

LEYDEN TOWNSHIP

Established on March 10, 1797, Leyden is one of the oldest townships in Lewis County. In 1805 when Oneida was subdivided, Lewis County retained Leyden. Over the next half century, Leyden was trimmed down to form other townships: Watson (1821) and Lewis (1852). Leyden takes its name from Leyden, Holland, home of the Holland Land Company responsible for the establishment and development of much of central and northern New York.

The first settlers arrived in the spring of 1794 from Connecticut, settling primarily in areas now known as Talcottville, Locust Grove, and Port Leyden. William Topping built a log cabin and Bella Butterfield built the first sawmill nearby. The Talcott's impressive limestone manor house, completed in 1800, is still standing and is also known as the "Edmund Wilson" house, in reference to the famous author whose family acquired the house in the 1830's from the Talcott family. On old maps of Lewis County one may find Talcottville missing. Due to a feud between the Talcotts and other residents, the name was briefly changed to Leyden.

Formerly known as Kelsey's Mills, after the first settler, Port Leyden is situated on the Black River and grew rapidly with the development of the Black River Canal in the 1850's. Dairy and lumbering products were shipped by water to other parts of New York State, and many businesses were established including gristmills, tanneries, milk plants, iron mines, and even a cigar factory.

Several miles north of Talcottville is the hamlet of Locust Grove (Leyden Hill). While currently consisting of only a few houses, Locust Grove had the first school teacher in the county and was also the site of “Homewood”, homestead of the Hon. C. L. Merriam.

Barrett’s Corner at the intersection of Route 12-D and the west road, like Locust grove, had many houses with a school and a hotel. Only a few houses remain. The first radio station (WBRV) in Lewis County was erected here in 1955.

2 miles directly east of Talcotville was Denley which was more or less a railroad stop for the Utica and Black River Railroad. Several cheese factories and a post office briefly existed. No evidence of this hamlet exists today, except for a dam and a side road, connecting Route 12 and 12-D named for this village.