

NAME:



Traveling on the Erie Canal

In the 1830s, people coming to Michigan traveled along dirt roads that followed the routes of Indian trails. These roads were full of holes and often muddy. After traveling on one of these early roads, one person wrote that she had just been "jolted to jelly."

Many newcomers to Michigan, especially those from New York, arrived by boat. They started their journey on the Erie Canal. The Erie Canal looked like a small river. It was four feet deep and 42 feet wide, but it stretched 363 miles across New York state.

Passengers traveled on packet boats, which were large wooden boats that looked like a box. These packet boats were pulled by horses or donkeys that walked along the edge of the canal. During the day, passengers remained on the boat's deck. There they sang or talked with other passengers. At night, travelers slept in the cabin or room. It was not a pleasant place to stay. The straw-padded bunks were often dirty and smelled bad. Each cabin's door and windows were closed to keep out mosquitoes, which made the cabin very hot.

Erie Canal packet boats traveled two miles per hour and cost passengers between two to four cents per mile. When packet boats reached Buffalo, New York, passengers boarded steamboats for the three-day journey through Lake Erie to Detroit, Michigan or Toledo, Ohio. Once in Detroit or Toledo people could stay there or move inland to settle in Michigan.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN? LIST THREE FACTS YOU LEARNED FROM THE STORY.

WHAT DO YOU WONDER ABOUT? LIST A QUESTION(S) YOU HAVE ABOUT THE STORY.
