Chautauqua County Historical Society,
Westfield, New York

Gentlemen:

I enclose for your files the paper I presented to the Society at our meeting June 8th, 1957 at the Cassadaga Valley Central School, relating to the History of the Town of Charlotte.

Very truly yours,

Walter H. Edson
HISTORY

OF

TOWN OF CHARLOTTE

No governmental or political unit existed within the county of Chautauqua, State of New York, known as the Town of Charlotte until April 29, 1829.

Thirty years earlier, in 1798 and 1799, the Holland Company had caused a survey to be made of range and township lines of its lands in what is now our county of Chautauqua. Such lines for township 4 range 11 were thus and then surveyed six miles square.

No permanent white settlement had yet been made within that township, nor within what is now the county of Chautauqua.

Before the time of those surveys the area of that township 4, Range 11, had been included in the area of larger governmental and political units known as towns.
with names and boundaries that were being changed from time to time.

On the 11th day of April, 1804, by an act of the legislature of the state of New York, the town of Batavia in the county of Genesee was divided into four smaller towns. All of the area of the present county of Chautauqua and more, had been previously included in that very large town of Batavia, then and thus divided into four smaller, but still very large towns to be known as Batavia, Erie, Willink and Chautauqua.

Before that date in 1804, voters residing within the present limits of Chautauqua County, desiring to vote at a general election or at a town meeting were required to go to Batavia for that purpose, a distance of nearly one hundred miles by forest paths. How many, if any, availed themselves of that privilege we are not informed.
What is now included within the area of many present towns of our county, was by that Act of the 11th of April, 1804, included in the area of one new town, thus created, to which was thus legally and officially given the name - "CHAUTAUQUA". Included in the large area of that new town of Chautauqua was township 4, range 11 of the Holland Land Company's survey, which constitutes the present area of the town of Charlotte.

The first town meeting for that very large town of Chautauqua was to be held at the house of the widow McHenry in what is now the town of Westfield at the Old Cross Roads where the first permanent white settlement in what is now our county of Chautauqua had been made by Col. James McMahan, early in the Spring of 1802.

No white settlement had yet been made in township 4, range 11.
Perhaps we ought to know something about what was going on generally in the state of New York in that year 1804, when the name "CHAUTAUQUA" was first given to one of the smallest of governmental and political units in the great American experiment of government of the people by and for the people.

Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr were then still living. It was in that very year that General Hamilton, at a conference of federalist leaders had warned them against giving political aid and support to Col. Burr in his campaign for election as governor of the state of New York.

There were three candidates that year, one republican, one federalist and Aaron Burr, who had claimed to be a federalist but was then running against the regular republican and the regular federalist candidates.

Whatever it was that General Hamilton said about Col. Burr was never retracted or apologized for, to the
satisfaction of Col. Burr, who thereafter fought and killed his critic, one of the most constructive and patriotic geniuses of American governmental and political institutions.

General Hamilton had frankly expressed his doubt that the American people could and would continue successfully in governing themselves legislatively or executively under the proposed republican system but had admitted that the sentiment of the people was so strongly in favor of it that the "experiment" ought to be given a fair trial.

Among the questions of that time were the following:

How much and in what form was legislative power to be given to the people of a town in the state of New York?

How much and in what form was executive power to be given to them?
What, if any judicial power, could they be trusted to exercise in any form?

The New York State election of 1804 resulted in the election of a governor who expressed interest in the development of public schools. A common school fund was established during his administration and had something to do with the subsequent success of the New York State experiment in government of the people, by the people and for the people.

Important in the wilderness were the opening, maintenance and improvement of paths for travel, transportation and traffic. Equally important were the opening, maintaining and improving of channels for the education and training of pioneers, their children and descendants. Common schools, colleges and special training of many kinds were yet to be provided.
But self-government itself continued to be experimental. Changes were necessary. In 1808, the Legislature divided the former county of Genesee into four smaller counties of Genesee, Niagara, Cattaraugus and Chautauqua, giving to the last mentioned county its present name, with its present boundaries. In that act of 1808, it was, however, provided that the new county of Chautauqua should remain a part of Niagara for judicial and municipal purposes until it should contain five hundred taxable inhabitants qualified to vote for member of assembly, to be determined by the Board of Supervisors of Niagara from the assessment roll for Chautauqua.

During the period of uncertainty about such completion of the organization of Chautauqua County, it is related that Jamestown lands were deeded by Matthew Prendergast to James Prendergast and that the deeds were
recorded in the Niagara County Clerk's Office at

Buffalo before Chautauqua had been thus fully organized

as a county. (See Foote's History of Jamestown as first
published in Vol. I of A.W. Anderson's
Conquest of Chautauqua, dated April 14,
1932, page 10.)

In that same year 1808, the Legislature also

created the new town of Pomfret which comprised the

present towns of Hanover, Villenova, Cherry Creek,

Ellington, Poland, Carroll, Kiantone, Gerry, Charlotte,

Arkwright, Sheridan, Pomfret, Dunkirk and part of Busti

and also included the areas of the present cities of

Dunkirk and Jamestown. The other towns of the present

County of Chautauqua continued to constitute the one

Town of Chautauqua. The county board of Chautauqua

County for a brief time thereafter consisted of two

supervisors, one for that town of Chautauqua and the

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other for the new and larger town of Pomfret.

Town 4, Range 11, now the town of Charlotte, which had theretofore been included in the town of Chautauqua from 1804 to 1808, then and thus became part of the new town of Pomfret in the new county also thereafter named "Chautauqua".

On page 21 of Foote's History of Jamestown, as published by A. W. Anderson in 1932, it is stated that:

"The towns of Ellicott, Gerry and Hanover were set off from," the town of Pomfret in 1813, "mainly through the instrumentality of Judge Prendergast and Major Samuel Sinclear, the pioneer and founder of Sinclairville."

It is to be noted that, as related by Justice Ottaway in his Story of Mina, to which I shall later refer, the original town of Clymer had included the later and smaller
towns of French Creek, Mina, Clymer and Sherman, so the original town of Gerry as thus set off from Pomfret included the present towns of Cherry Creek, Ellington, Gerry and Charlotte, each supposed to be six miles square.

On page 4 of Foote's History of Jamestown, as later published by A. W. Anderson in 1932, it had also been stated that Major Samuel Sinclear "had just settled at Sinclearville before the first settler in Jamestown - the intermediate country being a wilderness."

Some of the settlers in what thereafter became the town of Charlotte came from New Hampshire, Vermont and other parts of New England or from eastern New York State, from which the Prendergasts and other pioneers of Jamestown also came, although there seems to have been little, if any relation between their plans and migratory
movements toward the west and their final settlements in this county until after the creation of the two adjoining large towns of Gerry and Ellicott in 1813, which brought upon the enlarged board of Supervisors of Chautauqua County, Major Sinclair as supervisor of the large town of Gerry and Judge Prendergast as supervisor of the large town of Ellicott.

James Prendergast and Samuel Sinclair continued to be federalists - not republicans, nor whigs - although the Prendergasts had been tories and the Sinclairs rebels during the Revolution. In Chapter _XXIX_ of the Annals of southwestern New York, the late Albert S. Price has told the very interesting story of the Prendergasts and their reasons for loyalty to George III.

Early settlers of what later became the small town of Charlotte came into that town from the north, finding
their way southward through the forest and upward from the vicinity of Lake Erie and Canadaway Creek over the "ridge" near the north boundary of town 4, range 11, which then separated and still separates, northward flowing waters from southward flowing waters. That ridge constitutes merely a segment of the rim of hills that surrounds what some Pennsylvania geologists have described and designated geologically as the Chautauqua Basin, which is supposed to have once included the extensive area (comprising 4,000 square miles), most of which now constitutes the area of Chautauqua, Cattaraugus and part of Allegany Counties in New York and the greater portions of Warren, McKean and part of Potter counties in Pennsylvania, the waters of which flowed northward before the Quebec Glacier turned them southward.
Settlers of the town of Ellicott included the Rendergasts and others, some of whom had first come into what is now our county from the west and had made their first settlements near the upper part of Chautauqua Lake, before attempting to establish any dam at the lower end of it.

On page 7 of Foote's History of Jamestown, it is stated that Chautauqua County in 1810 had not over 500 electors and little more than 2,000 inhabitants and most of them had but recently entered this wilderness and had located in the vicinity of Lake Erie.

Major Sinclair came in from that direction but was not the first settler in the town of Charlotte. The first settler of that town was John Pickett, who also made an early visit to the site of what is now Sinclairville.

Pickett was unmarried and in April 1809 settled on Lot 62, town 4, range 11 in what was then the Town of Pomfret
and built a log house on the bank of the Pickett Brook which flows southwesterly out of what is now the Town of Charlotte into the Cassadaga Creek in the present Town of Stockton. Pickett Brook is not shown on the county or town map in the Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County published in 1881.

About the same time with John Pickett, others settled in that northwest portion of town 4, range 11, which became known as the Pickett neighborhood.

At the junction of presently existing roads in the northeast corner of lot 62 of town 4, range 11, an old cemetery now contains graves of many of those early pioneers of the Town of Charlotte, perhaps including the grave of John Pickett.

The hardships and tragedies of life in the wilderness had there quickly begun for pioneers of that town.
In the summer of 1810 a married woman was first to die. Her sister died the next day. They were buried in the same grave. It does not appear that their grave is within that old cemetery but it is somewhere nearby.

Pioneer life however continued in the Picket Neighborhood. Indeed, it was there that the first marriage was performed and that the first child of pioneers was born in Charlotte. There in that remote settlement in the wilderness of western New York happiness continued to be sought and hope thereof still prevailed.

Not far away, at about the same time and near the geographical center of town 4, range 11, another white settlement was being made. First to settle there was a Revolutionary soldier, Robert W. Seaver. In the second volume of The Centennial History of Chautauqua County, Mrs. Ruth C. Seaver, in an article about the "Founder of Sinclairville and Charlotte Center", on pages 328-329
reports that the Charlotte Center settlement was begun by R. W. Seaver and others who came from Oneida County, New York in that spring of 1809.

Robert W. Seaver was born in Worcester County, Mass. July 3, 1762. He enlisted at fourteen and served six years and eight months in the War of the Revolution. In after years he spoke most frequently of the long conflict at Yorktown, the surrender of Cornwallis and the funeral hush that succeeded the nine days and nights of incessant roaring cannon. In that battle he served under General Lafayette whom he apparently had an opportunity, later, to greet when Lafayette, in 1825, was a guest of our pioneers at Fredonia. Robert W. Seaver had also taken a part in one of the earliest battles of the War of 1812, which began before the town of Gerry was set off from the town of Pomfret. The British Ship, Queen Charlotte
had chased American salt boats from Lake Erie into

the mouth of Canadaway Creek but was repulsed by the

little army of Americans gathered there. Bullets were

run for the soldiers by the widow Cole and revolutionary

veteran Seaver made the cartridges, he being the only one

present who knew how to do that. Mrs. Ruth Seaver states

in her article that: "The stone that marks his grave in

Charlotte Center cemetery bears the simple record:

"Robert W. Seaver for seven years a soldier

of the Revolution, died July 31, 1836, aged

seventy-five years."


The settlement made by Samuel Sinclair was on

Lot 41, town 4, range 11 now included in the Town of

Charlotte. He had caused a log cabin to be begun there

late in that winter of 1809, near the southern base of

the hill on which is now located Evergreen Cemetery in
the village of Sinclairville where Samuel Sinclair, his second wife and other members of his family are buried. With help from the Pickett neighborhood that cabin was completed in 1810. In the fall of that year Major Sinclair and his assistants cut a road through the forest from Canadaway to his cabin and brought his large family to occupy it in the midst of that wilderness. He built a saw mill that year and a grist mill the next year. The road and mills and the Major, himself, and his wife, helped many others in the early settlement of the central part of what is now Chautauqua County.

At the time of Samuel Sinclair's purchase of land at the Batavia office of the Holland Company in 1809, Lot 41 of town 4, range 11 was included in the Town of Pomfret. The large Town of Gerry set off from Pomfret in the Spring of 1813 included lot 41 of town 4
and lot 63 of town 3 in range 11, also purchased by Major Sinclear.

The settlement on lot 41 became known as "Major Sinclear's" or, more briefly as the "Major's". The post office later established there was named "Gerry" and continued with that name until 1869. After Major Sinclear's death February 8, 1827, the settlement there became known as "Sinclairville". The incorporated village now bears the name - "Sinclairville".

The settlements at what are now known as Charlotte Center and Sinclairville are in the valley of Mill Creek which flows southwesterly through town 4 and into town 3 of range 11 to join the Cassadaga Creek near the southwest corner of what is now the Town of Gerry, far below the place where the Pickett Brook joins the Cassadaga in the Town of Stockton.

Lot 63 of town 3, range 11, formerly owned by Major
Sinclear is also in the valley of Mill Creek as it flows through the present Town of Gerry, above its junction with the Cassadaga.

Other streams that rise in town 4, range 11 are Clear Creek which flows southeast to join the Conewango and small tributaries of the Canadaway that flow northward from the northwest corner of what is now Charlotte.

No lake or other navigable stream or body of water lies within or adjoins the Town of Charlotte. All of those streams are fed by clear, cold springs and have long been and most of them still are good trout streams. Other freshwater fish may be caught in them. Mill Creek, formed above Charlotte Center by the junction of one tributary flowing southward from the town of Arkwright and another flowing northwesterly from the Town of Cherry Creek, flows thence southwesterly and swiftly but without naturally abrupt water falls. Many dams have
been made and used on Mill Creek from above Charlotte Center down stream to and through Sinclairville.

Other and larger fish may be found in the shallows and pools of lower Mill Creek in the present town of Gerry.

At least one muscallonge - a seven pounder - was taken from those waters within my recollection.

The development of a road down the valley of Mill Creek connecting those two large tracts of land owned by Major Sinclair was natural and soon followed.

It was not so apparent that such a road would be extended or connected with other roads to form highway communication with Fluvanna, Chautauqua Lake and the settlement at Jamestown before any road whatever was attempted to be built in the valley of the Cassadaga to connect the two settlements of Judge Prendergast and Major Sinclair.

Such was the case, however, and an east and west highway from Mayville to Ellicottville was soon begun, to extend...
through Gerry in Town 3, range 11, crossing Mill Creek
and later developing into an important line of communication
and transportation with the eastern part of the State of
New York, no longer maintained at that crossing of
Mill Creek.

Robert W. Seaver and Samuel Sinclear were mere boys when they joined the Revolutionary Army. Seaver was about two years older than Sinclear, who was only 18 at the time when he was honorably discharged from the Army at the end of his term of enlistment. His family name was spelled "Sinkler" when his father Richard Sinkler and three of his sons served in a New Hampshire regiment.

They fought in many battles and endured great hardships.

Samuel's brother Bradbury died at Valley Forge, March 5, 1778.

Samuel continued in the army and served under John Sullivan of New Hampshire, commander in chief of the Western
Army, designated by George Washington to lead the expedition against the Indians in 1779. That expedition did not bring Samuel Sinclair as far west as Chautauqua County and it was a long time afterward that he bought those lands and settled here. Upon discharge from the army he engaged in lumbering and was married in Maine. With his family he later removed to eastern New York where his first wife died. Later he married a widow who had children by her first husband. Major Sinclair brought her, his own children and hers to his settlement on Mill Creek in 1810, where they participated from that time on in the pioneer life of that community. He had much to do with the reception to General Lafayette at Fredonia in 1825.

There was another Revolutionary soldier, Nathaniel Johnson, who had served in the same
New Hampshire regiment with Samuel Sinclair.

He emigrated to western New York in 1813, coming through Buffalo while the ruins of that town were still smoking after destruction by British forces. He settled for a time at Hamburg, again at Silver Creek, then at Westfield and finally at Major Sinclair's in 1814. His wife, their son and daughter became active members of that community. The daughter, Hannah, married Sylvanus L. Henderson who had served in the War of 1812. Their son William W. Henderson, born in Sinclairville in 1828 was for many years prominent in the affairs of the Town of Charlotte the County of Chautauqua and in the organization and activities of the Chautauqua Society of History and Natural Science.
There were at least five others, probably more soldiers of the Revolution, who became early residents of the town of Charlotte. Besides soldiers and sailors who had been in service there were, doubtless, many other patriots from New England, eastern New York and other states of the Union who had suffered and sacrificed during the Revolution and later became pioneers of the town of Charlotte -- probable partisans of the new theories of popular government then being put into actual practice in this wilderness.

Among pioneers of the town there were also, however, many who came directly from other countries; from Canada, France, Ireland, Scotland and England; later from Germany, Sweden and other foreign countries. Several families came from France direct to the Pickett settlement and other parts of the town, some from Scotland to the northern part.
of the town, more from Ireland to Charlotte Center early
and others later to the northeast part of the town. Last
Thursday I found a descendant of Dutch Ancestry.
A larger number of immigrants came from England
to Kent Street and the neighborhood northeast of
Sinclairville. One sturdy Englishman came in 1818
direct from London. Twice he walked from what is now
our town of Charlotte to New York City. One of his sons
became a leading merchant in Sinclairville where he built
one of the best homes and was again and again elected
supervisor of the town of Charlotte. Later he returned
to London and died in England. His daughter and her
husband lie buried in the Sinclairville cemetery. His son
went on with other pioneers to the Pacific coast.
The English immigrants continued to come in later years.
Many remained in Charlotte and had much to do with the
history and development of that town. Their descendants
have constituted a large portion of the later population.

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From such various countries and nationalities the people of Charlotte were descended and developed.

Perhaps the most characteristic and significant feature of the history of the town of Charlotte and its people is the extraordinary interest that they have taken and continue to manifest in their local history. One of their number in the Centennial History of the County, suggested that, "The esteem that a Chautauquan has for his county is, in some measure due to the fact that so many of its citizens have taken an interest in cultivating and preserving its history." Among those active in cultivating and preserving county history have been many from the town of Charlotte. Among the earliest was Emory F. Warren who was born in Eaton, Madison County, N.Y. Nov. 16, 1810. He came with his parents and settled in Charlotte in 1819 where he attended district school.
Later he taught school and began the study of law in the office of Hon. Richard P. Marvin in Jamestown.

His portrait and biography appear between pages 20 and 21 of the Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of Chautauqua published in 1881 by F. W. Beers & Co. of New York. In 1845 he compiled "Sketches of the History of Chautauqua County," which were in 1846 published by J. Warren Fletcher, then publisher of the Jamestown Journal. At that time Emory F. Warren resided and practiced law in Sinclairville. Later he had a young law partner, Obed Edson, whom Mr. Warren inspired with his interest in local history. For many years thereafter the town of Charlotte manifested its interest in that subject and took an active part in preserving its own history. On the 4th of July, 1876 the town of Charlotte celebrated the one hundredth
anniversary of American Independence and the sixty-eighth year of the settlement of that town, a record of which was published in a 73 page finely printed pamphlet containing an immense fund of information about the town, its people and their history. The interest of the town of Charlotte and its people has been manifested in all of the county histories. What remains to be done about the history of the town of Charlotte, itself, is to bring it down to date, a task too difficult to be attempted on this occasion.

Certain recent changes in highways and schools within the town are too significant to be ignored at this time.

Major Sinclair's road from Fredonia, with some changes continued to be used. He helped extend it down the Cassadaga Valley to Bucklin's Corners, later known
as Vermont in the present town of Gerry. At last there was a road down that valley to the settlement in the town of Ellicott.

New routes were being surveyed, plank roads and other improvements were being made. The people of Charlotte were much interested and glad to participate in maintaining highways and stage routes from Fredonia through Sinclairville to Jamestown and to Warren, Pennsylvania. The line surveyed for the D.A.V. & P. Railroad did not bring any part of it within the town of Charlotte but the first president of the company was a resident of Sinclairville and other residents of Charlotte had much to do with improved means of transportation and communication. Most noticeable among recent changes are improved highways in the Cassadaga valley and the location of a large central school that has superseded the Sinclairville
High School of which some of us are proud to have been students.

It may be of interest to note at this time that the first white men known to have come within the limits of the town of Charlotte were the early surveyors employed by Holland Company to run its boundary lines. The earliest arrived at the southwest corner of the town late in the day, July 11th, 1798 and camped there for the night near the eastern edge of the Cassadaga swamp, probably not far which is in the present town of Gerry, from the site of this school. The next night they camped near the Pickett brook. The survey of the west boundary of Charlotte was completed July 13th. All boundaries had been surveyed by July 29, 1798.

Between the time of that survey and the later survey of lot lines in 1808 and the arrival of pioneers in 1809, evidences of visits of roving bands of Seneca Indians were found.
They came to hunt and fish and, in the season, to make maple sugar near the location of Sinclearville. A well worn Indian trail leading from the northeastern part of the county passed through the northeastern part of the town, through Charlotte Center and down the Mill Creek valley in the direction of their hunting grounds on the Broken Straw Creek in Pennsylvania. For many years after the first settlement of Charlotte Indians passed to and fro over that ancient path. I am not able to indicate where it crossed the Cassadaga swamp or creek.
Perhaps we ought to inquire: What is History?

A great dictionary of the English language gives as its first definition of history: (I quote)

"1. A relation of incidents (in later use only those professedly true) a narrative, tale, story."

That definition is dated 1834, which seems to indicate that, after that date, such a narrative, tale or story, not professedly true, would be considered something else than history.

It is the Oxford Universal Dictionary on Historical Principles, with corrections and addenda revised to the year 1955, that gives its first definition of the word "history" as I have just stated it.

The title, introduction and text of that Dictionary indicate that it also professes to be authoritative as a work of history - the history of words it professes to
spell, pronounce and define correctly, also the history of their various meanings and uses.

Its second definition of history, however, differs greatly from the first and is as follows:

(again I quote)

"2. Spec. A written narrative constituting a continuous methodical record, in order of time, of important or public events, esp. those connected with a particular country, people, individual, etc."

That definition is dated 1485, 350 years earlier than the first definition.

As defined by that second definition in the Oxford dictionary, the word "history" had been used for a much longer time than it had been used with the broad, loose and careless meaning of the first definition by that dictionary.
Recently a native son of one of the present towns of our county of Chautauqua has told to this Society most delightfully the story of that town. At the meeting held October 6, 1956, Lee L. Ottaway, who has long served and now serves and, we hope, will much longer serve judicially and otherwise, his town, county and state, has had the patience and has taken the time and devoted the energy necessary to tell painstakingly and with historical exactness, the "STORY OF MINA" with manifest pride in and love for that town and the county and state of which it is a part.

Under either of those definitions of history by the Oxford dictionary, it is the story, tale and narrative that constitutes history - not the incidents or events themselves.
As defined by either of the definitions I have quoted, that STORY OF MINA, as told and written by Lee Ottaway, has become and is history. We do not always maintain clearly the distinction that those two definitions make so clear.

There are, however, other definitions of "history", other statements of its meaning and of its uses, which I am disregarding for today.

In that same dictionary of the English language, in the abbreviated and necessarily condensed article that follows the catchword, "History", there is a quotation from Carlyle:

"If fame were not an accident and history a distillation of rumor."

Those are the only words thus quoted.
Without stopping to ascertain the rest of the sentence as completed by its author, or the context of those words as quoted in the writings of Thomas Carlyle, it seems obvious that such contemptuous comment on fame and history would not be deemed appropriate and applicable to writings of Carlyle, himself, a great teacher, philosopher and master of language, as well as historian and biographer.

Among the greatest of his historical writings are his stories of the French Revolution, of the life of Oliver Cromwell and of the death of Charlotte Corday.

As a writer of history and biography - Carlyle was not only positive in his narrative of incidents and events but was also masterful in his interpretation and assertion of their historical meaning and importance, their causes and results.
Writing as he did with such assumption of authority to relate and to interpret history as he pleased, he could hardly dispute logically the right and authority of other lesser persons to do the same.

The value of the writings of local historians, if they have value, may be much less than that of such great literature as Carlyle's, but they may be as truly history as the stories of Carlyle and of other writers of the classics.

With a slight change of accent in the name a local historian, familiar with Carlyle's story of Charlotte Corday, might surmise that the name of our town of Charlotte, after her death in 1793, had been transmitted from one person to another in memory of, "the fair young creature" described by Carlyle as, "Sheeted in red smock of murderess - so beautiful - serene- so full
of life - journeying toward death - alone amid the world,” Charlotte Corday.

The real facts about the choice of a name for our present town of Charlotte are less tragic - more prosaic. Without dispute among local historians, they are to be related simply and substantially as follows:

Township 4 in range 11 of the Holland Land Company's survey of range and township lines made in 1798 and 1799 had been established as six miles square. The survey of that township into lots for sale and settlement were made by John Lamberton for the Holland Land Company in 1808. He divided the township into 64 lots, each three quarters of a mile square but it was not until April 29, 1829 that the town became a separate governmental and political unit with a name of its own.
At a citizen's meeting held at the house of David Randall in the settlement then existing at and near the geographical center of township 4, range 11 as thus surveyed, Mrs. Randall suggested that the town be named Charlotte from a town of the same name on Lake Champlain in the State of Vermont. Her suggestion was approved and the town was named CHARLOTTE.

At the later meeting of this Historical Society held at Jamestown, April 6, 1957, Clayburne Sampson with characteristic thoroughness, exactness and entertaining skill told the story of "Jamestown's Store Boats" that navigated the more important waterways of this region from their port at Levant near the Junction of the Cassadaga and Chadakoin.

Among important articles of commerce in those days,
"black salts" mentioned by Judge Ottaway as a product of the forests of Mina marketable down the river, was also the most valuable article of exchange produced by pioneers of the town of Charlotte. The timber upon the hills in that town consisted principally of beech and maple with considerable ash, birch, cucumber, elms and cherry, with now and then a tall pine. Other pines and hemlocks grew on steep banks bordering streams far removed from the navigable waters of lakes and streams. Potash and pearl ash from what is now the town of Charlotte were paddled down the Cassadaga in canoes. Black ash was the only resource of the early settlers of that town and is said to have been the chief staple of the hill towns during the first thirty years of their history, and was the only product that could be sold for cash and was sure to be
received in exchange for goods and groceries.

Before the war of 1812 black salts from what is now Charlotte were sold at Mayville and Fredonia. In 1812 an ashery was built at Sinclearville where black salts were manufactured into pot and pearl ash, which were transported by canoes to the landing place on the Cassadaga Creek in the town of Gerry where they were put aboard batteaux for shipment to Pittsburgh.

Sinclearville continued to be an important point for manufacture of pot and pearl ash until about 1845.

Subsequent to 1824, pot and pearl ashes were sent to Montreal and later to New York where bills of exchange on New York and London were received for them.

The opening of the Erie Canal in 1825 improved business of that, and other kinds in Charlotte.
Besides the pamphlet relating to the Celebration of July 4, 1876, published by direction of the Committee of arrangements of that time, residents of the Town of Charlotte have had much to do with Chautauqua County history generally and have continued the story of Charlotte in Young's History of the county published in 1875, Ferguson's County History dated 1894 and the Centennial History of 1904 and in many other publications.

It is more than half a century since any organized effort has been made to bring the history of Charlotte down to date:

June 8, 1937

Walter N. Edison
If loyal natives of the town or other local historians of the kind who have served us in the past continue the story of our town and county to date, I am sure the fame of Chautauqua will continue to be known as something earned, not merely accidental, and the history of Charlotte an appreciation of truth rather than a distillation of rumor.

W. F.E.