



Manlius Town Historian

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Town of Manlius, Onondaga County, State of New York

The Town of Manlius was officially created on March 5, 1794 by the state legislature. It was one of the original 11 towns in Onondaga County that then stretched from the Madison/Chenango county border west to Geneva and from lake Ontario to the southern tip of Cayuga Lake, four times the present size of our county. The names of Manlius residents are the first on the petition to create the new county and Manlius residents were among the elected earliest county officials.

At that time, the Town of Manlius was much larger – including all of today's Town of Manlius plus all of the Town of DeWitt, the eastern half of Syracuse, most of the town of Salina and some of the Town of Onondaga.

Into this frontier moved many veterans of the American Revolution. Four men settled on the lots they received from the state as a reward for military service, while most sold their bonus rights to others.

In the 21st century, the town of Manlius has three villages within its border -- Manlius, granted powers of self-government by the state in 1813, is the oldest village in Onondaga County, reflecting its prominence as the county's commercial, industrial and cultural center on the important east-west turnpike road which is today's Route 173. Fayetteville, influenced by the commercial traffic of the Erie Canal, became a village in 1844. Minoa, where the railroad provided the principal economic base, was organized in 1913. Both Manlius and Fayetteville have Historic Districts on the National Register.

Fremont, an early crossroads, developed residentially after 1948. Kirkville, focused first on the Erie Canal and then the railroad, maintains its post office that serves a wide rural area in the northern part of the town.

The town's two major school systems – Fayetteville-Manlius and East Syracuse-Minoa – resulted from the consolidation of village and rural districts, FM in 1951 and ESM effectively in 1961.

The pioneers in the Town of Manlius were impressed by the rich fertile fields and tall forest they found here. Despite the fact that the town more than doubled its population after 1960, about one-third the town's 67 square miles are in agricultural use.

The oldest landmarks in the Town of Manlius are both within Green Lakes State Park. The lakes are the remnants of an ancient waterfall of the last ice age, 12,000 years ago. Because of their unique qualities, Round Lake and the pristine forest surrounding it are on the National Register of Natural Landmarks.

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