

Follow along with us as we cruise onboard our
56' Ocean Yacht.

Somewhere on the Water

Our Great Loop

Waterford, NY, Floating dock to Guy Park, Amsterdam, NY

Friday, June 13, 2025

Day 17 (9th cruising day)

Welcome! Glad to have you here!



We are doing a happy dance!! We are leaving Waterford, NY, and starting the Erie Canal!

We left the dock this morning around 7:45 am. The first lock of the day is right in front of us. We will go through Waterford's Flight, which is locks E2–E6. Each of these locks will lift us in elevation into the Mohawk River, aka the Erie Canal.

Fun Fact:

The locks range in lift from 33 to 34.5 feet. It raises boats a total elevation of 169 feet in ~1.5 miles. When opened, the flights were the highest elevation in the shortest distance in the country for canal locks. It is speculated that they remain the highest elevation over the shortest distance for a canal in the world. <https://waterfordmuseum.com/waterford-flight-of-locks/>

We enter our first lock with 6 boats. Once we got into the lock and elevated, the US Coast Guard conducted inspections of each of our boats, which took about one hour in total. We passed our inspection.

The inspection consisted of

1. Before boarding, asked if we had any weapons on board
2. Asked for our IDs (took pictures of them)

3. Asked for the boat's documentation
4. Looked for the round buoy (flotation device in case of person overboard)
5. Looked at our flares for the validation date
6. Inspected our valves for the toilets to ensure we were not dumping overboard
7. Checked the bilges to make sure the boat was safe
8. Asked if we had fire extinguishers on board

Our first lock, E2, was a little sloppy because we weren't sure what "weighted lines" meant when reading a description on "how to lock." Mark thought I would be able to run a boat line around the weighted line and then back through our hawse pipe, but that was not the case. The weighted lines are there for boaters to hold on to. If you have a cleat, then use it, but our boat does not have stern cleats that are suitable for wrapping these weighted lines. Mark had a cable and was able to run a boat line around the cable and use a cleat for leverage.

All the locks we went through today were similar as far as the procedure. Lock 6 was not fun. It was very turbulent during the elevation, and Mark had to use the thrusters to keep us up against the wall. Even if I were stronger, I could not have kept the boat in position without him using the stern thruster.





You have to make sure you hold your line; if your boat comes off the wall, you are at risk of hitting the boat next to you. This is why every boat should have bumpers on both sides of the vessel.

Lock 8 proved interesting as well. The strong current pulls you into the narrow lock opening and pushes the boat around. It was a little squirrely.

Fun Fact:

Lock 8 has a temporary, movable dam. This allows control of the flow of water in the Mohawk River between Lock 8 and downstream locks. It also allows, during the summer months, to create pools of water for boats, and in the winter, when the canal is closed, the dam is lifted completely out of the water and allows the river to flow naturally, preventing ice buildup. (It is not the only lock with this type of dam.)

At this point, there are only 5 of us locking together. Lock 7 was not big enough to fit all of us. It isn't like we planned to start our day together and

end the day together, but the natural flow of the day just makes it happen that way. When you enter lock 2, the lock attendant advises the other lock attendants how many boats there are and our information. Even if one boat sped up to break from the pact, the next lock attendant would hold them in position until the rest caught up.

During our Waterford Flight, near E6, we passed under a Guard Gate. They look like large guillotines.



Guard gates on the Erie Canal are structures designed to isolate sections of the canal, typically for emergency situations like breaks in the canal wall, accidents, or high water levels. They can also be used to drain sections of the canal for maintenance or winter protection. These gates act as a kind of emergency stop valve for the canal system, allowing for controlled water management and preventing damage to the canal's infrastructure. Google

I drove (and steered, not just autopilot) between locks 8 & 9.
Good practice for me. Yay.

I feel like we really accomplished something today. It was exciting to be on the Erie Canal, especially in the year of its 200th anniversary. Not all the locks were easy; the water level was high, the current was strong, there was a lot of debris, and it took good communication between us to get in, grab lines, keep the boat in a good position, and exit as smoothly as possible. By the time we got to lock E11, the camera batteries were dead, the storage cards were full, and we were tired, so if you watch the video, there is no footage of lock E11. Also, I started out trying to put a photo of each lock's information regarding elevation, etc., but I soon realized I did not have one for each of the 10 locks we went through. Oh well. Just know that each lock we elevated today. The last couple of locks were approximately 15 feet in elevation compared to the 33 feet in locks 2 – 6,

Daily Summary:

Departed from Waterford, NY @: 7:45 am

Arrived at Amsterdam @ 5:35 pm

Hours traveled: 10 hours

Nautical Miles Traveled: 35.29 total for the day (351.34 total miles)

Average Speed: 3.5 knots

Weather: partly cloudy, 70's

Anchorage/mooring/marina review:

#of locks we went through: 10

 **YouTube** <https://youtu.be/u501sNzVErA>

That is a wrap for this update!



Time is unrenewable and tomorrow is never promised so do it before you can't!

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