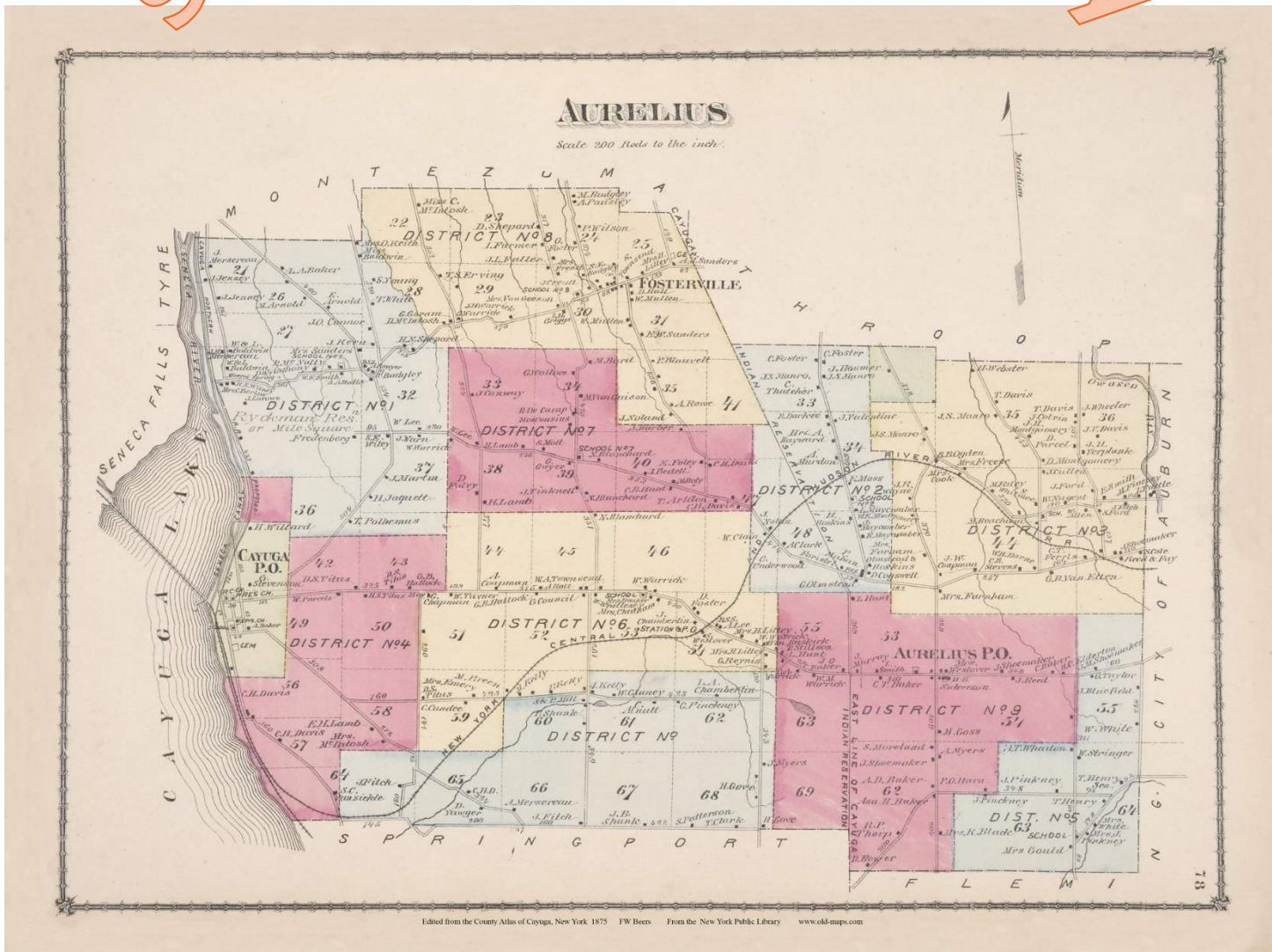


Some Aurelius History



The name Aurelius came from the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius. Formed on January 27, 1789, the original Town of Aurelius included most of the northern half of present-day Cayuga County. The Town's first board meeting was held in April of 1795 at the house of John L. Hardenbergh, which was located somewhere between the present Auburn Police Station and the Owasco Outlet.

The lands that became Aurelius had been home to the Cayuga Indian Tribe, the smallest of the six nations that made up the Iroquois Confederacy. The first white men to visit Aurelius were Jesuit missionaries from France. They came to teach and Christianize the Indians, but war, politics, and distrust from the Indians made this endeavor unsuccessful.

It was in 1779, during the Revolutionary War, that General Sullivan's

Expedition came to the Finger Lakes, between Seneca and Cayuga Lakes. General Sullivan ordered Colonel William Butler to take 600 men around the north end of Cayuga Lake and destroy the Indian settlements. The men waded breast- deep through the waters of Seneca River and set foot on what was to become Aurelius where the present Turnpike Road would meet the lake shore. This campaign was a punitive expedition agreed upon by congress and order by General Washington who viewed the Indians as allies of the British. The expedition did not encounter any resistance as the Indians had fled westward and the area was considered as a safe settlement area.

The region was part of the Central New York Military Tract, used to compensate New York soldiers for service in the military during the Revolutionary War. The first European American settler of record arrived in the area in 1789 although it is likely that others had made their homes in the vicinity on lands belonging to the native Iroquois.

The formation of Aurelius predates the incorporation of Cayuga County and many of the area's current municipalities. Between 1802 and 1823 the Town's boundaries changed as the towns of Brutus, Mentz, Cato, Sterling, Conquest, Fleming and the City of Auburn were created.

In 1800 the Cayuga Bridge was completed and the Cayuga Lake Company bought up thousands of acres around the ends of the bridge. Streets were laid out for Cayuga Village, and it was considered the County seat. The Village of Cayuga was set to be the center of progress in Cayuga County until 1804, when Seneca County was created by splitting the lands of Cayuga County. The Cayuga County seat was moved from the Village of Cayuga to the western boundary of Aurelius, which became the City of Auburn and effectively removed the Village from the action. With the construction of the Erie Canal and the coming of railroads, the Genesee Turnpike lost traffic, and the bridge closed in 1857 effectively stymied growth in the area.