

# **Establishment of Seneca County Boundaries**

**Prepared by Seneca County Historian Walter Gable**

**Revised September 2018**

## **Origins of Seneca County**

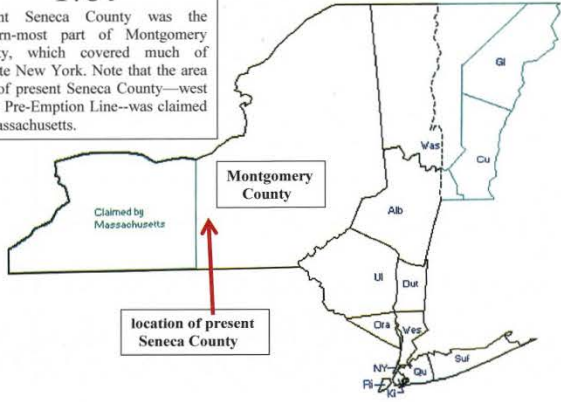
Prior to March 24, 1804, Seneca County was part of various counties. When counties were established in New York State in 1683, the present-day Seneca County was part of the vast Albany County. A portion of Albany County became Tryon County on March 12, 1772. This county was named for William Tryon, colonial governor of New York. In 1784, following the peace treaty that ended the American Revolutionary War, the name of Tryon County was changed to Montgomery County in honor of the American general, Richard Montgomery. On February 16, 1791, portions of Montgomery County became Tioga, Otsego, and Herkimer Counties. Onondaga County was established from a portion of Herkimer County on March 5, 1794. The western portion of Onondaga County became Cayuga County on March 8, 1799. At that time, Cayuga County included the present Seneca and Tompkins Counties and part of Wayne County.

Seneca County was established from the western part of Cayuga County by an act passed by the New York State Legislature on March 24, 1804. At that time Seneca County stretched all the way from Lake Ontario to south of what is today Ithaca. More specifically, it was bounded on the north by Lake Ontario, east by Cayuga County, south by Tioga County, and west by Steuben and Ontario Counties. It was a strip some sixty-three miles in length with an average width of eleven miles, totaling 744 square miles or about one-half million acres.

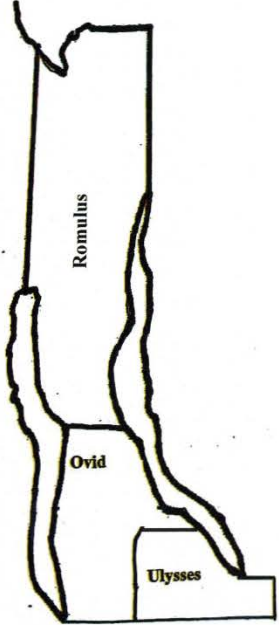
## **Subsequent Boundary Changes to Seneca County and Its Towns**

- March 5, 1794--when Onondaga County was created in 1794, the area that would become Seneca County was organized into the towns of Romulus, Ovid, and Ulysses.
- March 14, 1800--the town of Washington was created out of the northern part of the town of Romulus.
- 1802--The town of Hector was created from the southwestern part of the town of Ovid.
- 1803--The town of Junius was created out of the northern portion of the town Washington.
- 1807--The town of Wolcott was created out of the very northern portion of the town of Junius, and became part of Wayne County in 1823.
- April 6, 1808--The town of Washington was renamed the town of Fayette.
- 1812--the town of Galen was formed from the northern part of the town of Junius, and Galen became part of Wayne County in 1823.
- April 7, 1817--The town of Covert was formed from the southern portion of the town of Ovid, and in that same state legislation the town of Covert became part of the newly-created Tompkins County.
- 1819--The town of Covert was returned to Seneca County.
- January 27, 1826--The town of Lodi was created out of the western portion of the town of Covert.
- March 26, 1829--The towns of Seneca Falls, Tyre, and Waterloo were formed out of parts of the town of Junius.
- February 6, 1830--The town of Varick was formed from the then northern portion of the town of Romulus.
- May 5, 1837--There was an adjustment in the boundary between the towns of Ovid and Lodi, moving the boundary line about 1 mile to the north. Since that last change, the boundaries of the towns in Seneca County have not changed.

**1784**  
 Present Seneca County was the western-most part of Montgomery County, which covered much of Upstate New York. Note that the area west of present Seneca County—west of the Pre-Emption Line--was claimed by Massachusetts.

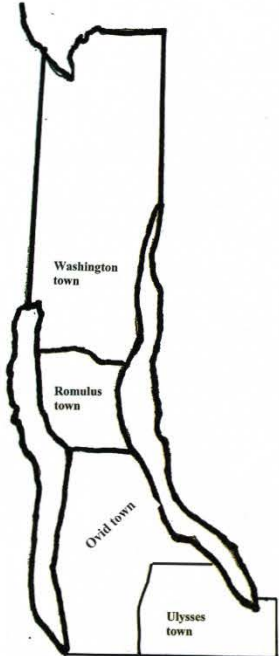


Lake Ontario



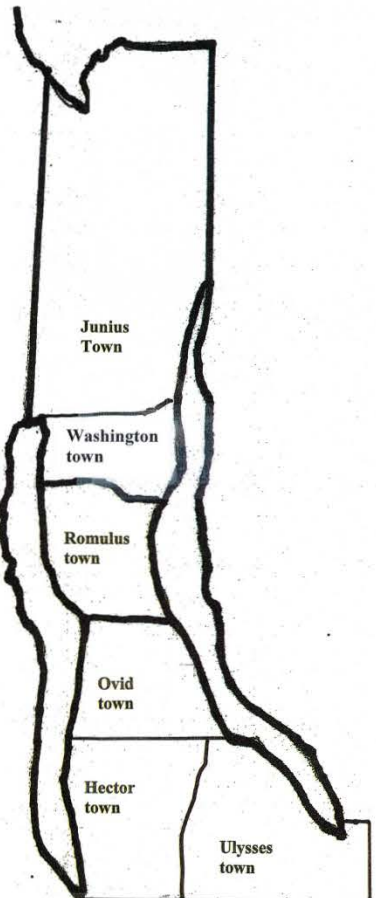
western part of  
 Onondaga County  
 March 5, 1794

Lake Ontario



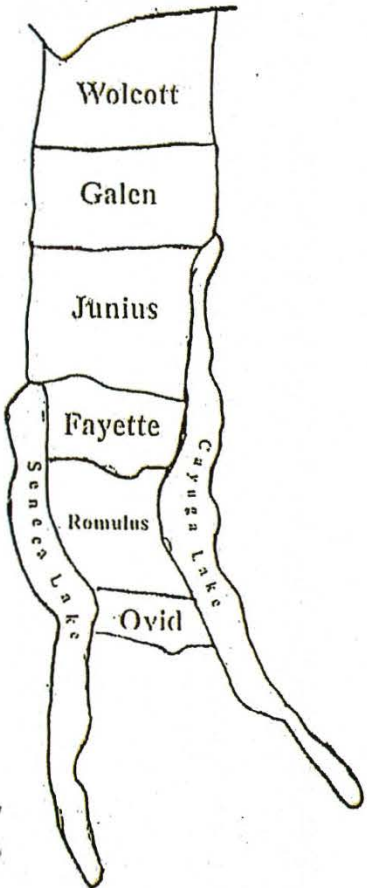
western part of  
 Cayuga County  
 1800

Lake Ontario



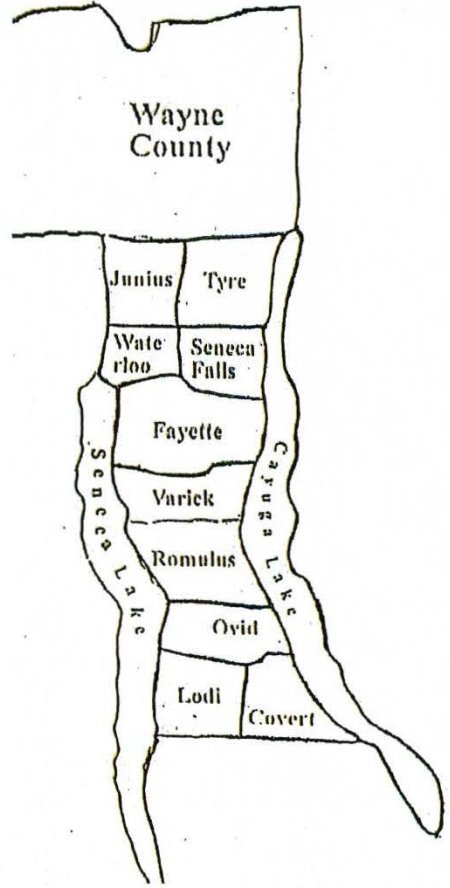
Seneca County  
 estab. March 24, 1804

Lake Ontario



Seneca County  
 as of April 7, 1817

Lake Ontario



Seneca County  
 as of May 5, 1837