

REPORT OF THE CLIFTON PARK HISTORIAN 2025

I am delighted to report that during December my longtime volunteer in history, Sue Thompson, was appointed Deputy Historian. She has been invaluable in assisting me in achieving many of the accomplishments for 2025. These include helping with research, especially in finding Revolutionary War Veterans in Clifton Park, interpreting colonial crafts and the Henry Knox Trail during Farm Fest, and assisting with historic marker dedications, and our Bicentennial of the Erie Canal. I am happy to now have her on board in an official capacity as Deputy Historian.

The major event and focus for 2025 was Clifton Park's celebration of the Bicentennial of the opening of the Erie Canal. Our celebration began with the dedication of a historic marker at Willow Spring, an inn and canal side settlement on Riverview Road just west of the entrance to the Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve. This was followed by a walking tour along the canal towpath to Lock 19. A power point presentation on the Erie Canal in Saratoga was presented at the Grooms Tavern during Historic Preservation month in May, and an exhibit on that subject opened at the Tavern at the same time. Connie Frisbee Houde from the New York State Museum gave a presentation on clothing of the canal era, and a bike ride along the towpath sponsored by the Mohawk Towpath Byway was offered in June.

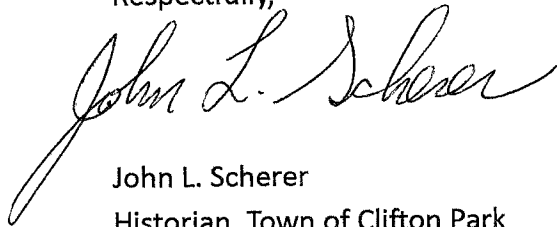
Another canal program during May was a bus trip to Canastota to visit a Dry Dock Museum, similar to Clifton Park's own Clute's Dry Dock. We also stopped in Camillus where we took a ride on a restored section of the original Erie Canal going over a restored aqueduct similar to the one that existed at Rexford.

A subcommittee of the celebrations committee co-chaired by George Donohue of Vischer Ferry and myself met monthly for over a year to plan a major celebration, Canal Fest, in Vischer Ferry. The efforts of many community members as well as town officials and staff culminated in a major festive celebration on a beautiful Fall Saturday in October. Opening with a dedication of a historic marker recognizing the 5 Revolutionary War Veterans buried in the Amity Church Cemetery, the day also featured a parade and welcoming by town officials and Brian Straton of the Canal Corps. Wagon rides down to Lock 19 were popular as were demonstrations by Revolutionary War reenactors and colonial craftsmen. An exhibit on the canal featuring exhibit panels from the New York State Museum, and a working model of a canal lock could be found at Amity Church as well as a photo contest and children's games. The festivities included the whole community and featured exhibits at the firehouse by such town

once owned by the Herbert Clute family of Vischer Ferry. It was donated by John Stevens of Taylor Drive, Rexford and looks great in the parlor of the Grooms Tavern.

Participation as advisor to the Clifton Park Historic Preservation Commission, The Friends of Heritage Square, and the Mohawk Towpath Byway continues. All of these organizations helped to make our celebration of the Erie Canal Bicentennial a resounding success. Much of what I do would not be possible without input from these organizations and support from the Town Board and various town offices. I look forward to celebrating the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution and especially Clifton Park's own bicentennial in 2028.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John L. Scherer". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

John L. Scherer

Historian, Town of Clifton Park