



## Ohio & Erie Canal History – Canal Era Vocabulary

Aqueduct	A bridge-like structure filled with water that allowed the canal boats to cross a stream or valley.
Basin	A widening in the canal that allowed boats to pass or turn around; often developed into a site of a tavern, mill, warehouse or town.
Cabin	The enclosed space or house area on the canal boat.
Canal	A man made waterway for navigation or irrigation.
Cargo	A variety of materials or goods that were to be transported to market.
Driver	A young boy or girl, often the son or daughter of boat captain who would drive the animals in pulling the boat.
Dry Dock	A place next to the canal where canal boats were built or repaired. Boats would be floated in and the water then drained away so workers could get under boat for repairs.
Feeder	A watered channel that fed the canal with a steady supply of water from a reservoir, lake, or river.
Lock	A stone, concrete or wooden chamber within the canal with water tight gates. The gates could open and close at each end, allowing the water level to raise or lower the boats.
Lock Tender	A worker who operated the lock gates in order to guide the boat in and out of a lock; also called a lock keeper.
Mule	An animal that is part horse and part donkey. Often used as draft animals to pull the canal boats. Horses were used as well.
Packet	A type of boat designed to carry passengers instead of cargo. Cargo boats were called freighters.
Pike Pole	Six to eight foot wooden stick used to move a boat by hand by pushing along the bottom of the canal, often used to turn the boat in a basin.
Tiller	A movable blade on a canal boat that controlled the boat's movement or steering; operated by the steersman.
Towline	A rope used to link the draft animals to the canal boat in order to pull or "tow" the boat on the canal.
Towpath	The walkway along the canal where the animals pulled or "towed" the boat with a towline rope.
Wicket	Also called a Sluice Gate; a window like mechanism in the canal lock chamber. It was opened to allow water to enter and fill the lock chamber prior to the boats entry.