

Section 1

America

celebrating 250 years



AN EVENING SUN PUBLICATION

How to celebrate and commemorate

America's semiquincentennial

Commemorations of America's national history are part of annual celebrations of American independence that take place each year on July 4, which marks the anniversary of the nation's birth. Those celebrations have a reputation for being particularly festive and tend to be capped off by awe-inspiring fireworks displays once the sun sets on the Fourth of July.

The liveliness of annual celebrations of American independence figures to be taken up a notch in 2026, when the United States will celebrate its semiquincentennial. Two hundred and fifty years of nationhood warrants a particularly jovial celebration, and there are many ways Americans can commemorate and celebrate the nation on this momentous occasion.

America's semiquincentennial is a big deal, and there's much residents of the United States can do to take an active role in the celebration and commemoration of the nation's history.

Support a local historical society.

Local historical societies have played a vital role in preserving United States history, and many of those who work in support of these organizations do so on a volunteer basis. Expressions of support for local historical societies can go a long way toward helping them continue to fulfill their missions. Financial donations, letters to state and local political officials urging increased funding for historical societies, visits to local historical sites, and even volunteering to help organizations fulfill their missions are a handful of ways to ensure these groups can continue to make invaluable contributions to their communities and the nation.



Volunteer with local government.

Pitching in to help local government organizations planning semiquincentennial celebrations is another great way to honor America's two hundred and fiftieth anniversary. The days and weeks surrounding July 4 will likely be filled with anniversary-related events and celebrations, but many communities also plan to commemorate the semiquincentennial throughout 2026, providing plenty of opportunities for volunteers of all ages to lend a hand.

Help digitize archival materials.

The modern world is accustomed to digital files and instant access to information, but the vast majority of records pertaining to American history and accounts of Americans' personal experiences remain preserved on paper. Photos and documents wear down over time, and American archivists face an uphill battle as they work to digitize records for the purpose of long-term preservation. Anyone who wants to lend a hand and help to preserve local and national history can speak with a local library or university librarian about what's being done to digitize historical accounts and records and offer to lend a hand with such efforts. If no such efforts are currently being undertaken in your community, offer to spearhead a digitalization project and recruit others to participate.

Explore the country.

Travel presents another great way to celebrate the nation on its two hundred and fiftieth birthday. The United States is a vast nation with many unique subcultures and local customs, not to mention countless locales that have featured prominently in American history. When planning vacations in 2026, resolve to stay within U.S. borders and seek ways to learn about the nation's history during your travels.



How Chenango County Came to Be

The English colony of New York was founded on Sept. 8, 1664, when the Dutch surrendered the colony of New Netherland. With increasing potential for settlement, the English formed the first counties to better administer their new domain. The first designation of counties took place on Nov. 1, 1683. The land that now constitutes Chenango County was part of a vast territory of western lands designated Albany County.

Soon after the conclusion of the French and Indian War, the English – to keep peace with the Native Peoples – agreed to the Fort Stanwix Treaty on Nov. 5, 1768. This treaty formed a line that ran south from Fort Stanwix (present day Rome, N.Y.) to separate the lands between European settlement (east of the line) and the Native Peoples (west of the line). This line, in part, followed the Unadilla River to the Susquehanna River, establishing the future eastern border of Chenango County. On March 12, 1772, the western lands including what is now Chenango County were separated from Albany County to become Tryon County named after Colonial Governor William Tryon.

With the birth of the United States in 1776 and the conclusion of the American Revolution in 1783, the state of New York was established. The first form of national government, the Articles of Confederation, left affairs of western land settlement and negotiations with the Native People to the individual states. The Fort Stanwix Treaty was now void and Tryon County's name was changed to Montgomery County in memory of General Richard Montgomery who was killed in the assault on Quebec during the 1775 American invasion of Canada.

Two treaties – one at Fort Herkimer on June 28, 1785 and one at Fort Schuyler (present day Utica, N.Y.) on Sept. 22, 1788 – between the Native People



and the state of New York opened the lands west of the Unadilla River for settlement. On Feb. 25, 1789, Surveyor General Simeon De Witt began the process of surveying these newly opened lands. Portions of Montgomery County were divided into Tioga, Herkimer and Ontario counties. The first Chenango County was vastly larger than today, reaching from the south shore of Oneida Lake to present-day Broome County. This new county was established from parts of Herkimer and Tioga counties on March 15, 1798. The county was then surveyed into towns. Each town was divided into lots 1 to 100 with one lot set aside for religious use, called the Gospel Lot, and one for education. The state of New York then sold

these lots to land agents who resold the lots. In many cases, the land was leased to the first settlers. On April 4, 1804, some of Chenango County was partitioned to expand Oneida County. On March 21, 1806, more of Chenango County was partitioned to produce Madison County. This established the current borders of Chenango County, which have been maintained to the early 21st century. This area was developed for agriculture in the 19th century and is still largely rural.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the county has a total area of 899 square miles of which 894 square miles are land and 5.1 square miles are water. Chenango County is in the approximate center of the state, west of Albany, north of Binghamton and southeast of Syracuse. The county is considered to be in the Southern Tier region of New York state. The Chenango River, a tributary of the Susquehanna River, flows southward through the county.

Interesting facts of Chenango County:

- The county's name originates from an Oneida Native American word meaning "large bull-thistle."
- The Chenango County flower is the bull thistle, *Cirsium vulgare*.
- The Chenango County Court House in Norwich was built in 1837 and still houses the county's courtroom.
- The Chenango County jail was built of stone after prisoners burned the former wooden jail and escaped.
- The Chenango Canal (1834-1878) connected Utica to Binghamton passing through Sherburne, North Norwich, Norwich, Oxford and Greene. It allowed for goods to be shipped to this region that were new and not available a few years prior.
- *Information courtesy of the Chenango County Historian Association and Historical Society*

HAPPY AMERICA 250!
Town of Greene, NY, Est. 1798

AMERICA 250

Welcome to the Town of Norwich
Clayton Welch Town Historian
Phone: 607-334-6464 • Email: welch7557@roadrunner.com

Norwich was formally established on January 19, 1793 from the historic Town of Jericho, now Bainbridge, and the Town of Union. Located in the heart of Chenango County, the Town of Norwich presently consists of approximately 43.1 square miles with a total acreage of 27,584 acres.

The area has a rich Native American heritage. The Oneida people cleared ten acres south of Norwich and referred to this land as the "castle". It was in this location they held councils and entertained other tribes.

In 1788, pioneer Avery Power arrived in Norwich and purchased land tracts on the West side of the Chenango River, becoming the Town's first white settler. According to the article titled "History of Norwich, New York, USA."

Afterwards, Norwich, as a "mother town" of the county, lost substantial territory in the formation of new towns. In 1806, Norwich gave up territory to form the towns of Pharsalia, Plymouth and Preston. More of Norwich was lost in 1807 to form parts of the towns of New Berlin and Columbus. In 1808 and 1820, Norwich exchanged territory with the town of Preston. The central community of Norwich set itself off from the town in 1816 by incorporating as a village, later becoming the City of Norwich in 1914.

Built in 1820, the White Store Church still stands as it has for over 200 years, with very few changes. To this day, there is no electricity, and a pump organ still accompanies the singing of the old, beloved hymns. 20 Revolutionary War soldiers were laid to rest in the surrounding Evergreen Cemetery.

Norwich has a proud history that includes several notable citizens such as Gail Borden, who originated condensed milk and founded the company Borden Milk Products; world-famous psychiatrist, Harry Stack Sullivan; Lt. Warren E. Eaton, DSC, the "father of soaring"; as well as John Randall.

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AMERICA 250 VISIT NORWICH, NEW YORK
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Has your home state produced a president?

When President Donald Trump was sworn in as President of the United States for a second time on January 20, 2025, he officially became the forty-seventh president in the nation's history. With 47 presidents and 50 states, one could not be blamed for thinking most states have a native son who has held the highest political office in the land. But the National Conference of State Legislatures notes that fewer than half the states in the union have been the birthplaces of presidents. In fact, just two presidents were born west of the Mississippi River. Indeed, the following rundown indicates which states have produced presidents and who and how many claim those locales as their birthplace.



Virginia: 8 presidents

No state has produced more presidents than Virginia, which produced eight men who would go on to become U.S. presidents. Those eight men were:

- George Washington
- Thomas Jefferson
- James Madison
- James Monroe
- William Henry Harrison
- John Tyler
- Zachary Taylor
- Woodrow Wilson



Ohio: 7 presidents

Ohio is second to Virginia in terms of native sons who have gone on to the office of the presidency. Seven U.S. presidents were born in Ohio, and those who claimed the place now affectionately known as "The Buckeye State" as their birthplace include:

- Ulysses S. Grant
- Rutherford B. Hayes
- James Garfield
- Benjamin Harrison
- William McKinley
- William Howard Taft
- Warren Harding



New York: 5 presidents

Five U.S. presidents, including current president Donald Trump, were born in New York. President Trump's fellow New Yorkers to serve as president include:

- Martin Van Buren
- Millard Fillmore
- Theodore Roosevelt
- Franklin Roosevelt



Massachusetts: 4 presidents

Massachusetts was home to many notable events during the American Revolutionary War, so it comes as no surprise that the state has produced four U.S. presidents over the nation's history. Those four presidents include:

- John Adams
- John Quincy Adams
- John F. Kennedy
- George H.W. Bush

States to produce 2 presidents

Various states are the birthplaces of two men who have gone on to serve as President of the United States. Those states include:

- **North Carolina:** James K. Polk and Andrew Johnson
- **Pennsylvania:** James Buchanan and Joe Biden
- **Texas:** Dwight Eisenhower and Lyndon Johnson
- **Vermont:** Chester Arthur and Calvin Coolidge

States to produce 1 president

Thirteen states have sent one native son along to the office of the President of the United States, including:

- **Arkansas:** Bill Clinton
- **California:** Richard Nixon
- **Connecticut:** George W. Bush
- **Georgia:** Jimmy Carter
- **Hawaii:** Barack Obama
- **Illinois:** Ronald Reagan
- **Iowa:** Herbert Hoover
- **Kentucky:** Abraham Lincoln
- **Missouri:** Harry S. Truman
- **Nebraska:** Gerald Ford
- **New Hampshire:** Franklin Pierce
- **New Jersey:** Grover Cleveland
- **South Carolina:** Andrew Jackson

Towns of Chenango County

Throughout this special section you will find history and facts about each of our towns from the Chenango County Historical Society

Afton:

Founded: The land was first settled in 1786 and it was called Clinton, later renamed Jericho in 1791 and then renamed South Bainbridge in 1814. It finally seceded from Bainbridge, 1857 when it was renamed Afton.

Named after: "Flow Gently, Sweet Afton" a poem published in 1791 by Robert Burns.

Notable People: Bert Lord (1869-1939) entered state and national politics, being elected to the Assembly at Albany and to the House of Representatives in Washington.

Dr. Philateus Hayes - First mayor of Afton in 1892. He founded the Susquehanna Valley Medical Society.

Dr. Carlton J.H. Hayes (1882-1964) taught European History at Columbia University. He was an ambassador to Spain during WWII.

Interesting Fact: Joseph Smith married Emma Hale at a home where the present-day Fairgrounds are located. Joseph Smith was the founder of Mormonism. Afton has continued to have a fair and community event since 1889. The Suspension Bridge across the Susquehanna River at the village of Afton was one of the finest structures in the State. The length of the span was 362



feet and it was supported by six cables, 558 feet in length, each composed of 132 wires. The height of the towers was 36 feet and the arch of the bridge four feet. On the east side was an approach bridge 70 feet in length. The suspending rods were five-eighths of an inch in diameter, attached to needle beams four feet apart. The weight of the bridge was 100 tons and the carrying weight was 240 tons.

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Bainbridge:

Founded: In 1791 as the “Town of Jericho” in Tioga County before the formation of Chenango County in 1798.

Named after: Commodore William Bainbridge, in 1814.

Famous people: Birthplace of Jedediah Strong Smith (1799-1831) frontiersman and explorer who discovered the South Pass along the Oregon Trail allowing pioneer wagon travel across the Continental Divide.

Interesting fact: The town was settled around 1788 by “Vermont Sufferers” who received land from New York as remuneration or consolation for their efforts in supporting New York during a boundary dispute with Vermont. Vermont prevailed in the land dispute and those who supported New York suffered losses of land, possessions, and position. The lands comprising much of present-day Bainbridge and Afton were conveyed to the Vermont Sufferers.

Each Memorial Day Weekend, Bainbridge hosts the General Clinton Canoe Regatta which features the World’s Longest Single Day Flat Water Canoe Race.

Columbus:

Founded: Columbus was first settled around 1791. The town was formed in 1805 from the town of Brookfield (now in Madison County). Additional territory was obtained from the town of Norwich in 1807.

Named after: Named by Dr. Tracy Robinson, first doctor in the town and first town supervisor. Possibly named from the first Columbus Day Celebration that took place in New York in 1792.

Notable people: Judge William Cooper (1754-1809), father of James Fenimore Cooper author of Leatherstocking Tales lived here for a short time of his life.

Interesting facts: It was the first named Columbus in the United States. In 1844 Columbus made 345,559 pounds of cheese. Home of Philadelphia Cream Cheese – the first known cream cheese factory in the world and the largest in the United States founded in 1872 as the Empire Cheese Company. The cream cheese was named Philadelphia in honor of America’s cradle of liberty and her first capitol. It later became Kraft’s Breakstone Yogurt Plant and is now the plant of Chobani.



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CHENANGO COUNTY | NY



Coventry:

Founded: 1806- formed from the town of Greene. Coventry was enlarged in 1843 to include part of Oxford.

Named after: Coventry, Connecticut, by settlers from New England.

Notable people: William Goodell (1792-1878) was an abolitionist and helped to form the New-York Anti-Slavery Society in 1833.

William Eugene “Pussyfoot” Johnson (1862-1945) was an American prohibition advocate and law enforcement officer who spent his career going undercover and exposing illegal alcohol during the American prohibition movement (1920-1933).

Interesting fact: Coventry’s poor soil conditions has made dairy herding prominent since the formation of Coventry.

Coventry has held a blueberry festival to celebrate the crop since 2006.

In 1869, the town, contained three churches (Presbyterian, Methodist and Baptist), a hotel, one district school and a select school, two wagon shops, a blacksmith shop, a tannery, several stores and about 50 dwellings.

German:

Founded: 1796

Named after: U.S. Senator Obadiah German, the original land owner.

Notable people: Obadiah German was born on April 22, 1766 in Amenia, N.Y. He was admitted to the bar in 1792, and commenced practice in Norwich. He was a member of the New York State Assembly in 1798-1799, 1804-1805, and again 1807-1809. In 1809, he was

elected a U.S. Senator from New York, and served from March 4, 1809 to March 3, 1815. German was known as a critic of the lack

of military preparations made in advance of the War of 1812, and voted against the declaration of war. In 1812, German was one of the founding trustees of Hamilton College in Clinton. He was first judge of the Chenango County Court (1814-1819). He was also a state militia officer, eventually becoming a major general. Supporting DeWitt Clinton’s Erie Canal project, German took part in planning and overseeing its construction after being appointed state commissioner of public works in 1817. German returned to the Assembly in 1819 as a member of the Clintonian faction of the Democratic-Republican Party and was chosen to serve as speaker. Afterwards, he resumed the practice of law. German became a Whig when that party was organized. He died on Sept. 24, 1842 in Norwich.

Interesting fact: In 1869, German contained a Free Will Baptist Church, a schoolhouse, a store, a marble shop, a hotel, and nine dwellings with a population of 43 people.



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NATIONALLY

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1900'S
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1948
CHENANGO COUNTY

Community Chest of Norwich Serving Norwich and Chenango County.



1967
ONEONTA

Oneonta Community Chest
Established to serve the Oneonta area.



1974
NORWICH

The Community Chest of Norwich becomes the United Way of Norwich.



1989
NORWICH

The United Way of Norwich becomes the Chenango United Way.



1989
ONEONTA

The Oneonta Community Chest becomes the United Way of Greater Oneonta and later that year becomes the United Way of Delaware and Otsego Counties.



2023
MERGER

United as one. Chenango United Way and United Way of Delaware and Otsego Counties and United Way of Madison County merge, uniting our mission and expanding our impact. One community. Greater impact.



CURRENT

United Way of Mid Rural New York serves a four county region which includes Chenango, Delaware, Madison and Otsego Counties.

OUR MISSION

The United Way of Mid Rural New York seeks to improve lives by mobilizing the caring power of our region's communities to advance the common good. United Way brings people together to build strong, equitable communities where everyone can thrive.

Thank you to all who have given, served, and believed in the power of community.



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America then *and* now

Celebrations of the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the United States of America will unfold throughout 2026. As millions join in the festivities, it can be fun to compare the nation in its infancy to the one that has since firmly established itself as a global leader.

Population

- **1780:** 2.8 million*
- **2025:** 342 million**

* The National Archives note that the first decennial census of the United States was not taken until 1790, so the figure cited for 1780 is a widely accepted estimate of the burgeoning nation's population during the opening years of the American Revolutionary War.

** This represents the U.S. Census Bureau population estimate as of late 2025.

States

According to the National Constitution Center, a series of resolutions passed by the Second Continental Congress in September 1776 officially cited the collective colonies fighting in the American Revolutionary War as the "United States."

- **1776:** 13
- **2026:** 50

Income taxes • 1776: 0%

Debates regarding income taxes may seem like an ever-present component of American life, but colonists did not pay income tax in 1776. Though taxation was undeniably a notable issue throughout colonial America, the Tax Foundation notes the situation was considerably different in 1776 than it is today, when taxes are a highly debated component of American life. In 1776, the British Crown relied on tariffs and excise taxes to fund the American colonies, whereas modern Americans pay federal and, in most states, state income taxes to finance a range of public goods and services.

Land mass

- **1783:** 800,000 sq miles
- **2026:** just under 3.6 million sq miles

The Times Atlas of World History indicates that the United States had an area of approximately 800,000 square miles in 1783. The country is considerably larger today, with a rough land mass of just under 3.6 million square miles according to the U.S. Census Bureau. To put that expansion since the nascent days of the nation in perspective, today the combined land mass of the country's two largest states eclipses the land mass of the entire nation in the early 1780s. Alaska (estimated land mass 571,000 square miles) and Texas (262,000), with roughly 833,000 square miles between them, are larger than the total land mass of the United States in 1783.

Transportation

- **Late eighteenth century:** Horses
- **2025:** 298.7 million registered vehicles

The Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress notes that walking was the most common and cheapest mode of transportation in the late eighteenth century. Horses and wagons enabled business and distance travel, but such modes were only available to those who could afford it, greatly limiting who could get around by any means other than their own feet. Getting around in the present day is a little more accessible, and a recent analysis from Hedges & Company found there were 298.7 million registered vehicles in the U.S. in 2025.

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Greene:

Founded: 1792.

Named after: General Nathanael Greene (1742-1786), sometimes misspelled Nathaniel, was a major general of the Continental Army in the American Revolutionary War.

Notable people: Francis Flynn aka General Mite (1864-1898) was a famous little person that showman at various competitions around the world.

Carolina Mohawk, known as Go-Won-Go, was an Indian actress who performed in Europe as well as here in America. Her father, Dr. Alan Mohawk, was a Seneca Native American who practiced medicine in Greene.

Interesting fact: A.B. Robinson built a stone structure, believed to be the first refrigeration unit in the United States lasting as a business from 1875-1900. It was used to preserve eggs and fowl. It also housed a turkey for President Grover Cleveland, dished up for Thanksgiving.

Guilford:

Founded: In 1793 and called Oxford. In 1813, the eastern part of Oxford split off to form Eastern. In 1817, Eastern changed the town name to Guilford.

Notable People: Joshua and John Mersereau were the first settlers and were spies for George Washington.

Daniel S. Dickinson (1800-1866) was a New York politician and served as a United States Senator from 1844 to 1851.

Interesting facts: Mt Upton had a horse-pulled hearse factory. Rockwell Mills made the uniforms for Civil War soldiers in a mill, now the home of The Old Mill Restaurant.

A carved wooden angel that hung outside at "The Angel's Inn" in Guilford Center is now in the permanent collections of the American Folk Art Museum in New York City.

The Guilford Center Church, which is still standing, was built in 1820 and is now the home of the Guilford Historical Society. Lady Upton was our famous race horse from Mt. Upton.



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American Revolutionary War TRIVIA



A depiction of the Battle of Bunker Hill (circa eighteenth century)

1 • On which day were the battles at Lexington and Concord fought?

2 • True or False: Bunker Hill was fought on Bunker Hill.

3 • The mercenary-like forces hired to fight alongside the British during the American Revolutionary War were known as what?

4 • This infamous figure was a decorated American military officer who rose to the rank of Major General during the American Revolutionary War.

5 • Which of these notable rivers did George Washington lead his troops across on December 30, 1776?

- A. The Hudson River
- B. The Delaware River
- C. The Rubicon
- D. The Charles River

6 • This Founding Father famously declared “Give me liberty, or give me death!” during a speech to the Second Virginia Convention in 1775.

- A. Benjamin Franklin
- B. Thomas Jefferson
- C. John Adams
- D. Patrick Henry

7 • True or False: The American Revolutionary War is the longest conflict in American military history.

8 • True or False: Fewer than half of all colonists favored fighting for independence from Great Britain.

9 • This treaty, signed in 1783, marked the end of the American Revolution.

- A. The Treaty of Versailles
- B. The Treaty of Paris
- C. The Treaty of Tordesillas
- D. The Treaty of Accession

10 • True or False: The Continental Congress declared its independence from Great Britain on July 2.

Answers:

1 - April 19, 1775

2 - False. Despite its name,

the Battle of Bunker Hill on June 17, 1775, was fought on Breed's Hill.

3 - Hessians. Though soldiers from various German states were hired and deployed by

the British during the conflict, the troops were principally drawn from the German state of Hesse-Cassel.

4 - Benedict Arnold. Though Arnold is today widely remembered as a

turncoat, he accomplished much for the Americans before defecting to the British in 1780,

including leading the capture of Fort Mifflin in 1775.

5 - B. The Delaware River

6 - D. Patrick Henry

American military history for nearly 200 years, the Vietnam War, in which America was engaged between 1960 and 1975, displaced it atop that list in the middle decades of the twentieth century. The invasion of Afghanistan, which began in 2001 and continued until 2021, has since become the longest conflict in American military

history. Though specific figures are hard to confirm, various historians estimate that only about 40 percent of colonists supported the American Revolutionary War, while roughly one in five identified as loyalists to the crown. The remaining 40 percent are believed to have held moderate

views.

9 - B. The Treaty of Paris.

10 - True. Though Americans annually celebrate the nation's independence on July 4, the Continental Congress declared its independence on July 2, two days before signing the Declaration of Independence.



Lincklaen:

Founded: The land was first settled around 1796. Lincklaen was formed from the town of German in 1823. Parts of the town were removed to form the town of Pitcher, once in 1827 and again in 1833.

Named after: Col. John Lincklaen, the former proprietor of the township and agent of the Holland Land Company.

Interesting fact: Mud Creek is an important stream flowing southward through the town, first to the Otselic and Tioughnioga rivers, then on to the Chenango River, which is part of the watershed of the Susquehanna River flowing to Chesapeake Bay.



McDonough:

Founded: 1816, with land from the town of Preston.

Named after: The town is named after Thomas Macdonough, a naval officer who served on Lake Champlain during the War of 1812.

Notable people: The famous secular music composer and poet, John Prindle Scott (1877-1932), called McDonough home for several years late in his life. Originally, he spent summers there, then in 1922, he purchased a house in the village that he called his “Scottage”. Truly inspired, his McDonough published poetry includes “The Old Road” and “The Hills O’ McDonough.”

Interesting fact: Since 1927, McDonough residents have annually decorated a living pine tree during the Christmas season with electric bulbs. Standing at over 115’ tall, the tree is recorded as the “world’s largest living Christmas tree.”

McDonough was home to the famed ‘Ford Homes’, the Ivon R. Ford, Inc., prefab house factory. Started and owned by Ivon R. Ford, Sr., it was one of the first manufacturers of prefabricated buildings in the country and was a major employer.

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North Norwich:

Named after: The town of Norwich, which is directly south of the town of North Norwich.

Notable people: Obadiah German (1766-1842) was an early settler in the hamlet of North Norwich and is believed to be its first merchant. He was an Assembly Representative, first judge for Chenango County, and a United States Senator for six years. He started a trading post along the Chenango River, and also operated a store in the area across from the present-day Town Hall, which was the site of his home. He was also one of the subscribers who helped incorporate the “Farmers Library” in the town of North Norwich. There is a “tale” that if he had been given the land, North Norwich would have been Chenango County’s seat.

Interesting Facts: North Norwich has an “umlaufberg,” also known as Steam Sawmill Hill. The Chenango River once flowed on the western side of this mountain, but now flows on the eastern side. A million years ago, a glacier ice block melted and caused the stream to change course. The hamlet of North Norwich lies to the south.

Rea-D-Pack Foods was founded in 1953 by the Goldstein family. At one time, it was the largest sauerkraut producer in the country, producing more than 15,000 tons annually. It closed in 2008.

North Norwich is home to the Lt. Warren E. Eaton, DSC Airport is located on Route 12 south in memory of Lt. Warren E. Eaton, World War I distinguished pilot.

New Berlin:

Founded: In 1807, from part of the town of Norwich. In 1853, part of the town was used to enlarge the town of Sherburne.

Named after: Berlin, Conn. In 1821, the town changed its name to “Lancaster,” but returned to “New Berlin” the next year.

Notable people: Helen Adelia Manville (1839-1912) was an American poet and littérateur.

Anson Burlingame (1820-1870) was an American lawyer, a legislator for the Republican/American Party, diplomat, and abolitionist. He was also the United States’ minister to the Qing Empire.

Interesting fact: In 1899, the offices of Preferred Mutual burned to the ground, along with 11 other buildings in New Berlin. Ironically, Frank Holmes, founder of Preferred Mutual, carried no fire insurance on his business property, but he did rebuild the offices.

The New Berlin Instrument Company produced Oboes, Clarinets and Bassoons for the C.G. Conn Instrument Co. until 1961.

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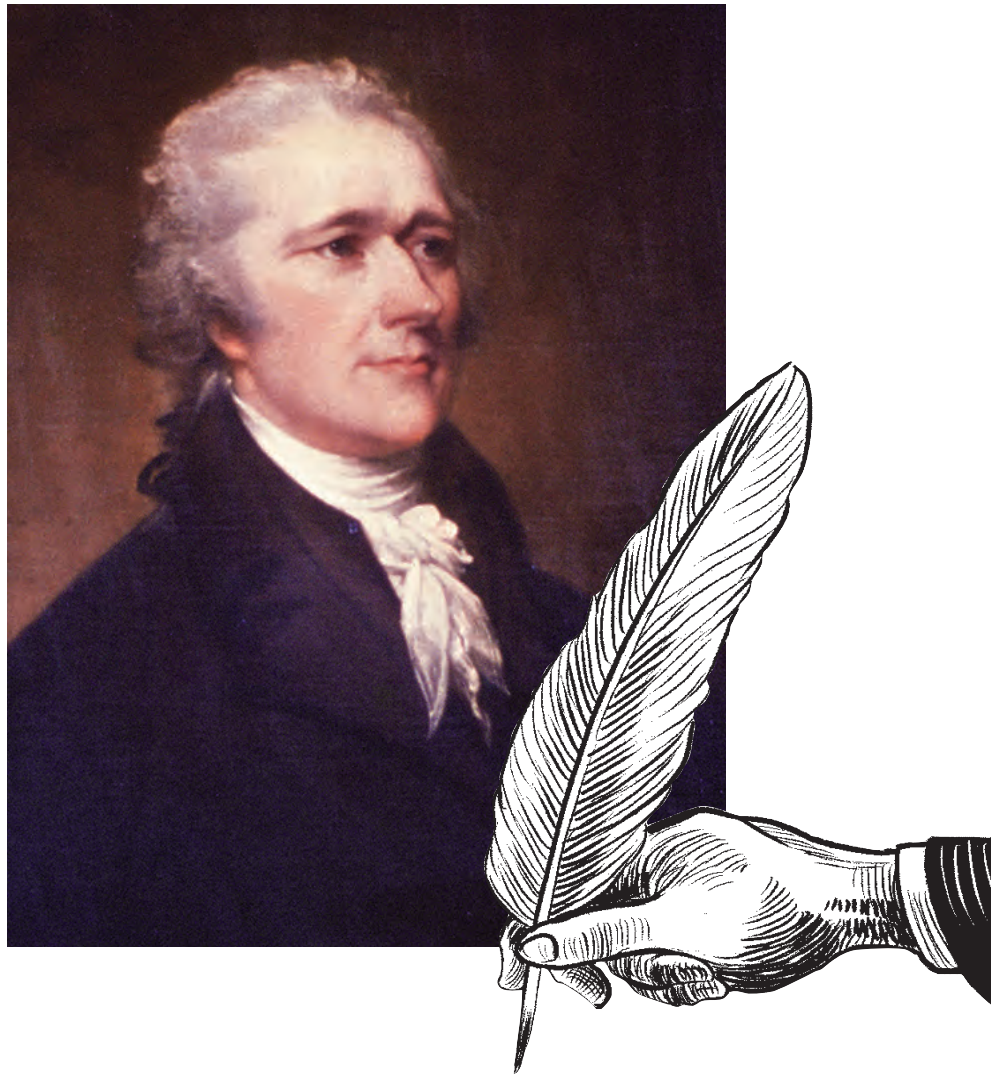
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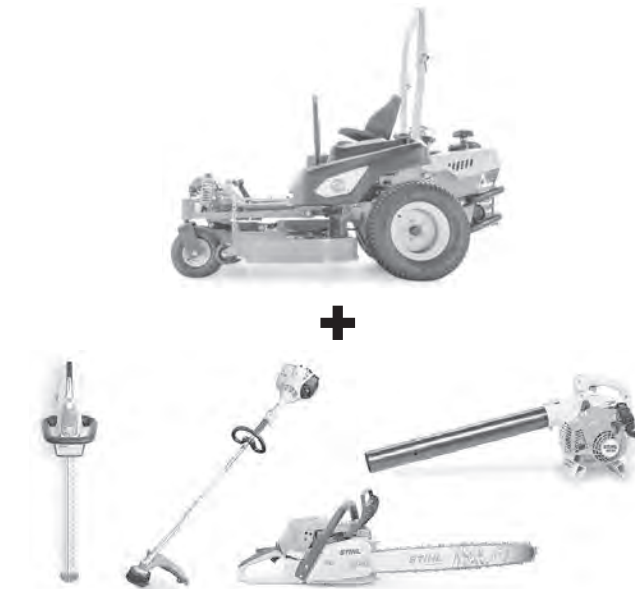
If only Hamilton had spellcheck

Alexander Hamilton's legacy rose to new heights in the twenty-first century, a remarkable feat given that the Founding Father passed away in 1804. The debut of the Broadway musical Hamilton in 2015 reinvigorated interest in the American statesman, but even the most ardent fans of Lin-Manuel Miranda's wildly popular play may not realize that Alexander Hamilton made a notable "mistake" that has endured through the centuries. A careful reading of the United States Constitution reveals that the home state of each delegate is listed alongside his name. The names of the delegates' states were written into the document by Alexander Hamilton. Benjamin Franklin was the Pennsylvania delegate at the time, and when writing the state Franklin represented next to his name, Hamilton spelled it "Pensylvania." That spelling notably contains two "Ns" and not the three in the modern spelling of the state's name used today. But before Americans point a finger at the Founding Father for misspelling the name, it's worth noting that Hamilton was not necessarily incorrect. Indeed, it was considered acceptable to spell "Pennsylvania" with two or three Ns in the late eighteenth century. Alas, modern readers of the Constitution cannot be blamed for wishing spellcheck had been around when the United States became a nation.



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Norwich:

Founded: The first settlers arrived around 1788. The town of Norwich was formed in 1793. It became a city in 1914.

Named after: Norwich, Connecticut, where many early settlers relocated from. The original name is from Norwich, England.

Notable people: Gail Borden (1801-1874) is the inventor of condensed milk. This enabled the milk to be transported and stored without refrigeration.

Ruth Benedict (1887 - 1948) was an American anthropologist whose work is still used today in education.

Jessamine Sophia Whitney (1880 - 1941) was an American statistician and public health professional, who worked at the National Tuberculosis Association for 22 years.

Edward F. Foley (1866-1954) was a famous photographer who moved to Norwich in his adult married life. Throughout his career, Edward captured many notable people of the era including, President of the United States, Franklin Delano Roosevelt; commander of the American Expeditionary Forces on the Western Front during World War I, General John J. Pershing; Great Britain Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, Italian Dictator, Benito Mussolini; French general, Marshal Petain; American Baseball Player, Jack Nugent; and the first female pilot to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean, Amelia Earhart. He is also credited as having one of the first printed images to capture the Declaration of Independence.

Interesting facts: Norwich is home to the invention of Pepto-Bismol in 1901.

The Norwich Knitting Mill was the first company in the world to produce Mickey Mouse undies, with a copyright date of 1933.

Norwich was the home to the David Maydole Hammer Factory. By the founder's death in 1892, Maydole had become the largest hammer manufacturer in the United States.



Otselic:

Founded: In 1807 by Ebenezer Hill, moving south from Georgetown to what is now Otselic Center.

Named after: An Iroquois word that translates to Plum Creek.

Notable people: Grace Brown (1886-1906) was an Otselic native murdered by her boyfriend, Chester Gillette. Her story received national attention and was the subject of the fictional character Roberta Alden in Theodore Dreiser's novel *An American Tragedy* as well as Jennifer Donnelly's novel *A Northern Light*. She is buried in Valley View Cemetery in South Otselic. Gillette was eventually convicted of her murder and electrocuted at Auburn Prison.

Interesting facts: Otselic has the only D.E.C. fish hatchery in Chenango County. Built in the late 1930s, it was located in South Otselic because of the influence of the Gladding Fishing Line owners.

The New York, Oswego & Midland Railroad, commonly referred to as the Butter & Cheese Express, passed through Otselic. The Rainbow Trestle was a notable landmark in its day. So named because of its graceful curve, it was 750 feet in length and 45 feet high, crossing the Otselic River basin and meeting land on Crumb Hill in Otselic Center.



Oxford:

Founded: In 1791, Benjamin Hovey, purchaser of a large tract on either side of the Chenango River, built a cabin near what is now Fort Hill Park in the center of the village of Oxford.

Named after: Oxford, Mass.

Notable people: Barnum Brown (1873-1963), commonly referred to as Mr. Bones, was an American paleontologist. He discovered the first documented remains of a *Tyrannosaurus rex* during his career. He is buried in Oxford.

Theodore Burr came to Oxford in 1792. In 1800 he built the first stringer bridge across the Chenango River in Oxford. Around 1804, Burr built the first "sizable bridge" crossing New York's Hudson River, at Waterford, N.Y. He built nearly every bridge that crossed the Susquehanna River from Binghamton to Maryland in those days. His successes made him the most distinguished architect of bridges in the country. Burr was awarded a U.S. patent for his arch and truss bridge design. His home is now the Oxford Memorial Library.

Interesting fact: Oxford lost some of its territory when the town of Guilford was created in 1813, and the town of Coventry was formed in 1843.



Pharsalia:

Founded: The first settlement occurred in 1797. It was formed as Stonington on April 7, 1806 but was later changed to Pharsalia on April 6, 1808.

Named after: Originally after Stonington CT, but Pharsalia is in honor of the Roman civil war battle site in Greece.

Notable people: The “Podunk Hillbillies” were musicians and comedians who entertained throughout New York and Pennsylvania for over 40 years.

Interesting fact: When New York State started acquiring land for wildlife management purposes, it first acquired land in Pharsalia in 1926 as The Pharsalia Game Refuge; what is now called Pharsalia Wildlife Management Area. This area is nearly 4,700 acres.

Pitcher:



Founded: The land was first settled around 1794. The town of Pitcher was formed from parts of the towns of German and Lincklaen in 1827. The size of Pitcher was increased in 1833 with an additional portion taken from Lincklaen.

Named after: The town is named after Nathaniel Pitcher, the eighth governor of New York.

Notable people:
Pitcher native

Jethro A. Hatch (1837-1912) was the first physician in Kentland, Ind., and a congressman from Indiana’s 10th district. His family moved to Illinois in 1847. He was the first physician to locate in Kentland in 1861 and practiced until 1862, when he was an assistant surgeon of the 36th Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment. He served as member of the Indiana House of Representatives (1872-1873). Hatch was elected as a Republican to the 54th Congress (March 4, 1895 to March 3, 1897), serving Indiana’s 10th congressional district. He was not a candidate for renomination in 1896. He returned to Kentland and resumed the practice of medicine.

Interesting fact: Pitcher Springs was once a popular vacation spot in New York as a spa at the springs.



Plymouth:

Founded: Settlement in Plymouth began around 1794. It was then formed from the town of Norwich in 1806. Plymouth was known for many years as Frankville, so called because of the early French settlers there.

Notable people: George E. Cook (1865-1930) was an impressionist artist who traveled across America and Europe painting and selling his art in many galleries, most works being oil on canvas. Adelaine Cook, George’s sister, sung opera in America and Europe as well. The two siblings resided in Thornbrook Hall, on Country Club Road in Plymouth.

Interesting facts: There was a plank road from Norwich to South Otselic built in 1835 and discontinued in 1870.

Col. Walker of Utica owned a large tract of land of which Plymouth was a part. He was an Englishman and was captain of the 1st New York Regiment in the War of 1812.

Preston:



Founded: The town of Preston was founded from the town of Norwich on April 2, 1806. On April 17, 1816, McDonough was annexed from the town of Preston to give Preston its present configuration.

Named after: Preston derives its name from Preston, Conn., the origin of the early settlers. The name originates in Preston, Lancashire, England.

Notable people: Jane Fisk Hadley (1733-1819), with her husband, operated a tavern in Lexington, Mass. during the early stages of the Revolutionary War. This tavern was a meeting place for early patriots. On April 18, 1775 she was a witness to the Battle of Lexington and the English march to nearby Concord. Later in the war, it is alleged that Hadley spied for the Americans. After the war, the Hadleys moved to Battleboro, Vt. and later to Preston. She is buried in the Mason-Packer Cemetery in Preston.

Interesting facts: Preston, being town number 14 of the original 20 towns, places it in the geographical center of Chenango County. Thus, Preston has been the location of the county home, Preston Manor, for more than 100 years. The manor was once a full working farm.

Louis Dunckel once owned the largest chicken farm in New York state. It later became Preston Egg – its off shoot, Egg Low Farms, is still operating in Sherburne.

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Freedom

The American flag has been recognized across the globe as a symbol of freedom for centuries. The Stars and Stripes is recognizable to billions of people worldwide, but the flag has undergone many changes since the United States gained its independence from Great Britain. According to the National Flag Foundation, the national flag of the United States has been revised 27 times since American colonists fought for and won independence from British rule. Of course, many of those changes occurred when a new state or new states were added to the union. Each time a new state joined the union, the flag would have to be adjusted with the addition of an extra star. The 1777 flag included a star for each of the 13 colonies that eventually became one of the initial 13 states, but the modern flag now features 50 stars as representative of the 50 states. Though the flag certainly underwent many changes since the nation's inception, the NFF notes the current flag has remained unchanged since 1960, when the 50-star version was officially adopted on July 4 in recognition of Hawaii becoming the fiftieth state in 1959.



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The Library of Congress continually adds to its collection, which currently consists of millions of books in roughly 470 languages.



Sherburne:

Founded: 1793

Named after: Although it is not confirmed, two beliefs are after a hymn or after an original settler named James Sherburne. The town could have been named after the tune "Sherburne", written by Daniel Read in 1783. The early inhabitants had a habit of frequently singing the tune, which was a great favorite with them. Many of the earliest inhabitants and settlers of Sherburne were originally from the town of Kent, Litchfield County, Connecticut.

Notable people: John Franklin Gray (1804–1881), first practitioner of homeopathy in the United States.

Tompkins H. Matteson (1813-1884) was an American painter born in Peterboro, NY. Matteson studied at the National Academy of Design. Tompkins ran a studio in New York City from 1841 to 1850. He died in Sherburne, New York, in 1884.

Randy Glasbergen (1957-2015) was an American cartoonist and humorous illustrator best known for three decades of newspaper syndication as well as a freelance career. He produced the syndicated strip *The Better Half* from 1982 to 2014. He wrote text for hundreds of greeting cards for Hallmark Cards, American Greetings, and others.

Interesting Fact: The area that became Sherburne, part of the Chenango River valley, was originally inhabited by the Oneida people, until the late 1780s when the state of New York purchased the land from them. These parcels were later sold at auction in New York City.

Smithville:

Founded: From part of the town of Greene in 1808

Notable people: The Tarbell family owned the largest number of Guernsey cows in the Northeast.

Interesting Fact: Tarbell Farms was once the largest producer of Guernsey milk in the Northeast. The Tarbell Estate – which covered more



than 3,300 acres – was composed of five distinct farms. In 1961, the Tarbells were raising more than 500 purebred Guernsey cattle in addition to horses, swine, sheep and chickens. Prior to its sale in 1962, the Tarbells' rich, creamy milk was shipped by rail to a number of high-scale restaurants in New York City. In 1967, the farms were torn down, although some relics remain as historical evidence of its existence.

Smyrna:



Founded: The land was settled around 1792. The town of Smyrna was founded in 1808 as “Stafford” from part of the town of Sherburne. Within a month, the name was changed to “Smyrna.”

Named after: A coastal city in

ancient Greece.

Notable people: Harry Stack Sullivan, M.D. (1892-1949), is noted as the father of modern psychiatry. He was honored through a renaming of the county’s mental health facility to the Chenango County-Harry Stack Sullivan Mental Health Clinic.

Brigham Young (1801–1877) was an American religious leader and politician who lived in Smyrna as a child. He was the second president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church) from 1847 until his death. He founded Salt Lake City and he served as the first governor of the Utah Territory. Young also led the founding of the precursors to the University of Utah and Brigham Young University.

Charlie Palmer, a world renowned chef, owns several restaurants and has received many culinary awards.

Interesting fact: The Smyrna Citizens’ Band has been performing concerts since 1918 for the citizens of Smyrna. One family in the band features a fifth generation of performers.

Prayer for the Nation

By Thomas Jefferson

Almighty God, you have given us this good land for our heritage. We humbly ask you that we may always prove ourselves a people mindful of your favor and glad to do your will. Bless our land with honorable endeavor, sound learning and pure manners. Save us from violence, discord and confusion, from pride and arrogance, and from every evil way. Defend our liberties and fashion into one united people the multitude brought here out of many nations and tongues. Endow with the Spirit of wisdom those to whom in your name we entrust the authority of government, that there may be justice and peace at home, and that through obedience to your law we may show forth your praise among the nations on earth. In time of prosperity fill our hearts with thankfulness, and in the day of trouble do not allow our trust in you to fail. We ask all of this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Welcome to the Oxford American Legion Fort Hill Post 376!

After the end of World War I, a group of sixteen veterans in Oxford, NY, decided to start their own chapter of the American Legion, the Fort Hill American Legion Post No. 376. They were granted their charter on September 30, 1919, shortly after the national American Legion was chartered and incorporated by Congress on March 19, 1919. They named it Fort Hill after a nearby historic area in the Village of Oxford said to have been built by Native Americans of the Tuscarora Nation which was one of the oldest fortifications in the east. This was the start of Post 376, a long enduring patriotic veterans organization devoted to mutual helpfulness.

EVENTS

The Legion Post 376 bar is open regular hours (with restrictions), Monday through Sunday from 2:30 to closing. Sunday hours are 12:30 to closing. **Light food and snacks** will be available during all open hours. **Shuffleboard and pool playing** available (with stipulations). Current paid up membership cards are required for admission. **Pool leagues** active on Sunday and Thursday nights. **Pitch leagues** on Wednesdays at 6 PM in the Fall.

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A nation gets a name



September 9, 1776, may not be the first date Americans think of when pondering their nation's history, but it's a significant day nonetheless. According to the National Constitution Center, on September 9, 1776, the Second Continental Congress adopted a new name for a collective of colonies that had been referred to as the "United Colonies." The name chosen on that day in late summer 1776, the United States of America, has endured. While the opening sentence of the Declaration of Independence, which was issued on July 4, 1776, refers to the "thirteen united States of America," it was a little more than two months later when the Congress passed a series of resolutions, including one in which it replaced "United Colonies" with "United States" as the fledgling nation's new name.

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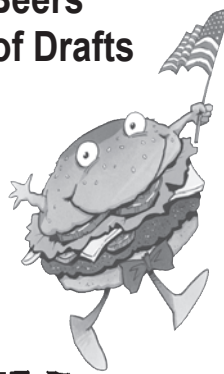
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Turtle Island Festival: Chenango County Honors Indigenous History for America250

Rebecca Laibowitz
Evening Sun Staff Writer
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As the United States commemorates the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, Chenango County celebrates by recognizing the often overlooked indigenous peoples of the area, the Haudenosaunee, whose histories and alliances helped shape New York State and the Nation.

On July 5, the Chenango County Historical Society (CCHS), the Chenango County Historian's Office, and the Chenango County Agricultural Society are bringing Turtle Island Festival to the Chenango County Fairgrounds. The Turtle Island Festival is a day-long community event featuring an outdoor performance spectacle based on the Haudenosaunee creation story, created by Seneca Nation artist and historian, G. Peter Jemison. At the same time, the community is invited to participate in "America's Potluck" a Nationwide America250 initiative encouraging communities to gather, share food, and share stories/history. The festival is part of the county's contribution to the nationwide America250 commemoration.

What is America250?

America250 refers to efforts started by the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission established by Congress in 2016 to celebrate and commemorate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, often considered the nation's birthday. Overall, the commission helps realize funding, promotion, and support for commemorative activities at the local, state, and national level.

Each state and territory has also formed its own commission. Governor Kathy Hochul signed the "New York State 250th Commemoration Act" on Feb 24, 2022, establishing the state's commission known as NY 250 and directing it to support and guide commemorative activities statewide.

Working with the New York State Museum, the Association of Public Historians of NYS, and the New York State Historian, the Commission published a field guide highlighting historically significant moments that took place in New York, and providing suggestive interpretive themes, ideas, and information for local historians to guide their commemorative activities. The very first theme in the guide being "Indigenous History is New York's History" which directly relates to the Turtle Island Festival.

Executive Director of CCHS Jessica Moquin, expressed, "we're going to be commemorating for the next eight years,"

adding, "that's how long the fight for independence took." CCHS kicked off the eight year long commemoration of America 250 in November of 2025 with a pre-screening of the Ken Burns Documentary called the American Revolution. CCHS has other initiatives in planning phases for commemorating the 250th anniversary and eight year Revolutionary War period so more is yet to come.

"Eight years will give us enough time, I hope, to at least touch on all the points that influence our history here in Chenango County," said Moquin.

The Union's First Allies

Among the six members of Haudenosaunee Confederacy are the Oneida Indian Nation, whose ancestral lands once stretched from the St. Lawrence Seaway South into Pennsylvania, including what is now Chenango County. During the Revolutionary War, the Oneida became the first allies of the American Patriots. The Confederacy also includes the Seneca, Cayuga, Mohawk, Onondaga, and the Tuscarora nations.

Oneida warriors played a pivotal role in the American victory at the Battle of Oriskany, a key turning point in the Revolutionary War, fighting alongside General Herkimer's men against British forces and other Haudenosaunee aligned with the Crown. After this battle, Chief Skenandoah/Shenandoah and the Oneidas chose to side with the American colonists, while other members of the confederacy sided with the British.

Oneida warriors went on to fight side by side with Revolutionary Patriots in many battles including the Battle of Barren Hill, the Second Battle of Saratoga, and were requested by George Washington to aid at Valley Forge. Washington's troops were starving and in desperate need of support. One Hundred Oneida warriors traveled hundreds of miles from Central New York, nearly 50 arrived at Valley Forge. With them they brought allyship, supplies and white corn.

An Oneida woman, known as Polly



On July 5, the Chenango County Historical Society (CCHS), the Chenango County Historian's Office, and the Chenango County Agricultural Society are bringing Turtle Island Festival to the Chenango County Fairgrounds. (Submitted photo)

Cooper, traveled with the group to Valley Forge, teaching Americans how to prepare the white corn increasing its nutrition and assisting Martha Washington. For her service, she was gifted a shawl and bonnet, of which the shawl still survives and is held by her descendants, currently on loan for an exhibit at the New York State Museum. Recognizing Polly Cooper's contribution to the Revolution the US Mint released a 2026 Native American \$1 Coin depicting Polly Cooper holding a basket of white corn standing with General George Washington.

Despite their alliance, the Oneida also suffered during the Revolutionary War when General Washington ordered the Sullivan-Clinton Campaign. An operation that aimed to burn down Haudenosaunee British Supporters but which did not differentiate between the Oneidas. In the following years, land loss, displacement, and political uncertainty followed.

It wasn't until ten years after the Revolutionary War that the United States formally acknowledged the sovereignty, land rights, and tax freedoms of the Oneida and other Haudenosaunee nations, through the Treaty of Canandaigua (1794), signed by President George Washington and Shenandoah. This treaty remains the oldest valid treaty still recognized by the federal government. Each year, in accordance with its original terms, the United States delivers bolts of cloth to the Oneida Indian Nation and other members of the Confederacy as a lasting symbol of the relationship.

Since that time around 250 years ago people from the Oneida Indian Nation have

Continued on page 4



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Continued from page 3

served in every major American military conflict.

CCHS Executive Director, Jessica Moquin expressed, "This [Turtle Island Festival] is our way of showing gratitude for their involvement because there were a lot of Oneida who fought and died, and they're American patriots when you look at it from that viewpoint."

The Turtle Island Performance, an international collaboration

The performance happening on July 5, at Turtle Island Festival, showcases the creation story of the Haudenosaunee through music, dance, and inflatable puppetry. Before getting into the details of the show, it's important to note that it only became possible thanks to various levels of international collaboration. A major part of the performance, the aerial turtle sculpture, was constructed by French company, Plasticiens Volants, based on designs by Jemison. While the dancing and narration is performed by the Skywoman Iroquois Dance Theater, choreographed by William Crouse a member of the Seneca Nation.

The performance first premiered in 2025 at Ganondagan State Historic Site before going on tour. Friends of Ganondagan, a non profit organization whose mission is to honor and promote Haudenosaunee history and culture and to strengthen traditions, is helping co-produce the tour. Funding has come from French Cultural Institutions including the Département du Tarn, Région Occitanie, Villa Albertine, the French Institute for Culture and

Education in the United States, and Institut Français Thomas Donahower. It's now being brought to the Chenango County Fairgrounds by the Chenango County Historical Society (CCHS) as one stop in the 2026 tour.

"We have a group of French performers and street performers, and they have a long history of working with inflatables. Here in the U.S., we don't see inflatables except maybe in the Macy's Day Parade, but all around the world, that's a big art form. And of course, over there, they don't see our traditional dancers or our contemporary social dancing. And so now we're kind of collaborating in a way that is unique, and I think that that's important," said Jemison.

Throughout the show, the aerial turtle sculpture is operated by French performers from Plasticiens Volants in a live showcase of international collaboration. Inflatables made by the company have been seen at multiple Olympic Games, and performed in over 75 countries. They have recently announced a project for 2027 that expands on turtle island, hoping to tell more of the story of Sky Woman. According to the announcement on their website, Plasticiens Volants' artistic intent for Sky Woman is to create works that question, awaken curiosity, and provoke reflection. The site says they want the project to pay tribute to a people whose history has been marked by attempts at erasure and forced assimilation.

A Collaboration between French institutions and the Haudenosaunee holds historical significance. As Jemison explained, the French were the first to label the Haudenosaunee as "Iroquois" a name

rooted in early misunderstandings. "We call ourselves the Haudenosaunee," said Jemison. Haudenosaunee translates to "People of the Longhouse" which encompasses all six of the nations, Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, and Mohawk, and Tuscarora who joined later.

Ancient lessons from The Haudenosaunee Creation Story come to life

"We have a creation story, a story of how the world came to be as you and I experience it. I find that story very inspirational, very informative, and it really is a story that can apply today as it applied when it was first delivered to us, at some indeterminate time in the past," said Jemison.

Jemison's art has been shown across the U.S. and the world, in collections at the MoMA, the Whitney Museum, the British Museum and the Denver Art Museum. He has used mixed media throughout his career, even creating an animated film with animators from the Rochester Institute of Technology, that depicts the same story as the performance coming to Chenango County. The film also premiered at Ganondagan Historic Site several years ago.

To create the performance Jemison had to decide which parts of the story to include. It is an ancient story with sacred aspects to their culture. Certain sacred elements are left out for the public performance which helps them condense it to be a more dynamic and visually representative show. A major theme in the story is balance. He spoke about two prominent characters in the story known by left-handed twin and right-handed twin who in the legend create

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things we see in the world.

“The left-handed twin is destructive. The right-handed twin is the one making things in a positive way. And this brings us to the present, we have these forces that still exist today. The force for negative and the force for positive, and they’re always in a kind of a struggle,” said Jemison. “This is what I find universal about the Haudenosaunee creation story, is that these things are still present. You and I deal with them, and you and I have equal tendencies. We sometimes do the good things and sometimes can flip up and go the other way,” he added.

The story includes more than just these twins, there is the Sky Woman who falls from the sky world, the turtle whose back she is brought to, the muskrat who brings earth to help build up the turtles back, the Skywoman’s daughter who is the mother of the twins, the Turtle Man their father. There is a whole part of the story that takes place in another world, the sky world, that isn’t told through this performance to save time.

“It’s a very old story. It’s a story that talks about two worlds, a world that is above us that we refer to as the sky world, and the world here on Earth that we inhabit. And this story begins with a woman,” said Jemison.

The Skywoman Dance Group will be using their social dances and songs to perform this ancient story to the public, while the inflatable sculpture is operated.

Commemorating the Past and Celebrating the Present

Bringing Turtle Island Festival to Chenango County presents a unique opportunity to commemorate an often overlooked aspect of American History. It provides a moment of recognition, gratitude, and community learning. For CCHS, the event represents a deliberate effort to begin the America250 festivities by centering stories that shaped the land before the United States existed as it does now. Moquin, expressed, “We’re trying to be intentional about it, because there are a lot of stories that can be told and starting at the beginning is a very good place to start.

A collaborative spirit has defined the planning process with CCHS, the Historian’s Office, Agricultural Society, Colorscape, local libraries, cultural organi-

zations, and community volunteers all contributing to bring the event to life.

CCHS has been partners with the Oneida Indian Nation for several years, working with their cultural ambassadors frequently. Moquin said that being engaged with them has been essential to programming. She expressed that the festival relates to the historical context of the Oneida’s supporting the American fight for freedom, honoring the first allies by sharing how they honor Turtle Island. It also offers an accessible way for the audience to learn about Haudenosaunee culture.

“Really everything we do commemorates America. You know, that’s, that’s what we’re here for. We’re local history, but local history is New York State history, is American history,” exclaimed Moquin.

When Jemison was asked about the Turtle Island Festival being part of the County’s America250 commemoration he responded thoughtfully, saying, “Well, you know, it doesn’t exactly align in the sense that this is about a time period long before that. But it is okay to me that they acknowledge that there were indigenous people, who were living here on this land, and we’re still here.”

In the spirit of America250, Turtle Island Festival invites the community to honor the past, while looking toward the future. Celebrating the endurance of Haudenosaunee culture, recogniz-



Oneida warriors played a pivotal role in the American victory at the Battle of Oriskany, a key turning point in the Revolutionary War, fighting alongside General Herkimer’s men against British forces and other Haudenosaunee aligned with the Crown. After this battle, Chief Skenandoah/Shenandoah and the Oneidas chose to side with the American colonists, while other members of the confederacy sided with the British. Painting by Don Troani. (Photo by Rebecca Laibowitz)

ing the first allies, and exemplifying a shared responsibility to preserve these stories and American values. It is a moment to acknowledge the complexity of the Revolutionary era, and the ongoing presence of the indigenous communities in New York State to this day.

The Turtle Island Festival takes place on Friday, July 5, 2026, from 4 to 8 p.m. at the Chenango County Fairgrounds in Norwich. The event is free and open to the public, featuring the outdoor performance, community activities, and America’s Potluck as part of the county’s America250 commemoration.

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After the passing of Norwich native Warren E. Eaton, a motion was made to name it in honor of Lieutenant Warren Edwin Eaton D.S.C, a decorated World War I pilot and local industrialist who died tragically in an airplane crash in 1934. Today the Legion functions as a pillar of community support, organizing events like National Vietnam Veterans Day ceremonies and supports local veterans.

The Norwich American Legion houses:
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about some of the colonies
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It's been 250 years since the 13 colonies joined to form the United States of America, but those 13 territories continue to feature prominently throughout the country each and every day. That's because the 13 stripes on the American flag represent the original 13 colonies.

The American flag serves as a visible reminder of the 13 colonies, and that's not the only interesting fact about the territories that would become the United States of America.



Colonial New Jersey was home to a notable rift in a famous family.

Benjamin Franklin was among the most renowned and recognizable of the Founding Fathers of the United States, and his commitment to the ideals of the burgeoning nation did not waver even when the conflict that became the

American Revolutionary War divided his family. William Franklin was a son Benjamin fathered outside his common-law marriage to Deborah Read. Though William was raised by his father and Read, father and son did not see eye-to-eye on every issue, including the war. William, in fact, served as the thirteenth and final Colonial Governor of New Jersey, and remained a steadfast loyalist throughout the conflict. The prospects of victory were looking dim for loyalists by 1781, and William departed for England in 1782, never to return to New Jersey or the infant nation it became a part of. Curiously, William's own son from an extra-marital relationship, William Temple Franklin, sided with his grandfather during the conflict, and even served Benjamin Franklin while the latter negotiated a pivotal alliance between America and France.



There was a constitution that predates the United States Constitution.

ConnecticutHistory.org notes that the Connecticut Colony had a framework for government by the mid-seventeenth century not unlike the one that would be spelled out in the U.S. Constitution. The Fundamental Orders of Connecticut were adopted in 1639 and are considered the first written constitution in America. Roger Ludlow of Windsor is believed to have drafted the Fundamental Orders, which consisted of a preamble and 11 orders (or laws) and mirrored trading company charters common at the time. Notably, the Orders did not reference the authority of the crown.



A debt sparked the founding of Pennsylvania.

After the restoration of the Stuart monarchy in 1660, Charles II of England took the throne. Money was tight at the time, so Sir William Penn, a British admiral, funded the rebuilding of the Royal Navy out of his own pocket. Charles II was petitioned for repayment by Sir William's son, also named William Penn, twenty years later. But the younger Penn, who had become a Quaker by this point, requested land in lieu of funds, with a goal toward establishing a place where religious tolerance was rule. The king granted the younger Penn's request in 1681, and decreed that the territory granted to Penn be named after his father. Thus, Pennsylvania got its name.



Rent was cheap in New Hampshire by the mid-eighteenth century.

The colony of New Hampshire was so sparsely populated by the end of the French and Indian War in 1762 that Governor Benning Wentworth came up with a unique way to entice people to move to what's now known as the Granite State. According to History.com, Wentworth recruited settlers by offering one-acre lots that required annual rental payments of just a single ear of Indian corn payable on December 25.

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Military heroes lent their names to Chenango County towns

Military heroes lent their names to some of present-day Chenango County, whose own name is reported to have come from an Oneida word meaning “Land of the Bull Thistle.”

Greene, for example, was named in honor of Gen. Nathanael Greene, second in command to George Washington during the Revolutionary War.

When the early settlers changed the name of their community from Hornby to Greene, they gave lie to the general’s complaint upon being named quartermaster general of the Revolutionary army that “nobody ever heard of a quartermaster in history.”

Three other towns turned to the War of 1812 for their names.

German is named after Obadiah German, a general of the militia who made his home in present-day North Norwich.

Bainbridge changed its name from Jericho in tribute to Capt. William Bainbridge, who had been captured in Tripoli during the war with the

Barbary pirates and later commanded the U.S.S. Constitution — Old Ironsides — during the War of 1812.

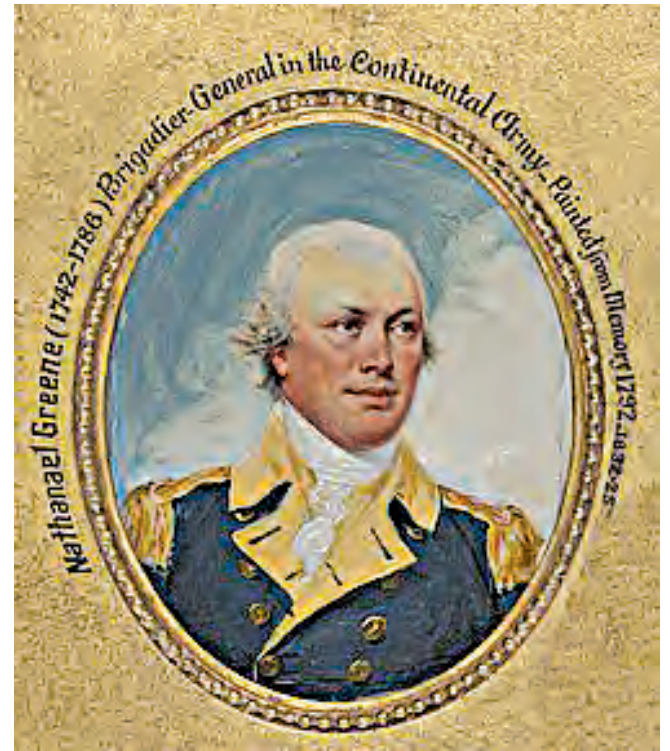
It was not Capt. Bainbridge, however, but Capt. Thomas Macdonough who commanded the decisive naval battle of the war.

In September 1814 a British fleet had the Americans under Capt. Macdonough’s command bottled up in Cumberland Bay, at Plattsburgh, on Lake Champlain.

The tide seemed to turn in favor of the British when the Saratoga, Macdonough’s flagship, lost its starboard batteries and one-fifth of her crew to a fierce onslaught from the British.

In a bold maneuver, Macdonough “wound ship” — turning the Saratoga 180 degrees while lying at anchor, and used his port batteries to force the surrender of four British warships.

News of the British surrender reached peace negotiators at a crucial moment, prompting a great softening in Britain’s



A portrait of Nathanael Greene by John Turnbull circa 1872

previous hard-line truce terms.

When a new town was separated from Preston in 1816, it was named McDonough in honor of the hero of Plattsburgh Bay.



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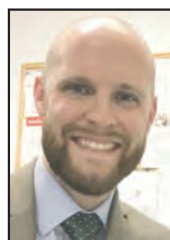
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