

Historic Maritime



District

Oswego claims the title of being America's oldest freshwater port. Spend the day exploring the rich history of the Oswego Harbor. The district has acquired a formal Historic Maritime District designation which includes the H. Lee White Marine Museum, the Oswego Maritime Foundation and the WW II vintage tug, the Nash.

Enjoy a tour of the museum which showcases an array of marine artifacts from the 18th through the 20th centuries. Ship models, navigational equipment and nautical paintings captivate the interest of all visitors.

The district is home to several vessels that depict a part of history. One of the Marine Museum's holdings is the National Historic Landmark veteran of the WWII Normandy Invasion, the U.S. Army LT-5 tugboat. Built in 1943, it has been carefully restored and is believed to be the only remaining fully operational vehicle of its kind. Another workhorse important to the canal is the Derrick Barge No. 8 built in 1925. It was used for dredging and repairing the New York State Barge Canal System. It is now permanently dry-docked along the West Pier. The OMF Ontario is replica of an 85-foot schooner built by the Oswego Maritime Foundation. Although Oswego was a ship building capital in the 1700s and 1800s, this is the first ship built here in over 100 years. It is used as a floating classroom as part of the Education Through Involvement program. It is the only ship of its type of US registry on Lake Ontario, dedicated specifically to public service.

Enjoy a boxed lunch on the Pier provided by one of Oswego's finest restaurants or dine in at one of the city's riverfront restaurants.

Following lunch, complete your visit of Oswego Harbor's history with a tour of Fort Ontario Historic Site. In Oswego, during the Battle of Oswego in 1756, Fort Ontario was destroyed in a massive French attack, along with Forts Oswego and George. In 1759, the British returned and re-built Fort Ontario as a star-shaped fortress with 42 mounted cannons on its walls. You will see how the officers and soldiers lived during this time, and witness a rifle demonstration.