

A strategy for  
**heritage tourism**

in Western New York

# Vision Plan

**WNY Tourism  
Work Group**

**May  
2013**



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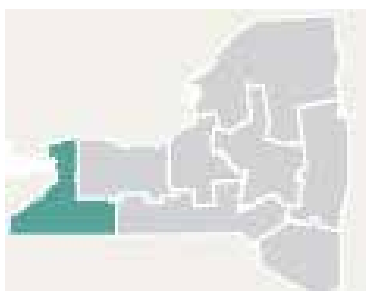
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# A Letter from the Co-chairs

As co-chairs of the Western New York Tourism Work Group, we are pleased to present our region's **Path Through History** Vision Plan—a bold framework that connects historically and culturally significant sites, locations, and events throughout Western New York. Our plan complements the Regional Economic Development Council's "A Strategy for Prosperity" by creating a roadmap that will attract heritage tourists to "the region that built America."

Almost a year ago, our Work Group convened to begin our regional effort in response to Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's new initiative to promote one of New York State's vital, but underdeveloped resources: the extraordinary array of historic sites, museums and cultural institutions that tell the story of the Empire State's rise to prominence over the last 200 years. We applaud the Governor's vision and commitment to support the identification, promotion, and investment in heritage tourism as a tool for economic development.

Our group worked diligently during the last several months to identify the themes that frame the story of this area within our national story, including serving as the gateway to the west via the Erie Canal, the original American tourist destination—Niagara Falls, a hub for commerce, a treasure trove for architecture, one of the last stops on the Underground Railroad and an extraordinary incubator for the arts. For those who are adventurous enough to see beyond the region's reputation as just another declining Rust Belt region, Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie and Niagara counties have a big and bold story for visitors and residents to experience along our **Path Through History**.

We give many thanks to those who attended our public forums and to the Western New York Regional Economic Development Council for recognizing the importance of history, architecture, culture and tourism to our region and making it a key driver for future investments. We are also grateful to The Baird Foundation and the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo for providing our group with financial support during this critical planning phase.

There is much to explore, enjoy and learn in Western New York and we look forward to welcoming visitors throughout our region as part of the **Path Through History** initiative.

Sincerely,

Crystal Abers  
Co-chair

Tod A. Kniazuk  
Co-chair

# Western New York Path Through History Vision Plan

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## Plan Overview

### Demand for heritage tourism

Western New York is poised to become a significant destination for heritage tourism—the fastest growing sector of tourism for domestic and international travelers.

Heritage tourism is a rapidly growing niche market that is directed towards experiencing the local customs, traditions, arts, history, sites, and culture that authentically represent a particular place. To the heritage tourist, this culture must be unique and it must be authentic. The heritage tourist wants to visit historic house museums, courthouses, battlefields, gardens, lighthouses, Native American and presidential sites, along with revitalized historic waterfronts, downtown districts, distinctive restaurants and residential neighborhoods. An increasing number of domestic and international travelers aided by the availability of global communication fuel this type of tourism. Heritage tourists stay longer, explore out-of-the-way places, and spend more.

### One of three regional priority growth industries

In its strategic plan for economic development for the region, the Western New York Regional Economic Development Council has identified tourism as one of the eight industry sectors in the region where we already enjoy high concentrations of employment, potential growth in jobs and wages is greatest, and we possess some kind of unique asset or advantage. Tourism is also one of the three priority sectors identified in the related Investment Development Plan, better known as the “Buffalo Billion,” with the potential to form the foundation Buffalo’s next economy and to drive economic growth, employment, productivity and wealth.

The *Path Through History* initiative, announced by Governor Andrew Cuomo in August 2012, will not only showcase New York State’s history and cultural significance, but also promote tourism and economic development in every region of the state.

The WNY Tourism Work Group which includes representatives from all Tourism Planning Agencies in the region, cultural and historic sites/areas, historians, Empire State Development, private foundations and heritage areas, has met since the summer of 2012 to develop a shared vision for heritage tourism in the region and to work collaboratively to identify our own regions’ “paths” through history.

### Vision: an integrated visitor experience

WNY’s vision acknowledges the significance of Niagara Falls as both America’s original tourist destination and an attraction that draws visitors from around the world. Our region’s vision calls for the development of an integrated experience for visitors and residents that “connects the dots” across Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie and Niagara counties through themes, places, stories and people. We have also identified Western New York’s strongest themes and priority sites, which are designed to expose our region’s assets to an ever-widening circle of visitors and create one of the best forms of promotion—word-of-mouth recommendations.

# Plan Overview

## Themes

WNY's themes are aligned with statewide themes for *Path Through History*. Our themes are:

- Scenic Wonders—Water, Rocks and Landscapes
- War and Peace: Military Sites and Stories
- Waterway to the West: The Erie Canal Transforms America
- WNY's Underground Railroad: Gateway to Freedom
- Industrial and Commercial Pioneering and Prominence
- A Vast Architectural Museum
- Arts for Everyone—A Western New York Legacy
- A Region of Cultural Novelty and Authentic Americana

## Goals

The Work Group has set the following goals for our plan:

1. Increase heritage tourism in the Western New York Region.
2. Increase the number and quality of visitor ready sites in the region.
3. Increase visitors' length of stay in the region.
4. Increase coordination and collaboration throughout the region.
5. Measure quantitative and qualitative impact of heritage tourism marketing and promotion activities on growth of the economy and quality of life.

# Plan Overview

## Strategies

### Principles

A. Utilize the five principles for successful and sustainable heritage tourism (as defined by the National Trust for Historic Preservation).

### Themes

B. Promote the WNY Heritage themes, stories, hubs and people as part of I Love NY's statewide promotion.

### Digital paths

C. Create digital Paths to mirror and promote WNY heritage tourism Paths.

### Link to other regions

D. Connect hospitality training institutions with WNY's heritage tourist attractions.

### Hospitality training

E. Link our region's *Path Through History* to complementary attractions, heritage areas/corridors and themes/destinations through cross-regional efforts.

### Tourism experiences

F. Provide resources to assist WNY *Path Through History* sites to shift from providing tourism products to interactive tourism experiences that meet or exceed visitor expectations.

### Capacity building

G. Provide education, technical assistance and capacity building to secondary attractions in order to increase the number and quality of visitor ready attractions/destinations.

### Investment

H. Invest in strategic projects that advance the WNY goals for economic development and strengthening the tourism industry in the region.

### Update the plan

I. Update the Vision Plan annually.

## Principles for successful and sustainable heritage tourism

**Collaborate:** By its very nature, heritage tourism requires effective partnerships. Much more can be accomplished by working together than by working alone.

**Find the fit between the community and tourism:** Heritage tourism should make a community a better place to live as well as a better place to visit. Recognizing local history by communities and sharing this history with others benefits both the community and its visitors.

**Make sites and programs come alive:** Look for ways to make visitor experiences exciting, engaging, and interactive.

**Focus on quality and authenticity:** Today's heritage traveler is more sophisticated and will expect a high level of quality and an authentic experience.

**Preserve and protect irreplaceable resources:** Many community, historic and natural resources cannot be replaced if they are lost. Take good care of them because once they are gone, they are gone forever.

# Plan Overview

## Implementation Projects

| Project   | Yr.1 | Yr.2 | Yr. 3 | Yr.4 | Yr.5 |
|---|------|------|-------|------|------|
| <b>MARKETING</b>  |      |      |       |      |      |
| Digital marketing campaign                                  |      |      |       |      |      |
| Develop WNY PTH content                                     |      |      |       |      |      |
| Orientation videos  |      |      |       |      |      |
| High res, four seasons of images portfolio                  |      |      |       |      |      |
| Digital travel guide  |      |      |       |      |      |
| “This Place Matters” campaign                               |      |      |       |      |      |
| Market to international tour operators                      |      |      |       |      |      |
| Conduct FAM tours   |      |      |       |      |      |
| <b>HERITAGE TOURISM DESTINATION &amp; PATH DEVELOPMENT</b>  |      |      |       |      |      |
| Solicit site development projects, including cross-regional |      |      |       |      |      |
| Implement site development projects & other PTH initiatives |      |      |       |      |      |
| Mini-grants for experiential programs                       |      |      |       |      |      |
| Mobile app development                                      |      |      |       |      |      |
| PTH passport program-Visitor in Your Own Backyard           |      |      |       |      |      |
| Awards for historic property improvements                   |      |      |       |      |      |
| Regional wayfinding   |      |      |       |      |      |
| Geo-caching and scavenger hunt products                     |      |      |       |      |      |
| <b>INTERPRETIVE CONTENT</b>                                 |      |      |       |      |      |
| Develop video clips of four seasons for themes, sites       |      |      |       |      |      |
| Self-guided tours--increase inventory and how to access     |      |      |       |      |      |
| Crowdsourcing project                                       |      |      |       |      |      |
| QR codes  |      |      |       |      |      |
| Content for “Wikihood,” “History Here” apps                 |      |      |       |      |      |
| <b>DATA GATHERING</b>                                       |      |      |       |      |      |
| Identify emerging heritage tourism sites                    |      |      |       |      |      |
| Conduct comprehensive survey                                |      |      |       |      |      |
| Conduct annual assessment of 5 county, I Love NY efforts    |      |      |       |      |      |
| <b>EDUCATION &amp; CAPACITY</b>                             |      |      |       |      |      |
| Annual heritage tourism conference                          |      |      |       |      |      |
| Community heritage tourism toolkit                          |      |      |       |      |      |
| Provide historical interpretation training                  |      |      |       |      |      |
| Capacity building for visitor readiness for emerging sites  |      |      |       |      |      |



## Introduction

Western New York's *Path Through History* Work Group began its planning effort in June 2012 and presented its vision statement, criteria for heritage tourism sites, and initial priority themes at Governor Cuomo's *Path Through History* Conference in August 2012. Given the high priority of tourism in the Western New York Regional Economic Development Council's Strategic Plan and the fact that 78% of tourists include cultural and heritage sites in their travel, the group has become the official Work Group on Tourism for the region. Members of the Work Group include representatives from all Tourism Planning Agencies in the region, cultural and historic sites/areas, historians, Empire State Development, private foundations and heritage areas. Angela Berti from the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Preservation in Niagara Falls has provided communications and support for the group throughout the process.

The Work Group has met on a regular basis since October 2012 to develop its multi-year plan for the region. In January 2013, the Tourism Work Group was fortunate to obtain private funding support for this planning process through The Baird Foundation and the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo in order to retain Eve Berry, an experienced facilitator and planning consultant, to assist with the development of the regional vision plan. Many thanks to both foundations for sharing the vision and commitment to preserving and promoting our region's cultural and historic resources.



The Tourism Planning Agencies in the region, (Visit Buffalo Niagara, Niagara Tourism and Convention Center, Chautauqua County Visitors Bureau, Cattaraugus County Economic Development, Planning and Tourism and the Allegany County Office of Tourism & Culture), manage the tourism efforts in the region and have been active leaders and participants in the planning process.

### What is heritage tourism?

“Heritage tourism is traveling to experience the places, artifacts, and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present. It includes cultural, historic and natural resources.”

National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2008

## Vision Statement

Western New York is America's original tourist destination - drawing visitors from around the world to see our magnificent Niagara Falls, beautiful parks and dynamic communities. Our natural wonders, numerous historic sites, and world-class cultural offerings continue to make us a premiere destination for authentic heritage tourism.

The *Path Through History* plan will develop an integrated experience for visitors and residents. By making connections between the variety of historic and cultural sites, we will provide opportunities to learn about and enjoy Western New York's significant role in New York State's development. Visitors will spread the word about our region's unique hospitality and character which combine all of the features that make Western New York such a special place.

### **Trend 1: Experience is more important than destination**

People are seeking experiences and getaways that combine a number of activities. Further, travelers desire drive-to destinations with year-round experiences. These combine to make visiting cultural heritage sites and events attractive activities for all ages. Managers must appropriately develop sites to accommodate various audiences.

### **Trend 2: Sites serve as educators of history for visitors of all ages**

Cultural heritage sites are perceived as experts and are trusted to impart a credible presentation of history. Since September 11, certainly, interest in America's cultural heritage has grown. American consumers-the domestic market-are seeking new ways to connect with their roots and become educated. The international market seeks out authentic American experiences to learn about our country. Both markets look to site managers and curators to provide an education that is missing from the classroom or long since forgotten. This means learning experiences must be developed for all ages.

### **Trend 3: Heritage sites and events are expected to provide high quality, authentic experiences**

An abundance of new cultural heritage sites and activities, along with manufactured and other non-industry related activities, creates a host of options for travelers. The internet brings a whole new world to cultural heritage tourism. Strategic marketing and consistent experiences are necessary to maintain market share. The new product is thematic, easily purchased, and easily experienced. Above all, the messages must be based on fact.

## Regional Overview

The Western New York Region is located in the extreme western part of the State and comprises the northern border of the United States. The region includes the Buffalo-Niagara Metropolitan area, which is comprised of Erie and Niagara counties, and also includes Allegany, Cattaraugus, and Chautauqua counties. The Western New York (WNY) region covers 4,974 square miles. It is strategically located on lakes Erie and Ontario, and shares a border with Canada. This region is one of ten economic development areas recently defined by New York State.

Western New York offers a wonderful quality of life, with the distinct advantage of city, suburban, small town, and rural living. The cost of living is affordable, the housing market has remained stable and the region is home to 21 colleges and universities. Niagara Falls attracts more than eight million visitors annually. When visitors and residents of Western New York venture beyond their immediate venue, they are dazzled with the regions majestic scenery, opportunities for recreation during all four seasons and the heart-felt hospitality characteristic of the area.

The history of Western New York revolves around its strategic location and geography, which have played a central role in the development of the region, including the many battles fought between four nations to control the area. The region is located on two of the Great Lakes, joined by the Niagara River, and has numerous connectors to Canada and other areas through major railroads, international bridges, state and federal highways, international airports and ports. Niagara Falls, located about midpoint between the two lakes, proved to be both a fantastic scenic wonder and a formidable barrier to water transport. Beginning with the 1825 completion of the Erie Canal, Western New York has played a critical role in moving goods, expanding global trade and creating prosperity.

Access to key population centers also is important to the region's success. Located 500 miles from 41 percent of the US population and 59 percent of Canada's with access to 25 percent of the world's fresh water, Western New York is



## Five counties, but one region

poised to take advantage of its many assets and strengths - such as a tourism sector with international acclaim; relatively low costs of living and doing business; an educated and skilled workforce; and strong aggregate household income.

Western New York is poised to experience a breakthrough as a cultural and heritage tourist destination. As detailed in this plan, the region played a pivotal role in the westward expansion of America and the development of New York State. Relative to comparable regions in the country, Western New York boasts an abundance of natural resources, historic sites, cultural attractions and one-of-a-kind destinations that can provide heritage tourists with a broad and diverse set of experiences. Its proximity to Niagara Falls as a national and international magnet for eight million visitors a year presents a significant opportunity to expand tourism and its economic impact into the region.

Western New York is connected to a number of federal and state Heritage Corridors and Areas, Trails and Byways including the National Great Lakes Seaway Trail, the Western New York Southtowns Scenic Byways, the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area, the Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor, the Lake Erie Concord Grape Belt and the Western Erie Canal Heritage Corridor. Western New York also has 16 National Historic Landmarks as well as thousands of buildings and places on the National Register of Historic Places. These connections provide opportunities for collaboration and to leverage existing assets and resources.

## Assets and Opportunities

Our region boasts an extraordinary array of historic and cultural assets. *A Strategy for Prosperity in Western New York*, the WNY Regional Economic Development Strategic Plan, summarizes the current status of tourism in the region:

“Western New York is a unique place with offerings for visitors like nowhere else in the world. But currently, quality tourism products are underdeveloped, and as a result, WNY largely remains a hidden gem in an industry sector that is ripe for growth. Strategies for increasing visitation to Western New York, therefore, must start with the realization that our five county region has offerings that are competitive in a global market. Few regions can boast the arts, culture, history, architecture, natural resources and world wonders like Niagara Falls that are unique to this part of New York State.”

Few other regions possess the number, variety and uniqueness of Western New York historical assets. The October 2011 National Preservation Conference, which surpassed all its conference attendance records by attracting more than 2,547 to Buffalo, played a key role in shifting perceptions about Buffalo and the Western New York Region. By design, many of the conference sessions took place at sites out in the community and into the region. As the host for the conference, Buffalo was recognized by the National Trust as a “shining example” of how a once declining Rust Belt city is redefining itself as a architecturally distinctive place.

Buffalo won “the hearts and minds” of the preservation devotees. Immediately following the conference the Buffalo News had this to say: “New for Buffalo: A superiority complex. Our inferiority complex as a downtrodden, Rust Belt city suffered a major blow over the last four days, and recovery may be difficult.....Buffalo’s once-embattled self-image is skyrocketing, after rave reviews from the thousands who came to take it all in. To borrow a line from Sally Fields’ 1985 Oscar acceptance speech: They liked you, Buffalo. They really liked you.”

Buffalo’s robust historic preservation movement is a vital asset that supports one of the critical principles of successful and sustainable heri-

tage tourism: preserve and protect irreplaceable resources. In the words of developer Howard Zemsky, who is also Co-Chair of the WNY Regional Economic Development Council, “Preservation should be one of our philosophical North Stars we ought to be following, because it works to our advantage in so many ways.”

For successful and sustainable heritage tourism, preservation is just part of the equation. Finding the paths and stories that connect the sites, collections, images, and experiences that allow visitors to step back in time are at the heart of our vision.

Western New York’s priority themes tell the story of how our region has played a significant role in the development of the United States and New York State, beginning with the lands and people that predate the formation of our nation.

“Western New York is a unique place with offerings for visitors like nowhere else in the world. But currently, quality tourism products are underdeveloped, and as a result, WNY largely remains a hidden gem in an industry sector that is ripe for growth.”

—*A Strategy for Prosperity in Western New York: WNY Regional Economic Development Strategic Plan*

## Priority Themes and Sites

| Theme  | Sites   |
|--|---|
| Scenic Wonders—<br>Water, Rocks and Landscapes                                 | Niagara Falls State Park, Niagara Gorge, Allegany State Park, Zoar Valley, Chautauqua Lake, Wiscoy Falls, Panama Rocks, Rock City, Seaway Trail   |
| War and Peace—<br>Military Sites and Stories                                   | Old Fort Niagara, Buffalo & Erie County Naval & Military Park, Forest Lawn Cemetery, Garrison/War of 1812 Cemetery, McClurg Mansion, Portage Trail  |
| Waterway to the West—The Erie Canal Transforms America                         | Flight of Five/Erie Canal Discovery Center, Buffalo Canalside, Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor   |
| Western New York's<br>Underground Railroad—Gateway to Freedom and Civil Rights | Castellani Museum/Freedom Crossing, Buffalo History Museum, Michigan Street Baptist Church, Nash House, Murphy Orchards/McClew Interpretive Center  |
| Industrial and Commercial Pioneering and Prominence                            | New York Power Authority Power Vista, Larkin District, Grain Elevators, Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Site (Pan American Exposition), Bethlehem Steel, Lumber Trade (Tonawanda), Chemical Industry (Niagara Falls) |
| A Vast Architectural Museum  | Darwin Martin Complex, Graycliff, Olmsted Parks, St. Paul's Cathedral, Central Terminal, Hull Family Home and Farmstead, Museum District, Millionaire's Row, Chautauqua Institution Historic District             |
| Arts for Everyone—<br>A Western New York Legacy                                | Castellani Art Museum, Kenan Center, Chautauqua Institution, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Burchfield-Penney Art Gallery, Colored Musicians Club, Springville Center for the Arts                                    |
| A Region of Cultural Distinctiveness   | Lucy-Desi Comedy Center, Herschell Carousel Museum, Roycroft Campus, History Center of Niagara County   |

Our working list of destinations linked to each of the themes is included in the Appendix.

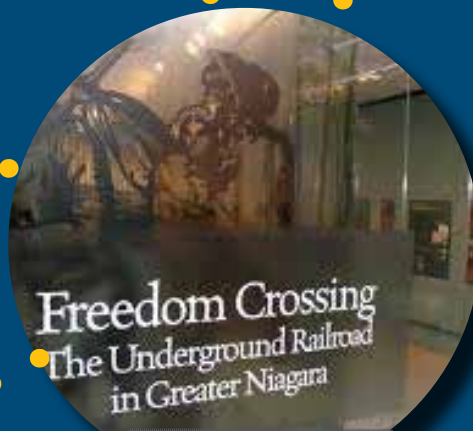
# Themes: Authentic Americana



Scenic Wonders



War and Peace



Underground Railroad



Industrial & Commerical Pioneering



Erie Canal



Architectural Museum



Arts for Everyone



Cultural Distinctiveness

## Assets and Opportunities

### Scenic Wonders— Water, Rocks and Landscapes

The origins of Western New York’s landscape as we know it today begins at the end of the Ice Age with the formation of the Great Lakes, Chautauqua Lake and our neighboring Finger Lakes. Retreating glaciers carved basins into the land that filled with melting water to form fresh water lakes. As large torrents of melting ice drained over the edge of the Niagara Escarpment into the river below, Niagara Falls was formed.



During the same period, the weight and pressure of the glaciers created rolling hills, picturesque valleys, dramatic gorges and caused widening of fractures in the rock that created thousands of crevices and alley passageways in several areas. Panama Rocks, southwest of Chautauqua Lake, is thought to be one of the most extensive formations of a glacier-cut, ocean quartz conglomerate in the world. Rock City Park, 70 miles east near Olean in Cattaraugus County, is the world’s largest exposure of the prehistoric ocean floor with boulders several stories high.

Western New York’s original inhabitants were Native Americans from several tribes that battled for control of the territory. The victors were the Seneca, known as the Keepers of the Western Door, who were one of the six tribes that make up the Iroquois (Haudenosaunee) Confederacy.



## Assets and Opportunities

### Scenic Wonders— Water, Rocks and Landscapes



“ Lake Erie makes a grand appearance, and lashes the surrounding shores with Billows as large as those formed in the vast Atlantic - the sight of the Human Eye is bounded by the convex Waters and lost over the deep, - Could I but convey to you the pleasing sensations I had in this excursion, I should think my time better spent than when employed in Observing the heavenly Bodies, -

Paint in your imagination a mighty River pouring her Waters into the Gulph of Florida, suppose this River traced up to a small Stream, - this stream I pursued to its source which is Lake Chautauque, then from this Lake distant only 7 Miles, conceive a body of fresh Water many hundreds of Miles in circumference, and this Lake connected with others, by water communications into the very middle of North America, - put these circumstances together, and view the advantages which must naturally fall to the share of Posterity, and join with me in admiring the works of a great and superintending Power -

The United States of America have more natural advantages than any other Governments, or Powers in the World, and if they Judiciously turn to their own account those advantages which they have from the nature of the Country, they must become both rich and powerfull....”

—Andrew Ellicott, Surveyor General and brother of Joseph Ellicott (Resident Agent for the Holland Land Company), in 1787, on his first view of Lake Erie



## Assets and Opportunities

### War and Peace— Military Sites and Stories

The French were the first Europeans to settle in the region in the early 1600s. The French and Indian War (1754-1763) resulted in British control of the region. Beginning with its first settlers, the Niagara Frontier was recognized as a valuable key to establishing a transportation route linking the Great Lakes and the Atlantic coast via its waterways. Lake Ontario, the Niagara River and Lake Erie formed the primary route inland beyond the great physical barrier of the Appalachian Mountains. Recognizing the strategic importance of the location, the French constructed the first small stockade, Fort Conti, in 1679 as the first physical sentinel guarding the outlet of the Niagara River as it enters Lake Ontario. Fort Conti burned down the same year and was replaced in 1687 with a larger post, Fort Denonville. Following a siege by the Seneca against the French garrison, the Fort was demolished in 1788.



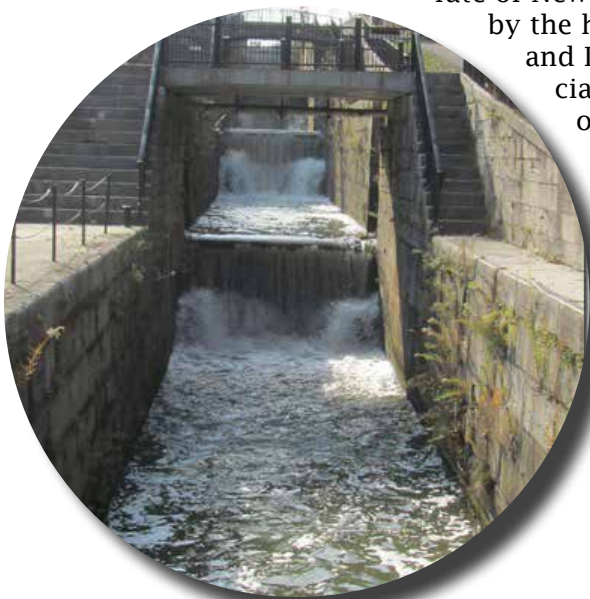
After extensive negotiations with the Seneca to build a tradinghouse, the French built the impressive “French Castle” in 1726, which still stands today on the same site as the earlier forts. The “machicolated house” was actually a well designed citadel, which stands and is known as Old Fort Niagara. Britain gained control of the fort in 1759 during the French and Indian War and maintained control throughout the American Revolution, yielding it to the United States in 1796, 20 years after the call for independence was sounded on July 4, 1776. This was a very uneasy period along this wilderness frontier, without established borders, between our young country and the remains of the King of England’s colony with its military enforcers. The fort was recaptured by the British during the War of 1812 until being ceded again to the United States in 1815 after which time it served as a peaceful border post. Old Fort Niagara served as a training station and active barracks from the Civil War until the last army units were withdrawn in 1963. Old Fort Niagara is the oldest house museum in the entire Great Lakes region.



## Assets and Opportunities

### Waterway to the West The Erie Canal Transforms America

As the new nation developed following the end of the Revolutionary War in 1783, access to timber, minerals, fertile land for farming and transportation of goods to and from its interior became a priority. The inland waterways that crossed New York State had been used extensively for military purposes during the French and Indian War and during the Revolution since the land routes from the east to the west were largely undeveloped and subject to inclement weather. The idea of a canal connecting the Hudson River to the Great Lakes was promoted by Jesse Hawley, a merchant from Rochester beginning in 1807. Gradually the idea gained support, culminating in the approval of legislation in 1817 to build the 363-mile long Erie Canal, in large part from the advocacy of Governor DeWitt Clinton. Completed in 1825, the waterway nicknamed “Clinton’s Ditch” (aka “The Big Ditch”) transformed the fate of New York state and the nation. The engineering marvel, built by the hands and on the backs of thousands of English, German and Irish immigrants, established New York City as the financial center of the country, played a vital role in settlement of the Midwest, dramatically reduced the cost of transporting goods and created an infrastructure that allowed the nation to expand and prosper. Additional canals were added to the system during the decades following the opening of the Erie Canal.



## Assets and Opportunities

### Underground Railroad: Gateway to Freedom and Civil Rights

The story of New York's canal is inextricably tied to the Underground Railroad movement. Its operators used the canal routes throughout the state to move African Americans from southern slave states to safe houses, hiding places and ultimately, freedom in Canada through Western New York. Between 1827, when New York abolished slavery, until the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, the state was a primary route to freedom. All the counties in our region are pieces of the quilt that forms the history of the Underground Railroad. Before the Compromise of 1850 and the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, many fugitives remained in Western New York, while others traveled to Canada, crossing at several points along the Niagara River. The proximity of connections along the Underground Railroad to Canada contributed to the significance of Buffalo, rendering it a major crossroads for fugitive slaves.

Throughout its 50 year time span, the Underground Railroad system delivered hundreds of freedom seekers from slavery and beyond the jurisdiction of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1793. The Fugitive Slave Clause of the U.S. Constitution guaranteed the right of a slaveholder to recover an escaped slave (Article 4, Section 2, Clause 3, later superseded by the Thirteenth Amendment which outlawed slavery and involuntary servitude except as punishment for a crime). The Fugitive Slave Act of 1793 created the legal mechanism by which recovery of slaves could be accomplished. Both local abolitionist and freethinkers contributed to the cooperative efforts, and as a result of their ability to organize, the underground network was pivotal in aiding runaways to secure their right of freedom. One organization which practiced civil disobedience in opposition to slavery was the Buffalo City Anti-Slavery Society, which was formed in the late 1830's. Some prominent abolitionists who were either stationmasters or anti-slavery activists in Buffalo during this period were William Wells Brown, George Weir, and Lewis Baker, to name a few. The Michigan Avenue Heritage Area was historically a vital center for the anti-slavery Movement.



Buffalo has a rich heritage regarding the early Civil Rights movement. In 1900, there were only 2000 black residents of Buffalo, which represented one-half of one percent of the population. Yet among these residents were people who would grow to be influential within the international black community. Mary Burnett Talbert lived with her husband, Buffalonian William Talbert, at 521 Michigan Avenue, right next to the Michigan Street Baptist Church. Mrs. Talbert received her bachelor's degree from Oberlin College, and went on to graduate studies. She was the first woman to receive a doctorate degree from the University at Buffalo. In 1901,

## Assets and Opportunities

### Underground Railroad: Gateway to Freedom and Civil Rights

Mrs. Talbert helped host the National Association of Colored Women's biannual meeting in Buffalo. Also in this year, Mrs. Talbert protested exhibits to be presented at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo. These exhibits, "Old Plantation" and "Darkest Africa," were racist in their depictions of black life and history.

Perhaps Mrs. Talbert's longest legacy is her part in the creation of the local chapter of the NAACP. In 1905, W.E.B. DuBois, John Hope, Monroe Trotter, and 27 other black men met secretly in the Talbert home on Michigan Avenue. This meeting was to help plan a movement to promote the rights and responsibilities of black Americans, and especially to contrast the speech that Booker T. Washington gave in Atlanta urging black Americans to compromise.

At the meeting, the participants planned to rendezvous in Fort Erie, Ontario, Canada. When the group met in Fort Erie, Ontario, Canada from July 11-14, 1905, they named themselves the Niagara Movement, a black civil rights organization. The Niagara Movement was a call for opposition to racial segregation and disenfranchisement, and it was opposed to policies of accommodation and conciliation promoted by African American leaders such as Booker T. Washington. They wanted their influence to be as powerful as the mighty Niagara Falls. W.E.B. DuBois articulated the rallying cry of the Niagara Movement: "We want full manhood suffrage and we want it now... We are men! We want to be treated as men. And we shall win." In 1909 many of the main players in the Niagara Movement formed the National Negro Committee. They chose February 2nd as their founding date, in honor of Abraham Lincoln's birthday. Race riots in Lincoln's hometown of Springfield, Illinois in August 1908 led to a conference on race relations in New York City six months later. The formation of the NAACP followed in 1910. The Niagara Movement disbanded and many of its leaders joined the NAACP.

The Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor in Buffalo, the permanent exhibit at the Castellani Gallery at Niagara University in Lewiston, collections at the History Center of Niagara County and the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Area, including the soon-to-be completed permanent exhibit at the rehabilitated former Customs House located along the Niagara River gorge, preserve and interpret the wealth of places and stories associated with the Underground Railroad movement in the Buffalo Niagara Region. This is a theme that continues to evolve and develop with new connections and discoveries.

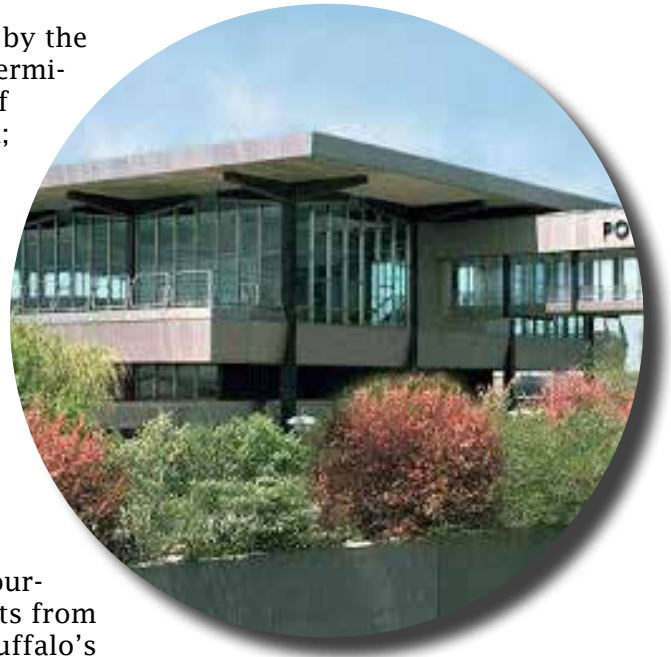


# Assets and Opportunities

## Industrial and Commercial Pioneering

Western New York's industrial growth was also fueled by the opening of the Erie Canal with Buffalo as its western terminus. Lockport, named in 1821, grew from a handful of cabins to a bustling village, then a thriving canal town; Buffalo was a boom town on the Erie Canal by 1830.

The shipment of goods and passengers along the Erie Canal and later, to and from Chicago established Buffalo's prominence as a crossroads. With the expansion of railroads, the region also became a focal point for freight transportation, grain storage, milling and tourist travel to Niagara Falls in the mid-1800s. As an extension of the shipping industry, the area emerged as a heavy manufacturing center as Joseph Hibbard began manufacturing steam engines and Joseph Dart invented the steam-powered grain elevator. By 1900, Buffalo was the largest grain-milling center in the country. Commercial banking flourished. Jobs in the milling industry attracted immigrants from all of Europe. From a population of 10,000 in 1831, Buffalo's population grew to 352,000 by 1900 and to nearly 600,000 by 1930.

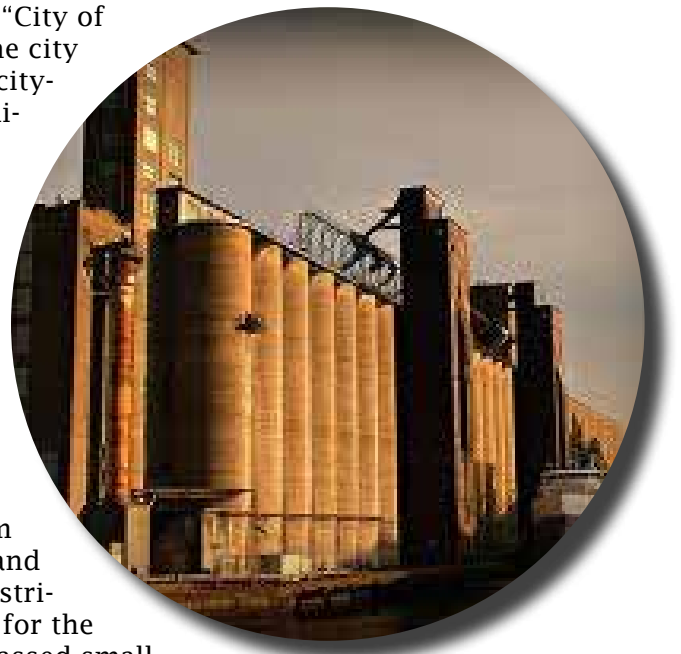


## Assets and Opportunities

### Industrial and Commercial Pioneering

By harnessing the hydroelectric power from nearby Niagara Falls in the 1890s, the Buffalo Niagara area became known as the “City of Light.” The Pan American Exposition of 1901 marketed the city to the world. During the early 1900s, a number of electricity-consuming industries, including the iron, steel, and chemical industries, set up factories in the region. Buffalo was the center of the aerospace and aeronautics industry from its earliest days during WWI through WWII. After WWII, 100,000+ jobs left the region in less than 25 years, beginning with the relocation of Curtiss-Wright to Ohio and the elimination of 35,000 of their local jobs in 1945.

Like other Rust Belt cities, the industrial landscape changed dramatically with the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1959, which marked the beginning of the Port of Buffalo’s decline when the water route relocated. With the advent of the Eisenhower Highway System and the opening of the NYS Thruway in 1956, commerce and industry left smaller communities to be closer to these distribution networks, eroding the wide-spread economic base for the region. It also changed tourism patterns as travelers by-passed small towns for the efficiency of superhighways. Since 1950, the City of Buffalo has lost half its population as industries relocated to other parts of the country and the world, and people opted for suburban living.



# Assets and Opportunities

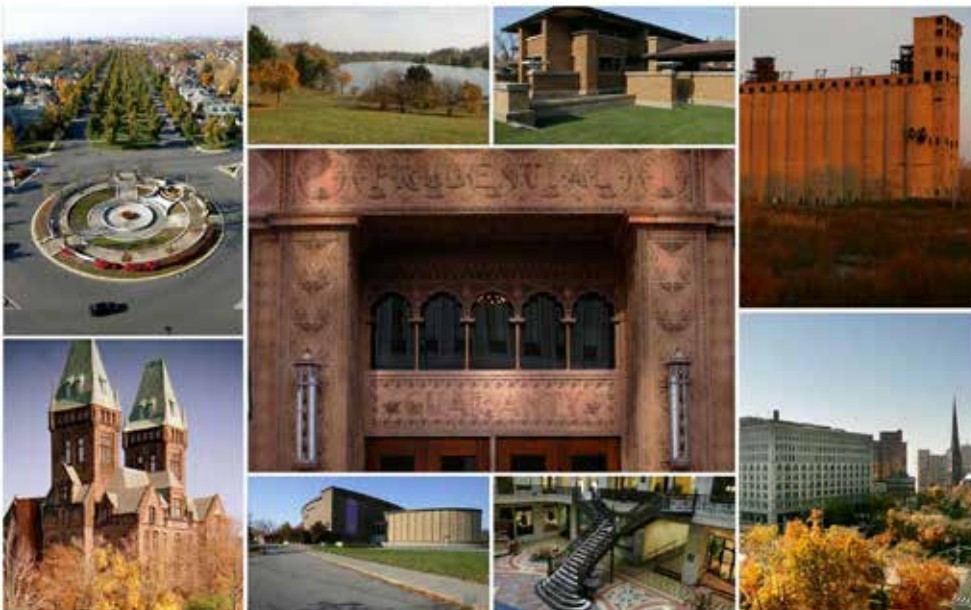
## A Vast Architectural Museum



The rich variety of architectural treasures are also a by-product of the Buffalo region's prominence as an industrial center. In 1900, Buffalo had more millionaires per capita than any other city in America and was the eighth largest city in the country. Most of the grand homes built by Buffalo's industrialists on Delaware Avenue remain intact, although many are occupied by businesses and nonprofit organizations. Among the homes on "Millionaires' Row" is the former Wilcox mansion where Theodore Roosevelt was sworn in as President following the assassination and death of President McKinley at the Pan American Exposition in 1901. This private residence is now known as The Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site, is among a very select group of places where Presidents have taken the oath of office outside Washington, D.C., and is one of the 78 National Historic Sites in the entire country. Western New York also has 17 buildings and places listed as National Historic Landmarks, an enviable treasure-trove of places in our region among less than 2,400 in our country so recognized with one of the highest designations

awarded by the Department of the Interior as unique historic and architectural national assets. Most communities do not even have one National Historic Site or Landmark, so the quality and variety of places on these lists underscores the significance of our regional architecture and other distinguished landmarks.

Only Chicago can boast more Frank Lloyd Wright-designed buildings than Western New York. The renowned architect, who much later came to be known around the world as the architect who defined a purely American style, was brought to Buffalo by businessman Darwin Martin, executive of the Larkin Soap Company, to design homes for his own family and the Larkin Company. The Darwin Martin Complex of five interconnected buildings, the Walter Davidson House, the William Heath House and Graycliff on Lake Erie are examples of Wright's Prairie Style houses. In the last several years, two Wright-designed structures have been completed—the Blue Sky Mausoleum at Forest Lawn Cemetery and the Fontana Boathouse on the Black Rock Channel. One more unusual Wright-designed project being constructed from drawings is underway at the Transportation Museum in downtown Buffalo – a gas station!



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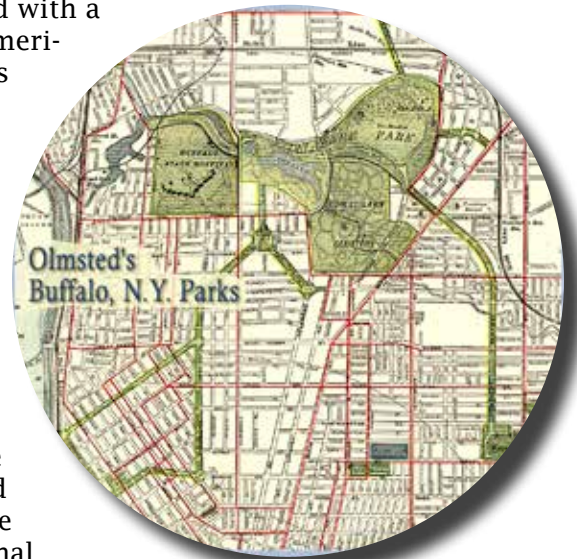
## Assets and Opportunities

### A Vast Architectural Museum

Frederick Law Olmsted, the landscape architect who designed New York City's Central Park, also designed Buffalo's coordinated system of public parks and parkways in concert with his partner, Calvert Vaux and other subsequent partners. Their work is recognized as an American triumph of design. The majority of Olmsted's designs are substantially intact and represent one of the largest bodies of work by the master landscape architect. Mr. Olmsted actively participated with a renowned group of distinguished Americans to rescue the American side of Niagara Falls from the ravages of private interests in order to reclaim the natural setting. The Falls had long been recognized for its natural beauty, but by the mid-19th century the surrounding land had become choked with factories and mills harnessing the tremendous waterpower of the swift-moving Niagara River, as well as tourist-oriented vendors hawking their wares. From the outset, Mr. Olmsted was one of the leaders in the twenty-year battle for a scenic reservation at the Falls.

In 1883 the New York State Legislature —with the backing of Governor Grover Cleveland— authorized the acquisition of land surrounding the Falls for the establishment of a state park. Mr. Olmsted with Calvert Vaux created the plan that led to the establishment of the park, and in 1885 he designed the Niagara Reservation, America's oldest state park and a National Landmark open without charge to visitors for more than 125 years. Now called Niagara Falls State Park, this public landmark stretches over 400 acres, with close to 140 acres under water.

Many talented local architects also designed a wide variety of homes, commercial and public buildings that feature the Federal, Greek Revival, Victorian, Queen Anne, Gothic Revival, Romanesque Revival, Italianate, Second Empire, Beaux Arts, Neoclassical, Arts and Crafts, Art Deco, Prairie, and Modern styles. Buffalo was also home to Louise Blanchard Bethune, the first woman architect. With the rapid economic growth in the late 19th century, the area supported a sizable and affluent middle class who commissioned beautiful homes by leading local architects and builders. These homes can be seen in the historic neighborhoods and official Historic Districts in the cities and towns throughout the region. The quality, scale, number and variety of architectural examples of all building types from vernacular cottages, to barns, to commercial and industrial buildings to the finest corporate, public and spiritual "homes" has earned the region the oft-repeated description as an architectural museum.





## Assets and Opportunities

### Arts for Everyone—A WNY Legacy

With the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825, ideas traveled as easily as goods, and innovation and inventiveness were sparked throughout the state. Change also permeated the arts in the Western New York Region. Although it is difficult to imagine a world without photography, television and the internet, during the nineteenth century American landscape painting was a primary source of factual information about the lands newly acquired or settled. Scenes of the Erie Canal, in particular, were immensely popular. In addition to portraying the spectacular beauty of New York State's natural wonders to the world, Americans were fascinated with their untamed landscape that helped shape the emerging national identity. Niagara Falls was also portrayed by a number of landscape artists capturing its sublime and romantic qualities of nature to showcase in their work in traveling exhibits across the country. As Western New York grew into prosperity, itinerant portrait painters traveled to capture the images of the people on the frontier of America. Until the invention of the daguerreotype and its rapid spread in the 1840s, these artists flourished. With the concentration of wealth, Buffalo attracted European-trained artists including one of the first, A.G.D. Tuthill, an Englishman who had studied under the famed American expatriate, Benjamin West, in England. Tuthill was joined by other portraitists William John Wilgus, Thomas Le Clear, William H. Beard, and Lars Sellstedt. Also active were Matthew Wilson, Augustus Rockwell, A. B. Nimbs, and Albert W. Samuels.

The area became a hub for art societies, art schools, and supportive organizations that brought artists together, resulting in the vibrant arts community that the region exemplifies today. The first group that formed was the Fine Arts Committee, which became the Buffalo Fine Arts Academy in 1862. As the fourth public art gallery in the country, the Fine Arts Academy pioneered the practice of providing major exhibit space to American artists. Surprising to many, this 150 year old institution is older than the Metropolitan Museum of Art in NYC.

In January 1900, John Joseph Albright, a longtime member of the organization and Buffalo industrialist, announced that he would finance the construction of an art gallery for the Fine Arts Academy. Designed by local architect E.B. Green, the gallery was acclaimed as “the finest example of Greek architecture to be found in America” at its dedication in 1905. Nearly half a century later, Seymour Knox, Jr. and other descendants made significant multiple donations of funding and works of art. Following the 1962 addition to the gallery, designed by Buffalo's Gordon Bunshaft of Skidmore Owings & Merrill to commemorate the Gallery's Centennial, the building was renamed the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in recognition of the generosity of the Knox family. The Albright-Knox has continued to collect contemporary art regionally, nationally and internationally.



## Assets and Opportunities

### Arts for Everyone—A WNY Legacy

The tradition of the arts flourishing in Western New York was further advanced through the Arts Student League, the Buffalo Society of Artists and the Buffalo Art Institute among others. The fertile climate for artists fostered the development and success of Western New York artists including sculptor Charles Rumsey, muralist Raphael Beck, watercolorist Charles Burchfield, Joseph Varga and Laszlo Szabo. The tradition continued with the founding of Hallwalls in 1974 by a group of young visual artists (some of them still just students at the time)—including Diane Bertolo, Charles Clough, Nancy Dwyer, Robert Longo, Cindy Sherman, and Michael Zwack—who carved an exhibition space out of the walls of the hall outside their studios in a former icehouse.

The history of Western New York theater also spans a two hundred year history. The first documented theatrical production dates to a performance presented by the Thalian Society in 1814 in Buffalo. The first building devoted to theater was built in 1821-1822 and followed by the Buffalo Museum (1829), the Seneca Street Playhouse (1833), the Old Eagle Street Theatre (1835) and the Buffalo Theater (1835) and Shea's Music Hall (1882). During its heyday, Buffalo attracted the Shubert brothers of Broadway fame, Arthur Conan Doyle, Bela Lugosi, George Jessel and Buffalo Bill's Wild West show.

Emanuel Fried, playwright, actor, labor activist, novelist, and educator, has also left an indelible mark on the development of theater in the region, influencing and inspiring generations of WNY theater practitioners. Other renowned theater icons from Western New York include playwright A.R. Gurney, actress Katharine Cornell and musical director and choreographer Michael Bennett. In the gloriously restored Shea's Buffalo Theatre, there is a WNY Hall of Fame honoring the greatest performers from the region.

Music and musicians gained support and audiences in the region. Buffalo was one of the front runners of the American Jazz Age, not only leading the way for many of our nation's cities to create musical unions but also hosting many of the world's greatest jazz musicians and singers.

There was very little black migration into the region until the turn of the century. In 1920, only 4,500 blacks had migrated to Buffalo to fill a labor shortage. However, by 1930, 13,500 blacks had moved to Buffalo, mostly all to the lower east side, where there has been a small but



# Assets and Opportunities

## Arts for Everyone--A WNY Legacy

consistent black community since the 1820's. Along with the growth of the black community, so did the talent and expression of African American culture and music develop and flourish.

The Colored Musicians Club was founded 1935 and is the only continually operating club still in existence in the United States. Jazz greats like Miles Davis, Coleman Hawkins, Dizzy Gillespie and Duke Ellington frequented the stage. Louis Armstrong and his wife, Lil, were both members of the club.

Western New York was also home to Harold Arlen, who wrote "Somewhere over the Rainbow," Springville songwriter Jack Yellen, best known for writing the lyrics to "Happy Days Are Here Again," Grover Washington, the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, founded in 1935 as a WPA project and many more contemporary musical artists.

The region's history also includes authors Mark Twain, Taylor Caldwell, Joyce Carol Oates, John Barth, and so many more. Photography and film's early days were tied to Buffalo. The country's first public movie house was in the basement of the Ellicott Square Building and the Albright Art Gallery (with a female curator, unheard of at the time) had the first exhibit in the U.S. of photographs as an art form.

Today, the Western New York region offers a full continuum of the visual, performing and literary arts and arts festivals. Visitors and residents can experience the region's panoply of arts including the unique Artpark! atop the Niagara Gorge, Buffalo's robust arts scene, the Allentown and Elmwood Arts Festivals, the Colored Musicians Club, Shakespeare in Delaware Park, Springville Center for the Arts' concerts and exhibits, Chautauqua Institution's programs, Ellicottville's Summer Music Festival and Jamestown's Lucille Ball's Festival of Comedy.



# Assets and Opportunities

## Arts for Everyone--A WNY Legacy



## Assets and Opportunities

### A Region of Cultural Distinctiveness-- Authentic Americana

Western New York is a treasure trove of authentic Americana. A by-product of Western New York's pivotal role in forging America's frontier is a long list of cultural "firsts," unique attractions, ground-breaking events and iconic people. The first recorded honeymoon trip to Niagara Falls, still known as the "Honeymoon Capital of the World," was in 1802 by Theodosia Burr, the daughter of Vice President Aaron Burr, and her new husband, Joseph Aliston. Publicity resulting from the 1804 honeymoon of Jerome Bonaparte, Napoleon's youngest brother, boosted the tradition, which grew in popularity following the opening of the Erie Canal and the extension of railroads to Niagara Falls. Daredevils soon joined newlyweds as tightrope walkers, barrel riders and stuntmen and women attempted to make history.



Barnum & Bailey Circus signed a new sideshow act in 1882—the "Amazing Seven Sutherland Sisters and their 'Niagara of Curls.'" Hailing from Cambria in Niagara County, the climax of the sisters' singing act was the unfurling of their collective 36 ½ feet of hair into the orchestra pit to thunderous applause. By 1893, the sisters, their father and their promoters capitalized on marketing one of the earliest and most successful lines of hair products, "the Seven Sutherland Sister Hair Grower."

The Herschell Carousel Factory in North Tonawanda, constructed between 1910 and 1915, was one of a handful of carousel makers that flourished during the early twentieth century. During the same era, Eden became the site for Western New York's monopoly on metal kazoo manufacturing, and today continues to be the only such factory in the U.S.



By traveling to the Southern Tier, visitors can still participate in the programs offered by Chautauqua Institution, the original adult learning organization founded in 1874 that attracts 150,000 people during the summer. Another seasonal venue is the Lily Dale Assembly in Chautauqua County, the largest spiritualist community in the world. Jamestown is the home of the legendary Lucille Ball and the Lucy-Desi Comedy Center that honors the film and television pioneers and their legacy.

To end where we began on the ***Path Through History***, our region features an original tourist "experience" at the original tourist destination in the country. Short of going over Niagara Falls in a barrel, a ride on the Maid of the Mist is the next best thing.



## Assets and Opportunities

### And now, the rest of the story

“But before we take a cultural tourism product to market, we first need to engage in a much more sophisticated process of identifying a community’s cultural tourism asset base, uncovering its cultural identity, and crafting a visitor experience that will capitalize on any community’s most strategic asset: *its sense of place.*”

--Steven Thorne  
a place-based cultural  
tourism specialist

During the early phases of the Work Group’s planning effort, a list of heritage tourism destinations was developed and rated in terms of meeting criteria for quality, accessibility, authenticity, visitor readiness, relevance to New York State history and NYS’ *Path Through History* themes. As the planning process continued and our plans were shared at three public meetings throughout the region, it became clear that our Vision Plan would need to make room for additional thematic stories and places in order to include the many assets identified through the public process.

Although the eight themes described above were affirmed through the public meetings, we realized that the Western New York region has many *Paths Through History*, some of the attractions along the paths are “works in progress,” but will still have appeal to many heritage tourists. There are literally hundreds of groups and organizations throughout the region working to restore historic buildings, revitalize communities and educate both visitors and residents about our region’s history.

Heritage tourists may be generalists or specialists, and our strategies need to encompass both target markets. For heritage travelers, the visitor experience is about much more than a destination’s “attractions.” It’s about discovering what makes a city, town, or region distinctive, authentic, and memorable. It’s about the experience of “place.”

By establishing both virtual and actual paths through the many facets of our region, WNY can further leverage its assets. For example, “firefighting history” and “agriculture” surfaced as special niches that have devoted followings. Since much tourism radiates out from a central geographic location, “heritage hubs” were also named. Certain historical figures who have had a lasting impact on the region were also mentioned repeatedly. Research on heritage tourists points to their high level of sophistication and their expectation of adventure and discovery. Simply put, mainstream attractions won’t be enough for these curious and well-educated tourists.

The current plan assumes that the development and interpretation of these additional stories, places and people will be phased in during years two through five of the plan.

# WNY Heritage Hubs



Niagara Falls



Buffalo



Lockport



Dunkirk



East Aurora



Springville



Chautauqua Lake



Jamestown



Olean

# Stories



Native American



U. S. Presidents



Agriculture



African American



Women



Crossborder



Immigrant Settlers



Firefighting



# People



1792  
Red Jacket



1800  
Joseph Ellicott



1812  
Peter B. Porter



1818  
James McClurg



1900  
Mary Talbert



1895  
Elbert Hubbard



1892  
John D. Larkin



1901  
Annie E. Taylor



1902  
Darwin Martin



1905  
Frank Lloyd Wright



1920  
Alice Mae Jemison



1825  
Coit, Wilkeson,  
Townsend, Clinton



1850  
Reuben Fenton



1868  
Frederick Law  
Olmsted



1890  
Seymour Knox



1881  
Louise B. Bethune



1880  
Belva Lockwood



1891  
Rev. Edward Nash



1923  
Katharine Cornell



1934  
Roger Tory Peterson



1941  
Robert Jackson

# Challenges

## Battered Image

Western New York's vision and goals for heritage tourism must also incorporate strategies to address the significant challenges facing the region. Challenges include the following:

## Population Decline

### The Region's Image and Population Decline

The region's image as a "downtrodden Rust Belt city" that endures perpetual blizzard conditions, coupled with the relocation of manufacturing and other industries have resulted in a significant decline in population. These weaknesses make it harder to attract firms, skilled workers, students and visitors, even discouraging our own residents. Although the weather in the region is less severe than our reputation, the reality of a shorter tourist season than many warmer regions is an ongoing challenge.

## WNY-an Afterthought

### Western New York as an Afterthought

To the world, and much of the country including many in our state, New York is equated with New York City and by some definitions, everything outside of the New York City Metropolitan area is referred to as "Upstate." Western New York has a long and frustrating history of competition for funding with "Downstate." Even the State Museum in Albany, whose mission is statewide, barely represents Western New York in exhibits, or even through items and publications for sale in the gift shop.

## Limited Coordination

### Coordination and Collaboration

Coordination and collaboration have been slow to take hold in the region. The region needs to foster a culture that supports working together. One example is our failure to embrace regional planning, leading often to uncoordinated development and decision-making. Cross-county promotion of tourism has also been limited. The call for coordination is across all levels, from the most local to regional, NYS, and federal agencies. This tourism initiative may serve as a shared beginning with positive results throughout the five county region.

## Public Transportation

### Limited Public Transportation

Few tourist destinations that attract 8 million annual visitors have such a limited public transportation system. Tourists and visitors frequently note the difficulty in navigating public transportation and share their frustration and disappointment with others. Negative word-of-mouth and internet postings will counteract all the best marketing promotions if people cannot easily find their way or find transportation once they arrive, ruining a holiday.

**"If you want to go fast,  
Go alone.  
If you want to go far,  
Go together."**

**—African proverb**

# Challenges

## Signage

### **Confusing Signage**

A number of challenges related to signage were mentioned by Work Group members and by the public. There are currently multiple agencies that manage signage from multiple heritage areas, trails, byways, attractions and destinations, in addition to road signs, directional signs, rest stop signs and more. The inconsistent, often lacking, wayfinding signage together with a confusing plethora of branded program signs shows the area is struggling to become visitor ready despite the strength of many local attractions. A “secret shopper” could point out the absence of clarity and/or ease of wayfinding very quickly, and could suggest many ways to improve the coordination of general directional signs along/to/from major roads. This is a long-standing problem well-recognized by local people in every community in the region.

## Funding

### **Limited Funding for Sites**

The economic climate and the number of sites that compete for limited resources for capital improvements, staffing and programs to engage visitors in exciting ways make it especially difficult for small nonprofit groups to make their sites “visitor ready.” As noted in the Regional Economic Development Council’s Strategic Plan, quality tourism products are underdeveloped. This does not mean incapable or unworthy, but rather undercapitalized and under-invested for some key skills and capacity.

## Resident Awareness

### **Awareness of Residents**

A frequent concern among destinations is local residents’ lack of awareness of sites right in their own communities. Residents were mentioned by a number of people during the public meetings as an important market for promotion and advertising activities. *Path Through History* can include a “Be a tourist in your own backyard” campaign.

## Lag in Best Practices

### **Lag in Integration of Best Practices**

Hundreds of specialty museums and historic house museums are open to the public throughout the Western New York Region on schedules ranging from weekends to six-days a week. They hold and exhibit Western New York’s historical collections, but many provide minimal interpretation—telling the stories of these objects—and need help creating effective exhibits. Many exist as single-room galleries, have microscopic budgets, and operate with all-volunteer staffs that are highly motivated to collect and preserve historical artifacts, but have little professional training.

Over the last decade, best practices in museum management have shifted to focus on the use of more interactive and hands-on experiences, interpretation and exhibits in contrast to observing items in glass cases or behind velvet ropes. Most museum personnel are unaware of current museum practices for visitor engagement.

# Goals

1. Increase heritage tourism in the Western New York Region.
2. Increase the number and quality of visitor ready sites in the region.
3. Increase visitors' length of stay in the region.
4. Increase coordination and collaboration throughout the region.
5. Measure quantitative and qualitative impact of heritage tourism marketing and promotion activities on growth of the economy and quality of life.

## Marketing GOALS

**coordinated** heritage tourists  
QUALITATIVE **QUALITY EXPERIENCES** One region  
**stay longer** impact  
*heritage tourists* quantitative  
MORE SITES **measurement** PROMOTION  
COLLABORATION **economics**  
**Growth** ATTRACT

# Strategies

## Principles

A. Utilize the five principles for successful and sustainable heritage tourism (as defined by the National Trust for Historic Preservation).

## Themes

B. Promote the WNY Heritage themes, stories, hubs and people as part of I Love NY's statewide promotion.

## Digital paths

C. Create digital Paths to mirror and promote WNY heritage tourism Paths.

## Link to other regions

D. Connect hospitality training institutions with WNY's heritage tourist attractions.

E. Link our region's *Path Through History* to complementary attractions, heritage areas/corridors and themes/destinations through cross-regional efforts.

## Hospitality training

F. Provide resources to assist WNY *Path Through History* sites to shift from providing tourism products to interactive tourism experiences that meet or exceed visitor expectations.

## Tourism experiences

G. Provide education, technical assistance and capacity building to secondary attractions in order increase the number and quality of visitor ready attractions/destinations.

## Capacity building

H. Invest in strategic projects that advance the WNY goals for economic development and strengthening the tourism industry in the region.

## Investment

I. Update the Vision Plan annually.

## Update the plan

## Principles for successful and sustainable heritage tourism

**Collaborate:** By its very nature, heritage tourism requires effective partnerships. Much more can be accomplished by working together than by working alone.

**Find the fit between the community and tourism:** Heritage tourism should make a community a better place to live as well as a better place to visit. Recognizing local history by communities and sharing this history with others benefits both the community and its visitors.

**Make sites and programs come alive:** Look for ways to make visitor experiences exciting, engaging, and interactive.

**Focus on quality and authenticity:** Today's heritage traveler is more sophisticated and will expect a high level of quality and an authentic experience.

**Preserve and protect irreplaceable resources:** Many community, historic and natural resources cannot be replaced if they are lost. Take good care of them because once they are gone, they are gone.

# Implementation Projects

| Project   | Yr.1 | Yr.2 | Yr. 3 | Yr.4 | Yr.5 |
|---|------|------|-------|------|------|
| <b>MARKETING</b>  |      |      |       |      |      |
| Digital marketing campaign                                  |      |      |       |      |      |
| Develop WNY PTH content                                     |      |      |       |      |      |
| Orientation videos  |      |      |       |      |      |
| High res, four seasons of images portfolio                  |      |      |       |      |      |
| Digital travel guide  |      |      |       |      |      |
| “This Place Matters” campaign                               |      |      |       |      |      |
| Market to international tour operators                      |      |      |       |      |      |
| Conduct FAM tours   |      |      |       |      |      |
| <b>HERITAGE TOURISM DESTINATION &amp; PATH DEVELOPMENT</b>  |      |      |       |      |      |
| Solicit site development projects, including cross-regional |      |      |       |      |      |
| Implement site development projects & other PTH initiatives |      |      |       |      |      |
| Mini-grants for experiential programs                       |      |      |       |      |      |
| Mobile app development                                      |      |      |       |      |      |
| PTH passport program-Visitor in Your Own Backyard           |      |      |       |      |      |
| Awards for historic property improvements                   |      |      |       |      |      |
| Regional wayfinding   |      |      |       |      |      |
| Geo-caching and scavenger hunt products                     |      |      |       |      |      |
| <b>INTERPRETIVE CONTENT</b>                                 |      |      |       |      |      |
| Develop video clips of four seasons for themes, sites       |      |      |       |      |      |
| Self-guided tours--increase inventory and how to access     |      |      |       |      |      |
| Crowdsourcing project                                       |      |      |       |      |      |
| QR codes  |      |      |       |      |      |
| Content for “Wikhhood,” “History Here” apps                 |      |      |       |      |      |
| <b>DATA GATHERING</b>                                       |      |      |       |      |      |
| Identify emerging heritage tourism sites                    |      |      |       |      |      |
| Conduct comprehensive survey                                |      |      |       |      |      |
| Conduct annual assessment of 5 county, I Love NY efforts    |      |      |       |      |      |
| <b>EDUCATION &amp; CAPACITY</b>                             |      |      |       |      |      |
| Annual heritage tourism conference                          |      |      |       |      |      |
| Community heritage tourism toolkit                          |      |      |       |      |      |
| Provide historical interpretation training                  |      |      |       |      |      |
| Capacity building for visitor readiness for emerging sites  |      |      |       |      |      |

# Implementation Projects: Year 1

## Year 1:

- Develop geo-targeted digital marketing campaign for all five counties in the region, including lead generating ads (thematic newsletters) with follow up emails. The campaign will be delivered by E-Brains, an experienced digital marketing group. The project is an adaptation of a similar 2012 Visit Buffalo Niagara campaign in Erie County that demonstrated a net increase of \$3,996,553 in spending by visitors who came to Buffalo Niagara because of the coordinated, sustained advertising message. The impact study was conducted by Texas A&M University.
- Develop Western New York ***Path Through History*** content for themes and paths for digital marketing, regional and local apps and web pages; content development also includes compilation of existing video and photos showcasing all four seasons, working with digital marketing campaign vendor, I Love NY, individual attractions and regional Tourism Planning Agencies to establish links and consistent ***Path Through History*** branding.
- Encourage regional participation in the first ***Path Through History*** branded weekends in 2013, including special offerings, programming and more.
- Conduct annual assessment of five county and I Love NY efforts to measure coordination, cooperation, progress and effectiveness.





# Implementation Projects: Years 2-5

## Year 2-5 Projects

### Marketing

- Create orientation videos with activities in all four seasons for presentation at visitor centers in geographic areas/hubs and at destinations/attractions, as well as Thruway rest areas and other appropriate locations, and possibly on in-house channels at hotels.
- Develop portfolio of high resolution images (300 dpi+) of all sites and paths in all four seasons for use in multiple marketing activities.
- Adapt North Dakota's "RU Legendary" campaign by inviting Western New York visitors to post videos of their experiences through social media. An example might be to undertake a 5 county "This Place Matters" Campaign coordinated with the National Trust for Historic Preservation.
- Implement program for marketing to international tour operators to extend itineraries to Western New York destinations beyond Niagara Falls.
- Hold Familiarization tours.

### Heritage tourism destination and path development:

- Develop regional wayfinding system with easy-to-read coordinated signage within and between all five counties. This gap in readiness was identified as a critical deficiency at all public meetings and in all five counties.
- Establish RFP process to identify attraction improvement projects for future funding for tourism and determine priorities for investment in individual heritage tourism sites.
- Establish a mini-grant program to provide funding for "hands on" and "living history" projects focused on experiential programming.
- Develop mobile apps to inform visitors and residents about Western New York's Themes, Stories, Heritage Hubs and People to assist in itinerary planning.
- Develop **Path Through History** Passport program for moving along the thematic paths in the region and to initiate "Be a Toursit in Your Own Backyard."
- Sponsor an awards or recognition program for property owners who care for and invest in historic properties.
- Create Geocaching and scavenger hunt products for Western New York attractions, festivals, heritage farms and wineries, farmers markets, and more.
- Prepare for and initiate participation in the Market New York program announced in Governor Cuomo's 2013 State of the State Address.

# Implementation Projects

## Interpretive content

- Create a series of short video clips to match paths and themes for our region in all four seasons. For example, several related destinations and experiences can be wrapped together in a theme, using a costumed “tour guide” narrator. The videos can be utilized for social media, email marketing, and websites of many organizations. Video is an important tool for creating new awareness, cross-promotion and establishing bridges to existing information on destinations’ websites.
- Development of self-guided tours based on the themes promoted in the video clips. These could be provided to the traveling/visiting public in print and electronic/web formats. With state wide themes, some will be appropriate to cross-promote with the other nine regions.
- Engage each community in a “crowdsourcing” initiative to tell its own story. (The Oxford English Dictionary is one of the earliest examples of crowdsourcing; Ancestry.com began from crowdsourcing of genealogical information; Wikipedia is another well-known, successful example.)
- Establish QR codes for individual sites.
- Establish complete listing of attractions on “Wikihood” and “History Here” smart phone apps.

## Data gathering:

- Identify all historic sites that have potential for inclusion in heritage tourism initiatives, including those sites that are still emerging and not yet fully visitor ready; develop descriptive content and link to appropriate paths.
- Complete survey on heritage tourism in each of the five counties (using the Nebraska survey model).
- Continue to gather and include new information as it becomes available, as sites and stories are developed, and additional cooperation develops. This plan is a beginning, not the conclusion.

## Education and capacity building:

- Sponsor an annual conference for regional heritage attractions to encourage cross-fertilization of ideas, to discuss and align themes and to provide education about how to enhance the visitor experience.
- Create a Community Heritage Tourism Toolkit.
- Provide training for historical interpretation.
- Provide capacity building for smaller sites to enable them to become visitor ready.

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# Appendix

# Recommendations to New York State

The following recommendations were compiled from comments and discussions at Work Group meetings and at the three public forums:

- “Connect the Dots” across existing tourism/marketing/wayfinding (Federal, State, County, Local) initiatives to eliminate barriers. Consideration should include signage, funding, standards and planning groups.
- Rethink how Western New York is portrayed outside of the region. For example, regions are almost always listed alphabetically, so Western New York is always last.
- The state historic markers, as an important asset for heritage tourism, should be preserved, maintained, coordinated with current signage efforts and expanded. These markers are an important part of establishing complete history paths throughout the state.
- Increase presence of WNY at the New York State Museum.
- Be consistent in naming of the region. For example, although Western New York is one of the ten *Path Through History* regions, on the **I Love New York** website, it is broken up into two regions: Buffalo-Niagara and Chautauqua-Allegany. Cattaraugus is left out of the labels.
- Encourage international flights directly to Niagara Falls.
- Enhance multi-lingual apps, interpretation, QR codes, signage as part of **I Love NY**.
- **I Love NY**’s most senior people come to the Western region for a five-day familiarization (fam) tour to learn about and appreciate the region in order to better market it.
- Advance plans for high speed rail.

# Core Heritage Attractions

Allegheny Harvest Cooperative Market and Our  
Common Ground  
Allegheny State Park  
American Museum of Cutlery  
Buffalo & Erie County Naval Park  
Buffalo Central Terminal/St. Adalbert Basilica/  
Broadway Market/"Polonia District"  
Buffalo History Museum  
Buffalo City Hall/Downtown Architecture  
Buffalo Canalside  
Chautauqua Institution  
Cuba Specialty Manufacturing Company, Inc.  
CUTCO/Kar Bar Knife Museum  
Darwin Martin House  
Dayton Railroad  
Dunkirk Lighthouse & Veterans Park Museum  
Erie Canal Discovery Center & Flight of Five  
(History Center of Niagara County)  
Fannie Bartlett House  
Fenton History Center  
Graycliff  
Grape Discovery Center  
Griffis Sculpture Park  
Herschell Carousel Museum  
Lily Dale Assembly  
Lucille Ball-Desi Arnez Center  
Market Street Art Center  
McClurg Museum

Michigan Avenue Preservation District  
Midway State Park  
Miner's Cabin  
Moss Lake  
Museum District/Delaware Park  
New York Power Authority Vista  
Old Fort Niagara  
Old Order Amish Community  
Onoville Marina  
Our Lady of Victory Basilica/South Park  
Robert H. Jackson  
Rock City Park  
Roger Tory Peterson Institute of Natural  
History  
Roycroft Campus  
Salamanca Rail Museum  
St. Bonaventure University/Regina A. Quick  
Center for the Arts  
Seneca Iroquois National Museum  
Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Site  
Wiscoy Falls  
Zoar Valley - Cattaraugus Creek



Allegheny State Park

# WNY Themes and Associated Sites

## Western New York Themes and Paths

- Scenic Wonders—Water, Rocks and Landscapes
- War and Peace: Military Sites and Stories
- Waterway to the West: The Erie Canal Transforms America
- Western New York's Underground Railroad: Gateway to Freedom
- Industrial and Commercial Pioneering
- A Vast Architectural Museum
- Arts for Everyone—A Western New York Legacy
- A Region of Cultural Novelty—Authentic Americana

## Scenic Wonders--Water, Rocks and Landscapes

Niagara Falls, with eight million visitors each year, is ranked #5 among the world's most visited tourist attractions. For visitors and residents interested in the wonders of rocks and water across the seasons and the centuries, Western New York offers many other breathtaking and fascinating destinations, including America's oldest state park.

### Destinations:

#### Allegany County

- Moss Lake (Houghton)
- Wiscoy Falls (Wiscoy)

#### Cattaraugus County

- Rock City Park (Olean)
- Allegany State Park (Salamanca)
- Zoar Valley (Gowanda)
- Griffis Sculpture Park (Ashford Hollow/East Otto)
- McCarty Hill State Forest (Addison)
- Rock City State Forest (Ellicotville)
- North Country Trail, Little Rock City Nature Trail, Camp Seneca Loop Trail

#### Chautauqua County

- Panama Rocks (Panama)

#### Erie County

- Olmsted Parks (Buffalo)

#### Niagara County

- Niagara Falls State Park (Niagara Falls)
- Niagara Gorge Discovery Center (Niagara Falls)
- Niagara Gorge Trailhead (Niagara Falls)
- Goat Island, Cave of the Winds (Niagara Falls)
- New York Power Authority Power Vista (Lewiston)
- Beaver Island State Park (Grand Island)
- Niagara Falls Public Library [images of Niagara Falls] (Niagara Falls)

# WNY Themes and Associated Sites

## Additional State Parks

### Niagara

- Artpark State Park (Earl W. Brydges)
- Beaver Island State Park
- Big Six Mile Creek Marina
- Buckhorn Island State Park
- De Veaux Woods State Park
- Devil's Hole State Park
- Fort Niagara State Park
- Four Mile Creek State Park
- Golden Hill State Park
- Joseph Davis State Park
- Reservoir State Park
- Whirlpool State Park
- Wilson-Tuscarora State Park

### Erie

- Woodlawn Beach State Park
- Knox Farm State Park
- Evangola State Park

### Cattaraugus

- Allegany State Park - Quaker Area
- Allegany State Park - Red House Area

### Chautauqua County

- Lake Erie State Park
- Long Point State Park on Lake Chautauqua
- Midway State Park

## Connections with NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (West of Utica only)

- Letchworth State Park, (Wyoming County)
- High Falls Heritage Area (Rochester)
- Watkins Glen State Park (Watkins Glen)

## Connections with National Park Service sites in New York State:

- North Country National Scenic Trail
- Finger Lakes National Forest

# WNY Themes and Associated Sites

## War and Peace: Western New York's Military Sites and Stories

Western New York's military history spans the period before the French and Indian War (or Seven Years' War)—marked by construction of Old Fort Niagara on the strategic junction of the Niagara River at Lake Ontario—to the present day. Four great empires—the Haudenosaunee, France, Great Britain, and the United States—fought for control of the region as a gateway to the interior of North America. The continued military presence, international border and defense industry make Western New York a key region in our state and nation's military history. The many veterans residing in our region who served their country are honored throughout the region by a number of memorial markers, which are also public art.

### Destinations:

#### Allegany County

#### Cattaraugus County

- Lucille Ball Comedy Festival (Jamestown)

#### Chautauqua County

- McClurg Mansion and Museum (Westfield)
- Portage Trail (Chautauqua)
- Dunkirk Historic Lighthouse (Dunkirk)

#### Erie County

- Buffalo & Erie County Naval & Military Park (Buffalo)
- Buffalo History Museum (Buffalo)
- Hull Family Home and Farmstead (Lancaster)
- Forest Lawn Cemetery (Buffalo)
- Garrison Cemetery/War of 1812 Cemetery (Cheektowaga)
- Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry at Front Park (Buffalo)

#### Niagara County

- Old Fort Niagara (Youngstown)
- War of 1812 Bicentennial Peace Garden Trail

### Connections with National Park Service sites in New York State:

- Fort Stanwix National Monument (Rome)

### Connections with NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

- Sackets Harbor Battlefield (Hounsfield)
- Bennington Battlefield State Historic Site (Grafton-Saratoga/Capitol Region)
- Fort Montgomery State Historic Site (Fort Montgomery-Palisades Region)
- Fort Ontario State Historic Site (Oswego-Central Region)
- Knox's Headquarters State Historic Site (Vail's Gate-Palisades Region)
- John Jay Homestead State Historic Site (Katonah-Taconic Region)
- Oriskany Battlefield State Historic Site (Oriskany-Central Region)
- New Windsor Cantonment SHS
- Crown Point SHS
- Johnson Hall SHS
- Steuben Memorial SHS
- Washington's Headquarters SHS



# WNY Themes and Associated Sites

## Waterway to the West: The Erie Canal Transforms America

With its completion in 1825, the iconic waterway established settlement patterns for most of the United States during the 19th century, made New York the financial capital of the world, provided a critical supply line which helped the North win the Civil War, and precipitated a series of social and economic changes throughout a young America.

### Destinations:

#### Erie County

- Buffalo Erie Canal Harbor/Western Terminus-Canalside (Buffalo)
- Amherst Marine Center (Amherst)

#### Niagara County

- Niagara County History Center (Lockport)
- Erie Canal Discovery Center (Lockport)
- Flight of Five (Lockport)
- Erie Canal Museum (Lockport)
- Medina Railroad Museum (Medina)
- North Tonawanda History Museum (North Tonawanda)
- Benjamin Long Homestead (North Tonawanda)
- Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor (Niagara)
- Lockport Locks and Erie Canal Cruises (Lockport)

#### Chautauqua County

- Portage Trail from Lake Erie to Chautauqua Lake;

### Connections with NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation sites

- Old Erie Canal State Historic Park (Dewitt/Rome)
- Chittenango Landing Canal Boat Museum (Chittenango)
- Erie Canal Village (Rome)
- Canastota Canal Town Museum
- Erie Canal Museum (Syracuse)



# WNY Themes and Associated Sites

## Western New York: Gateway to Freedom

For thousands of freedom seekers from Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, Kentucky and Tennessee, the way to freedom was to or through Western New York to Canada.

### Destinations:

Allegany County

Cattaraugus County

Chautauqua County

- Fenton History Center (Jamestown)

Erie County

- Michigan Street State Heritage Corridor (Buffalo)
- The Buffalo History Museum (Buffalo)
- Michigan Baptist Church (Buffalo)
- Broderick Park (Buffalo/Blackrock)
- Nash House (Buffalo)
- Obadiah Baker Homestead (Orchard Park)

Niagara County

- Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Area
- Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University—Freedom Crossing: The Underground Railroad in

Greater Niagara (Niagara Falls)

- Lewiston First Presbyterian Church (Lewiston)
- Murphy Orchards-The McClew Interpretive Center (Burt)
- Customs House/Whirlpool Bridge (Niagara Falls)
- Niagara County History Center (Lockport)

### Connections with National Park Service sites in New York State:

- Harriet Tubman Home for the Aged Residence and Thompson AME Zion Church (Auburn)
- St. James AME Zion Church (Ithaca)
- Gerrit Smith Estate and Land Office (Peterboro)
- John Brown Farm and Gravesite (Lake Placid)
- Foster Memorial AME Zion Church (Tarrytown)
- Plymouth Church of the Pilgrims (Brooklyn)

### Connections with NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (West of Utica only)

- M'Clintock House (Waterloo)
- Seth M. Gates House (Warsaw)
- Howland Stone Store Museum (Aurora)
- Starr Clark Tinshop (Mexico)
- John W. Jones House (Elmira)
- Matilda Joslyn Gage Home (Fayetteville)

# WNY Themes and Associated Sites

## Industrial and Commercial Pioneering

Western New York has a long history of innovation in industry and commerce, including hydropower, railroads, steel, shipping, aerospace, merchandising, oil, agriculture, lumbering and manufacturing.

### Destinations:

#### Allegany County

- Cuba Specialty Manufacturing Company (Fillmore)

#### Cattaraugus County

- Salamanca Rail Museum (Salamanca)
- American Knife Museum (Cattaraugus)
- Cutco /KA-BAR Visitor Area (Olean)

#### Chautauqua County

- Fenton History Center (Crescent wrench and other products (Jamestown)
- 1st Grange in U.S. (Fredonia)
- Concord Grape Discovery Center (Westfield)

#### Erie County

- Buffalo Maritime Center (Buffalo )
- Larkin District (Buffalo)
- Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site [Pan American Exhibition] (Buffalo)
- Pierce Arrow Museum (Buffalo)
- TriMain Center (Buffalo)
- Buffalo History Museum (Buffalo)
- Grain Elevators (Buffalo)

#### Niagara County

- Herschell Carousel Museum (North Tonawanda)
- New York Power Authority Power Vista (Lewiston)
- Niagara Aerospace Museum (Niagara Falls)
- Tesla Statue, Niagara Falls State Park (Niagara Falls)



Tesla Statue



KA-BAR

# WNY Themes and Associated Sites

## “A Vast Architectural Museum”

Western New York is a microcosm of distinctly American architecture rooted in American ideals about individualism, commerce and social mobility—a vast architectural museum.

### Destinations:

#### Allegany County

- Alfred Village Historic District (Alfred)
- Main Street Historic District (Cuba)

#### Cattaraugus County

- Persia Town Hall (formerly Bank of Gowanda)
- Ellicottville Historic District (Ellicottville)
- Gowanda Village Historic District (Gowanda)
- Leon Historical Society Museum (Leon)
- Oak Hill Park Historic District (Olean)
- Miner’s Cabin (Franklinville)

#### Chautauqua County

- Chautauqua Institution National Historic District (Chautauqua)
- Roger Tory Peterson Institute (Jamestown)
- Fenton History Center (Jamestown)
- Robert H. Jackson Center (Jamestown)
- Reg Lenna Civic Center (Jamestown)
- Dunkirk Historic Lighthouse (Dunkirk)
- McClurg Museum (Westfield)
- Erie Railroad Station (Jamestown)
- 1891 Opera House (Fredonia)

#### Erie County

- Darwin D. Martin Complex (Buffalo)
- Graycliff (Derby)
- Forest Lawn Cemetery (Buffalo)
- Buffalo State Hospital –H.H. Richardson Complex (Buffalo)
- Guaranty Building (Buffalo)
- Ellicott Square Building (Buffalo)
- Kleinhans Music Hall (Buffalo)
- Market Arcade (Buffalo)
- Albright-Knox Art Gallery (Buffalo)
- Buffalo History Museum (Buffalo)
- Calumet Building (Buffalo)
- Roycroft Campus (East Aurora)
- Olmsted Parks (Buffalo)
- Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site (Buffalo)
- Michigan Street Baptist Church (Buffalo)
- McKinley Monument (Buffalo)
- City Hall (Buffalo)
- St. Paul’s Cathedral (Buffalo)
- Erie Community College (Buffalo)

# WNY Themes and Associated Sites

- Cyclorama Building (Buffalo)
- Millionaires' Row (Buffalo)
- Grain Elevators/Silos (Buffalo)
- Our Lady of Victory Basilica (Lackawanna)
- Pierce Arrow Factory Complex (Buffalo)
- Hull Family Home and Farmstead (Lancaster)
- Babeville/Asbury Hall (Buffalo)
- Central Terminal (Buffalo)
- Market Square Historic District (Black Rock)
- Fontana Boathouse (Buffalo)
- Karpeles Manuscript Museum (Buffalo)
- Lafayette Hotel (Buffalo)
- Botanical Gardens (Buffalo)
- Butler Mansion (Buffalo)
- Buffalo Lighthouse (Buffalo)
- Electric Tower (Buffalo)
- Shea's Theater (Buffalo)



Hotel @ The Lafayette

## Niagara County

- Hazard H. Sheldon House (Niagara Falls)
- U.S. Customs House (Niagara Falls)
- Old Fort Niagara (Youngstown)
- Whitney Mansion (Niagara Falls)
- Adams Power Plant Transformer House (Niagara Falls)
- Niagara Falls City Hall (Niagara Falls)
- Niagara Falls Public Library (Niagara Falls)



Central Terminal



St. Paul's Cathedral

# WNY Themes and Associated Sites

## Arts for Everyone—A Western New York Legacy

Western New York has a long tradition of a thriving and diverse community of artists and artisans, galleries, museums, festivals, visual and performing artists, musicians, theaters and craftspeople.

### Destinations:

#### Allegany County

- The Schein-Joseph International Museum of Ceramic Art (Alfred University)
- Wellsville Creative Arts Center (Wellsville)

#### Cattaraugus County

- Griffis Sculpture Park (East Otto)
- Allegany State Park Workshops (Allegany)
- Regina A. Quick Center for the Arts at St. Bonaventure University (Olean)
- Cattaraugus County Fairgrounds (Little Valley)

#### Chautauqua County

- Roger Tory Peterson Institute of Natural History (Jamestown)
- Chautauqua-Lake Erie Art Trail (Chautauqua)
- Chautauqua Institution (Chautauqua)
- Fredonia Opera House (Fredonia)
- Wildlife Art Festival in Chautauqua County
- Lucille Ball Comedy Festival (Jamestown)
- Art galleries at the Patterson Library and Prendergast Library in Chautauqua County.

#### Erie County

- Albright-Knox Art Gallery (Buffalo)
- Burchfield-Penney Art Center (Buffalo)
- Buffalo History Museum (Buffalo)
- Shea's Performing Arts Center (Buffalo)
- Colored Musician's Club (Buffalo)
- Western New York Book Arts Center (Buffalo)
- Just Buffalo Literary Center (Buffalo)
- CEPA Gallery (Buffalo)
- El Museo Diego Oller Y Diego Rivera (Buffalo)
- Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center (Buffalo)
- Locust Street Art (Buffalo)
- Squeaky Wheel-Buffalo Media Arts (Buffalo)
- Road Less Traveled Theater (Buffalo)
- Theater of Youth (Buffalo)
- Allentown Arts Festival (Buffalo)
- Shakespeare in Delaware Park (Buffalo)
- Music Is Art/Music Is Art Festival (Buffalo)
- Springville Center for the Arts (Springville)
- Roycroft Campus (East Aurora)
- WPA Murals (Buffalo)
- Lancaster Opera House (Lancaster)

# WNY Themes and Associated Sites

- Elmwood Avenue Festival of the Arts (Buffalo)
- Shakespeare in Delaware Park (Buffalo)

## Niagara County

- Castellani Art Museum (Niagara Falls)
- Artpark (Lewiston)
- Market Street Art Center (Lockport)
- Kenan Center (Lockport)
- 100 American Craftsmen show at the Kenan Center (Lockport)
- Niagara County History Center [Workshops] (Lockport)
- Lewiston Art festival

## A Region of Cultural Distinctiveness—Authentic Americana

Western New York is home to a full range of cultural experiences and icons that have shaped the American psyche and interests.

### **Destinations:**

#### Allegany County

#### Cattaraugus County

- New York Amish Trail
- Lucille Ball Comedy Festival (Jamestown)
- Pfeiffer Nature Center (Porterville)
- Seneca Nation (Salamanca)

#### Chautauqua County

- Lucy-Desi Comedy Center (Jamestown)
- Lucille Ball Comedy Festival (Jamestown)
- Lily Dale Assembly (Lilydale)
- Chautauqua Institution (Chautauqua)
- Grape Discovery Center (Westfield)

#### Erie County

- Roycroft Campus (East Aurora)
- National Buffalo Wing Festival (Buffalo)
- Pierce Arrow Museum (Buffalo)
- Kazoo Factory (Eden)

#### Niagara County

- Herschell Carousel Museum (North Tonawanda )
- Daredevil Museum of Niagara Falls (Niagara Falls)
- Niagara County History Center [Seven Sutherland Sisters] (Lockport )
- Old Fort Niagara [Ghost hunting] (Youngstown )

# WNY Public Meetings

In March 2013, the Work Group conducted three public meetings throughout the region to gain feedback from stakeholders about regional assets and challenges, the vision for heritage tourism, goals and themes. Facilitated meetings were held in Niagara Falls, Buffalo and Olean. Crystal Abers and Tod Kniazuk (Co-Chairs of the Work Group), Mark Castiglione, (Project Coordinator of the ***Path Through History*** Project for New York State), Mike Ball, (Deputy Regional Director of WNY Empire State Development Corporation), Angela Berti, (Director of Communications and Marketing for NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Preservation) and Eve Berry, (Project Consultant) served as the team for the public meetings.

In addition to bringing specific sites and stories to the Work Group’s attention, feedback from the public meetings informed the development of the WNY Regional Plan for Heritage Tourism in several significant ways, including the following:

- Expanding the core themes to include a broader range of “heritage hubs” and thematic stories throughout the region;
- Creating multiple entry points to the regions Paths Through History, i.e. entry via a theme, stories, or geographic proximity;
- Connecting Western New York’s themes to other regions in the state;
- Emphasizing the importance of signage and wayfinding;
- Finding ways to encourage more of the eight million annual visitors to Niagara Falls State Park to venture beyond the Falls;
- Connecting heritage tourism to other agricultural, food, recreational and tourism opportunities;
- Attracting the next generation to involvement with historic sites and to heritage tourism.





# WNY People and their Stories

The following descriptions are an initial listing of people who played a significant role in Western New York history:

## Red Jacket (c. 1758-1830)

The famous Western New York Seneca's given name was Otetiani and he was also known as Sagoyewatha (he-who-keeps-them-awake). The name Red Jacket was derived from the red coat worn while fighting on the British side during the American Revolution. He played a key role in securing Seneca territory in New York state after the defeat of the British. By the 1790s, he was frequently the diplomat chosen by the Seneca Nation and the Iroquois Confederacy to represent them in councils and treaty negotiations. Red Jacket was famous for his oratorical skills, which he used to protest white influence on Seneca customs, religion and language. In 1792, President George Washington presented him with a "peace medal" featuring an image of the President shaking his hand. The medal is held in the collection of the Buffalo History Museum. Years later, the Erie Canal was officially opened on October 26, 1825 when the first boat, the Seneca Chief left Buffalo and arrived in New York City nine days later. Red Jacket died in 1830 and was buried in the Seneca Burial Ground in South Buffalo, but was reburied in Forest Lawn Cemetery in 1884.



## Joseph Ellicott (1760-1826)

Joseph Ellicott was born in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. As the Chief Surveyor and Resident Agent for the Holland Land Company, Ellicott was the individual responsible for opening the westernmost part of New York state to settlement and for promoting the success of the endeavor by guiding surveys, by establishing new villages, taverns and mills and by constructing a road network in a wilderness region. Ellicott had learned surveying by working with his older brother, United States General Surveyor Andrew Ellicott. Andrew Ellicott was responsible for surveying the boundaries of the District of Columbia and for continuing and completing Pierre Charles L'Enfant's work on the radial plan for Washington, D.C.



After working with his brother, Joseph Ellicott surveyed the land along the Georgia-Carolina border, then returned to Philadelphia where he was retained by the Holland Land Company to survey a large tract of land consisting of 3.23 million acres of land stretching from 12 miles west of the Genesee River to what is now the present border of New York State. This tract was known as the Holland Land Purchase. Joseph Ellicott and his team of 11 surveyors and their assistants spent two years from 1798 to 1800 living in the wilderness to conduct the survey. Ellicott insisted on high standards and accuracy. At the time, rulers for measurement were inconsistent and variable. To ensure greater accuracy within his team's work, Ellicott attached a 12-inch ruler to each field book. Ellicott became the first person to use the same one-foot ruler in use today.

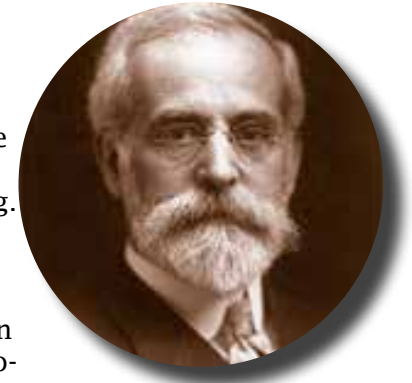
Joseph laid out the plan for the Village of Buffalo, which was originally named New Amsterdam in honor of the Holland Land Company. The radial design that begins at Niagara Square and fans out eastward, was inspired by the configurations of Paris and Washington, D.C. Joseph Ellicott was appointed Resident Agent of the Holland Land Company and opened an office in Batavia in 1801. He oversaw the surveying crews to complete the subdividing of land into townships, each six square miles. The townships were then subdivided into lots. The officers of the Holland Land Company had an extensive program to build

# WNY People and their Stories

roads, lay out towns and attract settlers to the area by selling small tracts of land on liberal terms and providing loans to help businessmen set up shops. Ellicott served as the Resident Agent for 20 years. Ellicott also had a significant influence on the building of the Erie Canal. As a Canal Commissioner, he urged the State to take the inland route over the proposed route from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario. In April 1817, the New York State Legislature passed a law to build the Erie Canal. The citizens of Buffalo were just rebuilding from the burning of their village on December 30, 1813 when they entered the race to establish the final destination of the canal. A fierce rivalry developed between Buffalo and Black Rock, but in 1822 the location of the western terminus was decided in favor of Buffalo over Black Rock. The Canal was completed in 1825, and the opening celebrated with the ceremony called the “Wedding of the Waters” which shared the exchange of fresh and salt water of the ports of Manhattan and Buffalo. Joseph Ellicott died in 1826.

## John D. Larkin (1845-1926)

Without John Durrant Larkin, it is unlikely that Buffalo would be home to the second largest number of Frank Lloyd Wright-designed houses or that the Roycroft movement would have begun. John D. Larkin, born in Buffalo at 13 Clinton Street where the Lafayette Hotel now stands, was one of seven children, began his business life at age twelve working as a Western Union telegraph messenger. After learning the soap business by working in Chicago with his brother-in-law, Justus Weller, he returned to Buffalo and set up his factory, J.D. Larkin, Manufacturer of Plain and Fancy Soaps. As his first salesman, Larkin hired his wife’s brother, Elbert Hubbard. Hubbard traveled the county “slinging” soap door-to-door. As his sales force grew, he hired Frank Martin, and three years later, his younger brother, Darwin Martin. At the suggestion of Hubbard, J.D. Larkin & Co. launched the innovation of mail-order merchandising. Elbert Hubbard left the business in 1893 to begin what would become the Roycroft movement in East Aurora.



By 1902, the business had grown to the point where a central administration building was needed. Salesman Darwin Martin had been promoted to the position of company treasurer. At the recommendation of Darwin Martin and William Heath, the head of the legal department, Frank Lloyd Wright received his first commercial commission in 1904 to build the Larkin Administration Building. Recognized as a landmark in the development of modern architecture, the office building was completed in 1906, but unfortunately, was torn down in 1950.

The J.D. Larkin & Co. continued to grow throughout the first several decades of the 20th century, becoming the equivalent of a regional department store with a wide mail order delivery system and more than 4,000 employees on par with Sears & Roebuck and Montgomery Ward. In addition to his innovative business practices and philosophy, John Larkin demonstrated his commitment to his employees by providing on-site educational services, savings accounts, a public library site, dental and doctor offices and free coffee. Larkin’s second son, John D. Larkin, Jr. eventually took over the reigns of the company after his father’s death in 1926.

# WNY People and their Stories

## Elbert Hubbard (1856-1915)

Elbert Hubbard, a renowned philosopher, artist and publisher was born in Bloomington, Illinois to a medical doctor and farmer, Silas Hubbard and his wife Juliana Frances Read. After working as a cub reporter and a teacher in Chicago, Hubbard joined his brother-in-law's soap company at age sixteen as a door-to-door salesman. He moved to Buffalo at the age of nineteen to work at the Larkin Soap Company, where he introduced the concept of direct mail marketing. He married Bertha Crawford in 1883 and bought land in East Aurora. In 1891, he wrote his first novel, which was written in collaboration with his mistress, Alice Moore, under the pseudonym Aspasia Hobbs. Losing interest in the soap business, he sold his interests in the Larkin Company in 1893 and briefly attended Harvard, but dropped out shortly and traveled to England, where he met William Morris and visited his Arts-and-Crafts Kelmscott Press. By 1895 he had fathered four children with his wife and one with his mistress.



Unsuccessful at finding a publisher for several biographical sketches he had written, Hubbard moved to East Aurora and decided to establish his own print shop, the Roycroft Press. Hubbard published two magazines, *The Philistine* and *The Fra* and visitors began to visit the print shop in East Aurora. To accommodate the growing number of visitors, an inn was built—now the Roycroft Inn—which was filled with simple, straight-lined furniture which became popular with the visitors who wanted to purchase the furniture. The “Roycrofters,” who were the skilled craftspeople, furniture makers, metalsmiths, leathersmiths and bookbinders, grew to a community of 500 workers on a campus in East Aurora. Hubbard's celebrity status grew from the combination of the Roycrofter's crafts and its founder's home-spun, utopian, counter-cultural views communicated through his publications.

Wife Bertha divorced Hubbard in 1903; he married Alice Moore in 1904. Hubbard was one of the most sought after public speakers in the country between 1905 and 1915. In 1915, during a trip to Germany, Hubbard and Alice were aboard the Lusitania when it was sunk by a German U-boat.

## Mary Burnett Talbert (1866-1923)

Mary Talbert was one of the best known African American women and activists of her time. She was born and raised in Oberlin, Ohio and was the only African American in her graduating class at Oberlin College in 1886. After several years of teaching, she became assistant principal, then principal of the Union High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. She married William H. Talbert in 1891 and moved to Buffalo, where she and her husband became members of the Michigan Street Baptist Church. She immediately began to organize educational and cultural programs in the community. In 1899, she became one of the founding members of the Phyllis Wheatley Club of Colored Women. This remarkable group of women, the city's first affiliate of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, set an ambitious program of service to others in order to achieve the NACW mission and emulate the Club motto, “Lifting as we climb.”



In 1905, she opened her home to Dr. W.E.B. Dubois, John Hope, Monroe Trotter, and others who founded and organized the Niagara Movement, forerunner of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. In 1911, she became a charter member of the Empire Federation of Women's Clubs, and the group's second president from 1912-1916. During World War I, Mary Talbert was active in the war bond drives, personally soliciting thousands of dollars in Liberty Bonds. Further, she served as an American Red Cross Nurse with the American Expeditionary Forces in France. She also served as a delegate to the International Council of Women in Christi-

# WNY People and their Stories

ania, Norway in 1920. She was a national and international public figure who was a sought after speaker for her lectures on race relations, anti-lynching and women's rights. Her tireless efforts on the behalf of African American people earned her the NAACP Spingarn Award. Mary Burnett Talbert was the first black woman to be honored with this prestigious recognition.

Mary Talbert died in 1923. She is buried in Forest Lawn Cemetery.

## **Annie Edson Taylor (1838-1921)**

Annie Edson Taylor is best known as the first person to ride over Niagara Falls in a barrel and survive. After a series of hardships during her early adult life, including the loss of her son in his infancy and her husband shortly thereafter, she attempted several occupations, unsuccessfully. In a last-ditch attempt to secure her financial future by achieving fame and fortune, she arranged to have a pickle barrel of oak and iron custom built for her voyage over the Falls. Pillows were inserted inside the barrel to cushion her fall. On her 63rd birthday on October 24, 1901, she was secured into the barrel, dumped over the side of a rowboat and sent downstream in the Niagara River to the Horseshoe Falls.



Following the plunge, she was rescued and found to be relatively unharmed. The only injuries were some bruises and a small cut on her head. Her plans for building wealth through her stunt were foiled by her manager, who absconded with the famous barrel and most of her funds. She spent what she had left attempting to find the barrel, which was finally located in Chicago, only to have it disappear again shortly thereafter, never to be found again.

In her later years, she posed for photographs for tourists, played the stock market and dabbled in filmmaking, writing a novel and providing clairvoyant readings.

Annie Taylor died, penniless, at age 82 in 1921. She is buried in the "Stunters Section" of Oakwood Cemetery in Niagara Falls.

### **Our working list includes the following additional people:**

Peter B. Porter  
James McClurg  
George Coit, Samuel Wilkeson, Charles Townsend, DeWitt Clinton  
Reuben Fenton  
Frederick Law Olmsted  
Belva Lockwood  
Louise Bethune  
Seymour Knox  
Rev. Edward Nash Darwin Martin  
Frank Lloyd Wright  
Alice Mae Jemison  
Katharine Cornell  
Roger Tory Peterson  
Robert Jackson

# Complementary Attractions

While the 200+ heritage attractions included in this plan are a key component of Western New York's heritage tourism industry, there are a number of complementary attractions that can be combined with these sites to develop compelling heritage tourism experiences. Heritage travelers like to participate in many different kinds of activities when they travel, and other niche markets such as nature based travel, outdoor recreation, ecotourism, agritourism and cultural tourism can all provide complementary experiences to enrich the visitor experience and encourage a longer length of stay. These complementary experiences could include outdoor recreation opportunities at state and national parks, farm or winery visits, as well as cultural experiences including the visual or performing arts.

In addition to the attractions included in this plan, there are many other historic sites in Western New York that are accessible to the public and which could complement these museum experiences. For example, many of Western New York's historic sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places fall into this category. The National Register of Historic Places is the nation's official inventory of properties deemed worthy of preservation. It recognizes places of local, state and national significance and is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate and protect our historic, cultural and archeological resources. National Register listings can include single sites as individual listings as well as entire historic districts. The National Register is maintained by the National Park Service.

In New York the program is administered by the New York State Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and is part of its efforts to promote New York history. To date, thousands of buildings and places in Western New York are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. These include residences, industrial and commercial buildings, farmsteads, landscapes, churches and even entire districts. Some are appropriate for visitation by the heritage tourist, since many are generally accessible to the public, used as museums or include interpretation that orients the visitor to a wide-range of Western New York history and culture.

## Historic Districts

The National Register includes entire historic districts, including "main street" commercial districts, residential neighborhoods and other places that have historical and architectural significance as a whole. These districts are often available to the tourist offering shopping opportunities, entertainment and activities that complement visits. Many communities have published walking tours of their historic districts or developed other interpretive ways to mark buildings with historical information, such as signs or plaques. Sometimes entire districts have been rehabilitated into vital areas of commercial activity, capitalizing on the uniqueness of its architecture and business offerings.

## Publicly Owned Buildings

Sometimes the finest architecture in Western New York is found in places such as courthouses, post offices, libraries, auditoriums and city halls. These publically owned buildings are often the town center for local citizens, holding historic and architectural pride by the community. They are also generally accessible to travelers as they are open to the public. Some publically owned buildings that are no longer used for their original purpose have been converted into museums or visitor centers. As an example, Preservation Buffalo Niagara provides free docent-led tours of Buffalo's City Hall from Monday through Friday.

## Cemeteries

While cemeteries are not normally considered for National Register listing, some may have special features that make them oriented to visitors such as the Forest Lawn Cemetery in Buffalo or Oakwood in Niagara Falls. Forest Lawn has an active, robust tour program throughout the year. Additional heritage tourism opportunities for cemeteries include developing walking tours (either guided or self-guided) or exploring the potential for special events.

# Complementary Attractions

## Parks

In addition to Western New York's State Parks, there are other historic parks that offer services, recreation and cultural offerings that can complement visitation by the heritage tourist. Examples of parks that could contribute to a heritage tourism experience are the Olmsted Parks in Buffalo and Chestnut Ridge Park in Orchard Park.

## Visitor Centers

Several historic buildings have been rehabilitated as visitors' centers. They serve to orient the heritage tourist to the offerings of local areas and byways. Several historic buildings in the region have been adaptively reused as visitor centers.

## Other Historic Sites

Some National Register properties are sites, historic trails and natural features, and many are accessible for travelers. New York State's historical marker program [currently inactive?] also serves to interpret sites that are not generally accessible.

## Arts, Theaters and Performing Arts

The offerings of cultural organizations in the visual and performing arts are often operated in historic theaters, libraries, churches and former public buildings. They offer complementary activities for the heritage tourist that contribute to the visitors' experience. Many traditional museums are open during working hours, and many performing arts venues offer the additional appeal of providing evening performances that offer an added incentive for travelers to stay in an area longer or spend the night. As the economic impact of tourism goes up dramatically with additional overnight stays, offering evening activities is highly desirable—and finding evening activities that appeal to travelers can often be especially challenging outside of metropolitan areas. Springville Center for the Arts is an example of a site that is leveraging the arts as a tool for community revitalization.



The region boasts an extraordinary array of cultural assets.

With a wide array of galleries, museums and cultural institutions, Buffalo ranks as the **#1 Arts Destination** for mid-sized cities in the U.S.

**Chautauqua Institution** has been named one of the most livable small communities in the world by the International Awards for Livable Communities.

Niagara Falls, one of the world's wonders, attracts **12 million visitors** each year.

WNY includes **six & acres** of public parks designed by renowned landscape architect **Frederick Law Olmsted**. **Six** { Frank Lloyd Wright designed homes the highest concentration outside of Illinois

Ellicottville, NY, renowned as the "Aspen of the East," is home to NYS's largest ski resort.

# National Historic Landmarks in WNY

ADAMS POWER PLANT TRANSFORMER HOUSE  
NIAGARA FALLS, NIAGARA COUNTY, NEW YORK

BUFFALO AND ERIE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY BUILDING  
BUFFALO, ERIE COUNTY, NEW YORK

BUFFALO STATE HOSPITAL  
BUFFALO, ERIE COUNTY, NEW YORK

CHAUTAUQUA HISTORIC DISTRICT  
CHAUTAUQUA, CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY, NEW YORK

COLONIAL NIAGARA HISTORIC DISTRICT (ORIGINALLY OLD FORT NIAGARA)  
NIAGARA COUNTY, NEW YORK

EDWARD M. COTTER (Fireboat)  
BUFFALO, ERIE COUNTY, NEW YORK

FILLMORE, MILLARD, HOUSE  
E. AURORA, ERIE COUNTY, NEW YORK

FIR (USCGC) RELOCATED FROM CALIFORNIA  
E. AURORA, ERIE COUNTY, NEW YORK

KLEINHANS MUSIC HALL  
BUFFALO, ERIE COUNTY, NEW YORK

DARWIN D. MARTIN HOUSE  
BUFFALO, ERIE COUNTY, NEW YORK

MICHIGAN STREET BAPTIST CHURCH  
BUFFALO, ERIE COUNTY, NEW YORK

LEWIS MILLER COTTAGE, CHAUTAUQUA INSTITUTION  
CHAUTAUQUA, CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY, NEW YORK

NIAGARA RESERVATION (NIAGARA FALLS STATE PARK)  
NIAGARA FALLS, NIAGARA COUNTY, NEW YORK

PRUDENTIAL (GUARANTY) BUILDING  
BUFFALO, ERIE COUNTY, NEW YORK

ROYCROFT CAMPUS  
EAST AURORA, ERIE COUNTY, NEW YORK

ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL  
BUFFALO, BUFFALO COUNTY, NEW YORK

THE SULLIVANS (USS)  
BUFFALO, ERIE COUNTY, NEW YORK

# Criteria for Inclusion in PTH

The Western New York *Path through History* Work Group has developed the following criteria to be used when determining which attractions should be considered for inclusion in the first phase of Governor Cuomo's *Path Through History* Project.

As Western New York is a diverse community with exceptional historic offerings, it is important to note that while an attraction may not fit all of the criteria set forth, a spirit of flexibility and creative thinking should be employed by this Workgroup in order to promote all that Western New York has to offer.

The primary criteria include:

- High level of authenticity, integrity and direct association with New York State's history and culture
- Provides significant insights into the people, daily life and culture, places and/or events that helped to shape New York State
- Paints a picture of significant historic events or settlement patterns in New York State
- Represents significant lifestyles or styles of architecture, artistic movements, gardening or landscaping, etc.
- Serves to illustrate the ways in which past generations lived, worked and pursued recreational and other interests
- Commemorates the achievements of individuals, groups and organizations and who exude the spirit of New York
- Recognizes the important contributions of multi-national populations of our region

Suggested changes:

- Represents significant lifestyles cultural, architectural, artistic,, or landscape movements in New York State history
- Serves to illustrate the ways in which past generations lived, worked and pursued recreational and other interests
- Commemorates the achievements of individuals, groups and organizations who played a significant role in New York State's development exude the spirit of New York
- Recognizes the important contributions of multi-national populations of our region (multi-cultural?)

Additional criteria to be considered when gauging visitor readiness and designation as primary/secondary/tertiary status include:

- Provides accurate, relevant and quality interpretation
- Reflects an appropriate level of preservation and/or conservation
- Offer standard hours/days of operation or is regularly accessible
- Through advertising, the web, and/or the distribution of brochures, the site should provide up-to-date visitor information, including hours of operation, driving directions or map, and a property snapshot
- Provide adequate visitor facilities appropriate to the type of attraction.



# Partnership and Existing Plans

## Partnerships

TPA's and promotion organizations  
National Heritage Areas  
Empire State Development  
Buffalo History Museum  
Buffalo News and media outlets  
Bi National Tourism Alliance  
Colleges and relevant departments (hospitality, history, museum studies)  
Niagara Parks Commission (Canada)  
Concord Grape Belt  
Niagara River Greenway and other trails  
Genesee Greenway  
Seaway Trail  
Preservation Buffalo Niagara  
County Historians and Museums  
State Historic Preservation Office  
Local Business Associations  
Chambers of Commerce  
Jamestown Renaissance Corp.  
County Economic Development Groups  
Local Governments  
Grass Root movements  
Living History  
Wine Trails (Niagara and Chautauqua)  
Various Foundations

## Existing Plans

National Preservation Conference Plan  
Erie Canal Harbor Plan  
Flight of Five Interpretive Plan  
Jamestown Renaissance Plan  
Genesee River Plan  
Regional Economic Development Plan  
Erie Canalway Plan  
Niagara Canalway plan  
Niagara River Greenway Plan  
Visit Buffalo Niagara Heritage Tourism Plan  
Seaway Trail Plan

# Highest Ranked WNY Sites & Themes

| Site Name (ranked by Working Group)   | Town-City-Village | County      | Architectural Museum | Erie Canal | Scenic Wonders | Industrial Commercial Pioneering | Underground Railroad | Arts for Everyone | Military | Cultural Distinctiveness |
|---|-------------------|-------------|----------------------|------------|----------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|----------|--------------------------|
| Old Fort Niagara  | Youngstown        | Niagara     | •                    |            | •              |                                  |                      |                   | •        |                          |
| Erie Canal Discovery Center & Flight of Five                                | Lockport          | Niagara     |                      | •          |                | •                                |                      |                   |          |                          |
| Darwin Martin House   | Buffalo           | Erie        | •                    |            |                |                                  |                      |                   |          |                          |
| Chautauqua Institution  | Chautauqua        | Chautauqua  |                      |            |                |                                  |                      | •                 |          | •                        |
| Graycliff   | Derby             | Erie        | •                    |            |                |                                  |                      |                   |          |                          |
| Roycroft Campus   | East Aurora       | Erie        | •                    |            |                | •                                |                      | •                 |          | •                        |
| Roger Tory Peterson Institute of Natural History                            | Jamestown         | Chautauqua  |                      |            |                |                                  |                      | •                 |          |                          |
| Polonia District including Buffalo Central Terminal & St. Adalbert Basilica | Buffalo           | Erie        | •                    |            |                | •                                |                      |                   |          |                          |
| Our Lady of Victory Basilica/Botanical Gardens/South Park                   | Lackawanna        | Erie        | •                    |            |                |                                  |                      |                   |          |                          |
| Griffis Sculpture Park  | East Otto         | Cattaraugus |                      |            |                |                                  |                      | •                 |          |                          |
| Buffalo and Erie County Naval Park  | Buffalo           | Erie        |                      | •          |                |                                  |                      |                   | •        |                          |
| Herschell Carousel Museum   | North Tonawanda   | Niagara     |                      |            |                | •                                |                      |                   |          | •                        |
| Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site                         | Buffalo           | Erie        | •                    |            |                | •                                |                      |                   |          |                          |
| Michigan St. Preservation District  | Buffalo           | Erie        | •                    |            |                |                                  | •                    | •                 |          |                          |
| Dunkirk Lighthouse & Veterans Park Museum                                   | Dunkirk           | Chautauqua  |                      |            | •              |                                  |                      |                   | •        |                          |
| Buffalo History Museum  | Buffalo           | Erie        | •                    | •          |                | •                                |                      | •                 | •        |                          |
| Grape Discovery Center  | Westfield         | Chautauqua  |                      |            |                | •                                |                      |                   |          | •                        |
| "Museum District"/Delaware Park   | Buffalo           | Erie        |                      |            |                |                                  |                      | •                 |          |                          |
| Rock City Park  | Olean             | Cattaraugus |                      |            | •              |                                  |                      |                   |          |                          |
| Buffalo City Hall/downtown architecture                                     | Buffalo           | Erie        | •                    |            |                |                                  |                      |                   |          |                          |

List developed in  
September 2012