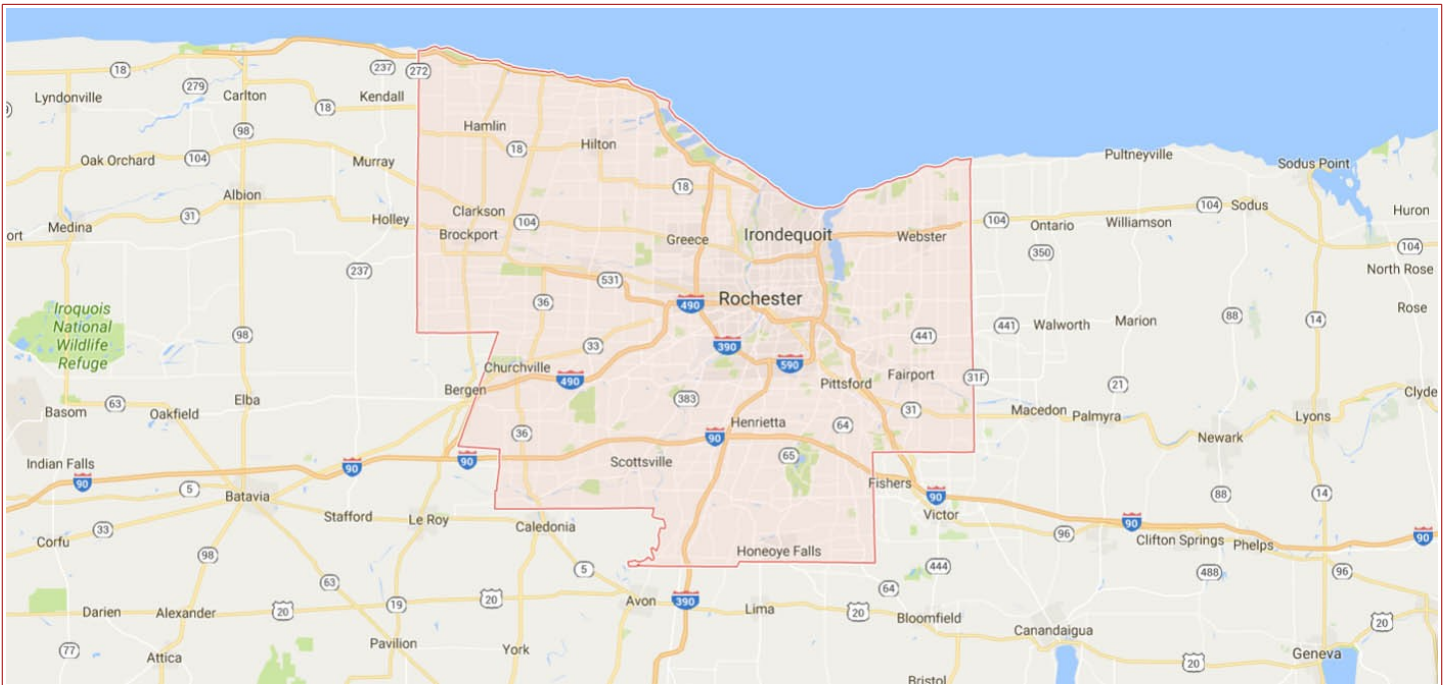


Genealogical Guide to Monroe County, New York

Formation of Monroe County



The western part of New York was Indian territory until after the Revolutionary War. At the conclusion of the Revolution, the ownership of western New York land was disputed between New York State and the State of Massachusetts. Massachusetts claimed land from the Atlantic Ocean west, all the way to the Pacific, including a large portion of New York State. In 1786 it was agreed that the State of Massachusetts would get the money from the sale of the land of western New York after they got clear title from the Seneca Indians. New York State would be allowed to govern the land thereafter. In 1787 Massachusetts sold the whole of western New York to two wealthy land speculators, Oliver Phelps and Nathaniel Gorham. Called the Phelps and Gorham Purchase, this land would become the County of Ontario on Jan. 27, 1789. Mr. Phelps and Mr. Gorham began selling parcels of land from an office in Canandaigua, but couldn't sell enough to pay Massachusetts what they were owed. They let the western two-thirds of the land revert to Massachusetts who again went looking for buyers. The Phelps and Gorham land included all of present day Monroe County, except for the present Towns of Hamlin, Clarkson and Sweden. That triangular section containing those towns was sold to Mr. Robert Morris, who sold parcels of the property.

On April 6, 1796, the town of Northfield in the County of Ontario was formed. It contained what currently is seven of the towns in the eastern part of Monroe County. Genesee County was taken off from Ontario County on March 30, 1802 from the land west of the Genesee River. One of the original towns in that old Genesee County was the Town of Northampton, which is now six of the towns in the western part of Monroe County. On Feb. 23, 1821, Monroe County was formed from parts of Ontario and Genesee Counties. The Monroe County borders have remained the same since 1821.