

## *Town of Ulysses*

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*Town of Ulysses Historians*

**Ulysses** was Town No. 22 of the Military Tract. It was named for Homer's great wanderer who spent twenty years finding his way home to Ithaki from the Trojan Wars.

The Town of Ulysses was formed in 1799 as part of Seneca County, which was separated from Onondaga in 1804. The first settlers entered the area in the 1790s. In 1817 Ulysses, which had been in Seneca County, was placed by the state in Tompkins County. On March 16, 1821, the Town of Ithaca was created from Ulysses, as was the Town of Enfield, which was created at the same time. Ulysses was left with lots 1 through 33, or the northern portion of the town west of Cayuga Lake; the remainder of the lots were divided east and west between Ithaca and Enfield.

**Camp Street** was named for Herman Camp in 1845 when construction began on his large Greek Revival style home that sits on a large plot and takes up one entire village block. The house was completed in 1847. Camp was a noted advocate of the Sunday School movement, Abolition, and other reforms.

**Congress Street** recalls the election in 1813 of Dr. Oliver Comstock, the first postmaster of the village, to the United States Congress. The street on which he lived was designated Congress Street.

# Town of Ulysses



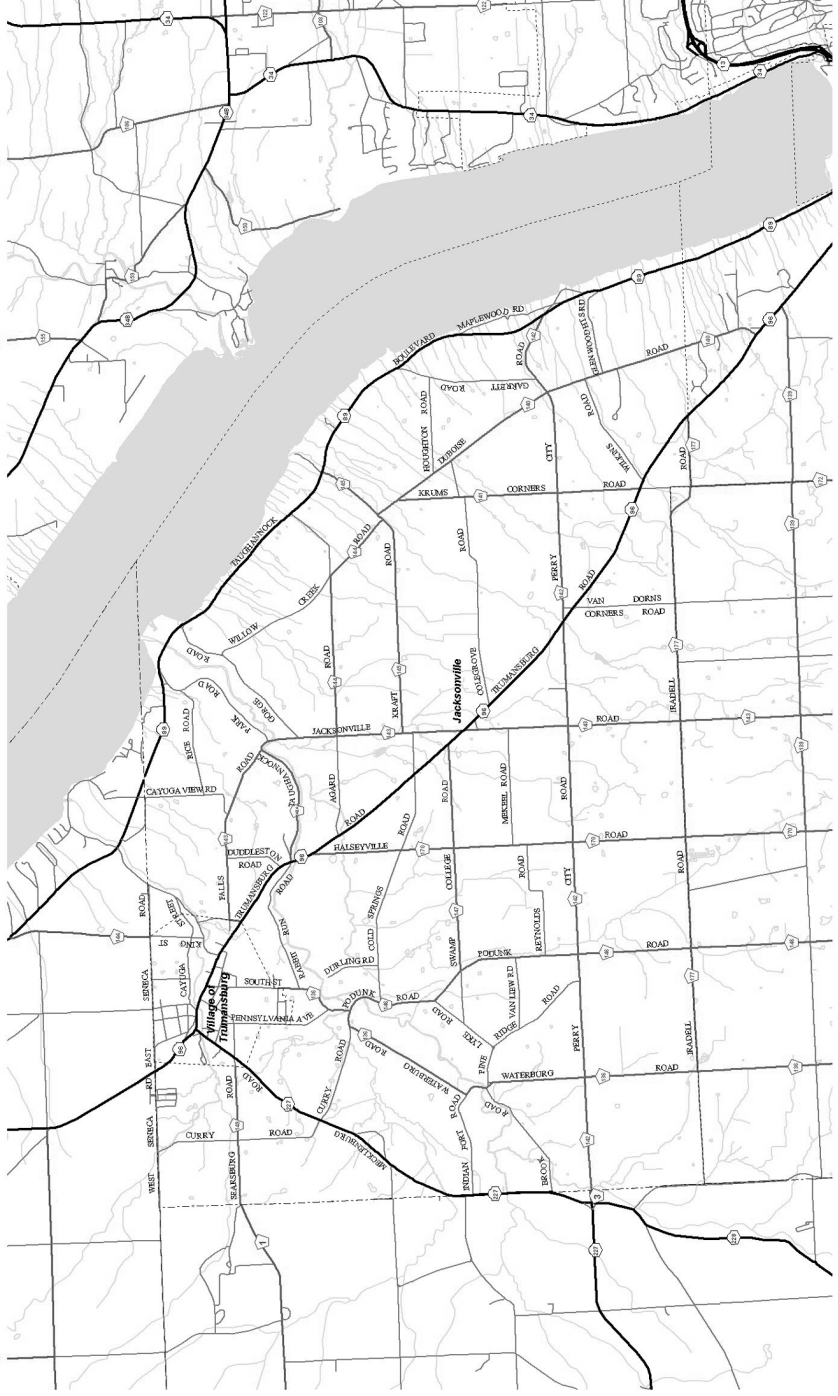
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One Inch represents 4,000 Feet



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**Elderado Drive** was created by William Elder, a local contractor who purchased land in the village and built an apartment building in the 1960s. Several other homes have since been built on the cul-de-sac, located across from the high school. It was Elder who gave the new road his own name in a lovely play on words.

**Cold Springs Road** was named for the nearby spring, located a few yards south on Route 96. There, a continuous stream of water provided cool refreshment for horse and buggy travelers. Today a trickle of water is the only reminder of this former landmark, once so appreciated by man and animal.

**Crowbar Point** refers to birds rather than an iron tool. Crowbar Point was supposed to be where some early travelers found a gathering of crows and since 1821 an area of the bank along the west shore of Cayuga Lake has so been called. Used for a time by fishermen and hunters, Crowbar Point is today a part of the Comstock Program Center run by the Seven Valleys Girl Scout Council. The land had been donated by the Cornell family to provide a camping area for girls in the 1930s and was named to honor Anna Botsford Comstock who had pioneered nature education for children. She was a Cornell University student in 1876 and became a university professor in 1913.

**DuBois Road** was named for the Peter DuBois family who came from Ulster County and were early settlers in the southeast section of the town.

**Frog Point** was a ferry location, established in 1829 by J. M. McLallen, from which boats left for the east shore of Cayuga Lake. From 1845 to 1885 the ferryboat *Wide Awake* operated from Port Deposit, which was another name for Frog Point, as was Trumansburg Landing and Frontenac. During the steamboat era, a hotel was built for summer guests. After the decline of steamboats, activity in the area faded. In 1929 the land was purchased by the Louis A. Fuertes Boy Scout Council and

named Camp Barton. It has been used for their camping program, which continues today. This area is actually just north of the Town of Ulysses line, in Seneca County.

**Glenwood** was first named for early settlers John and Nathaniel Mack who gave their name to this point of land on the west shore of Cayuga Lake but Henry Garret, a later owner, built a small hotel there that flourished in the 1880s. He gave it the name Glenwood Falls, later shortened to Glenwood. This was a popular picnic spot, also known as Garret's Point. The hotel offered dancing and often people would arrive by steamboat. In 1895 a larger hotel and dance pavilion were built but they burned in the 1930s. In 1945 the land was sold to the Ithaca Yacht Club, which is now an active place for summer boating.

**Halseyville** appears on the 1829 map of Tompkins County. It is located where today's Route 96 crosses Taughannock Creek and was where Nicole Halsey had his farm and mill. Halsey's house was built in 1829 but he might, as did others, have lived in a cabin for some years before that. The road in front of Halsey's house was the major route to Trumansburg and Ithaca and was known in the 1800s as the Ithaca-Geneva Turnpike. A large covered bridge was built at this crossing in 1833 and torn down in 1926. It was replaced by a sturdier modern structure, which was rebuilt in 1993.

**Hinging Post Road** is a new name with an interesting twist. Hinging Post Road is a cul-de-sac off DuBois Road. This housing development was started by Otto Schoenfeld in the mid-1990s. He named it Hinging Post Estates. What is a hinging post? It is a device used to attach two other elements together, or a hinging point can also be a turning point, or a determining factor—an interesting and not inappropriate name.

**Indian Fort Road** recalls a Cayuga-Seneca Indian village and burial ground that were located west of Waterburg near the present Route

227. The Indians built a “fort” on higher ground surrounded by an earthen embankment covering raised logs. They had left the village before Lieutenant Colonel Henry Dearborn’s detachment stopped at Taughannock in 1779.

**Innocentsville** reflects a plan around 1885 to develop a small community where retired Methodist ministers could spend their declining years. Land at the edge of Trumansburg on South Street was surveyed and even sold to qualified buyers but the colony never took hold. Owing to the occupation of the proposed residents, it was called Innocentsville. This account is from Glenn Norris; there seems to be no other documentation for the name.

**Iradell Road** comes from Joseph Iredell who bought 50 acres of land in April 1827, his deed signed by Simeon DeWitt. The family was of Dutch ancestry, their name was first spelled Ayr Dell. The spelling has varied over the years. The one room rural schoolhouse for District #6 located at the intersection of Jacksonville and Iradell Roads and is a now a private residence.

**Jacksonville** was settled in 1795 by Revolutionary War soldiers and others, this area was first called Harlow’s Corners, probably because William Harlow kept an inn nearby. It was known as Van Cortland Village, after Colonel Philip Van Cortlandt, a Revolutionary War soldier who visited in the area. He even owned land in the Town of Ulysses although he resided in the Town of Cortlandt, in Westchester County. The records show, however, that in 1813 Van Cortlandt deeded to the school trustees one acre to be used as a site for a school and cemetery. Shortly after the Battle of New Orleans, in 1815, the hamlet changed its name to Jacksonville to honor Andrew Jackson.

The hamlet had been a bustling community in the nineteenth century. The first post office was established in Jacksonville in 1820 and is still a vital part of the hamlet along with a convenience store, physical therapy office, adult home, antique shop, insurance agency, bakery,

bicycle shop, book bindery, marine repair shop, tax service, hair stylist, Close Hall, Methodist Church, and Amazing Grace Fellowship.

**Kentucky Avenue** was named by William Alford, who came from Kentucky in the middle of the twentieth century. He was the street's first resident and named it for his former home.

**Krum's Corners** is named for Landon Krum, a blacksmith, who arrived in 1845, having left his native home in the Town of Caroline. The corner became known for the smith's shop. Mid-nineteenth century, it was a stop on the stage line from Ithaca to Geneva and was a thriving community with a tavern, general store, and schoolhouse for District #3. A post office was established sometime before 1824 called Ulysses, but it was discontinued in 1856.

**Mack Settlement** is also known as Macktown. It was named for John and Nathaniel Mack, who secured one square mile of wilderness soon after 1800. The name persisted while the one-room school of District #16 was used. In 1952, the residents voted to consolidate with the Ithaca City School District. Mack Settlement was the area surrounding the intersection of DuBois and Perry City roads.

**Pease Street** was named on June 26, 1893, for the Pease family, who had bought a tract of land in 1867 for development into building lots.

**Pinckney's** was a stop on the Geneva-Ithaca Railroad, southwest of Glenwood, named for a local farming family. This was the first stop going north from Ithaca. Many travelers used the railroad as we use automobiles today. Route 89 (Taughannock Boulevard) was not built until the 1930s. All roads leading to the lake landings were east and west because of the creeks and gullies.

**Podunk** is a term that refers to a small, insignificant settlement. The origin of the word comes from the Mohegan or a dialect of the Al-

gonquian, meaning “a neck or corner of land.” Podunk was used in Massachusetts and Connecticut and later came to be a word of derision of any small or insignificant place. Its first recorded use was in 1666 in the *Documentary Collections of History in New York* (3: 121): “Yesterday there was a party of the Mowhawkes at Podunck (a place between this town [Hartford, Connecticut] and Windsor.” It appeared again in 1793 in *The County of Worcester, Mass.* (P. Whitney, p. 77). “There is one large pond . . . called by the Indians Quaboag Pond; but now more generally denominated Podunck Pond, from a track of meadow adjoining, which the Indians call Podunk.” The word appears again in 1841 in the New Orleans *Picyayune* (15 January, 4/1) where someone was supposed to have admitted that “my native place is down in Podunck.” The term appeared in 1901 in *Harper’s Weekley* (7 September) in which a man was referred to as “John Smith of Podunk,” meaning someone with little identity. In Connecticut history Podunk was often referred to as an Indian chief or a group. A *Podunker* was one from Podunk (see Mitford Mathews’s *Dictionary of Americanisms*, 1269–70).

Norris claimed that the word came from the sound of water moving over and old wooden gristmill which seemed to sound like “po-dunk po-dunk.” He also says that in the Algonkian language it means “a clean place.”

A type of soil commonly found in New York and New England is identified as the Podunk series. It consists of very deep, moderately well drained soils formed in recent alluvium on floodplains.

Lydia Sears, a historian of Trumansburg who died in 1978, noted that Podunk “was a rough, tough crossroads. Located on Bolter Creek, it was a small manufacturing community and at its peak had a population of about 100 people. Podunk got its name from the way the rushing waters of Bolter Creek descended on a sawmill wheel. Manufactured in the small community were: tubs, churns, barrels, window sashes, blinds, doors, custom built carriages, bricks, and according to some accounts, canal boats.” Several references to Podunk appear on the Internet. Harold Jansen wrote a slight book entitled *This Way to Podunk* (New York, 1954).

**Presbyterian Row** refers to the camps built by Charles H. Blood and two other trustees of the Ithaca Presbyterian Church along the lake-shore. They erected hunting or, as some said, drinking lodges. These early twentieth-century fishing camps became summer cottages, and then year-round homes.

**Quaker Settlement** recalls the first meeting of the Society of Friends in Ulysses held in 1864 when the McKeel family and other Quakers from the Town of Hector moved over to the Town of Ulysses. They met at the Select School House. In 1903 Charles B. Owen gave land for "The Friend's Church," the meetinghouse which is still in use today.

**Salo Drive** appeared after World War II, when Mr. Salo bought and developed the area, naming the street for himself.

**Swamp College Road** was first named Terrell's Corners for the Michael Terrell family who lived and farmed just north of the intersection of Podunk and East Waterburg roads. Later, the western section of the road was named Terrell Road. Romeyn Berry, director of athletics at Cornell University and beloved columnist in the *Ithaca Journal* for his series "State and Tioga," moved in 1936 to Stoneposts, a farmhouse entered by passing stone posts on what was East Waterburg Road. Berry wrote about many things, including country life, and he chronicled his chores on his farm. For Berry, East Waterburg was too prosaic a name and so he wrote as if he lived on Swamp College Road. A one-room school house, District #8, stood at the Halseyville Road intersection, where the ground could often be quite wet at certain seasons of the year. In the early 1950s, Winton Baines, a neighbor of Berry, and Clifford Bower, the Town Supervisor, decided that perhaps Berry really should live on Swamp College Road, seeing that he had given it a certain local fame, and so they helped to change the name in the official records.



**Taughannock** is a romantic name that is supposed to have come from the Delaware word meaning “great falls in the woods.” There are a number of legends associated with Taughannock Falls, where the water drops some 215 feet, higher than Niagara Falls. Taughannock is the second highest falls east of the Rocky Mountains. The spelling is also variable. Norris claims that various names have been given to the stream: Taghanic (Algonquin), Chicneaugowa, Tschochnioke (Cayuga). According to Harold Thompson, Cornell folklorist in the middle of the twentieth century, Taughannock was the name of an Indian chief who lived there. Others locate a battle at the falls between the Delaware and Iroquois Indians.

**Taughannock Point** was originally known as Weyburn’s Point after Samuel Weyburn, who established a cabin there in 1792. He was gone by 1794, however, when the Goodwin brothers, Benjamin and Richard, settled in the area, and it became Goodwin Point. The first recorded visitation to the point came during Sullivan’s campaign when Lieutenant Colonel Henry Dearborn marched through land “so horred rough and brushey that it was hardly possible for us to advance however with great difficulty & fatigue we proceeded about 8 or 9 miles to the end of a long cape,” identified by the editor as Taghanic Point. Taughannock Falls State Park was established in 1927.

**Trumansburg** was named for Abner Treman, a Revolutionary War soldier, who received lot no. 2 in Town No. 22. In 1792 he brought his family, including his brother-in-law John McLallen, west to settle in the Military Tract. He set out to clear his land and in 1794 built a gristmill, bringing up the machinery to run the mill from Chenango Point, which is now Binghamton. Treman is unusual because he sought to create a town on his land, and he sold parcels to settlers and helped create public institutions.

Treman gave his name to the little settlement. It was known for a time as Tremansburg, Tremansville, Treman’s Mill, and Tremain Village,

according to Norris. The first post office was established in 1811 under the name of Treman's Village. Before a year was out, however, there had been a mistake and by 1814 the Post Office Department had registered the area as Trumansburgh. That spelling was changed in 1894 when the Post Office Department regularized names reflecting a preference for "burg" so the final "h" was dropped.

In some early letters, the area was known as McLallen's Tavern, but this was used only during the earliest years and has long since faded away. Shin Hollow was also used, although in a most colloquial manner, as it is supposed to refer to men's legs that were scarred on their way home from the tavern, a dangerous trip because one had to weave in and out among the tree stumps. The village was incorporated in July 1872.

In 1965 the streets of Trumansburg were renamed for one day to honor Verner L. Timerson who died on October 15 and who had been mayor for 19 years. This day, Main Street became Verner L. Timerson Boulevard, Washington Street became Dennis Messler Drive, and Union Street was called Stephen Craig Square.

The village name now is frequently shortened by local residents in speech and print to T-burg.

**Updike Settlement** recalls the five Updike brothers: Burgoon, Ralph, Abraham, Jacob, and John, who came to Ulysses from Somerset County, New Jersey in 1801–1802. Burgoon settled on a large tract of land southeast of Waterburg. The settlement was at the intersection of the present Podunk and Perry City roads.

A log meetinghouse was built on one of Burgoon's lots in 1811. The pioneer settlers worshiped in the meetinghouse and many are buried in the cemetery, which stood next door. The nucleus of these worshipers relocated to Trumansburg in 1819 and became the First Presbyterian Church of Ulysses. The Baptists met and organized in the meetinghouse in 1819. In a few years, they too built a new building in Trumansburg for worship. After the meetinghouse was torn down, the area became known as District 15, for the one-room rural school.

Later, the school was consolidated with the Trumansburg Central School District, and the building has been vacant for many years.

**Waterburg** is a small hamlet found along Waterburg Road where it crosses Taughannock Creek in the western part of the township. Half way between Trumansburg and Mecklenburg in the Town of Hector, it was first named Middleburg. It appears on the 1866 map of Ulysses as Middleburg. This was a thriving settlement with water-powered mills, a Methodist Church, Grange Hall, schoolhouse, general store, and blacksmith. A post office was established in Waterburg on August 12, 1833, and discontinued in December 1902.

**Whig Street** was most likely named for the Whig Party, which emerged as a coalition of interests in 1834.

**Willow Creek** was named by Samuel Vann of New Jersey who settled in 1812, presumably, because of the willow trees that lined the creek. Rural School District #11 was organized in 1813. Willow Creek Post Office, located at the Lehigh Valley Railroad station, was established in 1873 and discontinued in 1913.

