

## LOCAL HISTORY



### **Name that town**

**197 Years Ago:** On Feb. 24, 1820, the first post office opened in Syracuse and John Wilkinson became the first postmaster. Syracuse had previously been known as Corinth, but because a town of Corinth already existed in Saratoga County, the citizens had to come up with a different name in order for the federal government to open the post office. Wilkinson was the one who suggested it be called "Syracuse," because of the geographic similarities between this region and that of Siracusa, Sicily. Both places were on a body of water, were surrounded by hills, and were the location of salt production. Wilkinson first found out about Siracusa when he stumbled upon a poem in a friend's library in New York City. The poem was written by Edward Stanley while he was a student at Oxford in 1819 about the mythology and history of Siracusa. Stanley would go on to become the prime minister of the United Kingdom.

— *Dan Connors for the  
Onondaga Historical  
Association*