

There's More *Walking Thru History* in the Capital District of New York!

(Part 1) by Linda Morzillo

In addition to the convention walks along the Erie Canal, the Saratoga National Historical Park, Albany and Cooperstown planned by Empire State Capital Volkssporters (ESCV), people can enjoy other nearby Year Round and Seasonal Events! Walks highlighted here and in the next issue of *TAW* are additional *historic* walks in the repertoire of the Empire State Capital Volkssporters. The descriptions in this and the next article describe the notable outstanding *historic* attributes of these highlighted walks.

On the ESCV website, walkescv.org, look to the left and click on Year Round/Seasonal Walks. Each walk's description includes directions to, and Special Programs associated with the walk. Distances and times noted below are from the Red Lion Hotel, site of the 2019 AVA Convention.

Schenectady, New York: (14.7 miles/24 minutes) During the 1600's, Dutch settlers came to *skahnéhtati*, meaning "beyond the pines." The Mohawk Nation, one of the Five Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy, called these lands along the Mohawk River, home. Walkers will view the Mohawk River and the historic area known as The Stockade. It's the site of the Schenectady massacre on February 8, 1690, during King William's War. French forces and their Indian allies, mostly Ojibwe and Algonquin warriors, attacked Schenectady by surprise, leaving 62 dead. The National Park Service noted The Stockade had "the highest concentration of historic period homes in the country," many dating from the 1700's and 1800's. With the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825, Schenectady became a transportation, manufacturing and trade center. "The City that Lights and Hauls the World" is home to General Electric (now focused on renewable energy), and once the American Locomotive Company (1901-1969). Other unique sights on the walk route are Union College with the notable round Nott Memorial Hall, the General Electric Realty Plot, Lawrence the Indian statue, historic Proctor's Theater, City Hall and two historic churches in the Stockade area.

Saratoga Springs, New York: (28.6 miles/33 minutes) *Health, Horses and History* are three of the many reasons why people visit this small city. In 1802, Gideon Putnam built a hotel in the wilderness and soon laid a plan for a town which included the many healing springs to be "forever remain open and free to the people." The present Saratoga Race Course dates back to 1863 and continues to be the home of some of the most important thoroughbred races in North America from mid-July to Labor Day. The revived downtown area is vibrant with restaurants, galleries and shops. In addition, Skidmore College, Congress Park, Victorian architecture and several museums all make this city a wonderful place to explore. A separate walk, Saratoga Spa Park, highlights the Saratoga Performing Arts Center, the National Museum of Dance, Saratoga Automobile Museum and Spa Park.

Lake George, New York: (51.4 miles/49 minutes) Samuel de Champlain was the first European visitor to *The Queen of American Lakes* in 1609. In 1646, the French-Canadian Jesuit missionary, Isaac Joques named it *Lac du Saint-Sacrement* (Lake of the Holy Sacrament). Noted for its beauty amidst the eastern Adirondack Mountains, there are 170 islands, mostly state-owned, and this area was the site of several conflicts during the French and Indian War. William Johnson led British colonial forces, changed the name to Lake George and built Fort William Henry as a fortification. Walkers will see Battlefield Park with remains of the replica of Fort George, Shepard Park, Father Joques' statue, Million Dollar Beach State Park, the Village of Lake George and of course, many picturesque lakeside views of Lake George.

(To be continued in the next issue – five more historic walks for your enjoyment!)