

# Endnotes...



By Rich Pyszczek Jr., NYS 250th Commissioner

As the United States approaches the 250th anniversary of independence, the New York State 250th Commission is coordinating a decade-long commemoration highlighting the state's central role in the American Revolution and the ongoing meaning of freedom today. The Commission, empaneled from 2023 through 2033, is planning events across the state to recognize the signing of the Declaration of Independence, while also exploring what organizers call the *Unfinished Revolutions of 1776*—the continuing struggle to expand liberty, equality and civic participation for all Americans.

## 2026: The 250th Anniversary Year

The year 2026 will serve as the centerpiece of the commemoration. One of the largest celebrations will be *Sail4th 250*, taking place July 3–8, 2026, in New York City. This international maritime gathering will bring tall ships, naval vessels and visitors from around the world to honor the nation's founding and New York's historic role as a gateway to America.

Western New York will host major *Declaration Signers Day* observances later that summer.

On August 1, 2026, ceremonies will take place at Old Fort Niagara, one of the oldest military sites in North America and a key strategic post during the Revolutionary War era. The following day, August 2, events will continue in Buffalo at the Buffalo and Erie County Naval & Military Park and at Canalside, locations that symbolize the region's long military, maritime and commercial history.

Throughout 2026, Western New York communities will also host *Community Builders* programs focusing on music, arts and cultural traditions. These events are designed to connect local history with modern civic life, highlighting the diverse people who helped shape the region and the nation.

## Statewide Commemorations Through 2033

The work of the Commission extends beyond 2026, with major historical anniversaries scheduled throughout the decade. Planned statewide observances include programs marking the Revolutionary War campaigns known as the *Battles Across New York*, culminating in the 250th anniversary of the Battles of Saratoga in fall 2027, often considered the turning point of the war.

Other commemorations will examine New York's role in approving the Articles of Confederation, as well as the impact of the Sullivan–Clinton Campaign in upstate New York. The era-long observance will conclude with remembrance of George Washington's farewell to his officers at Fraunce's Tavern in New York City, symbolizing the transition from war to nationhood.

## Remembering the Past, Shaping the Future

By combining historic commemorations with cultural programming and public dialogue, the New York State 250th Commission aims not only to celebrate the past, but to encourage reflection on the ideals of 1776 and how they continue to evolve. From New York Harbor to Western New York, the 250th anniversary will highlight the state's enduring role in the American story.

*Over the past 250 years we have become a nation of many nationalities, races, and creeds bound together by the unity of patriotism, freedom and equality. True patriotism springs from a belief in the dignity of the individual, freedom and equality not only for Americans or New Yorkers, but for all people on earth.*

For more information, please visit the following websites. Additional website links are available by reading this story online at [wnyheritage.org](http://wnyheritage.org).

<https://ErieCounty250.com>

<https://www.niagarausa250.org>

<https://nysm.nysed.gov/revolutionaryny250>

