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Friday, July 3, 2026

## Historian's Report for June 2026

**Dear Supervisor Holdridge and Board Members,**

Following is a brief summary of the highlights of the Town Historian's Office activities in June 2026.

### Exhibits & Historic Preservation

June's efforts took center stage at the 1915 Erie Station on June 7, 2026, with the successful launch of the "*Chester in the Revolution*" exhibit. This milestone included contributing detailed informational narratives for the educational signage and item installations, alongside fabricating a custom mount to securely display the 1804 Nathaniel Knapp gravestone.

The cast aluminum "*Welcome to Chester*" historic marker was recovered remarkably intact from last month's motor vehicle accident (MVA) and successfully reinstalled by the Town of Chester Highway Department.



### Public Inquiries & Research Assistance

The department accommodated diverse research requests from both local and out-of-state researchers. Notable genealogical and property research was conducted for Mr. R. Price of Horseheads, NY, to clarify historical distinctions between multiple enterprises that operated under the "Greycourt Inn" name. Additionally, Mr. Musser, an out-of-state researcher, was assisted in tracing Cornelius Board, who testified at the 1785 Wawayanda-Cheesecock Patent trial. To support ongoing regional scholarship, this researcher was provided with an extensive, indexed bibliography of the Orange County Historical Society (OCHS) Journals.

In collaboration with researchers Jim Baird, Mike Baird, Gina Chiusano, et al., we deciphered orders, letters, and other documents, most of which were military communications regarding and including technical data on the interlocking Hudson River defenses supported by the continental army artillery armory that operated at Chester from June through November 1779. The central element to the defense of the Hudson Valley and northern colonies was the massive 600-yard, 66-ton iron chain forged by Chester resident Peter Townsend's Sterling Iron Works. Fieldwork included participating in a brief authorized, though ultimately unsuccessful, expedition to document the location of this Revolutionary War Chester Artillery Encampment with physical evidence.

### Community Engagement & Fieldwork

We welcomed out-of-state tourists from Tennessee for an exclusive after-hours tour of the current exhibits at the 1915 Erie Station. The Orange County Chapter of the New York State Archeological Association held its annual picnic at the Chester Commons in 2026. During the event, I had the opportunity to showcase a few farm artifacts that were recovered from the above-mentioned brief expedition.

In local sports and culture, a specialized brief on Chester's historical claims to fame—focusing on its legacy with cream cheese and early baseball—was prepared for Village of Chester Mayor Tom Bell ahead of his ceremonial first pitch at the Hudson Valley Renegades' 2026 opening game.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Clifton Patrick", written over a horizontal line.

*Cc: Linda Zappala, Town Clerk, Town of Chester; Aaron Lefkowitz, Historian, Village of Chesters*