

Still in our first year taking the Challenge, I wonder if we will ever finish--but at least this new section of Trail made finding bathrooms much easier! Plus, I learned a lot about Syracuse and the Erie Canal through the signage along the way. We commenced our Erie Canalway Challenge on April 21, 2020, at the [Camillus Erie Canal Park](#) where we found the first "Wonder" of the Erie Canal (I'm searching for "7 Wonders")—the Nine Mile Creek Aqueduct, the waterway bridge for conveying barges over the creek. According to the Park, it is "the only restored navigable Aqueduct in New York State."

When we learned about the new Trail through Syracuse this winter, we strapped on ice cleats and grabbed a walking stick and trekked through the snow and ice from Reed Webster Park in Camillus to downtown Syracuse then onto Butternut Creek Aqueduct in Old Erie Canal State Historic Park, DeWitt. Along the way, we came upon the ruins of Lock 50, known as [Gere's Lock](#); enjoyed the back view of the New York State Fair Grounds; heard strange, loud machinery from Crucible Steel; crossed over the highway (Rte 690) to stroll above and beside Onondago Lake to its southern end; crossed the new pedestrian bridge over CSX's railroad tracks from where we watched [bald eagles](#) feeding at the Lake; imagined the warm bathrooms from our view of the largest shopping mall in New York, Destiny USA; learned about [Syracuse's salt mining industry](#) from path signs on the connecting [Onondaga Creekwalk](#) beside Inner Harbor; watched ice skaters at Clinton Square, where there are still remains of the Old Erie Canal; headed to the [Erie Canal Museum](#), housed in the only surviving Weighlock building (which I consider a second "Wonder"); strolled in the center of Erie Boulevard, once the Erie Canal itself, where we imaged barges floating by the fast food restaurants and dollar stores, came upon a strange, lock-looking structure with a stone etched, "Kasson--1848", which we learned from locals was the Erie Canal Monument made from old Lock stones (it had its [plaque stolen](#)); took a left on Bridge Street then onto Tow Path Road, where we could see remains of the Old Erie Canal again; then crossed over another highway (481) to the spectacular ruins of Butternut Creek Aqueduct in DeWitt. From there, we are heading to [Rome](#)--where construction began on the first Erie Canal over 200 years ago on July 4, 1817.

Jim, now a retired Pfizer scientist, has been sharing in my latest adventure in hopes of raising awareness of another "C-virus" plaguing the country, [cytomegalovirus \(CMV\)](#), the leading viral cause of birth defects (our daughter was born severely disabled by congenital CMV and died at 16 in 2006). Will our fight for a revision of the [current CMV law in New York](#) be as tough to pass as the legislation to build the original Erie Canal of 1825? Will Jim and I agree on the 7 Wonders and find enough bathrooms on the Trail to trek on--to impact the country, much the same way the Erie Canal did? I believe by walking the Erie Canalway Trail, we can share with Erie Canalway/Empire State Trail walkers and readers our belief that [women have a right](#) to know how to protect their unborn babies from CMV.

In 2000, Congress established the "Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor" because it was "instrumental in the establishment of strong political and cultural ties between New England, upstate New York and the old Northwest and facilitated the movement of ideas and people ensuring that social reforms like the abolition of slavery and the women's rights movement spread across upstate New York to the rest of the country..."

I just interviewed the president of [Mural Mania](#) who showed Erie Canal murals from Newark, Lyons, Clyde and Savannah, for Baldwinsville's public access channel, [PAC-B TV](#). I will continue to interview him about Mural Mania as he has many more murals in canal towns to share!

See you on the Trail!