

Rexford Ramble

A summary of seven stops and points of interest

Vischer Ferry Firehouse: Hamlet of Vischer Ferry began about 1787. Increased activity during the Erie Canal period 1840-1860 when many of the present homes were built by boat builders from the two local dry-docks. Greek Revival was the popular style of architecture at this time. This style was spread by published design or pattern books. After the turn-of-the-century Vischer

Ferry became a resort community. A hotel built in 1797 originally stood on the site of the firehouse. After it burned in 1947, the Vischer Ferry Volunteer Fire Department was formed.

1. Ferry Drive at Mohawk River: Home of Nicholas Vischer, circa 1740, the oldest home now standing in Clifton Park. Site of Mill and Ferry established by Nicholas's son, Eldert Vischer, in the late 18th century. Remains of Erie Canal public bridge and dry dock. Remains of toll bridge across the Mohawk River 1900-1902.

2. Lock 7, Barge Canal: After riding along the Old Erie Canal Towpath with the canal on one side and the Mohawk River-Barge Canal on the other, we arrive at the Lock 7 Dam on the Barge Canal. The Erie Canal opened in 1825 providing a water route west from Albany to Buffalo. Those joining the westward migration from New England passed through Clifton Park. The Barge Canal replaced the Erie Canal in 1917. The Mohawk River was dammed in 1907 to create Lock 7 of the Barge Canal. The Hydro-Electric Plant was completed in 1925, and enlarged in 1989 by the Power Authority of New York State to provide more than double its original power.

3. Riverview Orchard: A number of Farms still exist in Clifton Park. In fact an annual event in September called "Farm Fest" celebrates Clifton Park's remaining farms. Several apple orchards exist in the southern part of our Town, in fact, John MacIntosh, the man who propagated the MacIntosh apple, once lived on Sugar Hill Road where Bowman Orchard is now located. As you approach Route 146 at Rexford, note the view of the Mohawk River on your left with the Helderberg Escarpment in the distance.

4. Site of Rexford Amusement Park: Rexford Flats was first settled by Edward Rexford. His great grandson, Cyrus Rexford, built the large Victorian house at Riverview Road and Route 146, now Rexford Crossings, in 1883. The Methodist Church, built in 1839, and the blacksmith shop across the road are survivors of Rexford's canal era. By 1906, a full fledged amusement park, Luna Park, existed at Rexford. It had a merry-go-round, roller coaster, airplane ride, games, refreshments and a picnic grove. An electric trolley brought people from nearby Schenectady. The park failed during the depression years, and has since vanished. Many old timers remember the park as Dolle's Park, named after the family who last owned it.

5. Schenectady Yacht Club: The Erie Canal caused Rexford's major period of growth. The Yacht Club headquarters was once a canal store built about 1900. It was perched on the edge of Lock 22, now buried. Lock 21, located on the Yacht Club grounds was constructed during the 1842 enlargement of the Erie Canal. The south chamber is used by the Club for putting boats into the river in Spring, and taking them out in Fall. Remains of the Erie Canal aqueduct

are seen near the Route 146 bridge. Constructed in 1841, it once carried canal boats across the Mohawk River. The large arches supported the towpath.

6. Grooms Corners: Tavern of James Grooms built about 1820. First Clifton Park Town Board Meeting held here in March 1828. Later operated as a store and billiard parlor. The farm house of Nicholas and Catherine Vischer, built about, 1802, is now King Crest Farm. As you turn on to Vischer Ferry Road, note the Grooms cemetery where Alexander MacIntosh, father of John MacIntosh, is buried. Also notice the large monument to a couple who went down with the steamship “Atlantic” on Lake Erie.

7. Best House: Home built by Abraham Best Family in 1815. They came from Claverack, Columbia County. Abraham and his wife Harriet are interred in a vault near the house. Stony Creek Reservoir established in 1952, and it was necessary to move the fine Federal brick home of Francis Vischer. Note the stone bridge and the home of William Peters, c. 1814 at the intersection of Vischer Ferry and Crescent Roads.

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Mile	Turn	Direction	Street or Road
0.0	L	W	Riverview & Crescent Roads. Start at Vischer Ferry Fire hall.
0.1	L	S	Ferry Drive. STOP #1
0.3	R	W	Canal Towpath. Walk up hill at dam.
1.6		N	Hydro project overlook. STOP #2
1.8	L	NW	Riverview Road.
3.4			Riverview Orchard. STOP #3
4.9	S	NW	Stop sign. (Straight ahead)
6.2	L	S	Balltown Rd (Rt. 146). Regroup at Stewart’s before traffic light.
6.3	R	W	Main Street to Bluff Road.
6.8	U turn	E	(turnaround) STOP #4 (amusement park)
7.3	R	E	Main Street (wait to cross Rt 146)
		E	Schenectady Yacht Club. Stop #5
8.0	R	N	Balltown Road (Rt 146)
8.3	R	E	Riverview Road
10.6	L	N	Droms Road. Elmer Droms on left at 11.0 mi.
11.4	S	E	Grooms Road
11.7	R	S	Sugar Hill Road. STOP #6
12.2	L	E	Ray Road
13.1	R	S	Vischer Ferry Road.
14.1			Abraham Best House. STOP #7
14.9	R	SW	Crescent Road.
15.4			Vischer Ferry Fire Hall. Ride Finish