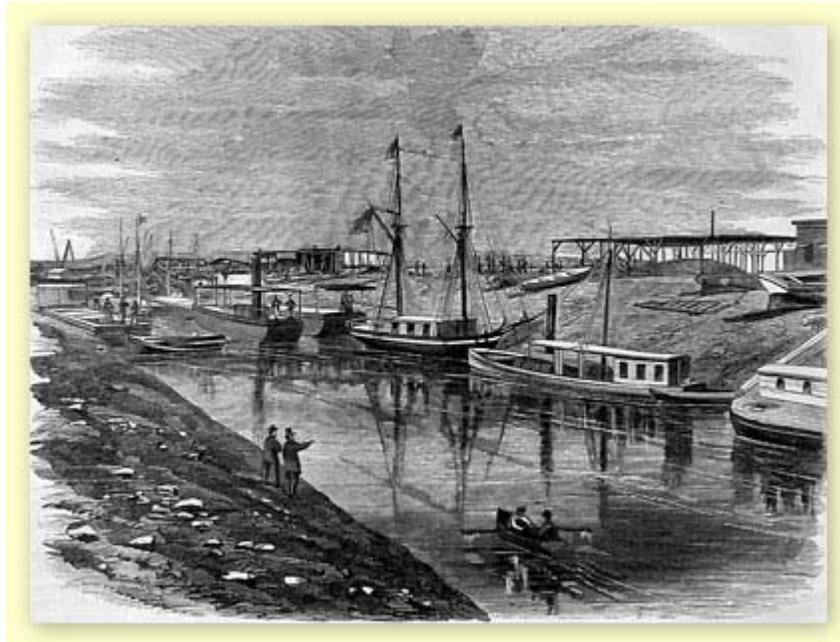


The Suez Canal



It is an artificial waterway in Egypt, connecting the Mediterranean Sea to the Gulf of Suez, and then to the Red Sea. The canal is 163 km long, and its width varies, and 60 meters at its narrowest. Along most of the length, there is only one lane for traffic available, though there are a handful of passing bays. The canal is extensively used by modern ships, as it is the fastest crossing from the Atlantic Ocean to the Indian Ocean. Taxes paid by the vessels represent an important source of income for the Egyptian government. The canal cuts through 3 lakes, the Lake Manzala, in the north which is protected from the canal with a bedding on its western side, the Lake Timsah in the middle, and the Bitter Lakes further south. The Bitter Lakes make up almost 30 km of the total length.

History

13th century BCE: A canal is constructed between the [Nile Delta](#) and the [Red Sea](#). For the following centuries, the canal was only partially maintained.

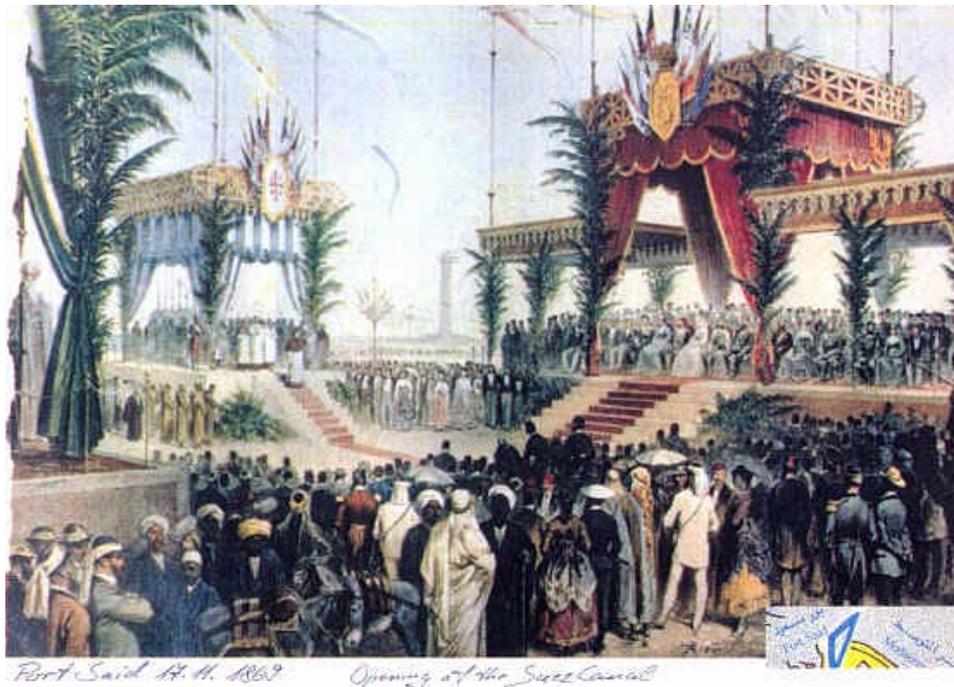
8th century CE: The maintenance of the canal is no longer funded by the rulers, and canal soon becomes unnavigable.

1854: By a French initiative, the viceroy of Egypt, Said Pasha, decides for a project to build a canal from the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea.

1858: La Compagnie Universelle du Canal Maritime de Suez is formed to construct the canal. The company, which was owned by both French and Egyptian interests, should both build the canal, and administer it for the following 99 years. After this time, the ownership would pass over to the Egyptian government.

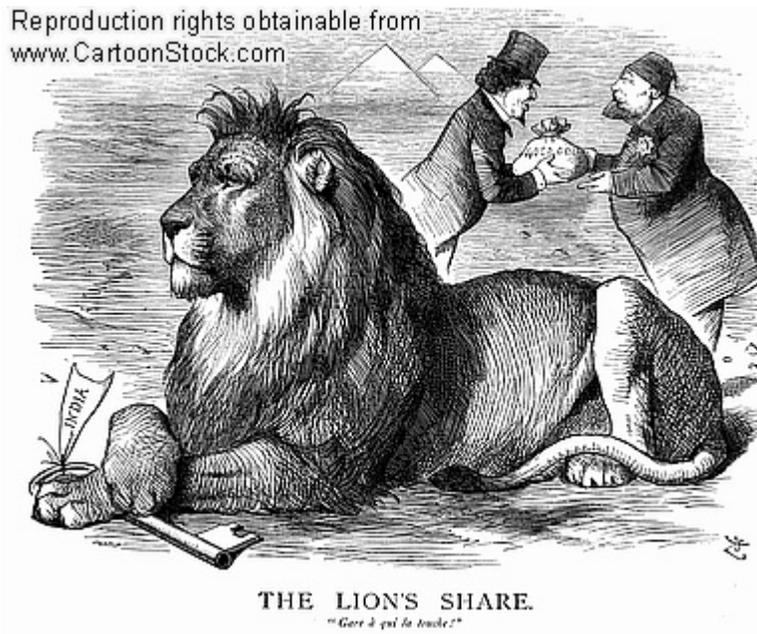
1859 April 25: Constructions begin.

1869 November 17: With great splendor, the canal is opened for navigation. Dimensions were 22 meter in bottom width, 58 meter in surface width, and a depth of 8 meters.



Picture of the Opening of the Suez Canal

1875: The British government buys the Egyptian stocks.



1888: By an international convention, the canal is opened for ships of all nations.



Map of the Suez Canal

1936: Through a treaty the British receives rights to keep military forces in the Canal Zone.



An early postcard of a passenger cruise ship passing through the canal

1948: Egyptian authorities introduce regulations against vessels calling on Israeli ports to pass through the canal.

1954: An agreement between Egypt and Britain that provides for British withdrawal within the following 7 years.

1956 June: The last British troops leave the Canal Zone, and the Egyptian military annexes British installations.

July 26: Egypt nationalizes the Suez Canal.

October 31: France and Britain attack Egypt, under the pretext that they want to open up the canal for vessels of all countries. The Egyptian answer is to sink the 40 ships that are inside the canal at the moment.

1957 March: The canal reopens, after the UN has carried through a scheme of removing the sunken ships.

1962: Egypt pays off all original shareholders.

1967 June 5: In conjunction with the Six-Day War, Egypt closes the canal. The canal would remain closed for years after the end of the war.

1975 June 5: The canal reopens.

— Vessels carrying non-military goods to and from Israel are allowed to pass through the canal.

1979: Unrestricted use for Israel is secured with the peace agreement between the two countries.



The distance saved by sailing through the Suez Canal



A satellite view of the Suez Canal



Cargo ships sailing through the canal today



An incredible aerial view of a ship passing through the canal