



**EMPIRE STATE
POSTAL HISTORY
SOCIETY**

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JAMES D. LERAY DE CHAUMONT

By Gerald Wiley

James D. LeRay de Chaumont (1760–1840) first came to the United States from France in 1785. While here he married Grace Coxe of New Jersey and became an American citizen. He returned from France in 1802 and purchased a large tract of land in northern New York.

He spent many years developing his lands, living some of that time in the village of Leraysville, named for him. The post office there, established as Leray in 1807, renamed Leraysville in 1808, and discontinued in 1901 (Figure 1).

Although Chaumont spent his final years in France, his influence greatly affected northern New York history. Several villages in Jefferson County with post offices have names associated with the LeRay de Chaumont family. Alexandria Bay (post office Alexandria 1823, changed to Alexandria Bay 1883, Figure 2) was named for Alexander, James LeRay's son; Theresa (post office 1823, Figure 3) for his daughter; Cape Vincent (post office 1817, Figure 4) for his son Vincent; Chaumont (post office 1806, Figure 5) for his birthplace in France; and Plessis (post office 1823, Figure 6) for one of the LeRay estates in France.

The above-mentioned post offices are still open, with the exception of Leraysville. The LeRay mansion, built 1825–1827 and all that is left of the village of Leraysville, is the residence of the commanding officer of Fort Drum. ■