

Mentz and Port Byron Timeline

1775 - Western NY is considered to be part of the Six Nations Indian Lands.

1775 – 1783 - American Revolution

1777 - Tryon County extends west to encompass Six Nations land.

1784 - Tryon County is renamed as Montgomery County.

1790 - Survey maps of 25 townships presented to the Surveyor General on July 3. The town of Brutus one of the 25.

1791 - Montgomery County is divided. Central New York is renamed as Herkimer County.

1791 - Balloting for Military Lots begins on January 1.

1794 - Onondaga County is divided off from Herkimer.

1794 - The Military Tract Townships of Cato, Brutus, Aurelius and that portion of the East Cayuga Reservation located north of the southwest corner of the Military Tract Township of Aurelius were briefly combined together to all become known by the name "AURELIUS," on March 5.

1794 - Philip King and family settled on Great Lot 72.

1797 - Elijah Buck purchased Great Lot 73.

1798 - Aholiab Buck was the first settler near the Owasco Outlet. The settlement around the Owasco Outlet was known as "The Lick," but becomes informally known as Bucksville.

1799 - Cayuga County is divided off of Onondaga County on March 8.

1802 - The Town of Aurelius was split into the towns of Jefferson, Brutus, Cato and Owasco on March 30.

1804 – 1806 - Lewis and Clark Expedition explores the west.

1804 - Cayuga County is divided into Cayuga and Seneca Counties.

1804 - John Dixon settles in area.

1808 - Town of Jefferson renamed as Town of Mentz on April 6.

1810 - DeWitt Clinton and party travels across the State by boat and coach to explore the possibility of constructing a canal. The group overnights in Montezuma.

1812-1814 – War breaks out between America and England.

1812 - Park brothers build a small dam across Owasco Outlet two miles south (upstream) of hamlet.

1814 - First water-powered mill built on Owasco Outlet by Aaron Knapp on land donated by the Buck brothers.

1815 - James Bennett and Willard Whitney become first merchants in village.

1816 – The eruption of Mount Tambora in 1815 leads to a period of global cooling that results in the year without a summer. Frost is recorded in every month and many crops failed. Lord Byron writes the poem “Darkness,” as a result of the gloomy year.

1817 - July 4, Construction begins on the Erie Canal in Rome with a goal of building west to the Seneca River at Montezuma. The canal will be 4 feet deep and 40 feet wide, with a towpath.

1819 - Fall, The boat “Montezuma” becomes the first boat to travel between the Seneca River and Syracuse on the new canal.

1819 – The Panic of 1819 is the first financial crisis in the young nation. It would last through 1821.

1820 - Spring, The Erie Canal opens between Utica and Montezuma. Construction on the canal continues both east and west.

1820 - Harry Rice begins a wool-carding and cloth dressing business on the Owasco Outlet near today’s Hayden Road.

1821 - Port Byron Lodge No. 130 F&AM Organized Freedom Lodge.

1825 - Local residents decide to rename Bucksville as Port Byron.

1825 - David B. and Walter H. Smith open store in building previously occupied by J.E. Smith.

1825 - October 26, The Erie Canal is opened between Albany and Buffalo. A grand parade moves west to New York City.

1825 - Brigham Young is living and working in Port Byron. He marries his wife Marion in Pine’s Eagle Tavern.

1830 - John Beach and others built a large grain mill along Erie Canal. A two-mile-long raceway is constructed up to Park’s dam along the Outlet to power the mill.

1831 - Aholiab Buck and family move to Illinois.

1832 - State proposes to enlarge Erie Canal to 7 feet deep and 70 feet wide.

1832 - William Hayden opens a woolen mill on Owasco Outlet. The area around the mill becomes known as Haydenville.

1834 - Construction begins on the enlargement of the Erie Canal.

1837 - March 2, The Village of Port Byron is incorporated.

1837 – A run on the banks lead to the Financial Panic of 1837. The resulting depression would last for five years.

1844 - Frederick Prince begins the Port Byron Herald newspaper in October. The paper is published for about two years.

1848 - Seneca Falls Convention for women's rights is held.

1849 - Charles White begins the Port Byron Gazette newspaper. The paper has a number of owners over the next few years.

1851-52 - The New York Central Railroad constructs a direct line between Syracuse and Rochester. A station is built a mile north of Port Byron.

1851 - A fight begins about a proposed new line for the Erie Canal. Some want the enlarged canal to be located north of the village center while others want it to remain along the old 1820 line through the village.

1855 - Port Byron Free Academy is chartered.

1857 – The over-expansion of the country leads to the Financial Panic of 1857. The effects would last until the beginning of the Civil War.

1857 - State decides to move canal route in village to the new line.

1857 - Beach's Mill burns

1858 - New Enlarged Canal route opens and old canal is abandoned.

1858 - The Port Byron Free Academy is built as a village school. Over 20 one-room schoolhouses are in use around the town.

1859 - The Town of Mentz is divided into Mentz, Montezuma, and Throop on April 8.

1860 - Port Byron Gazette is purchased by Cyrus Marsh. He renames it as The Northern Cayuga Times.

1861 - Civil War begins.

1862 - Although not complete, the State orders that the enlargement of the Erie Canal is complete and ends the work. Work on the enlargement does continue.

1865 - Civil War ends.

1865 - John Dixon begins a flour mill under name Dixon and White.

1871 - Charles Johnson and George Marsh begin publication of the Port Byron Chronicle newspaper, perhaps taking over from the old Gazette.

1873 – United States and much of Europe enter into a long depression after the Financial Panic of 1873. The depression was blamed on the overheated economy after the end of the Civil War and rapid railroad expansion. The depression would last until 1879.

1875 - John Hayden begins a fruit drying business in Haydenville.

1877 - L.H. King buys the Port Byron Chronicle.

1883-84 - The New York, West Shore and Buffalo Railway is constructed. A station is built on the north side of Port Byron.

1893 – The Financial Panic of 1893 begins in February and lasts eight months. Although brief, the effects were long lasting.

1898 - The Port Byron Free Academy burns on November 16. A new school is built.

1905 - Construction begins on New York State Barge Canal, a replacement to the old Erie Canal.

1907 - A fast interurban trolley system named the Rochester, Syracuse and Eastern is built between Rochester and Syracuse. The Auburn and Northern trolley line offers a connection to Auburn.

1914 – War breaks out in Europe in June. It develops into a “world war.”

1917 - Fall, Last boats travel along the old towpath Erie Canal.

1917 - Port Byron Telephone Company organized.

1917 – America enters into the World War. Troops land in France on June 25.

1918 – The first case of the “Spanish Flu” is recorded in Kansas in March. This would lead to the largest pandemic ever recorded. It would last about two years.

1918 – The “world war” ends on November 11 at 11am.

1917/1918 - winter - Center section of Seneca River Aqueduct removed to open river for Barge Canal use.

1918 - spring- Barge Canal open for business.

1920s - NY State Route 31 is designated, although the highway had been in use as a state road since the early 1900s.

1923 - L.H. King dies. His family continues with the newspaper publishing.

1929 – A stock market crash on October 24 brings the Great Depression.

1930s - NY State Route 38 is designated as a state road.

1931 - The RS&E Electric Trolley line goes out of business.

1935 - The Port Byron School burns on December 24. The community decides to build a central school district that would encompass all the various one-room school house districts.

1936 - Construction on new school begins.

1937 - Water from Owasco Lake piped to Port Byron for village water system replacing the use of wells.

1937 - The Port Byron Central School opens. This closes all the one-room school houses.

1938 - The King family sells the Chronicle to G. Welton Fickenisen.

1939 – The Great Depression has ended.

1947 - The Chronicle becomes the Port Byron Chronicle and The Cayuga County News.

1951 - Plans are made for a new elementary school.

1953 - Construction begins on new school.

1954 - The Arthur A. Gates Elementary School on Maple Avenue is opened in October.

1955 - NY State Thruway opens across the State. Traffic that once used Rt 31 shifts to the new super highway.

1956 - The newspaper is sold to Community Newspapers.

1977 - The new Leslie B. Lehn Middle School is opened.

1990 - The new Dana L. West High School is opened and the old school building on Church Street is closed.

2016 - Thruway builds the new Old Erie Canal Heritage Park.

2020 – The world enters into a pandemic as Covid-19 spreads. Much of life is brought to a stand still as lock-downs are ordered.