

LOCAL HISTORY

169 Years Ago: On March 18, 1848, the town of Geddes was formed. It was named after James Geddes, a former schoolmaster from Carlisle, Pa., who settled at the southwest corner of Onondaga Lake in the 1790s and established a thriving salt manufacturing operation. He married Lucy Jerome and they moved to the hills of Camillus and built a farm called "Fair Mount." Their daughter, Laura, married Harvey Baldwin, who became the first mayor of Syracuse. A self-taught engineer and surveyor, James Geddes became the chief engineer on the Erie Canal, and with his influence, the canal route ran through the salt works at Onondaga. In addition to surveying the route for the Erie Canal, Geddes was also responsible for surveying several of the early roads in Salina. Geddes Street is also named after him.



— Dan Connors for the Onondaga Historical Association

A view of the Erie Canal in downtown Syracuse. James Geddes was among the leading advocates for the canal and became chief engineer on the project. The area shown here is now Clinton Square, the home to an ice-skating rink in winter and a fountain pool the rest of the year.
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