

THE LOST CITY OF TRYON TRAIL

A HISTORIC TRAIL IN BRIGHTON, NEW YORK



The Lost City of Tryon Trail is an approved Historic Trail of the Boy Scouts of America and is administered by the Seneca Waterways Council Scouting Historical Society. It offers hikers a fantastic opportunity to experience a geographic location of enduring historic significance in Upstate New York.

2018 EDITION

Seneca Waterways Council Scouting Historical Society
2320 Brighton-Henrietta Town Line Road, Rochester, NY 14623

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A Nice Hike For Any Season



Introduction

The Irondequoit Bay area was once at the crossroads of travel and commerce for Native Americans. It was the home of the Algonquin and later the Seneca, visited by a plethora of famous explorers, soldiers, missionaries and pioneers. This guidebook provides only a small glimpse of the wonders of this remote wilderness prior to 1830.

The Lost City of Tryon Trail takes you through a historic section of Brighton, New York, in Monroe County's Ellison Park. The trail highlights some of the remnants of the former City of Tryon (portions of which were located within the present park) as well as other historic sites.

It was also the location of the southernmost navigable terminus of Irondequoit Creek via Irondequoit Bay, more commonly known as "The Landing."

The starting and ending points are at the parking lot on North Landing Road, opposite the house at #225.

Use of the Trail

The Lost City of Tryon Trail is located within Ellison Park and is open for use in accordance with park rules and regulations. Seasonal recreation facilities, water, and comfort stations are available. See the park's page on the Monroe County, NY website for additional information. Trail patches may be purchased by anyone who completes the trail (see the form on the last page).

Safety Tips:

1) The fields near North Landing and Blossom roads have become a popular venue for Disc Golf, especially on Sunday mornings. Please be cautious and respectful while hiking.

2) Portions of the trail near the creek can be muddy and slippery. Hiking boots are recommended, particularly in the early spring and after rainy weather.

The Birth of a City

The City of Tryon was the dream of a land speculator and investor named Salmon Tryon. He began exploring the remote Genesee Country for a property to purchase. At the head of Irondequoit Bay he found the perfect location with everything he dreamed of - fresh water from a natural spring, healthy standing timber, a strategic location on navigable land and water routes, a good harbor, and a growing population. Salmon purchased the land from a pioneer named John Lusk in 1797 and began the construction of his dream. The location was still a remote wilderness, having been secured for settlement by the Buffalo Creek Treaty less than ten years prior. His neighbor, Orringh Stone, ran a tavern just down the road (now known as the Stone – Tolan House and maintained by the Landmark Society of Western New York). Stone’s Tavern was a well-known meeting place for merchants who often arrived in the area via the landing on Tryon’s property. Many Seneca used the area as seasonal fishing and hunting grounds and would gather at a large boulder near the tavern. Tryon dreamed of building a city with a vast shipping and trading complex, and soon his property became the first non-indigenous settlement west of Canandaigua.



The Stone - Tolan House Today

By the following year, Salmon had accrued gambling debts and decided to sell the property to his brother, John, at a profit. John Tryon and his business partners, Amasa Adams and Augustus Griswold, built a business complex which included a five-story log warehouse, a store, a distillery, an ashery and a shipping dock including boats, as well as what is now known as “The Old Tryon House.” The distillery and the ashery were the first to be put into operation. As the land was cleared, the trees were burned, the resulting ashes were soaked in water, and the product that remained after leaching was known as potash. It was a very valuable substance used for making soap, glass and gunpowder. The cost of clearing the

land was less than the value of the potash, resulting in profit. Some of the cleared timber not converted to potash fueled the distillery, which was used to produce liquor from Genesee Valley grain. When the two products were ready for sale, the shipping docks provided a means of transport to markets in Canada and other locations around Lake Ontario. By 1800 the little wilderness city was growing strong.

Let's Get Hiking!



The hike begins at the parking lot on North Landing Road. Near this spot was a large cast iron historic marker installed by the New York State Education Department in 1940 and removed by park staff several years ago – can you guess why? Walk from the

parking lot to the sidewalk on North Landing Road and head south (approximately 650 feet) towards Blossom Road. About half way to Blossom Road is the first stop on the trail.

1) THE OLD TRYON HOUSE (319 North Landing Road)

This home was built for Tryon agent and store manager Augustus Griswold about 1799 and is one of only two remaining town structures. The other is located at 421 North Landing Road. When the town was laid out, the main street was located in the back yard of the house and ran parallel to the present North Landing Road. Now look to the east for the second stop.



2) THE OLD SPRING



On the hill east of the old Tryon house is the approximate location of a natural spring that was used by the residents of Tryon. Not much remains of the spring other than a spongy area on the hill. Can you find it? Sometimes cattails can be found growing on the spot. Continue south (approximately 290 feet) along the sidewalk to the third stop.

3) 1912 HISTORICAL MARKER

Near the corner of Blossom and North Landing Roads you can read a marker placed in 1912 for the centennial celebration of the City of Rochester. Look to the north for a nice view of the valley leading to the Indian (also known as Irondequoit) Landing, which you will visit later. From the marker proceed east (NNE) down the long hill. Stay to the right of the pine trees in front of you at



the bottom of the hill. Continue down the hill approximately 1084 feet until you see disc golf marker #9. On your left you will see a garden- follow the edge of the garden another 186 feet to disc golf marker #10. A few feet before you reach the marker, take the very short trail leading northwest through the trees to the fourth stop.

4) STONE STEPS IN OLD GARDEN

The garden, which was built in the early years of the park, is a nice place to rest for a drink of water. It was once filled with roses and was a popular spot for wedding photos. Next head northwest along Park Road. You will pass a swamp and part of Irondequoit Creek. On the right-hand side of the trail (663 feet) is a long stretch of stone stairs leading down to the creek.



If you decide to explore the stairs be careful- they are very slippery when wet. Continue north, approximately 777 feet, along the trail back towards the parking lot until you reach a log structure on your right, which is the fifth stop.

5) FORT SCHUYLER

Fort Schuyler was built in 1721 to study trade between the French, British and Seneca. The French took an interest in this area long ago. The explorer René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle and a group of missionaries camped here in 1669. Father Hennipin, who is credited with discovering Niagara Falls, built a chapel of tree bark. Two decades later, in 1687, the Marquis Denonville landed to the north at Irondequoit Bay and marched through this area. His forces attacked the Senecas living several miles to the South and



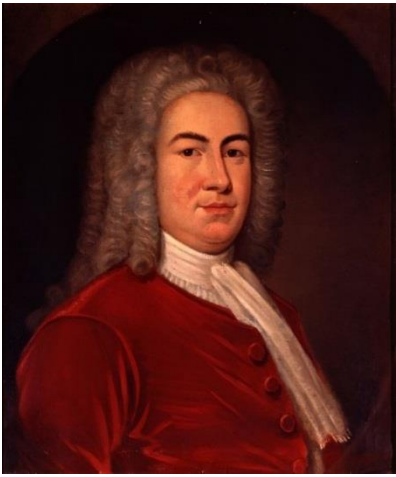
La Salle

mercilessly destroyed their village at Ganondagan. In 1701 the Seneca made peace with the French in Canada – as a result a very lucrative trade arrangement grew. New York merchants in Albany sold goods to French traders in Montreal who then bartered them for furs with the Seneca at locations such as the landing

(our next stop).



Denonville



Burnett

In 1717 the French built Fort Des Sables, in the area now occupied by Sea Breeze Amusement Park, to support their trading efforts. Two years later, William Burnett, the newly appointed Governor of New York, became determined to strengthen the colony's position on the frontier and improve its relationship with the Iroquois. Burnett altered the trade



Schuyler

by directing it through Iroquois lands

instead of Montreal, ending the Albany-Montreal Trade. In October 1721 he sent Peter Schuyler and a band of Dutch New Yorkers to observe and report on trade at the landing. A simple log structure was built in the wilderness and occupied by the band. The fort was in such a remote location that it was difficult to supply and only remained in operation for a year. The following year, Burnet was informed that the French had begun construction of Fort Niagara at the western end of the lake. He then ordered the construction of Fort Oswego to the east. The disruption of trade and other issues led to increased British – French – Iroquois tensions, culminating in the onset of the French and Indian War in 1754.



Historic marker located across the road from Sea Breeze Park (intersection of Culver and Lake Bluff Roads) near the site where Ft. Des Sables was built in 1717.



Historic marker located in Sandbar Park (Lake Road - Town of Webster) near the site where Denonville's forces landed in 1687.



The structure in front of you is a reproduction of Schuyler's outpost, and was built in 1938. The original outpost was probably more like a cabin than this fortified blockhouse style building. Imagine spending the winter here, thousands of miles away from your family and friends.

In 1798, nearly 80 years after Schuyler left, Salmon Tryon built his warehouse here.

Head down the path on the right (south) side of the fort, using the path on the left, and then north to a bridge over Irondequoit Creek. Cross the bridge and head to the large rock on your right which is the sixth stop (approximately 1751 feet).

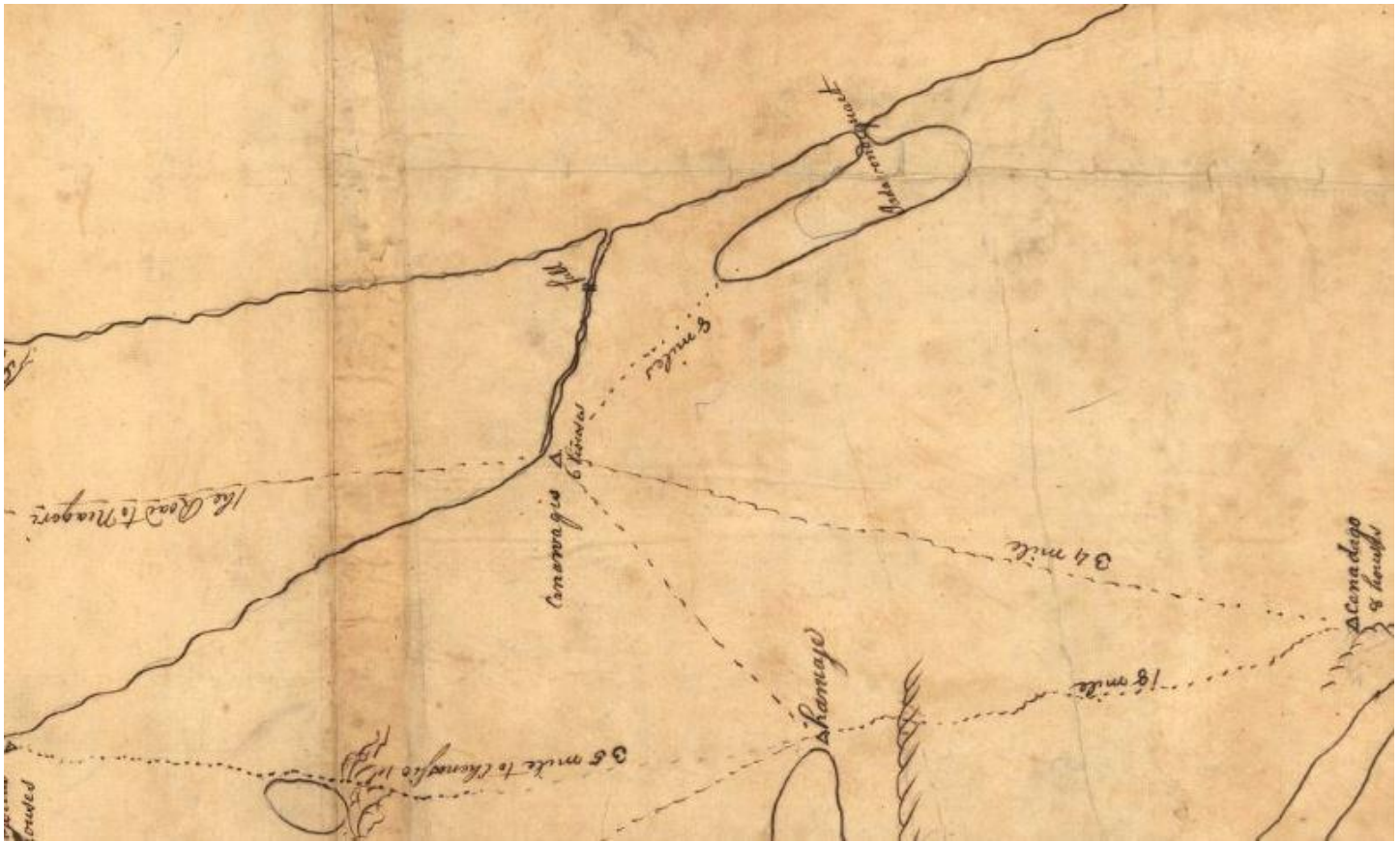
This marker, located nearby in front of Our Lady of Mercy High School, memorializes the earliest missionaries who visited the area.



Former Tryon road and now a path, on the right side of the fort leading to the bridge.



The bridge over Irondequoit Creek



Circa 1760 map showing the trail from Irondequoit Bay and the Landing to the Genesee River and beyond.

6) INDIAN / IRONDEQUOIT LANDING ROCK

The path you took to this site was the main road during Tryon days. The landing received its name due to its use for hundreds of years as a meeting place for first peoples and later traders and explorers. Travelers on Lake Ontario would enter Irondequoit Bay and make their way south to this spot, where the creek became too narrow for large vessels to navigate. On early maps dating back hundreds of years, it was marked as the beginning of a portage that ended at Red Creek on route to the Genesee River, which provided a water route to Seneca villages in the south, and a link to trails heading westward to the Niagara and



Ohio regions. The creek is now only a few feet wide, making it hard to imagine large ships at dock. Once Europeans found their way to the area, it was used for trade as well as a strategic vantage point.

Now turn around:

Option 1: If not flooded, head east 263 feet to the sign for the Butler's Gap Trail. Turn left and follow the trail (609 feet, east) to a gap in the hill and see if you can find the granite marker which is the next stop.

Option 2: If flooded, head east approximately 132 feet towards the tree line to the small post marker for Indian Landing Trail. Take the trail to your left approximately 164 feet to the fork in the trail. Follow the trail on the right that goes in front of the tree line for approximately 156 feet to a sign for the Butler's Gap Trail. Turn left and follow the trail (609 feet, east) to a gap in the hill and see if you can find the granite marker which is the next stop.

7) LOOKOUT SITE OF BUTLER'S RANGERS



“SITE OF BUTLER’S RANGERS’
LOOKOUT POINT CIRCA 1770”

Granite marker made by Gibney Monument Works for a 1985 Eagle Scout service project that developed this trail.

Butler's Rangers were 500 Scotch Highlanders and Indian Allies who prowled the frontier to plunder and kill. They cast their lot with the British during the Revolutionary War and became bitter Tories.

To your left and right are steep, difficult trails that circle the area and provide a fantastic view. If you decide to explore further, proceed with caution.

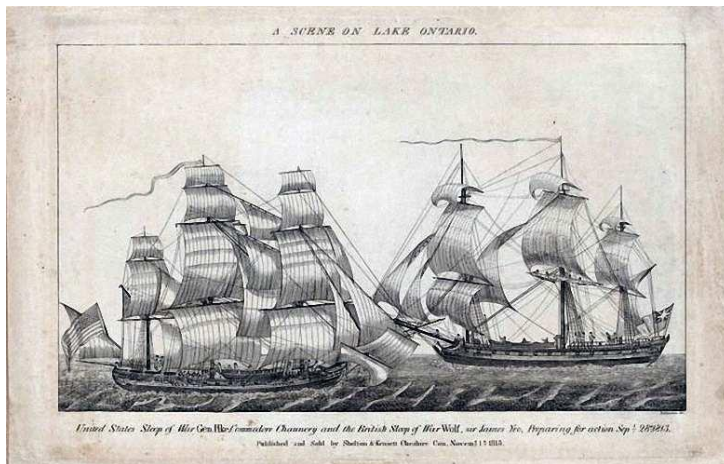
Otherwise, turn around and follow the trail back across the bridge, head up the

hill to the fort and continue to the parking lot and restrooms. Originally the trail continued from the granite marker right in a southeasterly direction past the swamp and out to the dirt road, but over the years it was overtaken by the swamp.

THE END OF TRYON

It is hard now to imagine what happened to the once prosperous City of Tryon. Its end began with improvements in transportation and technology that made the advantages originally offered here obsolete.

The decline started in 1807 with the death of John Tryon. While trying to settle the estate, his executor also died. Tryon facilities were in serious need of repair, particularly the warehouse and docks, but funds were scarce, and the land had to be sold. It became impossible to sell the property as a whole, so the distillery was dismantled, and lots were sold individually. In addition to these problems, the War of 1812 added to the decline of commerce on the lakes,

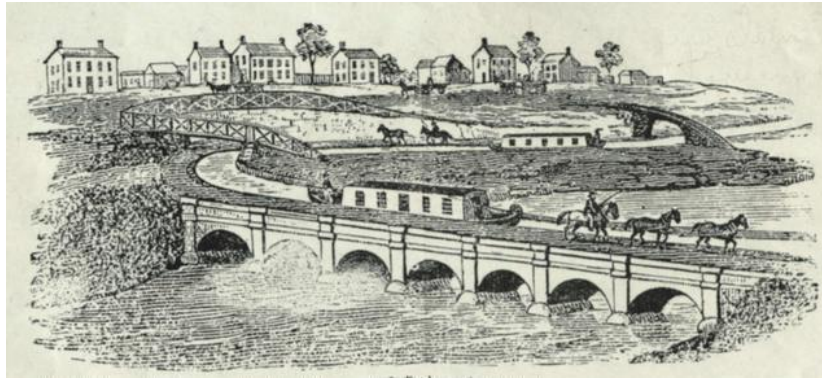


“A Scene on Lake Ontario”

US sloop of war Gen. Pike and
British sloop of war Wolfe
preparing for action, Sept. 28, 1813

ultimately affecting the City of Tryon. Many fascinating tales have been written of the adventures of traders who traveled along the trade route between Tryon and Oswego during this time. One individual had his vessel confiscated by the British and Americans on two separate trade attempts.

The opening of the local sections of the Erie Canal from 1822 - 23 was the final blow to Tryon. The canal bypassed Irondequoit Bay and provided a water route with no need for portage and the difficulties associated with using the lake, bay and creek, such as storms, silt buildup and dock congestion. While Tryon began fading away, the nearby villages of Brighton and Pittsford became thriving



towns. At the Genesee Falls, Rochesterville became a boomtown with one of the fastest growing populations in the nation. The small commercial settlement of Tryon was cut-off from its purpose and thus never became the vast thriving city its founder dreamed it would be.

Over the years the Tryon heirs sold their properties and farms took over which were gradually replaced by residential areas. Historians recognized the significance of the location and began installing historical markers long ago. In 1926 Ellison Park became the first official Monroe County Park, the result of the acquisition of approximately 200 acres from Mr. and Mrs. Frank Ellison in memory of Mr. Ellison's father, Nathaniel. In the first decades of the park, it was frequently used by Scouts and many camporees were held there. Tragedy struck in 1928 when a group of Boy Scouts decided to disobey their Scoutmaster's instructions and go for a swim in the creek. 14-year-old Tony DiMiortino went in the water with two other Scouts and drowned.

There are still a few traces of the Lost City of Tryon left for us today. The trail you hiked from the fort to the landing was once a heavily used road. The "Old Tryon House" still sits at the top of the hill on N. Landing Road (#319), and across the road you can find the marshy spot that once was a free-flowing spring. "The New Tryon House" is standing at 421 N. Landing Road, and if you use your imagination you can almost see the large warehouse in the vicinity of the replica of Fort Schuyler. The fort has been memorialized in the flag of the Town of Brighton and on insignia worn by officers of the Town of Brighton

Police Department and on the patch for hikers of this trail.



Thank you for hiking the trail. We hope you enjoyed the fascinating story of Tryon!

About the Trail

The trail, original tri-fold brochure and patch were designed and developed in 1985 by Life Scout Michael VanAs with the guidance of Troop 55 Scoutmaster Howard Beye (1933-2008). The work served as Mike's community service project required to attain the rank of Eagle Scout. The trail was administered and maintained by Troop 55 for more than 20 years, until Mr. Beye passed away and the troop folded soon after. Troop 55 was one of the oldest troops in Otetiana Council and had been using the park since at least 1928. In 2010 all administrative materials were donated to the Seneca Waterways Council Scouting Historical Society. The trail was slightly modified and a greatly expanded brochure was written between 2015 and 2018. The research and writing was completed by Robert D. Cunningham, archivist and co-chair of the society, with the assistance of Julie Cunningham. The historical consultant was Mary Jo Lamphear, historian of the Town of Brighton.



Troop 55 at
Camp Massawepie
(Forester) in 1985

Howard Beye, middle
row, right end and
Michael VanAs, top
row, second from right

Postscript (from 1985 tri-fold brochure)

The original project could not have been completed without the cooperation and support of the following individuals and organizations:

- The Brighton Historical Society (Roberta Lichuisa)
- The Monroe County Parks Department (Calvin F. Reynolds, Director)
- Gibney Monument Works, Inc.
- Scoutmaster Howard Beye and Scouts of Troop 55

A special thank you goes to Mrs. Margaret MacNab, author of *Tryon in Brighton*, whose interest in the topic and the project enthusiastically spurred its completion. The detailed information in her book served as a primary resource for the development of the trail and this informative brochure.

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- 20) Bridge over Irondequoit Creek photograph, Robert D. Cunningham, 2015 – 2016.
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- 27) Town of Brighton Logo
- 28) Eagle Scout badge
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Order Form for Trail Patches

Trail patches may be purchased by those who hike the trail from
The Seneca Waterways Council Scouting Historical Society.

Mail or deliver order form to:

Seneca Waterways Council Scouting Historical Society
2320 Brighton-Henrietta Town Line Rd.
Rochester, NY 14623

Patches will be mailed to the address provided on the form.

The Lost City of Tryon Trail Patch Order Form

Name: _____

Shipping Address: _____

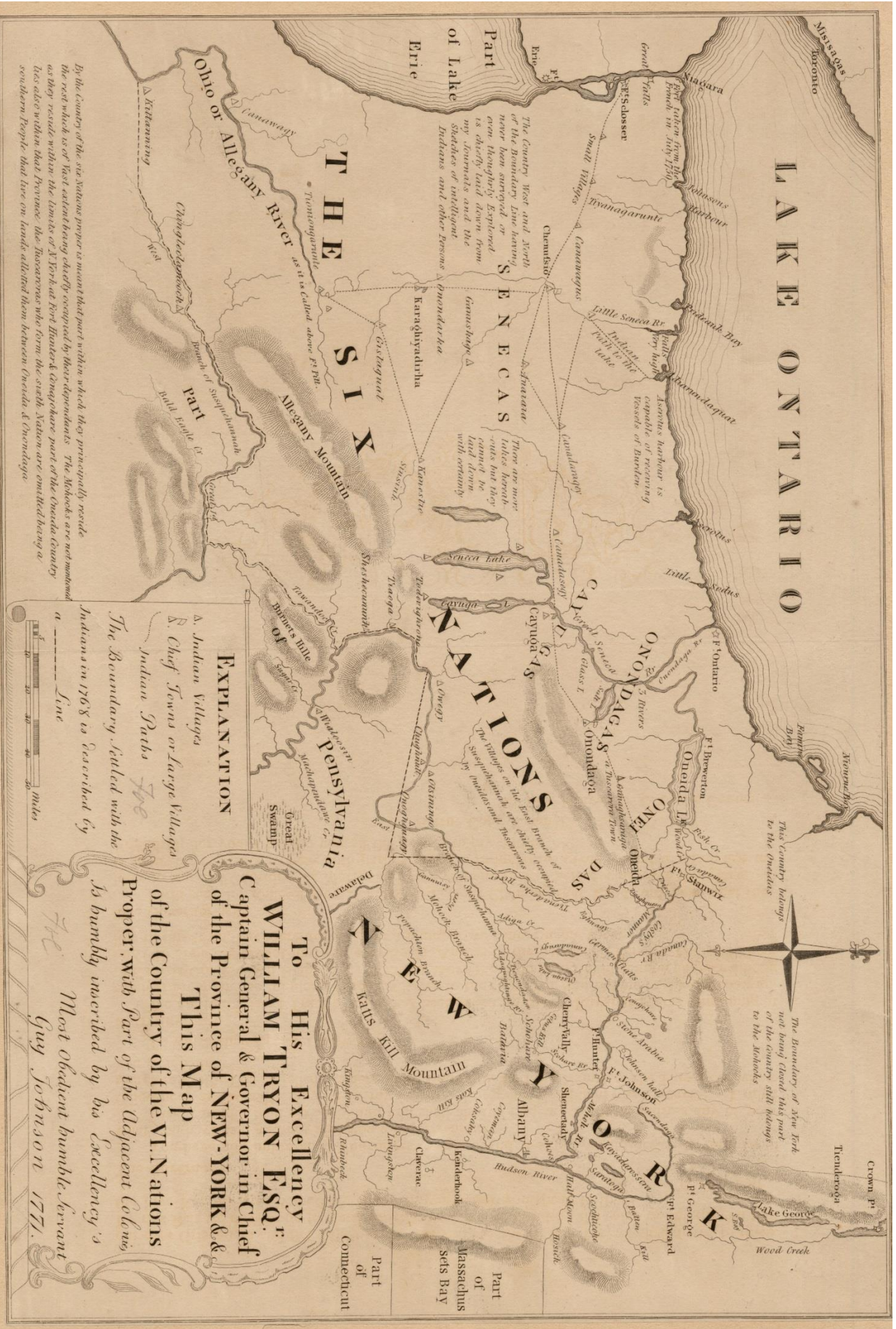
Email: _____

Date Trail Hiked: _____ Number of Hikers: _____

of patches: ___ x \$4.00 each + shipping (\$3.50 per order) = total _____

Account # 1-2306-027-00

LAKE ONTARIO



By the Country of the six Nations prior to mount that part within which they principally reside
 the rest which is of vast extent being chiefly occupied by their dependants. The Mohocks are not numbered
 as they reside within the limits of New York & Albany & Albany part of the Onondaga Country
 lies also within that Province the Tuscaroras who form the sixth Nation are omitted being a
 soverieign People that live on lands allotted them between Onondaga & Onondaga

The Country West and North
 of the Boundary line having
 never been surveyed or
 even thoughtly Explored
 is chiefly laid down from
 my conjectures and the
 Studies of intelligent
 Indians and other persons

There are more
 lakes here
 than can be
 laid down
 with accuracy

This Country belongs
 to the Onondagas

The boundary of New York
 not being closed this part
 of the Country still belongs
 to the Mohocks

EXPLANATION
 ▲ Indian Villages
 ▲ Chief Towns or Large Villages
 Indian Paths
 The Boundary settled with the
 Indians in 1768 is described by
 a --- Line
 Miles

To His Excellency
WILLIAM TRYON ESQ.
 Captain General & Governor in Chief
 of the Province of NEW-YORK & C.
 This Map
 of the Country of the VI. Nations
 Proper, with Part of the Adjacent Colonies
 is humbly inscribed by his Excellency's
 Most Obedient humble Servant
 Guy Johnson 1771.