



# Final Report

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## Fostering Historical Thinking in Students from the North Country and Beyond

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## Fostering Historical Thinking in Students from the North Country and Beyond

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This project was funded by an agreement awarded by the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission (GLFC) to the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission (NEIWPCC) in partnership with the Lake Champlain Basin Program. NEIWPCC manages LCBP's personnel, contract, grant, and budget tasks and provides input on the program's activities through a partnership with the LCBP Steering Committee.

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## **Executive Summary**

### **Project Synopsis**

Fort Ticonderoga used a CVNHP Local Heritage Grant to expand participation by teachers and students in North Country History Day for the 2022/2023 School Year and connect students from across New York and Vermont participating in National History Day with regional resources. Three in-person and two virtual History Day workshops were held for teachers throughout New York and Vermont to introduce them to the program. Teaching historical literacy and critical thinking skills is vital not only for participation in the History Day program, but also in academic pursuits in general.

### **Output**

Each partner organization hosted a History Day Workshop for teachers, run by Fort Ticonderoga staff. Two virtual, online History Day workshops were held for teachers throughout New York and Vermont.

### **Outcome**

The project expanded student participation in History Day, while instilling historical research, critical thinking, and communication skills in students.

### **CVNHP Management Plan Action ID**

The project supported the following task(s) of the CVNHP Management Plan:

- **Task 9.1.1:** Support historical and archaeological research and documentation
- **Task 9.12.1:** Continue to conduct teacher training workshops

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### 1 Project Introduction

Fort Ticonderoga serves as the coordinator for North Country History Day, a part of the National History Day program for grades 6-12. The 2023 program was held at Fort Ticonderoga on Saturday, March 18. Fort Ticonderoga proposed to expand participation in North Country History Day through a series of teacher workshops. Teaching historical literacy and critical thinking skills is vital not only for participation in the History Day program, but also in academic pursuits in general.

National History Day encourages students to explore local, state, national, and world history. After selecting a historical topic that relates to an annual theme, students conduct extensive research by using libraries, archives, museums, and oral history interviews. They analyze and interpret their findings, draw conclusions about their topics' significance in history, and create final projects that present their work. Projects can be historical papers, documentaries, performances, websites or tabletop exhibits. These projects can be entered into a series of competitions, from the local to the national level, where they are evaluated by professional historians and educators.

This proposal builds on a similar grant for the 2020-2021 school year. Fort Ticonderoga continued partnering with the Clinton County Historical Association and the Warren County Historical Society, while adding the Ticonderoga Historical Society as a partner. Each hosted a History Day Workshop for teachers run by Fort Ticonderoga staff. Fort Ticonderoga then conducted school visits to work with faculty and students new to the program.

Two virtual, online History Day workshops were also held, with support from the New York State History Day and Vermont State History Day coordinators, to introduce teachers from throughout New York and Vermont to the History Day program. Teachers who have used the program in their curriculum also shared their approach and experiences.

## **2 Tasks Completed**

- 1) North Country History Day was held on Saturday, March 18, 2023. One group of three students from the Plattsburgh area qualified to represent the region at New York State History Day, held at SUNY Oneonta on Monday, April 24, 2023.
- 2) Three workshops were scheduled with partner organizations: Clinton County Historical Association in Plattsburgh, Ticonderoga Historical Society in Ticonderoga, and the Warren County Historical Society in Queensbury.
- 3) Two virtual workshops through Zoom were scheduled, working in collaboration with staff from New York State History Day and Vermont History Day.

### **3 Outcomes/Deliverables Completed**

- 1) A Press Release announcing the grant was distributed March 9, 2022.
- 2) Quarterly Reports were filed as required.
- 3) Three digital photos of History Day participants are attached.
- 4) Three volunteers participated in the History Day program for a total of 15 volunteer hours.
- 5) There were 25 participants in the History Day program.

### 4 Conclusions

The National History Day program in general, and New York State History Day in particular, continues to feel the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on schools, teachers, and students. Participation nationally is significantly down from pre-pandemic numbers in 2019. Support from CVNHP has been helpful as we reconnect with previous History Day teachers and reach out to new teachers and students.

In addition, this grant has helped us strengthen relationships with our partner organizations: Clinton County Historical Association, Ticonderoga Historical Society, and the Warren County Historical Society. While we would have liked to engage with more teachers and students, these relationships have laid the groundwork for additional collaborations revolving around History Day.

History Day is primarily about helping students develop Historical Thinking and Critical Thinking skills, skills essential for success academically and in the real world. Participating students learned how to conduct research, assess the validity of resources, and how to think like a historian, utilizing the work of Sam Wineburg, author of “Thinking Like a Historian.”

The biggest challenge during this grant project was the continuing impact of Covid-19 on educators. History Day is very dependent on enthusiastic, committed teachers, and involves time outside the standard classroom schedule. Over the course of this grant, it became evident that teachers wishing to engage their students with History Day require additional support similar to the workshops offered.

During the course of working with the Ticonderoga Historical Society, the concept of an after school “History Club” was discussed. An initial meeting with staff from Fort Ticonderoga, the Ticonderoga Historical Society, and the Black Watch Library took place to discuss the opportunities for creating a club for the coming 2023-204 school year. Since that meeting, the Ticonderoga Heritage Museum has expressed an interest in participating as well.



## 5 References and Appendices

**Required Documentation** (Attach any articles, press releases (which should acknowledge partnership with LCBP), a list of acronyms and published documents pertaining to this project.):

- Press release announcing grant award and describing project.
- Digital copies of (or electronic links to) any media coverage the project.
- At least three (3) digital photos (in largest format available) of people participating in activities relating to the grant.

<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Total number of <b>volunteers</b> engaged in project	3
Total number of <b>volunteer hours</b>	15
<b>Value of volunteer hours</b> (Hourly rates: NY: \$30.18; VT: \$26.40; QC: \$27.39)	\$452.70
Number of grant-funded <b>events</b>	6
Number of <b>people attending grant-funded events</b>	25
Education: Number of <b>students</b> involved	15
Education: Number of <b>teachers/specialists</b> involved	10
Education: Number of <b>classes/field trips/etc.</b>	N/A

**Photos:** Email or mail a CD to your Project Officer with any photo documentation you have of your project with proper photo credit that LCBP can use in future publications.

**Electronic Data:** Email or mail a CD to your Project Officer with any electronic datasets you have generated through your project.

Attach any articles, press releases (which should acknowledge partnership with LCBP), a list of acronyms and published documents pertaining to this project.