

Michigan Every Day

By Patrick Sullivan and Carole Eberly

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Erie Canal opens

In its early years, few people lived in Michigan and land was inexpensive. To reach Michigan by land meant scaling mountains thick with forest and negotiating dangerous swamps. Travel from the east was easier with the opening of the Erie Canal.

The journey from New York to Detroit could be measured in days rather than weeks. With the opening of the canal, a tidal wave of settlers from New England moved to Michigan, taking advantage of the cheap, fertile land. Also, cost of shipping goods from Michigan to the east became about a quarter of what it had been before.