

# Jefferson County Facts and Trivia

## GENERAL INFORMATION

- There are 22 Towns, 20 Villages, and one City in Jefferson County.
- The total population for the County, according to the 2010 U.S. Census, is 116,229 people.
- Jefferson County is located in District 21 of the 113<sup>th</sup> U.S. House of Representatives and District 48 of the New York Senate. The northern portion of the County is located in the 116<sup>th</sup> District of the New York State Assembly, while the eastern portion is located in the 117<sup>th</sup> District and the southwest corner is located in the 120<sup>th</sup> District.
- The City of Watertown is the County Seat.

## GEOGRAPHY

- Jefferson County is located in the northern tier of New York State at the Junction of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River. The County is bounded by the St. Lawrence River and St. Lawrence County to the north, Lake Ontario to the west, Lewis County to the east, and Oswego County to the South. The largest nearby U.S. population center is Syracuse, New York, located 70 miles to the south.
- Jefferson County spans an area of roughly 1,293 square miles making it the ninth largest county in the State.

- The County is located directly south of the Province of Ontario, Canada. Therefore, it is situated along the international border with Canada and facilitates traffic between the two nations across the St. Lawrence River via the Thousand Islands Bridge.



- There are fifteen state parks in Jefferson County, many which offer scenic views of Lake Ontario or the Thousand Islands. In fact, two are only accessible by boat.
- There are nine state forests in Jefferson County comprising 17,857 acres and twenty-five County forest parcels totaling 5,493 acres. The County also contains thirteen wildlife management areas that provide an additional 17,121 acres of open land for outdoor recreation.

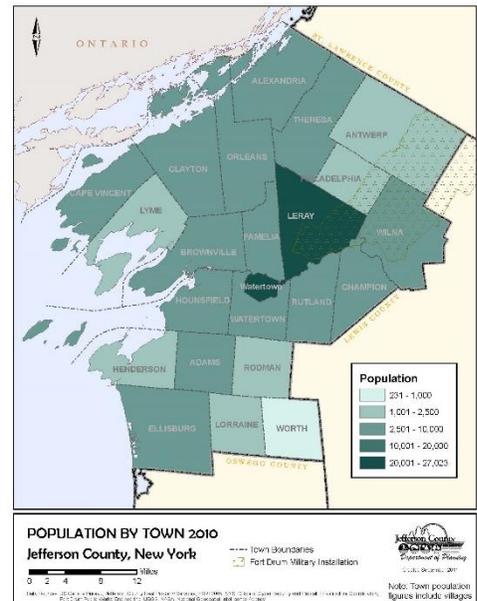
## FORT DRUM



- Located nine miles east of Watertown is Fort Drum, home to more than 36,900 soldiers, family members and civilian employees of the 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) and its supporting tenants.
  - Fort Drum is the largest Army installation in the Northeast.
  - Fort Drum occupies 107,265 acres in Jefferson County and stretches across the Towns of LeRay, Philadelphia, Antwerp, and Wilna.
- Fort Drum’s direct impact on the tri-county area was just under \$1.3 billion for the Federal Fiscal Year 2015.
  - The indirect/induced impact created by the re-circulation of Fort Drum payroll and base spending through the local economy created \$377.9 million/year in additional business sales.
  - With approximately 19,300 employees, Fort Drum is the largest single-site employer in Jefferson County and in Upstate New York.
  - Fort Drum is a major training center for reserve component forces, and units of the New York Army National Guard rank among the post’s most frequent customers. These units regularly come to Fort Drum for weekend inactive duty training and annual training during the year. Fort Drum’s ranges, training areas and facilities are essential to the New York Army National Guard to meet readiness objectives and federal training requirements. In total, the base sees almost 80,000 troops for training annually.

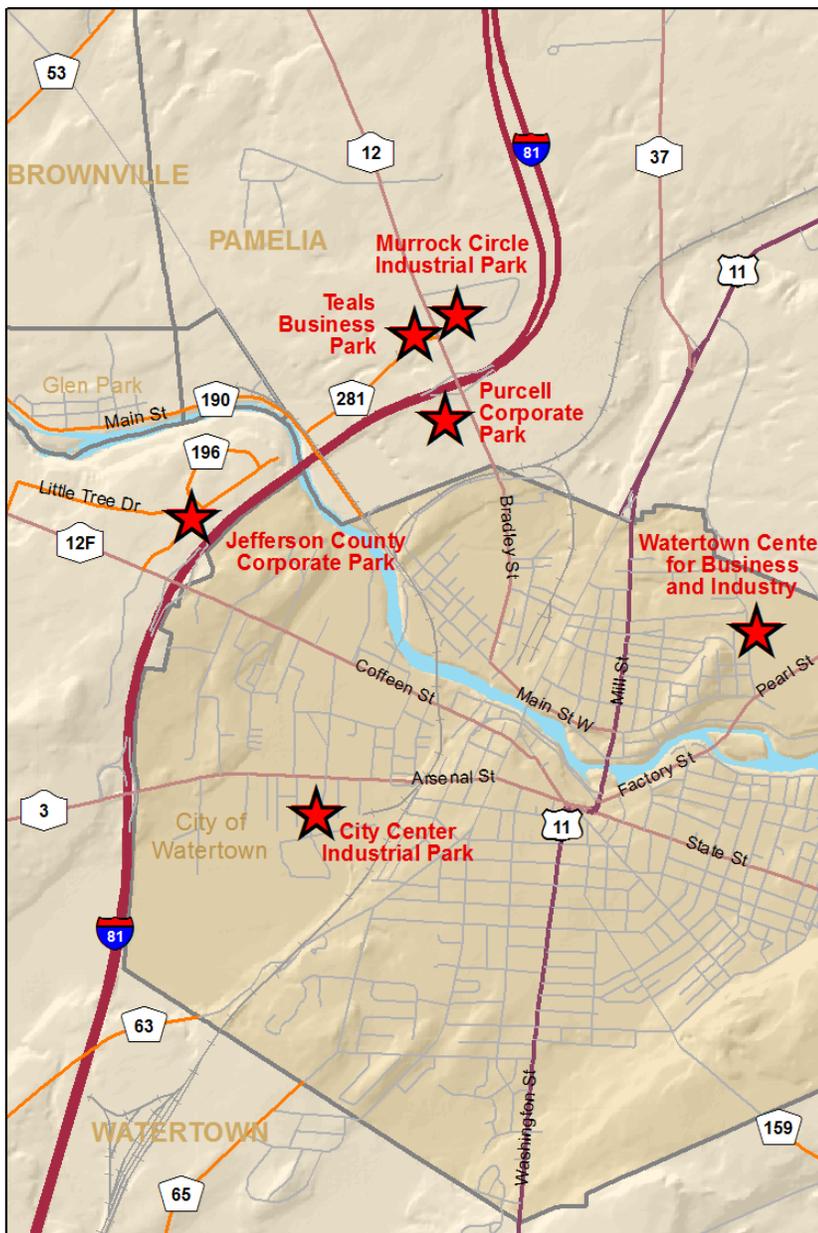
## POPULATION

- The yearly Census population estimate released for Jefferson County as of July 2014 is 119,103.
- The City of Watertown has a population of 27,023. The largest town is the Town of LeRay with a population of 21,782 people. The relatively large population of LeRay is attributed to the military presence of Fort Drum. By comparison, the town with the smallest population is the Town of Worth, with a total of 231 residents.
- The County population increased 4% since 2000. Between 2000 and 2010, the Town of Theresa had the greatest population increase, with a 20.3% increase while the Town of Cape Vincent had the greatest population decrease, with a 17% drop in total population.
- The median age of Jefferson County is 32.6 years. This is 5.4 years less than the New York State average, and is mostly likely due to the young military population related to Fort Drum.
- The Towns of Henderson and Lyme have the oldest median age for population. The median age in Henderson is 47 and is 46.9 for Lyme.



## INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE

- Jefferson County is the home to the Watertown International Airport, which is located in the Town of Hounsfield and currently offers two round trips daily to Philadelphia, provided by American Airlines. In 2015 the airport served over 40,000 commercial flight passengers.
- The largest industry in Jefferson County is government, employing almost 40% of the workforce. That is largely due to the presence of Fort Drum, two state prisons, and the regional headquarters of NYS DEC, DOT, and DOH in the County.
- Major Industrial/Business Parks located in Jefferson County.



**Jefferson County Corporate Park**  
located adjacent to Interstate 81 and is accessed from NYS Route 12F in the Town of Watertown.

**Purcell Corporate Park**  
located adjacent to Interstate 81 and is accessed from NYS Route 12 in the Town of Pamela. Rail access.

**Teals Business Park**  
located a quarter mile from Interstate 81 and is accessed from County Road 52, off NYS Route 12, in the Town of Pamela.

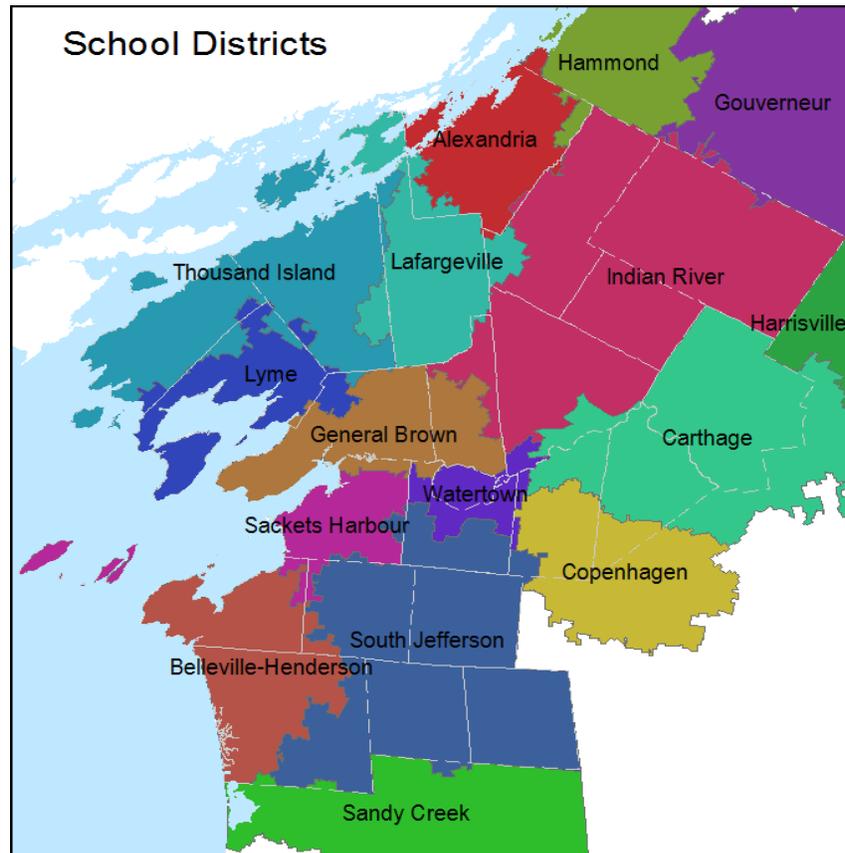
**Murrock Circle Industrial Park**  
located less than a quarter mile from Interstate 81 and is accessed from NYS Route 12 in the Town of Pamela.

**Watertown Center for Business and Industry**  
a business incubator center located at Starbuck Avenue and NYS Route 283 in the City of Watertown.

**City Center Industrial Park**  
located one mile from Interstate 81 and is accessed from NYS Route 3 in the City of Watertown. Rail access.

## EDUCATION

- There are 15 independent school districts serving Jefferson County residents. Most of the schools are physically located within Jefferson County; however, some are not and are noted as such.



- Alexandria Central School District: [www.alexandriacentral.org](http://www.alexandriacentral.org)  
Bellville Henderson Central School District: [www.bhpanthers.org](http://www.bhpanthers.org)  
Carthage Central School District: [www.carthagecsd.org](http://www.carthagecsd.org)  
Copenhagen Central School District (Lewis County): [www.ccsknights.org](http://www.ccsknights.org)  
General Brown Central School District: [www.gblions.org](http://www.gblions.org)  
Gouverneur Central School District (St. Lawrence County): [www.gouverneurcentralschool.org](http://www.gouverneurcentralschool.org)  
Hammond Central School District (St. Lawrence County): [hammondcsd.schoolwires.net](http://hammondcsd.schoolwires.net)  
Indian River Central School District: [www.ircsd.org](http://www.ircsd.org)  
Lafargeville Central School District: [www.lafargevillecsd.org](http://www.lafargevillecsd.org)  
Lyme Central School District: [www.lymecsd.org](http://www.lymecsd.org)  
Sackets Harbor Central School District: [www.sacketspatriots.org](http://www.sacketspatriots.org)  
Sandy Creek Central School District (Oswego County): <http://www.sccs.cnyric.org>  
South Jefferson Central School District: [www.spartanpride.org](http://www.spartanpride.org)  
Thousand Islands Central School District: [www.1000islandsschools.org](http://www.1000islandsschools.org)  
Watertown City School District: [www.watertowncsd.org](http://www.watertowncsd.org)
- There are five parochial/private schools serving most of Jefferson County:  
Immaculate Heart Central Schools, Watertown: [www.ihcschools.org](http://www.ihcschools.org)  
Faith Fellowship School, Watertown: [ffwatertown.com/school](http://ffwatertown.com/school)  
Augustinian Academy, Carthage: [c-augustinian.org](http://c-augustinian.org)  
Christian Heritage School, Natural Bridge: [christianheritageschool.weebly.com/index.html](http://christianheritageschool.weebly.com/index.html)  
Genesis Elementary School, Chaumont: (315) 649-3050
  - Bohlen Technical Center, BOCES, located in Watertown, serves the technology needs of all Jefferson County residents: [www.boces.com](http://www.boces.com)

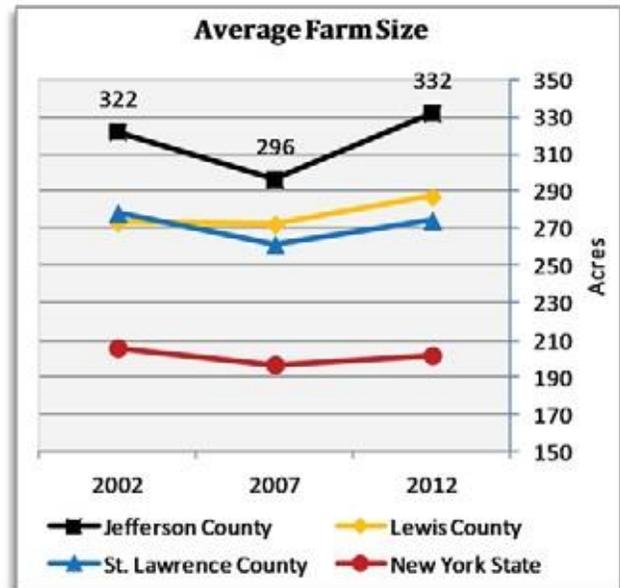
- SUNY Jefferson (JCC) is a two year liberal arts community college located in Watertown. JCC also offers course offerings leading to Bachelors and Masters Degrees through its partner colleges and online programs. Go to [www.sunyjefferson.edu](http://www.sunyjefferson.edu) for more information.
- Fort Drum offers many higher education opportunities through its Army Education Center located on post: [www.drum.army.mil/hr/Pages/education.aspx](http://www.drum.army.mil/hr/Pages/education.aspx)
- Within around a 90 minute drive of Jefferson County there are a number of four year colleges and universities such as:
  - SUNY Oswego: [www.oswego.edu](http://www.oswego.edu)
  - SUNY Cortland: [www.cortland.edu](http://www.cortland.edu)
  - SUNY Potsdam: [www.potsdam.edu](http://www.potsdam.edu)
  - SUNY Canton: [www.canton.edu](http://www.canton.edu)
  - Clarkson University: <https://www.clarkson.edu>
  - St. Lawrence University: [www.stlawu.edu](http://www.stlawu.edu)
  - Syracuse University: [www.syr.edu](http://www.syr.edu)
  - Lemoyne College: [www.lemoyne.edu](http://www.lemoyne.edu)
  - SUNY Upstate Medical University: [www.upstate.edu](http://www.upstate.edu)
  - SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF): [www.esf.edu](http://www.esf.edu)
  - Cazenovia College: [www.cazenovia.edu](http://www.cazenovia.edu)
  - SUNY Polytechnic Institute: [www.sunyit.edu](http://www.sunyit.edu)
  - Utica College: [www.utica.edu](http://www.utica.edu)

## FUN FACTS

- The origins of Arbor Day (J. Sterling Morton), the Dewey Decimal System (Melville Dewey), the Five and Dime Store (Woolworth's), Philadelphia Cream Cheese, and Thousand Islands Dressing, can all be traced to Jefferson County.
- The Thousand Islands dressing story: local lore states that early film star and vaudevillian May Irwin, who summered in the Thousand Islands, named the now ubiquitous dressing, while others contend that George Boldt, the famed proprietor of the Waldorf-Astoria, gave the dressing its name because of his own summer place in the region. No matter who named it, it's tough to beat on a sandwich.

## AGRICULTURE

- According to the 2012 USDA Agriculture Census, Jefferson County had 876 farms a marginal decline from 885 in 2007.
- The average farm in Jefferson County in 2012 was 332 acres, an increase from 296 acres in 2007. The New York State average was 202 acres, up from 197 five years earlier. Jefferson County farms are relatively diverse in terms of size, however: 20.6% of the farms in the County in 2012 had fewer than 50 acres, while 20.1% were in the 100- to 179-acre range. Approximately 17% of the farms had at least 500 acres.



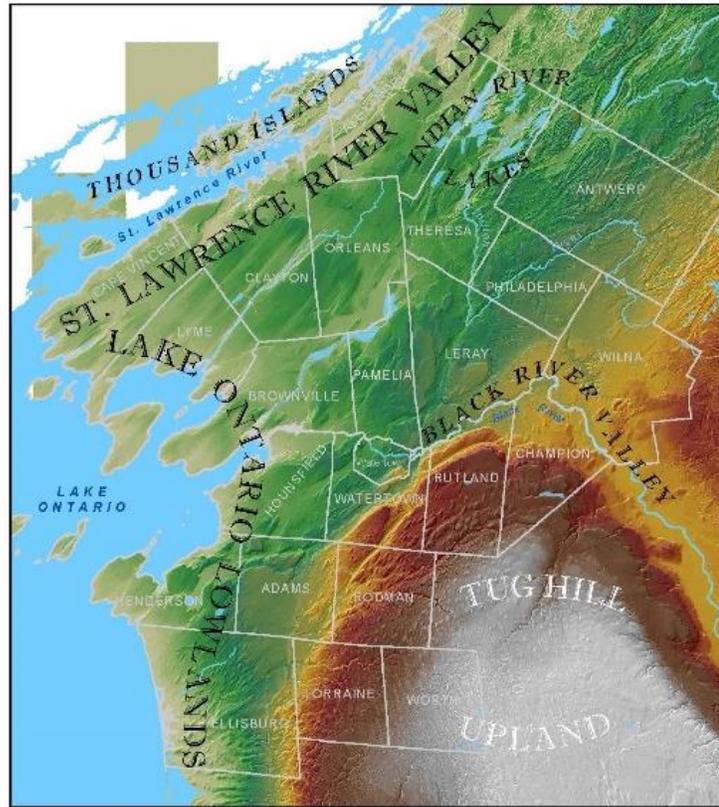
- While 16 % of all employment in Jefferson County is related to retail trade, 11 % of employment in New York State is in retail trade occupations.

## CLIMATE

- Jefferson County's climate is characterized as humid-continental. Winters are long and relatively cold; spring is cool and short; summers are warm and moderate, autumn is also warm, but usually short.
- The climate is influenced by the proximity of Lake Ontario, particularly during winter. The relatively warm lake water provides moisture to air masses moving across from the west, which often results in "lake effect" snowfalls primarily in the southern half of the county.
- Average annual snowfall is 93 inches in Watertown, but approaches 200 inches in the snow-belt areas in the southern section of the County. The average total annual precipitation is 38 inches.
- Lake Ontario has a moderating effect on near shore temperatures, reducing the extremes of cold in winter and heat in summer.
- On average, there are 161 sunny days per year in Jefferson County. The July high is around 80 degrees. The January low is typically around 10 degrees. The County's comfort index, which is based on humidity during the hot months, is a 58 out of 100, where higher is more comfortable. The US average on the comfort index is 44.

## REGIONS OF JEFFERSON COUNTY

- Jefferson County's physical geography carves the County into five natural regions, each with its own unique character and offerings:



### Indian Lakes Region



- The Indian Lakes region consists mainly of small, rural communities in the interior portion of Northern Jefferson County, nestled between the St. Lawrence River and Fort Drum.
- The Indian River Lakes system consists of 18 natural lakes spread throughout the northern portion of Jefferson County, the southern portion of St. Lawrence County, and the westernmost tip of Lewis County. They range from shallow, highly productive warm water lakes to deep, cold water lakes. The system provides a unique opportunity to fish for a variety of species in a relatively small geographic area. There are 15 lakes open to the public, with seven located in Jefferson County.
- Flowing from Indian River Village in Lewis County to Black Lake in St. Lawrence County, the Indian River offers over 100 miles of excellent fishing and canoeing opportunities. Seventy-five miles of the river is readily canoeable and fishing is good through its length, making it an extremely appealing area to the outdoor enthusiast.

- The Indian is a picturesque mostly slow-moving river. Its channel varies greatly in width, from 25 to 200 feet, and is best described as moderately wide with narrow sections. Water depths are generally shallow (less than 10 feet) with numerous deeper holes.

### Black River Valley



- The Black River basin area covers nearly two-thousand square miles and receives the highest annual precipitation of any watershed in New York State.
- Hydropower afforded by the Black River was an important attraction for settlements in the early days of the County's development. Industries sprang up along the River, many surviving today in the Villages of Brownville, Carthage, and West Carthage, along with the City of Watertown.
- The tradition of harnessing the Black River's force for power is centuries old – in 1795, the first mill in Carthage was constructed. The Black River guided early settlement in the region and flows through the most populated areas of the County.

### Tug Hill Uplands



- East of Lake Ontario, the land rises steadily to form the Tug Hill Uplands, a relatively flat, rocky area separated from the Adirondack Mountains by the Black River Valley. The plateau stands in the path of prevailing winds that pick up moisture from Lake Ontario. The annual snowfall averages 20 feet, making the region one of the snowiest areas east of the Rocky Mountains.
- Because of the heavy snow cover that this area endures for nearly half of the year, it is no surprise that winter sports such as snowmobiling, snowshoeing, dog sledding, and cross-country skiing dominate the local recreational scene.
- Tug Hill has an elevation of about 350 feet in the west and 2,000 feet in the east. Due to this, the plateau has generated interest from snowkiting (an outdoor winter sport where people use kite power to glide on snow or ice) enthusiasts from across the east coast.

### The Thousand Islands Region

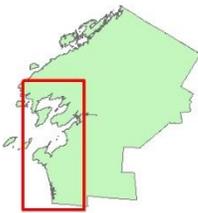


- The St. Lawrence River is one of the longest rivers in North America. It is also the outflow for the entire Great Lakes system. The Great Lakes hold nearly 20% of the world's fresh water.
- The River flows 744 miles from Lake Ontario into the world's largest freshwater estuary, the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Only 114 miles of the River are located in New York State.
- There are exactly 1,864 islands in the Thousand Islands Region. The islands range in size from over 40 square miles to smaller islands occupied by a single residence, or uninhabited outcroppings of rocks that are only home to migratory waterfowl. To be counted as an island, the piece of land must be surrounded by water, above water all year long, and

support at least one tree. Approximately 381 islands and shoals of the Thousand Islands are within Jefferson County.

- The River is 250 feet at its deepest point.
- The St. Lawrence River is the world's longest deep-draft inland waterway. The St. Lawrence Seaway took 15,000 people and 4 years to build, beginning in 1955 and completed in 1959.
- Parts of the River are so clear in some areas that the bottom can be observed in 80 feet of water.
- The 1000 Islands International Bridge consists of one American span, three Canadian spans and one International span. The American span is 800 feet between towers, 150 feet above water and has two 1,500 foot viaducts. The Canadian spans includes a suspension span, 750 feet between towers, 120 feet above water and a 1,500 foot viaduct, a steel arch span that is 348 feet long and a Warren Truss span that is 600 feet long. The International span across the border is 90 feet long and the shortest international vehicular bridge in the world.
- The Indians called the Thousands Islands MAN-I-TO-ANNA, meaning the "Garden of the Great Spirit".

### The Lake Ontario Lowlands Region



- This region is mostly low and flat, with hills of unsorted glacial till and sorted melted water deposits.
- Lake Ontario is one of the five Great Lakes of North America. It is the easternmost lake, and the smallest in surface area but it has greater volume than Lake Erie.
- In the Native American Indian Huron language, "Ontario" means "Lake of Shining Waters".
- Lake Ontario is 193 miles long and 53 miles wide.
- The elevation is 244 feet above mean sea level along the Lake Ontario shoreline.
- This region includes large sand dunes, expansive backwater areas and many bays along the lakeshore.
- The region includes the Chaumont Barrens; a 1,600 acre alvar forest in the Northern portion of the County, one of the few alvar forests left in the world.
- The 526 acre Black Pond Wildlife Management Area is also located in this region, in the southern portion of the County. Much of the barrier beach in Black Pond WMA has forested sand dunes that are as much as 60 feet high.
- Henderson Shores Unique Area This 1,160 acre reforestation area is classified as a "Unique Area" for good reason. The underlying limestone, sometimes right at the surface, often with a shallow layer of wet soil, provides an unusual habitat for a variety of very specialized plants.



## Brief History

The vast wilderness of Jefferson County was originally inhabited by the Oneida Indian Nation which thrived on the abundant natural resources. Though French colonial influences are evident, settlement and development in the County did not occur until after the American Revolution, when Alexander Macomb acquired title to this region from the Oneidas. "Macomb's Purchase" was soon subdivided into large tracts and other holdings which stimulated the settlement of the region.

Jefferson County, created in 1805 from Oneida County, was named in honor of President Thomas Jefferson. Settlement started as early as 1794. The economy has always been heavily supported by agriculture—particularly dairy farming—and by some of the oldest paper mills in the state.

Attracted by the abundant waterpower afforded by the Black River, industrially minded pioneers from New England settled in the center of the County and established a manufacturing and trading center. During its early history, Jefferson County was world famous for its manufacturing tradition: cotton and woolen yarns, carriages, sewing machines, water pumps, oil lamps, portable steam engines, railroad brakes, plows, emery grinders, paper machinery, cylinder printing presses, high pressure hydraulic pumps, and turbine starting systems. The City of Watertown was established as the County seat.

Today, the County features numerous historic and tourist attractions, including the Thousand Islands Region and Sackets Harbor, site of two battles during the War of 1812.

Fort Drum has been used as a military training site since 1908 when it was referred to as Pine Camp, the Army's presence in the North Country may be traced back to the early 1800's. On Feb. 13, 1985, the 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) was officially reactivated at Fort Drum, and has been one of the most deployed units in the U.S. Army. The 10th was the first division of any kind formed by the Army since 1975 and the first based in the Northeast since World War II. The 10th Mountain Division (LI) was designed to meet a wide range of worldwide infantry-intensive contingency missions. Equipment design was oriented toward reduced size and weight for reasons of both strategic and tactical mobility.

### NOTABLE PUBLIC OFFICIALS WHO WERE BORN OR RAISED IN JEFFERSON COUNTY

- Allen Welsh Dulles—First civilian and the longest serving (1953–61) Director of Central Intelligence (de facto head of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency). Also member of the Warren Commission.
- John Foster Dulles—U.S. Secretary of State during the Eisenhower administration
- Robert Lansing— U.S. Secretary of State during the Woodrow Wilson Administration
- J. Sterling Morton—U.S. Secretary of Agriculture during the Grover Cleveland administration
- Roswell P. Flower—New York State Governor
- John M. McHugh—the 21<sup>st</sup> U.S. Secretary of the Army during the Barack Obama administration