

**ARTIFICIAL WATERWAYS
AND COMMERCIAL
DEVELOPMENT (WITH A
HISTORY OF THE ERIE CANAL)**

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Artificial Waterways and Commercial Development (with a History of the Erie Canal) by A. Barton Hepburn

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BY

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FOREWORD

THE first improvement upon the slow, tedious, and costly means of transportation by beasts of burden and vehicles was accomplished by utilizing rivers, supplemented by canals, as a thoroughfare for boats and barges.

These waterways determined the routes of commerce until the locomotive engine made land routes the more popular, as they were the more expeditious. Reaching in all directions, spanning waterways, tunneling mountains, and defying obstacles generally, they naturally took command of trade. In almost all other countries, the commercial advantage of maintaining both land and water routes was fully appreciated; in the United States, the impatience of all delay, which characterizes our people in their rush to anticipate the future and bring the latent resources of our phenomenally rich country into soonest possible use, however wasteful such haste may be, found expression in the development and expansion

of railway, and the comparative neglect of canal and river transportation, especially during the last three decades. Denser population with increased local needs, the greater consumption which accompanies the growing wealth of the people, the congestion of traffic generally, and many other causes, are teaching people the unwisdom of neglecting the cheaper, albeit slower, means of transportation.

People have come to realize that the function of artificial water navigation is to supplement and complement, and not to rival, the railways. The great development and successful rivalry of the Canadian canals have attracted wide attention and done much to bring to our people a proper appreciation of the great service which canals and canalized rivers may render.

The failure of New York State to develop and maintain her canal system found yearly expression in the loss of commerce to the city of New York; this manifest fact led to the present great work of enlarging the capacity of her canals. Her canal system is typical, and influences which call for improvement and enlargement in New York will, with equal

force, call for the development of artificial waterways throughout the country. Such development seems to be an imperative need of internal trade.

In order to place before the public in concise form the salient facts as to artificial waterways and their relation to commercial development, this volume has been prepared. As typical of all, the history of the Erie Canal is given, together with a general review of the canal systems of the world.

A. BARTON HEPBURN.

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