

# History of New York City Architecture

Building a New Nation  
1785-1820

# Building a New Nation 1785-1820

- Revolution and its aftermath
- Concept of “eclecticism”
- Building technology- pattern books
- The Federal style – characteristics
- Examples of the Federal style
  - Public
  - Commercial
  - Residential

The Infrastructure

# Building a New Nation 1785-1820

## Revolution and its aftermath



- One-third of all Revolutionary battles were fought within the boundaries of present day New York City



- Served as the military headquarters of Great Britain
- Occupied for seven years





- Suffered physically and economically



- Briefly served as national and state capitals





- New York had to rebuild after devastating losses

# Eclecticism

- Emotional and/or intellectual associations
- A romantic idea that a building or style is “good” because of its connection to a period of history whose image is educational or inspiring.
- 1785-1820 is a period of  
synthetic eclecticism



# Building Technology

- Introduction of American pattern books

A pattern book is a means of education for carpenters, builders and owners. It contains basic designs and practical instruction on the construction of structural and geometric forms



- Asher Benjamin wrote the first American pattern book in 1797. It was titled *The Country Builder's Assistant*

THE  
**AMERICAN BUILDER'S COMPANION;**

OR, A

**SYSTEM OF ARCHITECTURE,**

PARTICULARLY ADAPTED

**TO THE PRESENT STYLE OF BUILDING.**

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TREATING

ON PRACTICAL GEOMETRY;  
THE ORIGIN OF BUILDING.

OF THE FIVE ORDERS OF ARCHITECTURE; OF  
THEIR PARTICULAR PARTS AND EMBELLISH-  
MENTS, AND OF THEIR APPLICATION.  
ALSO, VERY FULLY ON STAIRS.

ON PLANS AND ELEVATIONS OF HOUSES...FOR BOTH  
TOWN AND COUNTRY.

ON CHURCHES.....COURT HOUSES, &c.  
ON SASHES...SASH FRAMES...SHUTTERS...DOORS  
...CORNICES...BASE AND SURBASE MOULD-  
INGS...ARCHITRAVES, &c.

ILLUSTRATED WITH

**SEVENTY COPPERPLATE ENGRAVINGS.**

*Sixth Edition....Corrected and Enlarged.*

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WITH A PLAN AND ELEVATIONS OF A CHURCH, AND NINE ADDITIONAL PLATES, ON  
HANDRAILS FOR CIRCULAR STAIRS, AND

**GRECIAN ARCHITECTURE.**

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**BY ASHER BENJAMIN,**  
ARCHITECT AND CARPENTER.

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**Boston :**

PUBLISHED BY R. P. & C. WILLIAMS...CORNHILL SQUARE ;

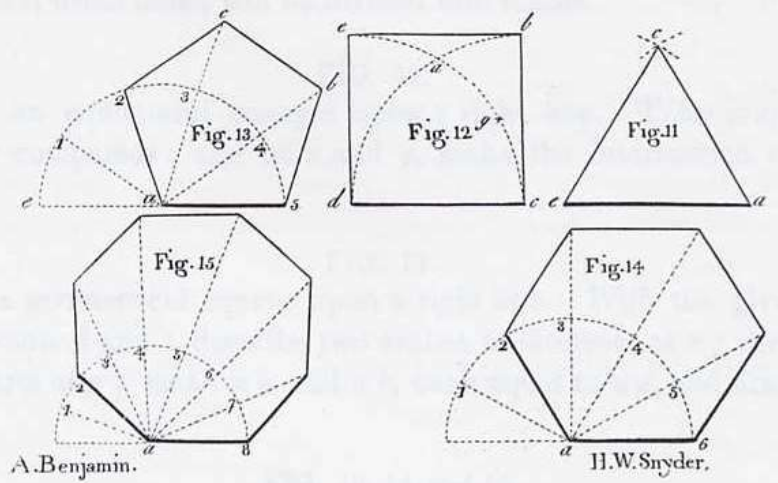
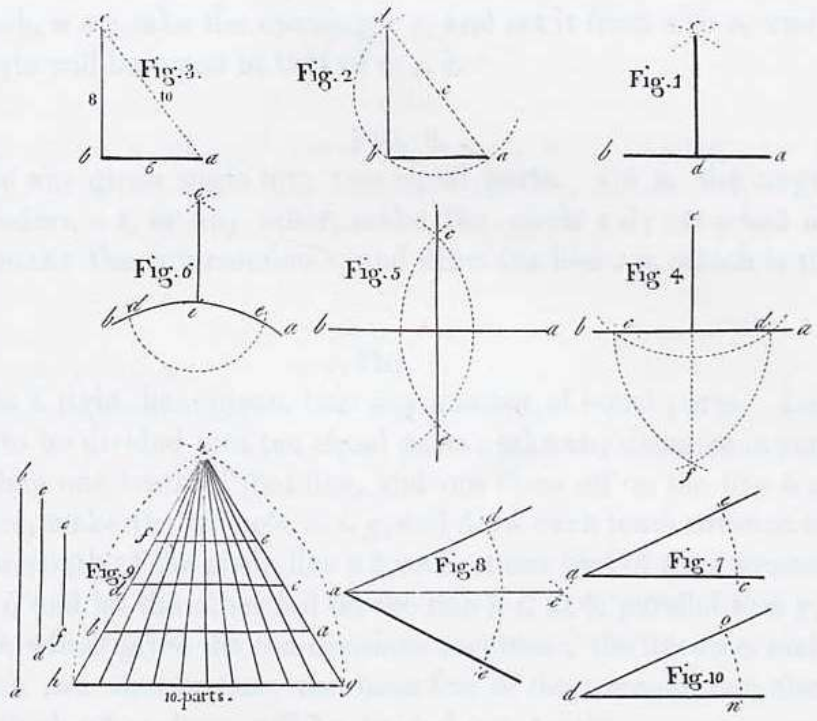
No. 79, Washington Street, opposite the Old State House.

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DUTTON & WENTWORTH, PRINTERS.

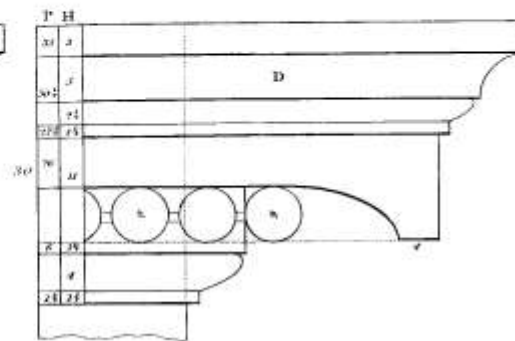
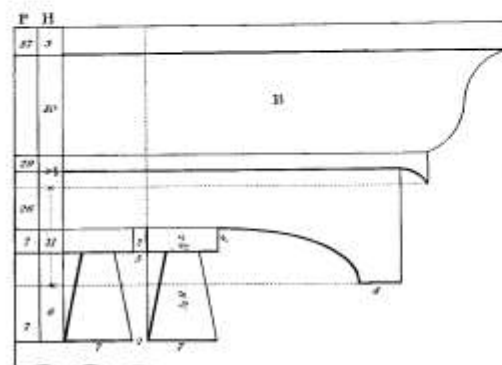
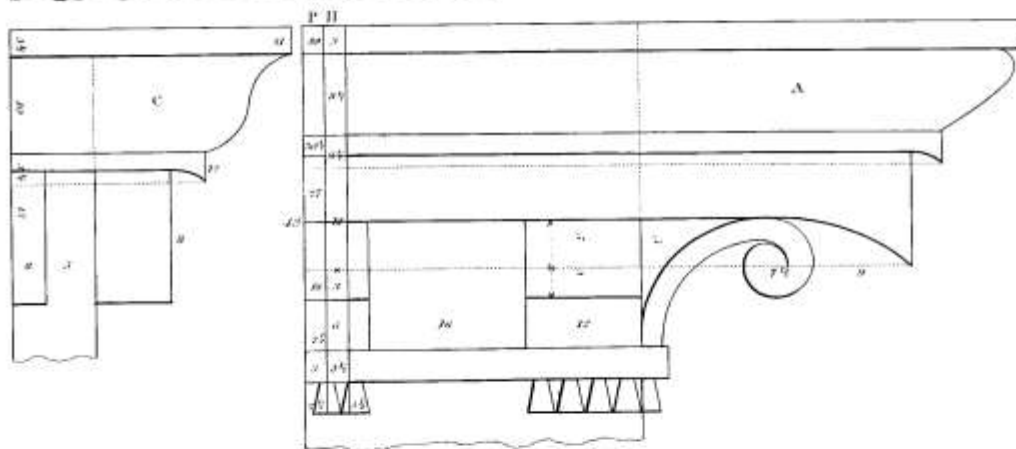
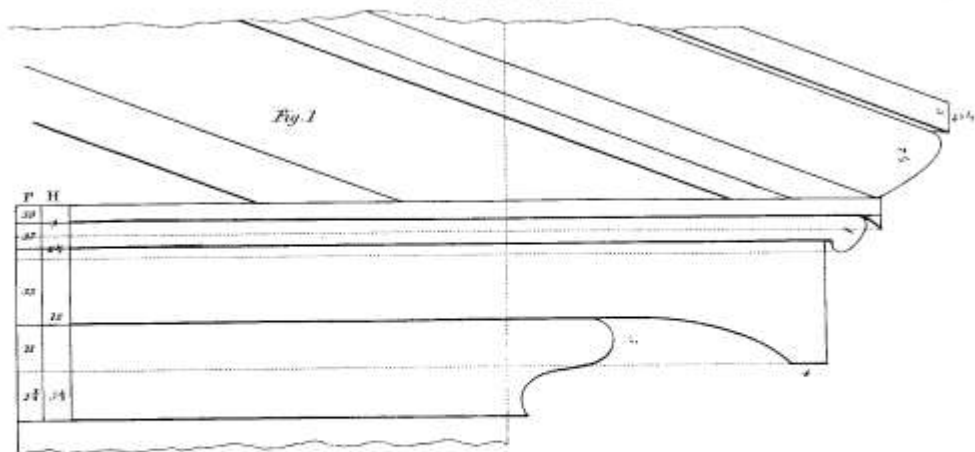
1827.





A. Benjamin.

H. W. Snyder.



# Characteristics of Federal style 1785-1820 (continued to 1830)



- Northern Dispensary Institute, 1831





- Modest scale
- Simple architectural ornamentation
- Greater freedom with forms

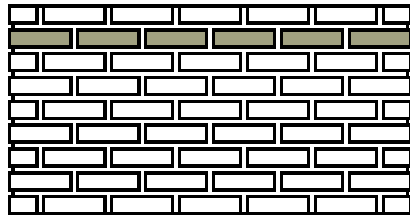


- Generally 2-3 stories high with a basement and an attic with dormer windows

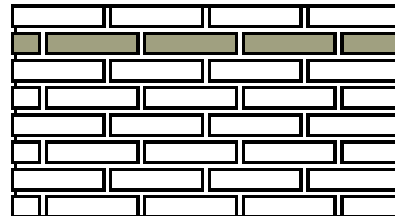


- Build of brick laid in a Flemish bond pattern and a brownstone base
- Also built in wood

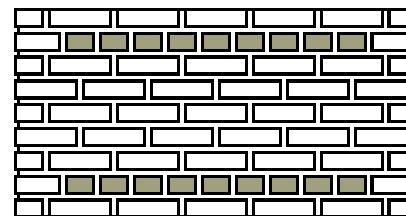




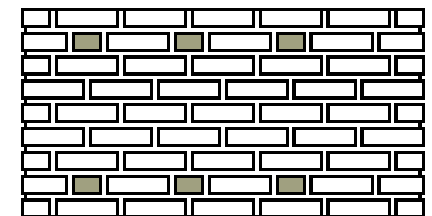
**RUNNING BOND**



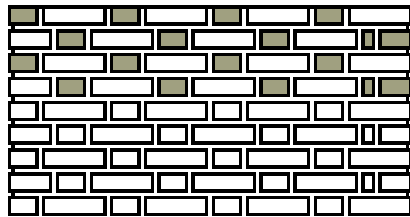
**1/2 RUNNING BOND**



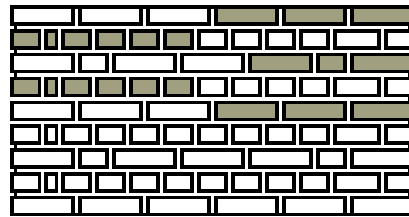
**8 COURSE HEADERS  
COMMON BOND**



**8 COURSE FLEMISH HEADERS  
COMMON BOND**



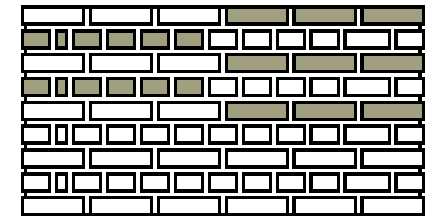
**FLEMISH BOND**



**ENGLISH CROSS OR DUTCH BOND**



**STACK BOND**



**ENGLISH BOND**

# Brick bond patterns



- Peaked or low hipped roofs
- Openings-simple

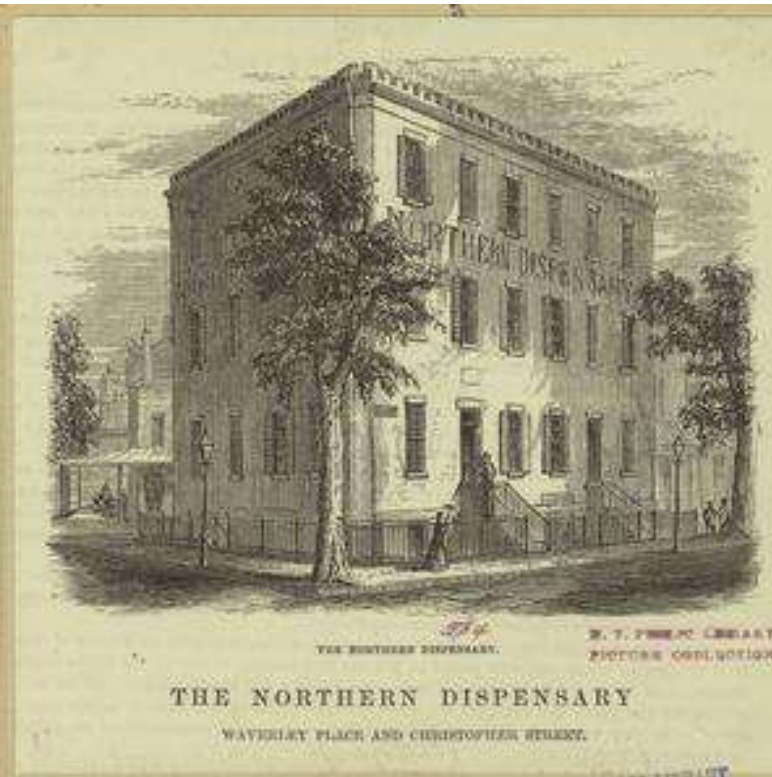


- Moldings and columns simpler, narrow Exterior decoration confined to porch, entrance and cornice



# Northern Dispensary Institute, 1831

Henry Bayard, carpenter; John C. Tucker, mason



# New York City Hall, 1802-1812

Joseph-Francois Mangin & John McComb, Jr













# Schermerhorn Row block, vernacular, 1811-1849







# Federal houses in Brooklyn Heights

155-157 Willow Street















# 13 Pineapple Street Brooklyn Heights







# 24 Middagh Street Brooklyn Heights







# Federal Houses in the Charlton-King-Vandam Historic District















Rectory of the Shrine of St Elizabeth Seton, 1806, ?  
John McComb, Jr.













# Poe Cottage, vernacular, ca 1812





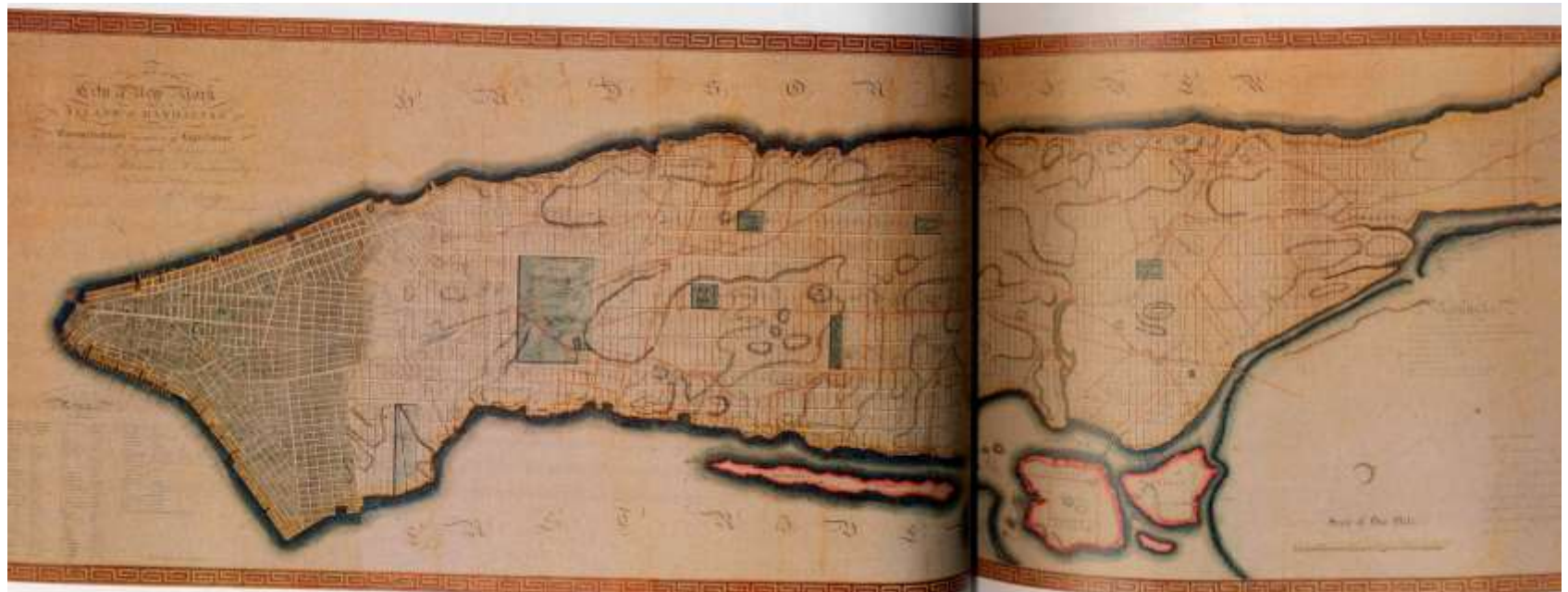
# Infrastructure







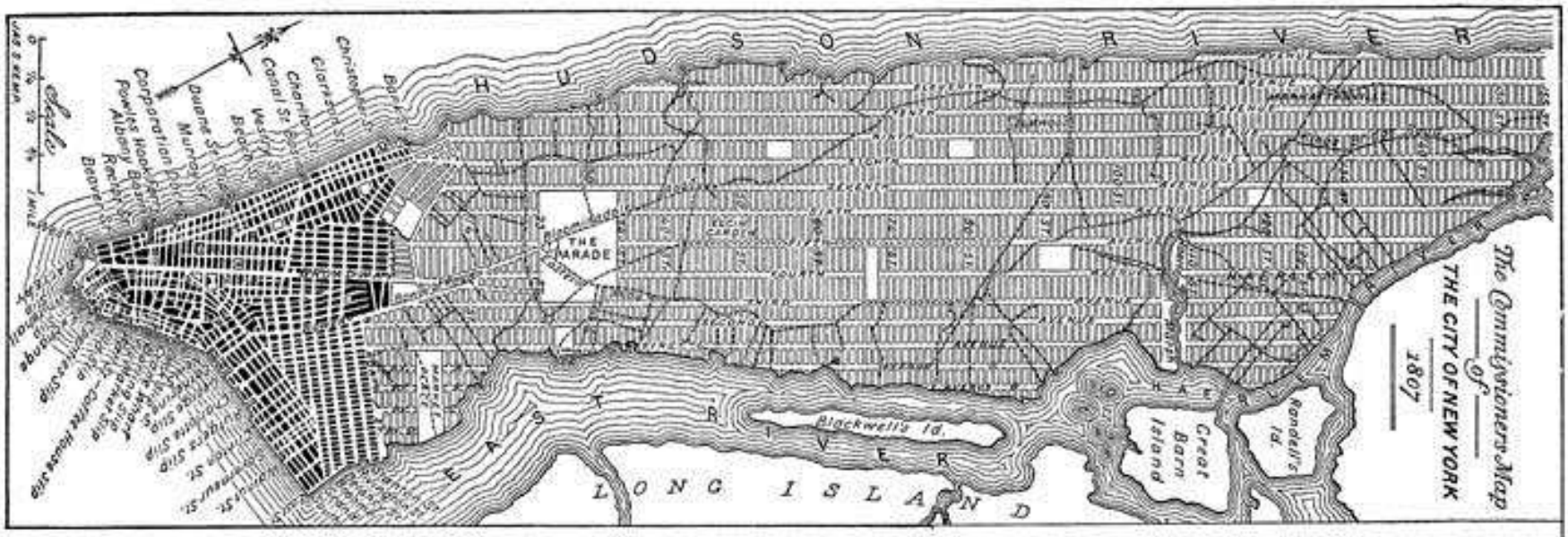
# Commissioners' Plan of 1811







Charlton St houses, orig.  
built 1820s





# US Map + NY Map

- Canals, Great Lakes + Mississippi River





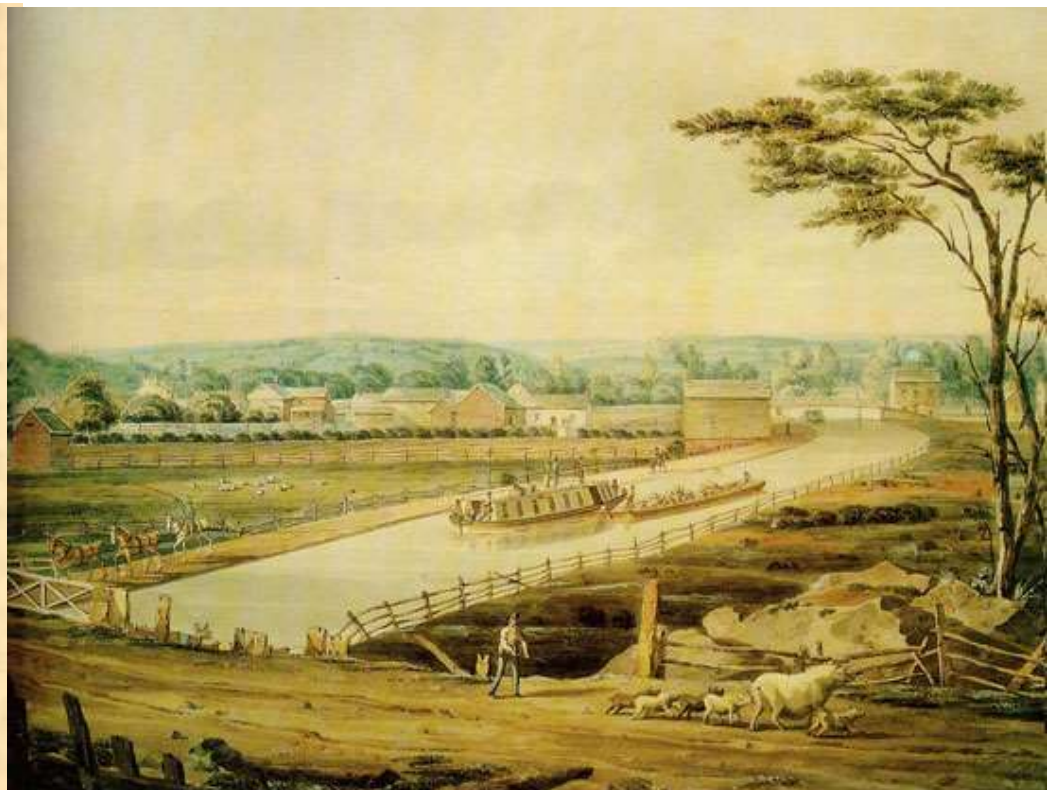
- The Erie Canal opened in 1825



# Erie Canal ca 1830-50s



Engraving from  
1852, NYS Library



John William Hill, 1829,  
Watercolor



# Erie Canal current





THE LOCK.





# Mohawk River Locks





# Mohawk River Locks

