

While we may be just one couple among many who went on this ride there are some things about our participation that made the ride extra special. First of all, I grew up in New York City; my wife Julane grew up in Western NY, Pendleton and Lockport to be specific. We had been married for 48 years when we joined the July 2017 Erie Canal Ride. Some of the early days of this ride became a nostalgic trip for us as we passed places of Julane's youth. As we entered Pendleton coming from Buffalo we stopped for ice cream near Tonawanda Creek Road. When Julane and I got married in 1969 she was living on Tonawanda Creek Road but what I learned next wasn't the first thing she told me about Pendleton. That ice cream place, Uncle G's Ice Cream, was once a corner store called Cappy's to which she would walk or bike from her home to buy popsicles.

We took a diversion in Pendleton and rode down the Tonawanda Creek Road where she lived, where her grandparents and aunts and uncles lived and also where she had some jobs to help her earn some cash as a teenager. As we arrived in Lockport, but before we went over to see the series of locks known as the "Flight of Five" we took a short detour to stop by First Presbyterian Church where we were married nearly 48 years ago (over 50 years ago as I type this message).

As we continued along, she has memories from Albion, a brother and his family live in Gasport. We camped on the athletic field of Clifford Wise Junior High School in Medina, and before the sun set we had a small family reunion with Julane's brother Dave, his wife Pat, their adult sons Matt and Tim, Tim's wife Sarah and their children from Lockport. They came to the school in Medina to check out our biking/camping adventure.

Leaving Medina, we also took time to explore Culvert Road, the only road in New York State where you can actually drive under the Erie Canal. We continued onward into Albion where we were charmed by the diverse and special architecture and stone work. I am a second generation American of Norwegian descent so the sign about the Norwegian "Sloopers" who settled in Holley, NY in 1825 told a story that was very interesting. On our second night we camped at Minerva Deland School in Fairport. After dinner Julane's sister, Nelia, who lives five minutes away, came and drove us to her house for strawberry shortcake and conversation. We admire artwork and craft wherever we find it. We stopped to admire the trompe l'oeil scenes on the concrete bridge abutments in the village of Newark, NY.

In Seneca Falls we paid homage to the leaders of the Women's Suffrage movement and stopped for ice cream from Cayuga Lake Creamery across the canal from what once was a knitting mill that employed young women who were paid less than they deserved at the time. We camped at Mynderse Academy in Seneca Falls. Spectacularly large clouds rose up over our campsite and became colored with the golden rays of sunlight but there was no rain as the clouds dissipated when the sun set. Visiting Port Byron Old Erie Canal Heritage Park was a real treat and we took our time enjoying the exhibits before continuing to cycle on. There were a lot of interesting sights and campsites between Port Byron and Syracuse. We rode into town looking for the Erie Canal

Museum and weigh lock. A few blocks further east on Water Street, we cycled around this shallow water feature which simulated an important basin for canal craft to congregate before entering the weigh lock. In my photo album I put historic photos and prints that show how accurately this simulation looks today. After visiting the Chittenango Landing Canal Boat Museum we cycled back to the Canastota Canal Town Museum which offered a history of the "Old Erie Canal" and brought to life local folklore and history. Amazingly, one of the docents at the museum knew Julane's Aunt Kate Pynn and cousins (some of the cousins still live in the Canastota/Wampsville area). Aunt Kate--Mrs. Pynn to the woman--was the woman's 4-H leader when she was a young girl.

This ride is a nostalgic one for my wife and amazing to me. We passed so much national history yet it seems also personal while also enjoying beautiful countryside, architecture and early American technology. Our arrival in Albany was almost anticlimactic--we felt ready to continue onward but there it was, the end, with people cheering, a party atmosphere and the personal recognition that we had completed over 400 miles of excellent bicycling.