



TO: Cultural Education Committee

FROM: Elizabeth R. Berlin *Elizabeth R. Berlin*

SUBJECT: New York State History Month Activities

DATE: October 6, 2016

AUTHORIZATION(S): *Mary Ellen Elin*

SUMMARY

Issue for Discussion

November is New York State History Month. This is time to celebrate New York State history and the work of New York State's historians.

Reason(s) for Consideration

Arts and Cultural Affairs Law, Section 57.03, designates November as New York State History Month as a celebration of state history and the contributions of state and local government historians. The law authorizes the Education Department to undertake projects to recognize the month.

Background Information

The New York State Museum, is working with the New York State Archives, New York State Library, Museum Association of New York, the New York Academy of History, the Association of Public Historians of New York State, Greater Hudson Heritage Network, Lakes to Locks Passage, Erie Canalway National Heritage Area, I Love NY, Path Through History, and NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to get the message out about New York State History Month.

In 2015, the State Museum created a New York State History Month logo for statewide use and a website that features educational resources, a schedule of History Month programs as the Museum, and a "New York Minutes" page featuring a New York State history fact of the day throughout November: <http://www.nysm.nysed.gov/historymonth/>. These resources continue for 2016 and have been supplemented by the Office of State History website.

The State Museum's Office of State History and Education Department coordinates statewide activities in November and throughout the year with the state's many history museums, historical organizations, and the network of officially designated municipal historians.

Listed below are the State Museum's History Month activities and statewide initiatives with cooperating organizations.

State Museum Activities:

Creation of a specially designed logo and press kit to be used by any New York State organization sponsoring History Month activities.

History Month web page listing Museum, Library, and Archives resources and offerings and linking to activities sponsored by cooperating institutions statewide.

"New York Minutes," a web and social media feature showing significant statewide historical events for each day in November.

The State Museum is working with Teaching the Hudson Valley to specifically reach out to teachers and give them ideas on how to use NYS History month in their classrooms. This will be followed up with a blog post and social media posts throughout the month.

Program: Lunch Bite: "Henry DiSpirito: From Stonemason to Sculptor." Ashley Hopkins-Benton, Senior Historian and Curator, will present a brief 20 minute tour on the Henry DiSpirito sculpture Torso. (November 3rd)

Film Screening in Collaboration with WMHT Public Television: "Mario Cuomo: Poetry and Prose" (November 6th)

Program: Brain Food for the Curious Short Talks at Lunchtime: "New York's Presidents and Presidential Contenders." Senior Historian and Curator Aaron Noble will present a short talk on New York's historical presidential winners and losers. (November 8th)

Lecture & Book Signing. Photographers Thomas Rinaldi and Robert Yasinsac will present photographs from the *Hudson Valley Ruins* exhibition currently on display at the State Museum, together with historic images, to tell the story of the region through its ruins. The authors will be offering a glimpse of their work as homage to the many deserted buildings along the river as well as a plea for their preservation. (November 12th)

Program: Behind the Scenes Tour of NYS Museum's History Collections. (November 20th)

Program: Brain Food for the Curious Short Talks at Lunchtime: "Erie Canal Warehouse." Senior Historian and Curator, Brad Utter will discuss the history of a canal warehouse that was located in Mohawk, NY. The Museum has numerous objects from the warehouse that will be featured in the upcoming exhibit "New York's Erie Canal:

Gateway to a Nation”, including the main workhorse of the warehouse, a giant windlass/hoist that raised and lowered cargo from wagons and canal boats.

External History Month Programs with NYSM Staff:

"Preserving the Garden: The Road to Recognizing the Historic Woodstock Festival Site" A Special Presentation at Bethel Woods Center for the Arts, Bethel NY. The Museum at Bethel Woods Director and Senior Curator Wade Lawrence and New York State Historian Devin Lander invite you to learn about one of the pivotal moments of the sixties and the efforts currently being done to preserve and secure official historic designation for the festival site. The day will begin with light refreshments and a casual meet and greet, followed by an engaging multimedia presentation about Woodstock and the cultural center that builds upon its legacy today. Following the presentation and Q&A, weather permitting, Mr. Lawrence will lead a walking tour of the historic site, pointing out the landscape clues about what happened there almost five decades ago and Bethel Woods' plans for the historic landscape's future.

The Museum at Bethel Woods is located at 200 Hurd Road, Bethel (Sullivan County), New York. Visit www.bethelwoodscenter.org for more details. (November 13th)

Statewide Initiatives:

Statewide History Month activities are listed through the I Love New York and Path Through History websites.

Researching New York Conference:

Programs will be held at the State Museum. New York State Historian Devin Lander will be facilitating a workshop on grant writing tips for small historical organizations. Lander will also be involved in several of the panels and events related to the Conference on the UAlbany campus. (November 17-19)