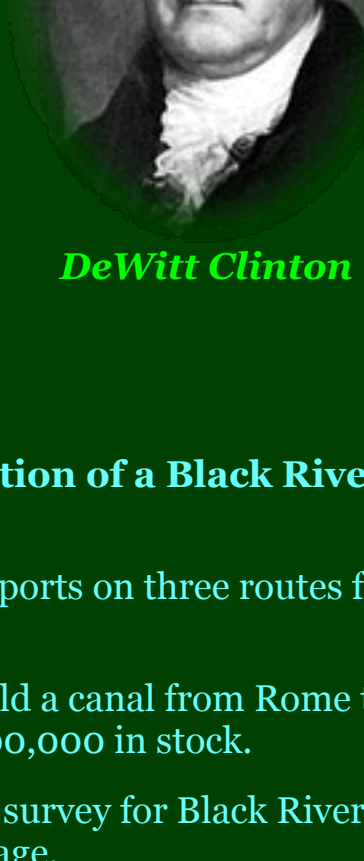




BLACK RIVER CANAL CHRONOLOGY

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DeWitt Clinton

John Quincy Adams (1825 - 1828)

- 1825 Governor DeWitt Clinton proposes construction of a Black River Canal to link the Mohawk River with Lake Ontario.
- 1826 First Canal Survey. Engineer James Geddes reports on three routes from Herkimer, Boonville and Fort Bull – all terminating at Ogdensburg on the St. Lawrence.
- 1828 First Black River Canal Company formed to build a canal from Rome to Lyons Falls and improve the river from Lyons Falls to Carthage within 3 years. Authorized to sell \$400,000 in stock.
Second Canal Survey. Alfred Cruger completes survey for Black River Company. Proposes 34-mile canal, 11-mile feeder, 40 miles of river navigation, and 1,090 feet of lockage.

Andrew Jackson (1829 - 1836)

- 1829 State Legislature orders Canal Commissioners to make survey. Fail to do so.
- 1830 Commissioners again ordered to make survey.
- 1831 Third Canal Survey. Holmes Hutchinson reports on canal with feeder, inclined planes, and locks. Black River Canal Company fails to raise sufficient capital.
- 1832 Second Black River Company incorporated to build canal or railroad. Authorized to sell \$900,000 in stock.
- 1835 Fourth Canal Survey. T. B. Jervis reports on a canal 26 ft. wide, 4 ft. deep, with banks 7 ft. high, with or without inclined planes. Citizens of Oneida, Lewis, Jefferson, & St. Lawrence counties draw up memorial in favor of a canal.
- 1836 State Canal Commission authorizes construction of an overland Black River Canal and Erie Canal feeder, as well as improvement of Black River.
Porteous R. Root appointed chief engineer.

Martin Van Buren (1837 - 1840)

- 1837 Root completes detailed location surveys.
First 14 miles located and put under contract.
- 1838 Contracts let for construction from Lansing Kill to Lyons Falls, and for 10-mile feeder canal from Forestport to Boonville.
- 1840 E. H. Broadhead reports on extending canal from Carthage to Lake Ontario.
Lansing Kill aqueduct completed.

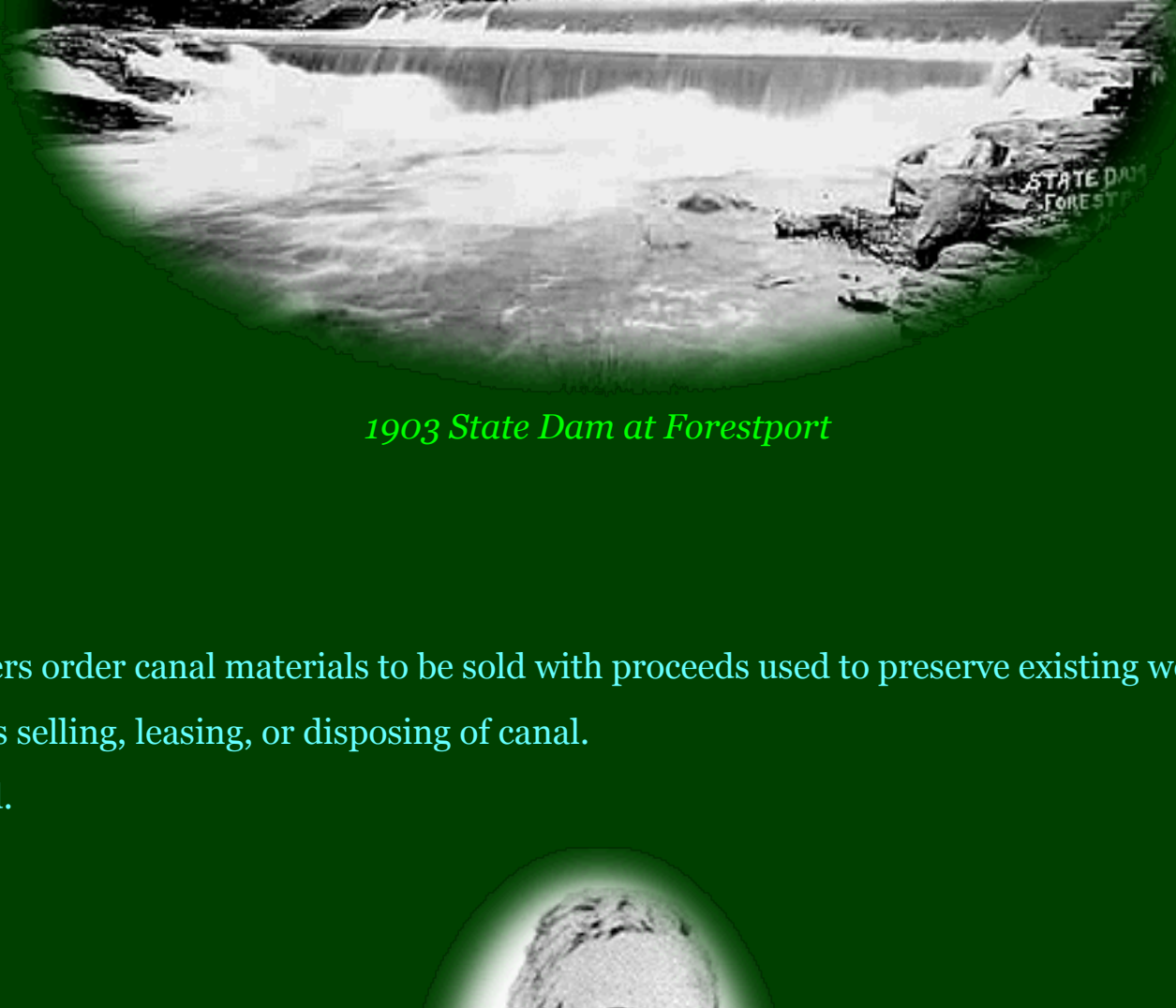


Black River Canal Bond issued in 1839

William Henry Harrison (1841)

John Tyler (1841 - 1844)

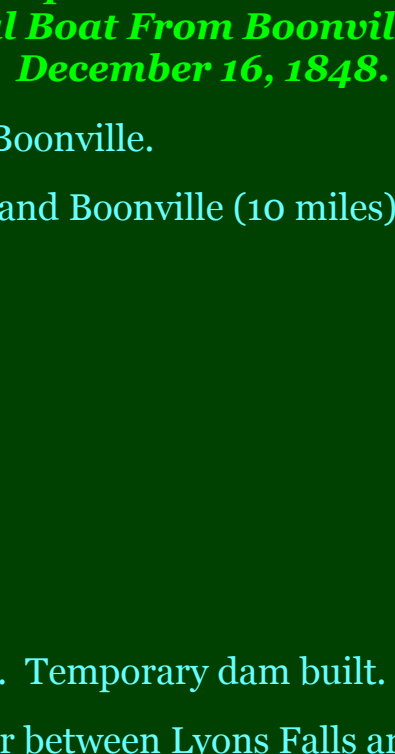
- 1841 Contracts let for Black River dam at Forestport. [\(Topographic Map\)](#)
- 1842 Deficits in general revenue prompt state legislature to pass "Stop and Tax Law," halting all work on the canal except necessary repairs.
Forestport feeder canal provides 11,500 cu. ft. per minute to Erie Canal.



1903 State Dam at Forestport

James Polk (1845 - 1848)

- 1844 State Canal Commissioners order canal materials to be sold with proceeds used to preserve existing work.
- 1846 State Constitution forbids selling, leasing, or disposing of canal.
- 1847 "Stop and Tax Law" lifted.



Black River Canal Superintendent Nelson Beach of Watson Rides 1st Canal Boat From Boonville to Forestport December 16, 1848.

- 1848 Contracts let to complete locks near headwaters at Boonville.
Erie Canal Feeder Canal opens between Forestport and Boonville (10 miles).
Black River Steam Boat Company chartered.

Zachary Taylor (1849 - 1850)

- 1849 Water for Erie Canal begins to flow.
Canal filled between Boonville and Rome.
Survey of Woodhull Lake and Wolf Lake completed. Temporary dam built.
State Legislature approves funds for improving river between Lyons Falls and Boonville.

Millard Filmore (1850 - 1852)

- 1850 May 10. Southern section of canal opens (25 miles) between Rome and Boonville.
Contracts let for northern section from Port Leyden to Lyons Falls.
November 1. Canal from Boonville to Port Leyden opens (6 miles).
- 1851 Plans made for four reservoirs (2 billion cu. ft. water) and for improving Black River between Lyons Falls and Carthage.
Contracts let for Mohawk feeder canal at Delta.



Delta Feeder (Larger Image)

Franklin Pierce (1853 - 1856)

- 1853 Bridge planned over Black River at Carthage.
Contracts let for Woodhull and North Lake reservoirs.
- 1854 Dams built at Carthage and Lyons Falls.
Locks 108 and 109 completed.



- 1855 November 13. Canal between Port Leyden and Lyons Falls opens (3 miles).
Contracts let for reservoirs at South Lake and Chub Lake.
- 1856 North Branch reservoir completed (423 acres, 310 million cu. ft. capacity).

James Buchanan (1857 - 1860)

- 1859 Woodhull and South Lake reservoirs put under contract.
Guard-lock for Delta feeder completed.
Contracts let for Otter Creek lock and dam.
October 10. Contracts let for improving the Black River between Lyons Falls and Carthage (60 ft. channel, 5 ft. water).
Contract let for dam at Carthage.
- 1860 Woodhull Reservoir completed (1,236 acres, 780,943,680 cu. ft. capacity).
South Lake Reservoir completed (518 acres).
Delta Feeder completed.

Abraham Lincoln (1861 - 1865)

- 1861 Otter Creek lock and dam completed.
River navigation opens between Carthage and Beach's Bridge, Lowville (22.5 miles).
- 1863 Canal commissioners urge completion of Chub Lake Reservoir.
- 1864 Lock and dam authorized between Otter Creek and Carthage. (Completed 1869).
Canal Commissioners authorize bridge over Black River at Lyons Falls (completed 1865) and at North St. in Port Leyden.

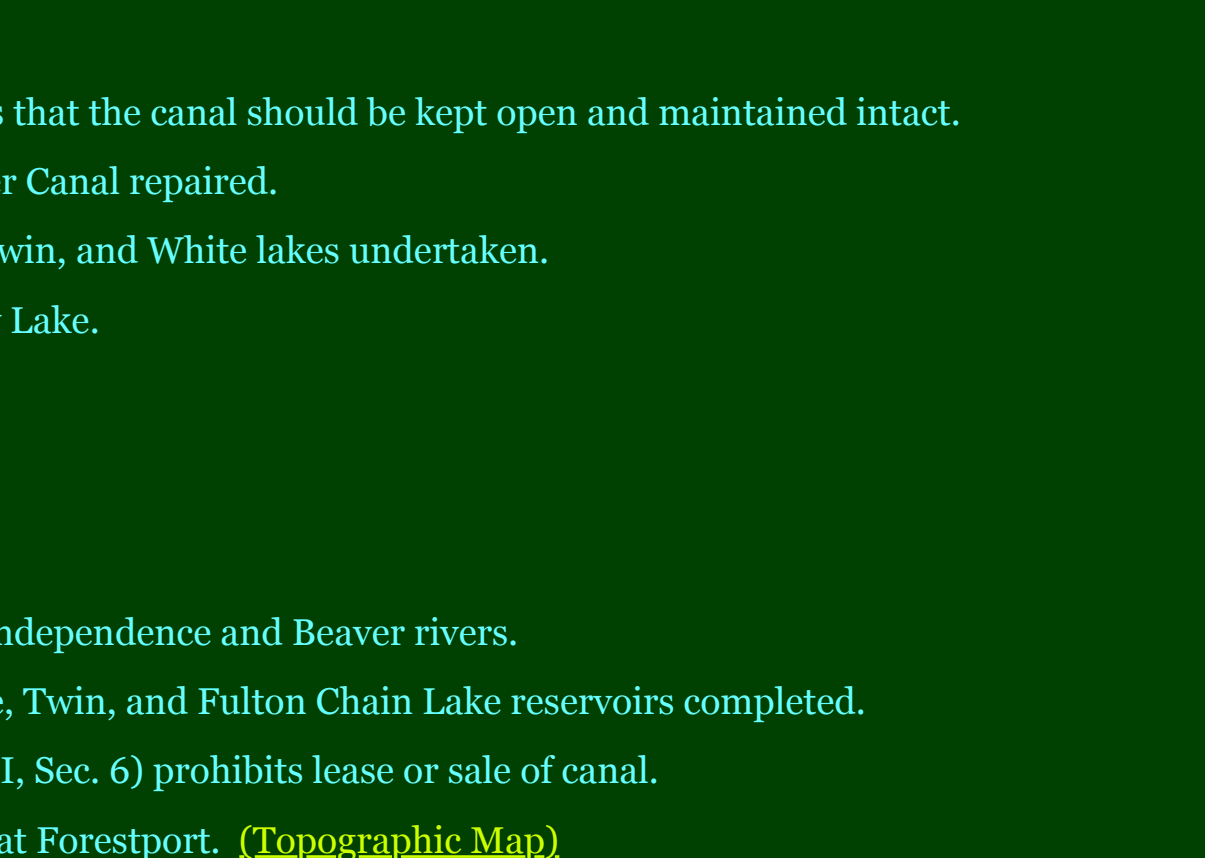


Andrew Johnson (1865 - 1868)

- 1865 Work contracted for lock and dam at Otter Creek (3 miles above Beach's Bridge).
- 1866 State takes control of bridges at Illingsworth and Beach's Landing (Lowville).
- 1867 Canal to be deepened and widened from its junction with Erie at Rome to Lock No. 1
- 1868 Bridge authorized over canal at Main St. in Port Leyden. (Completed 1869).

Ulysses S Grant (1869 - 1876)

- 1869 Bridge authorized over Beaver River.
Iron bridge to be built at Floyd St. in Rome.
April 21. Dam break at North Lake Reservoir floods Black River Valley as far as Watertown. Claims for \$700,000 filed.
First level of Black River Canal at Rome enlarged to the size of Erie.
- 1870 North Lake Reservoir reconstructed.



Old Forge Dam

- 1872 Dam to be built at Moose River at Old Forge (outlet of Fulton Chain of Lakes).
Sand Lake Reservoir completed (200 million cu. ft. capacity).
- 1874 February 1. State canal system consolidated into three administrative divisions. Black River Canal placed in Middle Division.
- 1875 Canal board ordered to examine and report on the possible sale of canal.
- 1876 January 13. Canal Commissioner Thayer and State Engineer Sweet decide against abandoning or selling canal.

Rutherford B Hayes (1877 - 1880)

- 1877 Canal Commission reports that the canal should be kept open and maintained intact.
All locks on the Black River Canal repaired.
- 1880 Surveys of Canachagala, Twin, and White lakes undertaken.
Dam built at Second Bisby Lake.

James A Garfield (1881)

Chester Arthur (1881 - 1884)

- 1881 Reservoirs to be built on Independence and Beaver rivers.
Canachagala, Bisby, White, Twin, and Fulton Chain Lake reservoirs completed.
- 1882 State Constitution (Art. VII, Sec. 6) prohibits lease or sale of canal.
- 1883 Second reservoir planned at Forestport. [\(Topographic Map\)](#)
Stillwater selected as reservoir site on Beaver River.
- 1884 Iron wooden bridge across Chenango Falls at Ucha removed and placed across Black River Canal at Rome.
June 8. Wooden spillway at Lyons Falls washes out.
Work begins on second Forestport Reservoir. (Completed December, 1893).

Grover Cleveland (1885 - 1888)

- 1885 Towpath to be built on south bank of Beaver River in town of New Bremen.
Work begins on Stillwater Dam.
- 1886 Stillwater Dam completed (9.5 ft. above low water, 150 ft. spillway; 328 million cu. ft. capacity).
July 29. South abutment and 90 ft. of the dam and apron at the head of Delta Feeder washes out.
- 1887 Lock 20 rebuilt.
- 1888 Locks 8 and 48 rebuilt.

Benjamin Harrison (1889 - 1892)

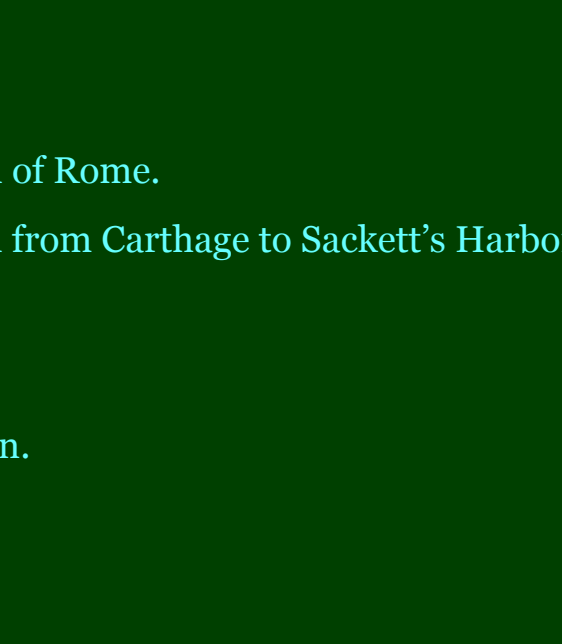
- 1889 Lock 60 rebuilt.
- 1890 Lock 12 rebuilt.
- 1891 Lock 1 rebuilt.
- 1892 Beaver River Dam at Stillwater enlarged and raised 5 feet. (Completed 1894).

Grover Cleveland (1893 - 1896)

- 1893 Lock No. 76 rebuilt.
Forestport Reservoir damages New York Central Railroad embankment.
- 1895 Work begins on bridge over canal between Carthage and West Carthage. (Completed 1896).
Work begins on draw-bridge over canal at Garden St. in Rome. (Completed 1896).
Work begins on iron-bridge over canal at Thomas St. in Rome. (Completed 1896).
Locks 18, 28, and 37 rebuilt.
- 1896 Locks 39, 40, and 41 rebuilt.

William McKinley (1897 - 1901)

- 1897 July 23. First Forestport Break (400 ft., 50 ft. deep).
Locks 49 and 96 rebuilt.



Lock 96

- 1898 David E. Whitford reports on water-supply from Adirondack forest.
May 23. Second Forestport Break.
Locks 51 and 53 rebuilt.
- 1899 State Superintendent of Public Works, Colonel John Partridge, hires Pinkerton Detective Agency to investigate the second Forestport Break.
September 18. Third Forestport Break.
1900 Locks 47 and 64 rebuilt
Superintendent Partridge recommends abandoning canal between Boonville and Lyons Falls.
Perpetrators of Forestport Breaks apprehended, indicted, and convicted.

Theodore Roosevelt (1901 - 1908)

- 1902 Work begins on replacing the lower Forestport Dam with concrete structure. (Completed 1903).
- 1903 July 28. Break near Lock 13.
Concrete dam on Beaver River completed.
- 1904 Bridges 4, 11 and 9 replaced.
- 1905 Governor Frank Higgins recommends abandoning Black River Canal between Boonville and Rome.

Howard Taft (1909 - 1912)

- 1911 Work begins on Delta Dam on Mohawk north of Rome.
- 1912 Governor John Dix vetoes bill to extend canal from Carthage to Sackett's Harbor on Lake Ontario.

Woodrow Wilson (1913 - 1920)

- 1913 Governor Martin Glynn vetoes canal extension.

Warren Harding (1921 - 1923)

- Black River Canal closes.
- 1924 State scow at Boonville towed to Rome



Lock Near Sugar River

This chronology of the Black River Canal is largely based on Noble Whitford's [History of the Canal System of New York](#).

