

Historian's Report, August 2026

On the Economic Value to the Village of Historic Resources

Because I will again begin with the subject of celebrations, I would like to introduce the topic with some interesting results about the value of historic resources to a community. In our case, it is not just a single resource, but an entire dual historic district, Aurora/Wells College, a unique resource even after Wells' closure. This resource is dependent for its value on the integrity of the district: parts (buildings in their settings) cannot be removed at will and maintain overall integrity.

From the State Historian, Devin Lander,

...studies show that heritage tourists spend more time (and more money) on their trips than other tourists. Successfully promoting a location's history depends on an accurate and engaging presentation. Successful efforts continue to have an important positive effect on local and regional economies. (<https://nysm.nysed.gov/research-collections/state-history/news/elevating-history-how-local-government-historians-help/>)

How significant is the effect, and what is needed to keep its value? From the Rockland County Business Gazette,

The numbers statewide make the economic case plainly. In 2024, a record 315.4 million visitors came to New York, spending \$94 billion, generating \$145.2 billion in total economic impact, and supporting nearly 742,000 jobs. Tourism is one of our state's largest industries, and well-maintained parks and historic sites are among the reasons people choose to visit — and to come back. When a trail washes out or a historic home closes for repairs it cannot afford, the loss is not only cultural. It ripples through every business that depends on those visitors. (Rockland County Business Journal, <https://rcbizjournal.com/2026/08/18/our-national-parks-and-historical-sites-are-economic-engines-congress-should-reinvest-in-them/>)

This is why historic preservation is important to Aurora.

Regular Report

Celebrations: A unique celebration took place on Wednesday, August 5, honoring Pleasant Rowland on the occasion of the completion of the Patrick Tavern porch. My role involved coordination with Katie Waller, arranging for a plaque, and setting up in Patrick Tavern, including historic china from the Village collection. In addition, I revised the history highlights prepared for AuroraFest as a handout of "Seven Little Stories of Early Days at Patrick Tavern."

On Saturday, August 22, I represented Cayuga County at the dedication of the new memorial to the 111th NY Volunteers, "True Valor at Gettysburg," in Lyons' Central Park. All but the keynote speaker were requested to keep remarks to two minutes. My introduction gave the significance of the regiment to our area: "Over half the companies of the Hundred and Eleventh were raised in the towns and villages of Cayuga County. The monument's rifleman bears on his cap the designation of Company K, the 'hometown unit' of the Village of Aurora and Towns of Ledyard and Springport." I included a few excerpts from the speech by Francis Finch from which I read on Memorial Day.

Display: The display in Patrick Tavern, "Our Home: How We Saw It," received another planned update, with installation of a small display of artifacts from the archaeological work at Patrick Tavern in 2000. Open every Tuesday, 4:30-6:00 p.m. and alternate Saturdays from July 25; 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Queries: A query on the historic china used on Aug. 5.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Schwab, PhD

Village Historian