

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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The Erie Canal

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I am all the way from Buffalo,
Upon the good boat Danger
A long, long trip we had, my boys,
I feel just like a stranger.
Petty fogs, artful storms,
Forget them I never shall
I am every inch a sailor, boys,
On the Erie Canal.

Chorus:

So haul in yer bowlines,
Stand by the saddle mule;
Low bridge, boys, dodge yer head,
Don't stand up like a fool.
For the Erie is a-risin,
An' the whiskey's gettin' low;
I hardly think we'll get a drink
Till we get to Buffalo.

We left Albany harbor
About the break of day;
If rightly I remember,
'Twas the second day of May.
We trusted to our driver
Although he was but small,
Yet he knew all the windings
Of that raging Canawl.

Early every morning
Ye can hear the flunkies call,
Come aft and git your lime juice,
Come aft, one and all;
Come aft and git your lime juice,
And don't bring any back,
Before you git to Syracuse
Ye's goin' to get the sack.

Three days out from Albany
A pirate we did spy!
The black flag with the skull and bones
Was a-wavin' up on high;
We signaled to the driver
To h'ist the flag o' truce,
When we found it was the Mary Jane

Just out o' Syracuse.

Two days out from Syracuse
The vessel struck a shoal,
And we like to all been foundered
On a chunk of Lackawanna coal.
We hollered to the captain
On the towpath treadin' dirt
He jumped on board and stopped the leak
With his old red flannel shirt.

The cook she was a kind soul
She had a ragged dress.
We h'isted her upon a pole
As a signal of distress;
The winds began to whistle
And the waves began to roll,
And we had to reef our royal
On the raging Canawl.

When we got to Syracuse
The off mule he was dead,
The nigh mule got blind staggers
And we cracked him on the head;
The captain he got married,
The cook she went to jail,
And I was the only son of a bitch
That's left to tell the tale.

Four long days we sailed the Hudson,
Sal and I and Hank,
We greased ourselves with tallow fat
And slid out on a plank;
The crew are in the poorhouse,
The captain he's in jail,
And I'm the sole survivin' man
That's left to tell the tale.
From American Ballads and Folk Songs, Lomax
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