

## “Buffalo”

*We left New York City for Albany, up the Hudson through the Mohawk Valley.  
At Syracuse the bridge is low, through Rochester in driving snow  
Three hours to go, to Buffalo*

*(Chorus)*

*So, Buffalo girls, won't you come out tonight? We've been riding the Erie Canal all night,  
And tomorrow we're taking the Great Lakes to Chicago.*

*We haul iron, lumber, and meat,  
Whiskey, rye, and corn, and wheat;  
We're making the Mississippi obsolete  
By linking the west up to the east.*

*There's just a few more miles to go 'til we're back in Buffalo.  
Everything stops when you get to the locks and the water comes rushing in.  
So hitch up the mules, 'cause there's a town around the bend.*

*(Chorus)*

### **Historical Background:**

As early as 1803, just fifteen years after the Constitutional Convention, the United States, as a result of the Louisiana Purchase, stretched as far west as present day Idaho. The biggest problem facing the rapidly-expanding nation was a lack of transportation. The only effective way to transport goods anywhere in the United States was by using the Mississippi River and its tributaries. This made New Orleans an important center of commerce and, arguably, the most crucial city to the United States' economy.

Many politicians and business leaders of New York State were constantly seeking ways to link the abundant resources of the West directly to the large markets in the East. The Erie Canal, completed in 1825, did just that. The Hudson River begins in New York City and travels north to its source at Albany. The canal, with seventy-three locks, was dug 325 miles from Albany to Buffalo. From there, steamships and barges would carry vast quantities of goods through the Great Lakes to Chicago. The success of the Erie Canal began a canal-building boom in the United States that connected the resource-rich West to the industrial East, and enabled New York City to take economic precedence over New Orleans. New York City became the center of commerce in the United States and, eventually, the world.

