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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Albany Heritage Area Visitors Center Hosts "The Irish and The Erie Canal" Exhibit

Albany, NY – The Albany Heritage Area Visitors Center is proud to host "The Irish and The Erie Canal" exhibit on loan, courtesy of the [Irish American Heritage Museum](#).

The exhibit chronicles the significant influence that the Irish and their culture had on the formation of the Erie Canal, as well as the changing face of Irish America illustrated through the Canal's construction. The Irish were involved in the process of creating the Erie Canal from start to finish, serving as politicians, surveyors, engineers, contractors, laborers, and boatmen.

The iconic man-made waterway is a microcosm of Irish America. The exhibit demonstrates the parallels between the experiences of the Irish along the Canal's route with those of the Irish across the nation.

"A surprising aspect of the exhibit is that, despite the fame of the Irish laborers on the canal, Irish involvement was at every level - the politicians who lobbied for it, the engineers who designed it, and some of the large and wealthy contractors who supervised the project," says Dr. Elizabeth Stack, Executive Director of the Irish American Heritage Museum. "An amusing tidbit is that some people were so skeptical of the project being successful that they derogatorily called it "Clinton's Ditch!" However, this "ditch" connected the country to its western frontier, eased travel, developed western New York, guaranteed New York's status as the "Empire State," and opened up America's agricultural and manufacturing capacity to new world markets. It made the young United States a world power."

Elizabeth Stack, Ph.D., has recently been appointed by the Irish American Heritage Museum's Board of Trustees as the new Executive Director. She most recently taught Irish-American History and served as the Associate Director of the Institute of Irish Studies at Fordham University. Dr. Stack is a native of Listowel in County Kerry, Ireland, and has presented her research at various national conferences in the United States and in Ireland.

"I am very excited about directing the Irish American Heritage Museum and getting to know the community," says Dr. Elizabeth Stack. "We have exciting plans for lectures and discussions on literature and history in the coming months, and we intend to collect the memories and stories of immigration from our members. We are expanding our programs, exhibits, and collections, and I look forward to having our enthusiastic members and visitors join us at 370 Broadway soon."

"The Irish and The Erie Canal" will be on display at the Albany Heritage Area Visitors Center, located at 25 Quackenbush Square, Albany, now through June 29.

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ABOUT Discover Albany

The Albany County Convention & Visitors Bureau, Inc. was established in 1976 to promote the civic and commercial progress of the community through increased development of conventions and tourism. Today, the organization is known as Discover Albany. Discover Albany currently represents more than 300-member businesses and assists each year in hundreds of regional meetings. Discover Albany also operates the Albany Heritage Area Visitors Center, Henry Hudson Planetarium, and the Albany International Airport Information Center. The Albany County Convention and Visitors Bureau Foundation was established in 1993 to provide educational opportunities and work with other organizations to secure grants and funding to advance regional travel and tourism projects. For more information, call 518-434-1217 or 800-258-3582 or visit www.albany.org.

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