

ALONG THE CANAL

Palmyra's own Path through History

Over the last few years I have spent a good bit of time working to promote the Erie Canal statewide and beyond and the Port of Palmyra in particular. Part of that effort involved the identification of the first round of the *NYS Path through History* sites. My assignment was to recommend potential canal related possibilities. I was delighted that of the 12 sites chosen in round one three were directly related to the Erie Canal – the Museum of Waterways and Industry in Seneca Falls, the Aldrich Change Bridge in Macedon and our own Historic Palmyra. You know from the proliferation of PTH signs on the Thruway and major highways that many more have been added, but the canal had a presence at the beginning.

I bring this up several years later because now, as a Palmyra Harbor Host (more on that another time), I continue spend much time at the Port of Palmyra Marina. One day, while chatting with boaters it occurred to me that the Palmyra marina had its own, Palmyra-focused Path through History right there in front of me. They include in the mini-park above the canal the monument in honor of our Viet Nam Era Veterans. It was a gift to the community by a local resident. Surrounding the monument are six flags: our American flag, Air Force, Army, Navy, Coast Guard, and the Marines Corps. The Palmyra-Macedon Lions Club has taken responsibility for the flags.

Just to the east of the monument is a mural, also a gift to Palmyra by one of its residents. The property owner proposed the idea of a mural on his newly installed fence and the Pal-Mac Middle School Art Club took him up on it.

The double- faced wayfaring sign in front of Muddy Waters Café shows the proud crew of the canal boat Palmyra on one side and a 19th century map of the village on the other. It was one of the first signs placed by the Erie Canal Heritage Corridor Commission. To its east is a mini-garden honoring Peter Wilson, twice elected mayor, 1996 – 2001, of the Village of Palmyra. It was during Peter's term that the idea of a marina became a reality. Like the veterans' monument, Peter's garden was sponsored by friends. It is maintained by the village.

North of the Comfort station (showers and restrooms) if you walk toward the canal you will find the first of two anniversary plaques commemorating the ongoing service provided to Palmyra and its people by the members of the Palmyra-Macedon Lions Club, 1958-2008, and the Palmyra- Macedon Rotary Club, 1905-2015. Finally, right at the water is the handsome brick sign welcoming visitors to *Palmyra, Queen of Canal Towns*. It, too, was a gift of the local craftsman who built it.

Our small but beautiful marina offers not only access to the historic Erie Canal but also a short but meaningful introduction to Palmyra history.

Vicky Daly

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