When Clarissa Burroughs left her New Jersey home in 1835 to travel on the Erie Canal, she could not have imagined how much she would learn. In addition to the memories she recorded in the diary that she would share with her mother, she learned much from the people she met and observed along her journey. She was curious about what she would see and what she might accomplish as a result of her trip.

Clarissa Burroughs traveled the Canal in 1835 to see the sights. This is a small section of her diary.

* List as many ways as you can imagine for Clarissa Burroughs to get from her home in New Jersey to the packet-boat at the start of her journey.

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Clarissa did not set out with unrealistic hopes. By the time she began her voyage (trip), many tourists had already traveled along the Erie Canal and had shared their own experiences about their journeys in newspaper articles or in letters to family and friends. She read about the experiences of others and had an idea about what parts of the journey might be exciting and what she might not look forward to. Still, there would be much left to learn that she couldn’t even imagine.

Although she was pleasantly surprised, for example, to find some helpful crew members and friendly passengers on the boat, but she disagreed strongly with earlier tourists who had written glowingly about the sleeping accommodations. Clarissa was constantly worried about being tossed from her bed when the boat thumped against the sides of a lock. She frequently complained about the dirty, cramped, and noisy interior (inside of the boat). Yet, she had known enough about the discomforts of boat travel to plan part of her journey on railroads and horse-drawn stagecoaches.

If the delays and other details of packet boat travel were sometimes annoying, Clarissa enjoyed the slow-pace of traveling on the canal. The Erie Canal was a wonder of human ingenuity (clever invention).

People came from all over the world to admire its locks, aqueducts, and manmade gorges, which were the engineering marvels of their day. Where nature had thrown obstacles in people’s way, the planners responded by leveling mountains, lifting an entire waterway into the air, and seemingly making water run uphill. Many inventions, such as the wheelbarrow, were created. The wheelbarrow made work much easier.

The Erie Canal stood for progress, the ability of human beings to turn nature into a method of transportation that would be the beginning of a revolution. It opened many doors for new transportation ideas later on. Because of the canal, thick forests and Indian villages had been replaced by gardens, churches, paved streets, literary societies, and a statehouse. These were all signs that progress was being made.

The mid-1830s was a time of rapid change in the northern United States. Along with the growth in transportation had come expansion, industrial growth, and development.

As the nation underwent rapid economic growth, many middle-class people like Burroughs worried that as people became more successful, society would not work together as much or enjoy nature. She set out on her trip in hopes of discovering that this would not be true.

* Look back at your completed map of New York State.

* Trace Clarissa Burroughs journey from her home in New Jersey to the Erie Canal.

Ms. Burroughs traveled on many waterways. List them here.
List all the cities that Clarissa Burroughs traveled through.