

## A MANCHESTER MINUTE—THE ERIE CANAL BICENTENNIAL

In 2025 the Erie Canal will celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> year since its completion. The construction of the Erie Canal began in 1817 near the city of Rome. By the time of its completion in 1825, shipping was now possible from New York City to Buffalo, which was a small town at the western terminus of the Erie. For the Town of Manchester, the hamlet of Port Gibson is the only place where the canal is found in Ontario County. Port Gibson actually owes its existence to the Erie Canal. This is because when the idea of a canal was proposed, several prominent Canandaigua businessmen sought to have access to the canal for ease in transporting goods. The group, led by Henry Gibson ( who lent his name to the hamlet), lobbied the State for part of the County to be located on the new waterway. Other prominent leaders included John Grieg, Moses Atwater, Francis Granger, and James Bemis. These men laid out the streets of the new village and their names can be found in Port Gibson as well as in Canandaigua, the County Seat of Ontario County.