

New York: Walking Through History with the Niagara Frontier Volkssport Club

By Terry McFarland

Many of you will be driving across New York State going to and returning from the 2019 National Convention. The Niagara Frontier Volkssport Club would like to give you a thumbnail impression of walks that you could include in your trip.

Walk Through History, our Convention theme, is a hallmark of our region in New York State. You will find the following walks along the Seaway Trail- which includes the St. Lawrence River and the south shore of Lake Ontario and which have been settled for thousands of years by indigenous peoples practicing agriculture, hunting and fishing.

The latest are the Haudenosaunee Iroquois Confederacy whose model of peaceful cooperation among their Five Nations was used in drafting the US Constitution turning the original colonies into a nation state.

Our easternmost walk is Ogdensburg where the French established a fur trading site, Fort de la Presentation, on the St. Lawrence River. Park at the Start Point, the Dobisky Visitor Center, take a look around and then continue your walk along the historic and scenic route with signage outlining the naval and land battles fought here. The Frederick Remington Museum is also on the walk route.

Moving along west to the Cape Vincent walk on the St. Lawrence River, see the Thousand Islands region which was explored by Samuel de la Champlain in 1615, where he encountered the indigenous Iroquois Onondaga. Visit and perhaps stay the night at the Tibbetts Point Lighthouse and highly rated hostel. Watch the ships from all over the world pass by on their way to the Atlantic! The car ferry to Canada's Wolfe Island/Kingston, Ontario (CVF walk here) is also a fun option.

Sackets Harbor on Lake Ontario is recognized as one of the top ten National Park Service historic sites due to its War of 1812 heritage areas. Excellent signage and Visitor Center provide a "You Are There" experience as you walk its beautiful lakeside and charming town route. Watertown's stately homes and Olmstead parklands also include the only zoo dedicated to New York State wild animals and habitat. Visit the historic public square and its walkable downtown alive with summer activities.

There is something for every walker's interest in Oswego, port city on Lake Ontario with War of 1812 history at Fort Ontario; a railroad hub with historic preservation of its past in the Oswego RR Museum; and, the H. Lee White Maritime Museum and the West Pierhead Lighthouse which is a navigation aid to the present day.

Welcoming lighthouse enthusiasts to the Sodus Bay lighthouse Museum on our Sodus Point Lake Ontario walk is a seasonal highlight. The spectacular view of Lake Ontario never disappoints and the charming town transports you to an early time in our national history. Finally, in Pultneyville, also on Lake Ontario, friendly faces at the deli Start Point welcome walkers to their quiet village. It was not so quiet when the British fired upon it from a warship in the War of 1812. And, along with many other of our Niagara Frontier walks, Pultneyville was an important station in the Underground Railroad.

VISIT US ON YOUR WAY IN 2019!

For locations, please refer to the map of walks on our website: NiagaraVolkssportClubs.org