



LOCK 39

A short hike along the Ohio-Erie Canal

May 3, 2018



Approach to Lock 39

The 44 locks along the Ohio-Erie Canal lifted canal boats on their journey from Cleveland to Portsmouth. This lock raised or lowered a boat nine feet.



The picture on the right shows the spillway where water from the canal that was not being used in the lock as it continued to flow down the canal.

The picture on the left shows the inside view of the lock looking south. The gates that let a boat in or out are at the far end.

Though these are the original sandstone blocks of the canal, they have been covered by concrete or replaced as needed from a renovation in 1905.



The Ohio-Erie opened in 1825 from Cleveland to Akron and in 1833 all the way to Portsmouth. Within 15 years of its opening, Cleveland grew from a sleepy village to a major port on Lake Erie



Part of the lock door

The inset where the lock door would have been





The canal was basically destroyed by the flood of 1913 which caused the canal to rise at the Akron summit. All the wicket gates were opened, but the danger continued. Levees were built along the canal banks, but still the water continued to rise. It became clear that the only way to save Akron from being swept away in the flood was to dynamite the banks of the canal. Permission was granted from Columbus for the emergency action, and banks were destroyed. Similar scenes were being played out along all the canals in the state. This deluge essentially wiped out canal use forever.

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