

A Brief Chateaugay History

Chateaugay was settled in 1796 by Benjamin Roberts and Nathan Beman following their survey of the area the year before.

By March 15, 1799, the area had sufficient population to be declared a township within Clinton County. The early years of the settlement were marked with hard work and survival of the remote, frontier conditions. By 1800, the second US Census showed a population of 443 as the Town of Chateaugay encompassed all of the present Franklin County.

The War of 1812 impacted the town as troops were quartered here, a skirmish was fought just north of the present village and American troops that fought in the Battle of Chateaugay (Quebec) were staged here.

During the 1850's, the opening of the Northern Railroad led to a boom time for the town. Farmers could now ship their products more quickly and much farther. Other industries also took advantage of the increased markets. Population crested and the town prospered.

In 1856, the town was ravaged by a tornado that destroyed or damaged 128 buildings just within the village limits. More destruction occurred at various other locations in the township.

The village was incorporated in 1868. Eventually, water, sewer and electrical power systems were developed for village residents.

In 1879 the Chateaugay Academy was erected at the end of Church Street. In 1901, the Town Hall was built on Main Street. From 1908 through 1911 Chateaugay hosted annual Fairs at the Chateaugay Agricultural Society fairgrounds at the end of Collins Street.

The 20th century saw Chateaugay citizens serve their country in two world wars, Korea, Viet Nam and other recent conflicts. Many local projects and events helped to further develop and define our town; a new centralized school building complex, a Recreation Park, and a new fire station among them.

During the 1980's, New York State began planning to expand the state's correction system by constructing several new facilities. The North Country in general and Chateaugay in particular were very open to the placement of the new facilities which were not necessarily being welcomed by other areas of the state. Following a concerted local effort to promote the town as the location of a new corrections facility, the NYS Department of Corrections opened a unit in Chateaugay in 1990. The jobs created within the new facility gave the local economy a dramatic boost. The new correctional campus was constructed on a 100 acre parcel of land. Built as a state of the art facility, capable of being reconfigured and expanded, if necessary, the Chateaugay prison became one of the newest and most economical units within the NYS corrections system. Unfortunately, the facility was closed in a recent round of prison system downsizing.

In spite of the prison closure, Chateaugay is experiencing an infrastructure revitalization that is fueled by strong community support and outstanding civic involvement. Among the recent projects are; a refurbished Recreation Park with three pools, the new Chateaugay Memorial Library, a completely renovated Town Hall with its newly refurbished theater, two local wind farms and the construction of natural gas

network to serve the cheese plant, school and other businesses and private homes throughout the village.