

WELCOME TO THE TOWN OF SCHUYLER FALLS!

The Town of Schuyler Falls was formed on April 4, 1848, when, "...an act to 'erect' [*establish*] the town of Schuyler Falls from the town of Plattsburgh..." was passed by the Senate and Assembly of the State of New York. Schuyler Falls was the last town formed from the original town of Plattsburgh, in Clinton County, the most northern and eastern county in New York State. Peru (1792), Beekmantown (1820), and Saranac (1824) and the village of Plattsburgh (1815) had been established, and now the more rural area including several hamlets would be a town with its own governance. The common understanding is that Schuyler Falls was named in honor of Peter Schuyler, the 'Falls' added to recognize modest waterfalls on the Salmon and Saranac Rivers as the higher elevation in the town's west dropped as the rivers flowed eastward into Lake Champlain.

The town of Schuyler Falls is about 36.8 square miles in area (36.5 in land, 0.3 water), with a current population of ~5000, showing a slight increase over the 2020 census of 4841. The town has no shoreline on Lake Champlain (Plattsburgh kept that all for themselves!). The town stretches from the Saranac Valley on the north to the Peasleeville Valley on the south, both of which can be seen by way of scenic Burnt Hill Road, which stretches through the town of Saranac on the north and west, through a small section of Schuyler Falls, and Peru, along the western and southern edge of Schuyler Falls. The town of Plattsburgh borders Schuyler Falls to the east and north. From the higher elevations in town, one can easily see the Green Mountains and Lake Champlain.

Schuyler Falls is mainly rural, with hamlets of Morrisonville, Woods Mills, Schuyler Falls, plus other housing concentrations on or near Irish Settlement and Salmon River Roads, Mason Street and Route 22B. The hamlets, all located on the rivers, were important especially in the 1800's and early-mid 1900's, with mills (grist, saw, cider, woolen, pulp wood), factories (lumber, ladders, butter, bricks, starch), schools, stores, churches, and cemeteries/graveyards. The D&H Railroad from Plattsburgh north to Dannemora and Lyon Mountain stopped in Morrisonville, just southwest of the hamlet. Norrisville, on the Salmon River west of Schuyler Falls hamlet, had a foundry and iron ore, but by the late 1800's had essentially disappeared.

The first settler in what is now the town of Schuyler Falls was Ezra Turner in 1794 who settled on the Salmon River a few miles south of present Route 22B. Ezra was said to be one of the original thirteen settlers of Plattsburgh. His father was a Revolutionary War veteran who supposedly participated in the skirmish at Wait's Mill in early September, 1814 in the hamlet of Morrisonville. In 1794, Ezra married Amy Beman, the daughter of Nathan Beman who at age 16 in 1775 piloted Ethan Allen on Lake Champlain to Ticonderoga. Ezra built a house and barn which also doubled as a schoolhouse. During the War of 1812, Ezra was a Captain in the Peru Volunteers. Ezra is credited with actively destroying a bridge over the Saranac to prevent the British from crossing the river. Ezra and Amy cleared 3 acres for kitchen gardening to feed their eventual brood of 12 children (10 who survived to adulthood), built a sawmill in 1801, and an iron forge in 1823, both of which were washed away by a freshet on the Salmon River in 1827. The Grist Mill on the Salmon River was built in the current location on Route 22B and Felton Road in 1827 by Hiram H. Everest, who in 1855 sold the mill to Chauncey Turner, a grandson of Ezra Turner.

A part of the hamlet of Schuyler Falls was recognized (2026) as a National (and State) Historic Register District, anchored by the Grist Mill, still currently owned by Turner descendants. Around the mill are a handful of residences that housed workers, managers, and early investors in a variety of architectural styles and built between the 1830's and 1900. One of the homes included in the district is the home of Joseph Ladue, who was born in Schuyler Falls in 1855. In 1876 Joe sought his fortune in the West and Alaskan gold rushes. In 1896 he established the settlement at Dawson City, Yukon, making his fortune both in gold exploration and in selling lots in Dawson. He returned to Schuyler Falls, married his sweetheart Kitty Mason, purchased, renovated, and lived in the house in Schuyler Falls. Unfortunately, Joe passed away in 1901. Dawson City has a statue in his honor as its founder.

Morrisonville on the Saranac River was settled around 1803 as was Beckwith Street (Route 22B) and Mason Street (the longest 'street' in Clinton County). Woods Mills was settled in the early 1800's also, first by Beziel Wood. The Irish Settlement area was settled about 1824 by wealthy Irish farmers, with some subsequently moving to settle on the Salmon River near the boundary of the towns of Schuyler Falls and Plattsburgh.

Over the first hundred years of the Town of Schuyler Falls, the history includes mostly farms and small industries. The population hovered around 1500 with paved main roads and most side roads dirt until the late 1950's /1960's. With the growth of the Plattsburgh Air Base about 7 miles east of the town, development and town population grew by almost 2000 between 1960 and 1980.

Today, the Town of Schuyler Falls maintains its rural feel with much open space, several large parks with recreation areas, ball fields, playgrounds near or in each of the hamlets and population centers, with a few convenience stores and small businesses in the town. The nearby volunteer fire department and ambulance corps were founded by Schuyler Falls residents. There is one large church and several other smaller faith communities, one elementary school, and part of Macomb Reservation State Park in the town of Schuyler Falls. Major shopping plazas and a mall are conveniently located only a few miles east of the town boundary. A variety of housing is available for renters or owners, in developments or on country roads, multi-family or single owner. The public high schools serving the town (Saranac and Peru Central School Districts) are few miles from town borders, as are the SUNY Plattsburgh and Clinton Community College campuses and the Champlain Valley Physicians Hospital (an affiliate of University of Vermont Health). The Adirondack Park is adjacent to the town. Vermont is a short ferry ride away, with Montreal about an hour to the north.

We are proud of our town, its history, and contributions to the surrounding areas and people.

Welcome to the Town of Schuyler Falls!

Prepared by Town Historian Barb Benkwitt, historian@schuylerfallsny.gov, 518-563-1129, x8 or 1-4547. April 10, 2026