

Historical Society Remembers Summit Park

The Battle of Oriskany Historical Society will dedicate a historic roadside marker to commemorate Summit Park on Saturday, October 12, 2019 at 11:00 am. The marker will be installed at the corner of Utica Street and Oklahoma Avenue in the Village of Oriskany, across the street from the USS *Oriskany* Anchor Memorial. The Oriskany Museum will be open afterward for a reception of cider and baked goods.

Summit Park was a tourist attraction situated on the bluffs above Oriskany in the early decades of the twentieth century. The park opened in 1897 and operated annually from Memorial Day to Labor Day until its last season in 1926. A dedicated trolley line brought visitors from Utica directly into the park by way of Oklahoma Avenue, where the marker will be dedicated. The park boasted a roller coaster, carousel, arcade games, a dance hall, an amphitheatre, and boating on the Oriskany Creek. The dance hall hosted full orchestras from around the state and the amphitheatre had its fair share of big names, including former President Theodore Roosevelt, who spoke to a crowd of 10,000 at the park in the Summer of 1910.

In 1959, the site reopened under new ownership as Summit Park Playground, boasting the “largest and safest pool in New York State” along with volleyball courts, a baseball diamond, concession stand and “acres of picnic grounds.” The park was sold again in 1966.

Though there have been attempts to redevelop the property since the park’s closing, the site remains untouched and most of the property has returned to forest. Over the intervening decades, memories of Summit Park continued to delight those who attended the park in their youth, but living memories of the site are beginning to fade. The historical society hopes the historic marker will preserve the history of this local landmark for generations to come.

The historic marker itself was made possible by a grant from the William G. Pomeroy Foundation®, a private, grant-making foundation established in 2005. One of its main initiatives is to help people celebrate their community’s history by providing fully funded grants for historic roadside markers and plaques. In 2006, the Pomeroy Foundation launched its first program, the NYS Historic Marker Grant Program, commemorating historic people, places or things. Since then, the Foundation has expanded to offer marker grants in the State of Ohio and has established several nationwide programs: Historic Transportation Canals Marker Grant Program, Legends & Lore® Marker Grant Program, National Register Signage Grant Program, and National Women’s Suffrage Marker Program. In all, the Foundation has funded nearly 900 grants for roadside markers and plaques in multiple states, all the way to Alaska. To learn more or apply for a grant, visit: www.wgpfoundation.org.

The Oriskany Museum is located at 420 Utica Street in the Village of Oriskany just off State Route 69 between the cities of Utica and Rome. The museum boasts a collection that spans American history, from Native American arrowheads to Vietnam War flight gear. The museum is open Wednesday through Saturday from 1:00-5:00 p.m. or by special appointment. Admission

is free. The museum is located in Trinkaus Park, which features the anchor from the USS *Oriskany*, an A4-Skyhawk plane, tennis courts, and a children's playground.

This event will correspond with NYS Path Through History Weekend, a statewide initiative to showcase New York State's rich and fascinating history. For the latest events and happenings at the Oriskany Museum, please visit oriskanymuseum.com or call 315-736-7529.

For immediate release. For press questions or concerns, please contact Alexis Werchowski Albright, Oriskany Museum Curator, by email at oriskanymuseum@gmail.com.