

## Our Producer

Toward Castle Films was founded by award-winning filmmaker Paul Lamont, and specializes in documentary films for broadcast, theatrical release and museum installations. Films produced by Toward Castle explore universal themes that touch on deep human experiences. Their mission is to produce documentaries that focus on our shared history to reveal a vivid panorama of our nation's collective experience.



Paul Lamont, President of Toward Castle Films

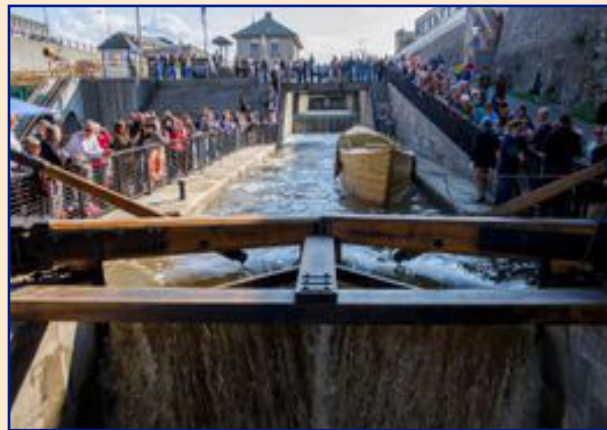
President of Toward Castle Films, LLC is Paul Lamont, who serves as Producer/Director/Writer. Lamont is a veteran documentary filmmaker whose career spans over 30 years. He has produced, directed and written numerous documentary films that have been broadcast on public television stations nationwide. He has also produced several films for regional broadcast on public television station WNED-TV, Buffalo/Toronto Public Media.

Lamont's films have been screened at festivals, universities, museums, and institutions in the United States and Europe, and have been recognized with multiple Emmy nominations as well as several other national and international industry awards. He is a member of the Television Academy of Arts and Sciences and the International Documentary Association.

## Erie Canal Flight of Five Locks

The Flight of Five Locks are Locks 67, 68, 69, 70 and 71 of the 72-lock Enlarged Erie Canal. Erie Canal Locks 67-71 were completed in 1842 as part of the First Enlargement of the Erie Canal, or Clinton's Ditch. The Lockport Locks were regarded as a modern engineering marvel at the time that the Erie Canal was originally opened in 1825, enabling water-borne commerce and passengers to travel from New York City to the Great Lakes via the Hudson River and the man-made inland waterway system, and opening up the Midwest to development.

The Flight of Five is often referred to as "staircase locks" due to the immediate succession from one lock to the next. However, during the conversion of the Erie Canal to the Erie Barge Canal, the southern flight of locks was demolished and removed, and the northern Flight of Five went into disuse, other than to serve as a spillway after 1922. Since 2003, the Lockport Locks Heritage District Corporation and the City of Lockport have collaborated with federal and state agencies to successfully rehabilitate three of the five locks in the abandoned northern tier of the Flight of Five back into working order. Returning this iconic 19<sup>th</sup> Century engineering marvel to working condition has been a major component of the City of Lockport's strategy to enhance the community's Erie Canal attractions as a major heritage tourism destination.



Lockport's Restored Flight of Five Locks

## INTRODUCING *America's Stairway*



Celebration of the Opening of the Erie Canal  
Courtesy of Niagara History Center

*The epic story of how  
one of America's first successful public works  
emboldened a nation to move westward, and  
how in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century it has enabled  
a new generation to revitalize itself*

A production of the  
Lockport Locks Heritage District Corporation  
In cooperation with  
Toward Castle Films

## Why America's Stairway

*America's Stairway* places the historic Flight of Five locks on the Erie Canal in Lockport, New York, squarely in the American narrative as a symbol of a young and developing nation. It draws a direct line between the Erie Canal, the Flight of Five, and the birth of American tourism to today's heritage tourism industry which is inextricably linked to community-based, grassroots preservation efforts and a community's sense of place. In doing so, it has meaning and resonance that transcends both time and geographic location.



Lockport's Twin Staircase of Locks (c. 1880)

## Our Audience

*America's Stairway* is a national story. For the first time in a documentary film intended for national distribution, the Erie Canal and specifically, the Flight of Five—the crowning achievement of America's canal era and of those who envisioned scaling the Niagara Escarpment—is examined in relation to the natural and technological sublime, the birth of American tourism and how those ideas are linked to today's embracing of heritage tourism, preservation, and sense of place. It will serve as an inspiration and a catalyst for other communities to explore and preserve their history and is a profound reminder that great moments in our nation's narrative can be found in small towns and communities across the American landscape.

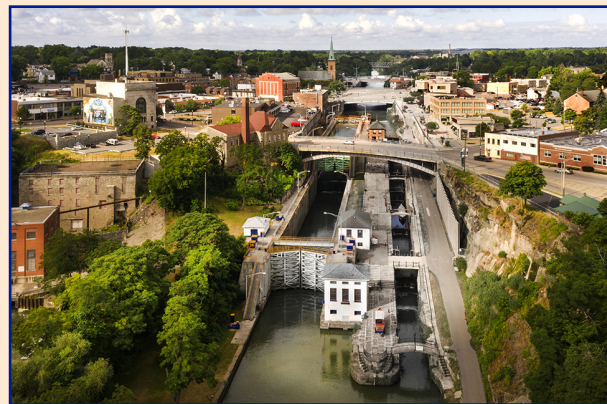
## The Grand Northern Tour

Because of its location on the canal, Lockport became part of what was known as the "Grand Northern Tour," a leisurely trip across the northern United States and Canada with the highlight being a visit to Niagara Falls, 30-miles west of Lockport. For the burgeoning middle class, the canal allowed easy, inexpensive travel and historians refer to this era as the birth of American tourism. The majestic stone architecture of the Flight of Five, or the "Stairway to Niagara," as one historian calls them, became to technology what Niagara Falls was to nature—an icon of the sublime. The locks at Lockport were renowned around the country and in Europe and by the 1830s, had put Lockport on the map.



## Our Story

America celebrates the 200th Anniversary of the completion of the original Erie Canal in the year 2025. *America's Stairway* explores a unique, untold story. It tells of an American landmark, once the focal point of a nation and beyond, eventually overlooked, but now emerging in the new light of the twenty-first century.



Lockport Locks Heritage District - 2021



## Become a Stairway Supporter!

Show your support for America's Stairway by becoming a Stairway Supporter. Help us reach our \$150,000 goal by making a donation in any amount. Click on the 'Donate Now' button on [www.americasstairway.com](http://www.americasstairway.com) or send your check, which may be made payable to

Lockport Locks Heritage District Corporation,  
One Locks Plaza, Lockport, NY 14094.

## Stairway Supporter Levels

Patrons	- \$50
Silver Sponsors	- \$250
Gold Sponsors	- \$500
Platinum Sponsors	- \$1,000

Ask us for details about Naming Sponsorships, which are also available at the following levels:

Canal Commissioner Level	- \$10,000
Thomas Evershed Level	- \$20,000
Nathan Roberts Level	- \$30,000
DeWitt Clinton Level	- \$50,000

The Lockport Locks Heritage District Corporation is a 501c3 non-profit corporation. Those making donations to the Stairway Fund will receive complimentary admission to the premier showing of *America's Stairway*.

Yes, I would like to support the production of *America's Stairway*. Enclosed is my contribution in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

**View the 5 minute trailer today at  
[www.americasstairway.com](http://www.americasstairway.com)**