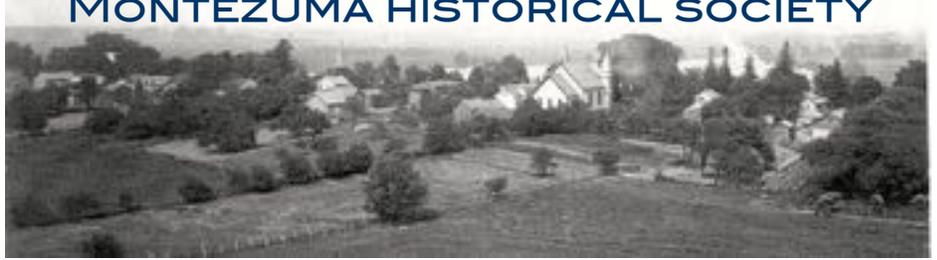


# The Story Teller

Spring-Summer 2017

MONTEZUMA  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
PO Box 476  
Montezuma, NY 13117

MONTEZUMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



## CELEBRATING HISTORY

An Epic Erie Canal  
Outdoor Drama premiers  
on the ground where  
history took place.

**7:30 PM**

**JUNE 26 & 27**  
**DEVANEY'S**  
**WEEDSPORT**

**JUNE 29 & 30**  
**GIARDINA PARK**  
**MONTEZUMA**

*\$10/Person*

*Live Music by Merry Mischief*

*Dinner available prior to  
show at both locations.*

[www.eriecanalplay.com](http://www.eriecanalplay.com)

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*Newsletter Editor:  
Cheryl Longyear  
Town Historian*

This year marks the beginning of the centennial celebration of America's most grandest and influential man-made waterway, the Erie Canal first known as Clinton's Ditch. To kick off honoring this extraordinary event that took only eight years to complete through 363 miles of wilderness, an epic drama is being brought to Central New York this summer just prior to 200th anniversary of the first shovel of dirt dug in Rome, NY, on July 4, 1817.

The play chronicles the creation of the canal from the moment it was conceived in the mind of the Canandaigua jailed debtor, Jessie Hawley, played by Tim Monnin to being championed to its completion by DeWitt Clinton in 1825. It will depict the setbacks through the disruption by the War of 1812, to the crippling, back-breaking digging by thousands of Irish immigrants and some escaped slaves, and the immense struggle to complete the middle section of the Canal through the Montezuma swamps.

The playwrights are Anne Paris and Hugh Pratt from Buffalo, NY, with a strong interest in social justice. The husband and wife team spent five years writing the play together.

Producing and directing the play is Joni Lincoln, recently retired drama coach from Port Byron Central School who has over 30

years of work with local community theater artistry.



Joni's passionate ideas about the power of theater and her interest in

Erie Canal history are closely tied with that the Pratts'. Together they will bring to life the story of building the canal through the eyes of its advocates and opponents, of engineers and low-wage diggers, of Native Americans and Irish Immigrants, through those who lived and those who died.

The Erie Canal produced America's first great work of Civil Engineering. Canvass White, was the principal engineering assistant in charge of various portions of Erie construction. White began his engineering career in 1816 with plans for building the Canal. He traveled to England to study their canal system. The following year he returned to England again

and recruited a force of experienced Irish workers. He is also known for a patented type of hydraulic cement. He and a brother later began manufacturing their own cement, which became famous. White's patent cement (and its successor Rosendale cement) was used on hundreds of works, including the Brooklyn Bridge footings and the Statue of



Liberty pedestal. White is portrayed by Montezuma Town Councilman, Joel Glimpse.

It wasn't just the workers who suffered. Clinton's body, mind, and career were all affected. One of the close friends that helped Clinton through those tough times was Thomas Eddy, Eddy was the son of Irish Quaker immigrants. Eddy had been engaged in charitable work, was elected a governor of the New York Hospital in 1793, and became interested in the reform of the penal laws. He later became a Canal Commissioner.

We are honored to be partnering with non-profit partnership to bring awareness with the National Association of Mental Illness. Eddy is played by Bart Wasilenko, Co-Chair of NAMI of Cayuga County from Weedsport.



While Clinton was struggling with political controversy over the Erie Canal, his wife, Maria,



portrayed by Anna Post was raising eight children. At age 46 she lost her life after suffering from malaria.



Bill Daugherty stars as Dewitt Clinton. Daugherty was, born in St. Louis growing up with a family

of musicians. After 30 years of living and working in NYC with a successful career in theatre and as a concert artist, he began directing and teaching and eventually producing as well. He now lives in Weedsport teaching for the Finger Lakes Musical Festival/Merry-Go Round Theater and Cayuga College in Auburn, and as resident director at Nazareth College in Rochester.

Rounding out the amazing cast

of both experienced and novice actors is Matthew Crawford from Port Byron who has gone on to create an amazing acting career, He will play Michael O'Rourke. Michael and Connell Quinn, portrayed by Tyler Guarnieri are both Irish workers who came to America to find work on the canal.

Live musical accompaniment will be provided by CNY's well-known Merry Mischief. Merlyn and Harry's music will be sure to add to the enjoyment of the event.

The story of Building Clinton's Ditch recounts how self-taught men plunged into a wilderness and forged a dream into a reality. The virtues of true grit, feisty optimism, hard work and native ingenuity were the real tools that dug the canal. They are also what built our country.

This not-to-be missed production itself represents American spirit and ingenuity and is part of our local heritage that carries the legacy of what our town was built around. It's a story of the great hope and vision that needs to be carried on for the future.

This takes a real community effort to bring this production to our area, and we thank the actors and production crew for their dedication.



## A Legacy of Farming Heritage

Montezuma is very fortunate to have important remnants of history and viable farmland created by very early family settlers in this part of the state being preserved by the local farming community. Our scenic rural areas and beautiful natural resources can easily be taken for granted. Our mission is to engage the community in promoting and proudly connecting to these resources and our Erie Canal Heritage. We strongly believe that there are economic opportunities that could be realized by these important Town resources and work diligently to preserve, protect and promote them.

The Fred and Donna Burleton Farm on Route 31 still exists today as one of only a few remaining operating farms that developed during the Town's early settlement. It was settled by Lewis and Huldah McCloud who were buried on the farmland in a family cemetery in 1849, on a hill east of Mentz Church Road. The McCloud's raised nine children and cleared and developed the land for farming. The original Erie Canal

crossed the farm on what was the important Montezuma Turnpike, now Route 31 from the north to south side of the road. It continued along the south side with a two pier aqueduct crossing Crane Brook. The canal then flowed west into Montezuma. This was part of the first section of Clinton's Ditch that opened between here and Utica in 1819.

Productive agricultural land is a finite and irreplaceable natural resource providing food for our sustainable future. Agriculture contributes to local economies directly through sales, job creation, support service and businesses, and also by supplying lucrative secondary markets such as food processing. It's important to appreciate the investments being made in preserving a legacy of our farming heritage for future generations. This farm is an iconic testimony to American farming heritage and brings pride to our community.

This area of the Route 31 corridor is one of the main gateways in and out of the Town. As such, it leaves a lasting

impression of its rural character. Many Town residents have indicated they value the rural character as the single most common reason for living in Montezuma.

Route 31 is designated as Route 5 Bicycle Route used by bicyclists touring the area, and it is a New York designated route for this portion of the Erie Canalway Trail. It also is now part of a proposed bike touring corridor in the CNY Regional Recreation & Heritage Plan meant to boost compatible economic development that positions Montezuma to grow through these efforts.

When not possible to ride on off-road trails such as this area between Montezuma and Port Byron, the open space offers bikers a scenic view and an invitation to explore more of the beauty our town has to offer.

In 2010, approximately 2.4 million pedestrians and bicyclists traveled the existing segments of the Canalway. When this trail system is completed, it will be the longest, continuous trail system in the United States, attracting an additional 700,000 users annually. Between 2002 and 2008 based on data collected by the Outdoor Foundation, the number of bicycle trips of all kinds made by Americans grew by approximately 100 million. Bicycling is now the third most common vacation activity (USTA). Evidence is showing that trailways further community development in general by making them more attractive to entrepreneurs starting new businesses and employers considering relocating.



### PROSPECT HILL CEMETERY MARKER DEDICATION

Prospect Hill Cemetery on McDonald Road is located high on hill out of view, but many of our early settlers are buried in this cemetery. Often families looking to visit their ancestor's graves aren't even able to find the cemetery. Thanks to The William G. Pomeroy Foundation a new marker will be installed for dedication on Memorial Day, May 29, 2017.

The Program will be held in conjunction with the VFW Post 8137 Memorial Day services honoring Veterans beginning at the VFW at 2:00 PM.

Following services at the VFW, the dedication of the new marker will be at the cemetery on McDonald Road.



The marker honors one of the earliest settlers in town, Dr. Peter Lynsen Clarke. Clarke built a house on top of another hill in the early 1800's, also called Prospect Hill, where the water tower is today.

Dewitt Clinton visited Clarke on

his trip to explore a route for the Erie Canal across the State in 1810, commenting on Clarke's handsome house on the hill.



Clarke was born July 13, 1773, in Milford, Connecticut.

According to Storke's History

of Cayuga County, Dr. Clarke came in 1798, exploring the salt resources in Montezuma. Dr. Clarke acquired several thousands of acres deeded from Israel Smith in the Eastern Cayuga Reservation located in the Town of Montezuma and other areas in Cayuga County in 1808. He settled here that year with his family moving from New York City and encouraged additional settlement through the sale of his lots.

An 1819, newspaper advertisement placed by Dr. Clarke and Comfort Tyler touted the "natural advantages of Montezuma, such as inexhaustible sources of salt water to be greater than any other village on the canal from Lake Erie to Utica" (Cayuga Republican, 1819).

Dr. Clarke and Comfort Tyler became very interested in increasing transportation westward across the Montezuma Marshes. The Montezuma Turnpike and Bridge Company was incorporated on March 31, 1815. The major achievement of this road was the bridging Montezuma Swamp, and Peter Clarke, was listed as the secretary-treasurer of the turnpike company (State Route 31).

When the Erie Canal was built, he became engaged very early in the passenger and freight boating business on the canal.

He returned to New York around 1840, but after his death in 1858, his remains were brought back to Montezuma for burial in Prospect Hill Cemetery. It's unclear when the Clarke's obtained land in the



cemetery for family burials. His wife's mother, Anna Fisher died in 1829, in Montezuma, and she was probably one of the earliest burials there.

An 1880, newspaper article claims there was a Prospect Hill Cemetery Association formed from several towns people having purchased lots from John Jones. Several stones on the lower roadside end of the cemetery are from these families including Royal Torrey, first Supervisor in town elected in 1866.

In a deed recored January 22, 1869, Colonel James Clarke, son of Dr. Lynsen Clarke. purchased additional property in the cemetery, and sold lots. The cemetery property was eventually transferred to the town by deed in 1938 from Lena H. Clarke, and is now maintained by the Town of Montezuma.

Other burials include Clifford Jones, first owner of the Clifford House, the hotel in the center of town; Foster Parker, well known naturalist of the area; Charles Higgins, Civil War soldier who became prominent in the flag harvesting business and town supervisor.

## CANAL CLEAN SWEEP VOLUNTEERS COMPLETE PROJECTS IN MONTEZUMA HERITAGE PARK

On Earth Day, April 22nd, for the 10th year Montezuma Historical Society sponsored and organized local volunteers



Josh was in charge of recruiting volunteers, arranging for tools needed, and leading the work done including mulching the trail and clearing brush within the foundation walls. Josh also researched the history of the building and historic photos to determine the history of the site.

Other volunteers worked at the High Street Trailhead raking, weeding, and mulching the beds. A total of over 100 volunteer hours went into the planning and site work done this year.

MHS provided pizza and volunteers made cookies for lunch following the event.

GREAT JOB!!!

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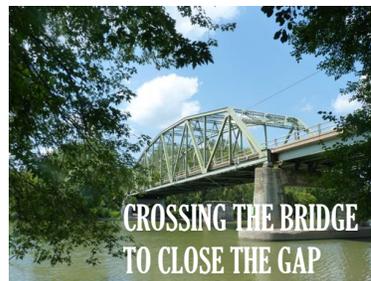
### AMERICAN HIKING SOCIETY'S NATIONAL TRAIL DAY MACEDON TO MONTEZUMA BIKE RIDE SATURDAY, JUNE 3RD

In celebration of work done on the

as part of the Statewide program to enhance and preserve the tremendous environmental, cultural and historic canal resources within our communities.

This year's program included a project undertaken by an Auburn boy scout, Josh Lindstrom, who was looking for a project to complete his Eagle Badge Scout requirements. Josh first helped with his aunt, Marge Palmatier when he was nine years old with an archaeology study done in the park. He took an interest then, and wanted to continue with a new project.

He met several times with the Park Design Committee to plan a project that had been identified in 2016's EPF Grant Interpretive Planning Project. The scope of the project included laying out a trail around the site of the remains of the Montezuma Fibre Mill Co.



New York Erie Canalway Trail section from Lyons E-25 to Port Byron, a 35-mile bike ride will be held between Macedon and Montezuma on, **Saturday, June 3, 2017**. The event is being sponsored by the Close the Gap Ad Hoc Committee of Wayne and Cayuga Counties, S.O.A.R., Trail Works, Inc., Wayne County Business Council, and the Montezuma Historical Society in partnership with the American

Hiking Society. This section of the trail is part of the newly state funded bike and pedestrian trail that extends from Buffalo to Albany and from the northern border of the state to New York City, scheduled for completion by 2020.

The ride will begin in Macedon at 8:00 AM with light breakfast with bikers at Macedon Canal Park Pavilion, lunch in Lyons at Abbey Park at 12:20 PM, and end with the arrival at 5:15 PM in Montezuma at the Richmond Aqueduct followed by a BBQ dinner. In addition, there are several scheduled stops in the communities of Palmyra, Newark, Galen, Clyde and Savannah to highlight historic sites and work that has been done along the route.

There is no charge for the ride, but an optional fee for meals is \$10 for an individual or \$20 per family. Reservations for the meals are required by **Thursday, May 25<sup>th</sup>**. For a detailed schedule and to make reservations, register at:

[http://  
WayneCountyBusinessCouncil.com](http://WayneCountyBusinessCouncil.com)  
Contact Sandi Bastedo at (315) 331-8415, or email: [sb932@cornell.edu](mailto:sb932@cornell.edu)

Great strides have been made by the Closing the Gap Ad Hoc Committee in determining the most feasible and accessible route that includes signage, historical canal landmarks and natural resources located in Wayne and Cayuga Counties. In Cayuga County the trail will start at the Seneca River Bridge, following Route 31 and Bike Route 5 to Port Byron. In Port Byron the trail will pick back up again off highway at Schasel Park along the towpath to the Centerport Aqueduct Park in Weedsport.

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## 11TH ANNUAL MEETING & 2017-18 ELECTION - MHS BOARD

### MAYHEM, MYSTERY, AND MURDER: Five Tales of Cayuga County's Dark Side



We will be returning this year to Brenda's Diner for an

enjoyable dinner and presentation to celebrate the 11th year serving the Town of Montezuma as a historical society.

As a part of our annual meeting we will conduct a small business meeting to elect our 2017-18, board. With the support of our members and other funders, we have been able to continue to preserve, protect and promote our valuable historic resources. Thank you to everyone who has continued to serve and care deeply about making a difference in our community. I'm extremely grateful to have had the opportunity to work with you.

As a result of your commitment, our town has a beautiful park and trails that is helping to create a healthier, greener place for everyone to enjoy!

We are pleased to have a guest speaker, Robert Norton, who will be sure to entertain us with his talk, "Mayhem, Mystery, and Murder: Five Tales of Cayuga County's Dark Side."

Norton is a substitute teacher at Jordan-Elbridge, and history buff who has enjoyed delving into the stories he shares. We look forward to his presentation and hope you can join us. The program is open to the public and free of charge except for your dinner which will be ordered off the menu.

Please fill out the voting form enclosed with this letter to vote for board officers and trustees for the 2017-2018 year **before the Dinner on June 6th**. If you would be coming to the meeting, you can bring the form with you.

Hope you can join us!

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### 2017-2018 Membership Dues

If you haven't taken the opportunity to renew your membership for this year we hope you will consider re-joining. We appreciate your helping us to keep our heritage alive.

We have invested your donations in important programs and historic resources, and we are committed to continuing our efforts.

No matter where you live we appreciate the support. If you get a chance to visit, please let us know you are in the area. We would be glad to give you a tour of either the Historic Mentz Church or Montezuma Heritage Park.

If you are local and can participate, we need volunteers to be able to continue our work. A small town with little resources can be challenging to keep up with all there is to do.

### CLINTON DITCH SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

There are several opportunities to support this year's Erie Canal Outdoor Drama

It takes a tremendous amount of funds for this kind of quality performance. Please consider a placement in the program showing your support.

CANALLER - \$1000  
PERFORMANCE SPONSOR

LOCK TENDER - \$500 FULL  
PAGE IN PROGRAM

SAL THE MULE -  
\$250 HALF PAGE IN  
PROGRAM

HOGEE - \$100 1/4 PAGE IN  
PROGRAM

DITCH DIGGER - \$25 NAME  
IN PROGRAM

#### Make checks payable to:

NAMI of Cayuga County  
17 Lansing Street  
Auburn, NY 13021

Volunteers are also needed the week of the event to set up and take down the stage in Montezuma, and help with parking.

Please call Cheryl at  
315-776-4656 if you can help!

THANK YOU!

**REMINDER — 2017 MEMBERSHIP IS DUE**

*Your support is needed to help us continue to preserve, promote, and protect the heritage of our community. We are an independent non-profit educational 501(c)3 organization, which means we are not funded by the Town of Montezuma, county, state or federal taxes. Your membership fee helps us cover operating expenses, matching grants for projects done in Montezuma Heritage Park, minor maintenance on the Mentz Church and programs offered during the year. **Thank you for your support!***

**2017 MEMBERSHIP FORM**

Name (s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_ New or \_\_\_\_\_ Renewing Membership

*Our mailing and printing costs keep increasing. Newsletters can now be received via email and posted on our website. We would appreciate adding \$2 to your dues if you would like a copy mailed. \_\_\_\_\_ Yes, please mail the newsletter.*

**General Membership:**

- \$10 Individual
- \$15 Family
- \$50 Supporter
- \$25 Business Basic
- \$50 Business Supporter
- Other Donation

**Friends of the Montezuma Heritage Park:**

- \$10 Ditch Digger
- \$50 Sal the Mule
- \$500 Canaller
- \$25 Hoggee
- \$100 Lock Tender

Yes, I'm interested in Volunteer Opportunities with MHS; please contact me!

*The Montezuma Historical Society is a Private 501(c)(3) organization, and your donations and contributions are tax deductible.*

**2017-2018 Montezuma Historical Society Election Ballot**

***Please return before: June 6, 2017***

**Please vote for one of each officer position and eight trustees:**

- |                |   |                                       |
|----------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| President:     | <input type="checkbox"/> Mellony Carner   | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| Vice President | <input type="checkbox"/> Barbara Black    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| Treasurer      | <input type="checkbox"/> Kathy Decker     | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| Secretary      | <input type="checkbox"/> Cheryl Longyear  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| Trustee        | <input type="checkbox"/> Paul Baker       | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| Trustee        | <input type="checkbox"/> Roberta Baker    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| Trustee        | <input type="checkbox"/> James Decker     | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| Trustee        | <input type="checkbox"/> Shirley Gillmore | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| Trustee        | <input type="checkbox"/> Cynthia Laraway  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| Trustee        | <input type="checkbox"/> Edward Laraway   | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| Trustee        | <input type="checkbox"/> Stanley Longyear | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| Trustee        | <input type="checkbox"/> Robert Melvin    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

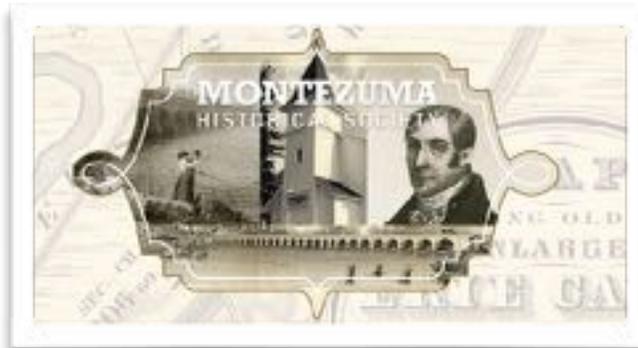
Yes, I will be attending the Annual Meeting on June 6, 2016, 7 PM at Brenda's Restaurant

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WEBSITE:

[montezumahistoricalsociety.org](http://montezumahistoricalsociety.org).



VISIT US ON  
FACEBOOK

MONTEZUMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY -  
FRIENDS OF MONTEZUMA  
HERITAGE PARK