In treating of music in Chautauqua County, it will be necessary for us at first, in order to get a clear perspective, to dis-associate in our minds and from our consideration, modern music in all its splendid development, and to hark back to primitive beginnings. In fact, as far as music in the best sense of the term is concerned, the first fifty years after the organization of our county may be fittingly described as a pre-historia era. And yet, elsewhere in the world, the art had practically reached its zenith, thru the efforts and labors of a coterie of men with whose names those interested in the art love to conjure. Johann Sebastian Bach, the greatest composer of contrapuntal music, who breathed his last in 1750, was followed across the Styx by the youthful Mozart, who died in 1791, and by Papa Haydn, who passed in 1809. These were followed, shortly after the organization of this county, by the greatest of all, the mighty Beethoven, who died in 1827. Thus, while Chautauqua County was still a wilderness and music unknown here, these constructive giants had almost exhausted its possibilities. What has been accomplished since must be looked upon as an elaboration of their ideas and efforts.

While the incidents of births and deaths, of business and of material enterprises, of great achievements and of catastrophes in our county are reasonably well set forth,- music, which until recently was looked upon as more or less of a triviality, and as playing
no particular part in life's scheme, has been neglected in our annals, and the records for its proper treatment are extremely meagre. This omission possibly occurred from a failure to appreciate the tremendous power which music exercises on the emotions, moving us to tears at one moment by its soothing dulcet strains, and the next, by its strident blatant cacophony and wildly conflicting rhythms, arousing us to almost murderous resolves. Music, depending entirely upon the viewpoint of the person interested, may be looked upon as a philosophical and scientific study— as a commercial enterprise— as a demonstration of technical ability— as a refined type of entertainment— and as an appropriate accompaniment of all the experiences of life, from the cradle to the grave.

Macauley, who is qualified to speak, says:— "The perfect historian must possess an imagination sufficiently powerful to make his narrative affecting and picturesque". To allay any false hopes, the speaker disclaims any such distinction as "the perfect historian", and furthermore, he does not warrant that this narrative will be either affecting or picturesque. What he would like to point out, however, is the fact that our county, in its beginnings, was little more than a wilderness, so that any phase of its early musical history, owing to the lack of recorded data, must of necessity be largely a matter of tradition and of imagination.

We must, therefore, envisage a densely wooded region, almost a trackless wilderness, very sparsely settled, with here and there a clearing where some venturesome pioneer had elected to make his home. Here these energetic, hard-working and practical settlers, whose daily life was one of toil— hardships and dangers, erected their humble dwellings, cultivated patches of ground, endured privations and the rigors of the climate, met the attacks of ruthless hostile Indians, in which many of them gave up their lives, all in an attempt to establish a new home and,
poetically, to make the wilderness "blossom as the rose". It will be readily conceded that such surroundings and such conditions as were the lot of the original settlers of the county were not propitious or conducive to the cultivation, practice or enjoyment of music, either as a science or as the youngest of the arts.

There are two requisites to the full appreciation of any art, the first, leisure and opportunities for its study; and the second, a coterie or audience to share the pleasure and enjoyment of its demonstration. Chautauqua County, in the early days, had no music teachers, few performers, and no audiences, so music was at a very low ebb, practically non-existent.

Amongst the treasures which the pioneers brought from their homes may have been copies of some celebrated pictures, or some piece of statuary. These, from time to time, served to cheer the loneliness of the wilderness and to suggest other and happier associations. This pleasurable satisfaction was quite possible, because painting and sculpture are arts possessing fixed and palpable qualities. Music, however, differs in that to most people it must be re-created by one almost equally as great and talented as its composer, before it becomes vital, convincing or appealing. In other words, to them it is not music unless it is sung or played.

Amongst the pioneers were doubtless those who could sing. It may be that one or other brought with him a violin, or some other easily portable instrument. Missionaries were early in evidence amongst the settlers, and it is quite possible that religious gatherings were held in homes. These would offer opportunities for psalm and hymn singing. There were in those days singing evangelists, for the history of the
county records one Phillip Phillips, who was called the Pilgrim Singer, and who escaped drowning in an accident on Cassadaga Lake, on Sept. 2, 1852. Doubtless there are many others of this type of singing missionaries or preachers. It is more than possible that after the settlers increased in number, the itinerant violinist would be in great demand. He no doubt held the same relation where-ever he wandered as the minstrel in medieval times, always a welcome guest. His visits must have been the bright spots in an otherwise drab existence. On festiva occasions and at dances, he would doubtless regale the assemblage with the old-fashioned airs.

These pioneer days ultimately came to an end. Forests were cleared and farms sprang up in their place. Settlements and villages were established. The number of inhabitants and their wealth increased very materially. The bringing of the first piano into the county must have been a great event. Tradition says that it was purchased in Boston and reached Chautauqua County via Buffalo. Some of the meeting houses and churches were supplied with melodeons and reed organs, but an instrumental accompaniment for choirs was not always available in these places of worship.

About this period there was great interest in what may be called the singing school or music convention era, presided over by traveling singing teachers. The work undertaken in these schools or conventions consisted of an elementary course of lessons in reading music and in singing, following by a closing concert. Several well-known leaders prominent in the music convention movement which swept over the eastern portion of our county in the two or three decades succeeding the Civil War period, visited Chautauqua
County and conducted their schools in Jamestown, Dunkirk and other centers of population. These conventions developed local leaders who went into the surrounding communities, and carried on the work on a smaller scale. As an aftermath of these activities, and as an evidence of the interest they created, societies and associations more or less permanent were formed.

Such a one was the Southern Chautauqua County Musical Association, established in 1874, which continued for about thirteen years. It had semi-annual sessions, lasting three or four days. These meetings were held in Dunkirk, Ellington, Sinclairville, Cherry Creek, Kennedy, Ashville, Panama, Sherman, Stockton, Frewsburg, and Mayville. The president of the association was A. H. Stafford. Other officers were Ludwick Dobbin, John F. Baxter, W.D. Phelps, George L. Robbins, Oscar Partridge, and Miss Maud Whitney. The membership numbered from 75 to 100. The pianist was Miss Martha Bruce. Directors and instructors at different times were: C. C. Case, W. S. Kelso, Samuel Ames, Professor Samuel Elliott, and H. R. Kirkland. A similar organization with headquarters at Dunkirk, which extended its influence over communities in the norther section of the county was the Forest Union Musical Association.

In 1860-61, an old-fashioned singing school was organized in the Village of Kennedy, Poland Township, and taught by Judson W. Breed, of Jamestown. This was broken up by the call for troops issued by President Lincoln. Most of the male members of this choir who were of military age enlisted in Company G.-49th. Infantry, New York Volunteers. The young women members organized
a girls' choir which sang in church for the first time on Nov. 10, 1861. This choir lasted for about two years. It sang anthems, chants, and hymn tunes from the old-time publications, the Diapason, the Jubilee, and the Sabbath Bell, relying almost entirely on the tuning fork for the key. The village boasted one melodeon, which was carried to the church for special occasions.

Amongst old-time musicians prominent in the southern part of the county may be mentioned Charles Crumb, of Cherry Creek, who died in 1884. He was a well known vocal instructor and taught singing schools for a number of years. He prepared himself for this work in the Genesee Normal, with P. B. Bliss. He had considerable musical talent and became a prominent teacher. In Kiantone, the principal musicians in the early days were the Jones families, from Vermont; the Eben Davis family; the Paul Davis family; and the Cheney family. Three sons of Seth Cheney, Nelson, Matthew and Mark, were members of a Brigade Band, in the War of 1861-65.

Jamestown, being the most populous center, has had a large share in the advancement of the musical status of the county, and has had, at different times, many musical organizations which have enjoyed a more than local reputation. Some of these were choruses of the usual convention variety, organized for the production of the early popular American cantatas, "Belshazzar", "Queen Esther", and "Nebuchadnezzar", and had only an ephemeral existence, whilst others lasted for a number of years.
One organization was the Handel and Haydn Musical Association which existed for about five years, formed in 1891. Its officers were; President, A.H. Stafford; Secretary, Gilbert G. Hall; Treasurer, Mrs. Robert G. Shaw; Accompanist, Mrs. H. R. Kirkland; Director, Harry J. Fellowes. It produced, amongst other works, Root's cantata, "The Haymakers", which was given in operatic form at the Opera House, in Jamestown, for the benefit of James Barker. The performance was repeated at Randolph and other places throughout the county.

Others were the Columbia Choral Society, Herbert Whitney Fav, director, and the Saint-Saens Choral Society, Miss Mary Donovan, director. In addition, choruses were organized at different times and directed by Judson W. Breed, Judge John J. Winney, Mme. Walbridge, whose society gave "The Messiah" at Celoron, directed by Strelezki, of Buffalo; and Willebald Lehmann, whose chorus prepared "The Chimes of Normandy" for public production.

In the fall of 1909, a centennial celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of Jamestown was proposed. A Centennial Chorus of several hundred voices was organized by Dr. Julius Lincoln as president, and Professor Samuel Thorstenberg as director. The proposed celebration was afterwards abandoned on account of a great conflagration; but in 1910 the chorus was re-organized under the name of the Jamestown Choral Society, with the same president and director, for the purpose of studying oratorios and other standard vocal works. From 1910 to the present time, the Choral Society has continued its activities under the same director. It has given concerts every season, not only in Jamestown but has visited nearby cities.
The palm for length of existence must be given to the Mozart Club, the oldest and largest women's musical organization in Jamestown, which stands among the best musical clubs in the State of New York. It was organized in the early winter of 1879 by a group of devotees of the "Art Divine", led by Miss Josephine Fenton, daughter of Governor Reuben E. Fenton, later married to Frank Edward Gifford, and recently deceased. She was a woman of wide artistic and social experience, and as president was presiding officer and an inspiration to the Mozart Club for over forty years. There has from the beginning been much musical talent in the club; its ideals have been high, and thru the years, at monthly recitals held during the winter season, the programs rendered by members have been delightful concerts. The Mozart Club not only encouraged the study and practice of music among its members, but its aim is also altruistic. It has brought to Jamestown great orchestras, famous singers, and distinguished virtuosi. The Club, in addition, has a scholarship fund, thru which it has aided, assisted and helped many promising young musicians of this community in their efforts towards musical careers.

The Olio Club, consisting of about fifty of the best known amateur musicians, was very active in the musical life of Jamestown from 1891 to 1895. The members, comprising the younger set, gave monthly programs of good vocal and instrumental music. A unique entertainment by this society was given in 1893 at the residence of Miss Hegeman, now Mrs. Charles J. Bailey, when the members impersonated well known musical characters. The club is no longer in existence.
The Music Study Club was organized in 1908 by Mrs. John M. Cushman and Miss Adelia G. Underwood. The object of the club is to study composers and their works, as well as the esthetics of music. Meetings have been held each month from October to April, inclusive. A musical program, with a paper prepared on the subject to be studied, followed by discussion, is given at each meeting. The Club is still in existence and is carrying on its good work.

The Music Lovers' Club is a newer organization. It is also devoted to the practice of music and a study of the lives of composers.

Jamestown has a large Swedish population, which, through its church affiliations, as well as in secular societies, has exercised much influence in musical advancement. The following choruses, with preponderating Swedish membership, have helped sustain musical interest and have accomplished notable results. The Chautauqua Manner-chor, 1891-96; - Union of Scandinavian Singers, a mixed chorus, 1889-1901; - Swedish Glee Club, J.A. Eckman, Director, about eighty male voices, 1897-1903, gave performances at Chautauqua; - Swedish Choral Union, 1898-1902; - Lyric Club, female voices, 1900-1903; Aeolian Quartet, 1893-1903. These societies gave the first performances in this section of many choral works, as The Dream, Costa; The Daughter of Jairus, Stainer; The Holy City, Gaul; and Ruth, Gaul.

Another well-known organization active musically twenty-five years ago was the Hugo Jungst Quartet, composed of James W. Butterfield, first tenor; Alfred Wooler, Harry J. Follwes, and W.S. Bailey, second tenor, at different times; Wrothwell Butterfield, first bass; and Herbert Whitney Tew, second bass. This quartet was coached by
Dudley Buck, and it sang in the principal cities of western New York and northern Pennsylvania. The quartet is no longer in existence.

Instrumental organizations do not seem to have been as popular as vocal societies. Several have been formed at different times, but were only short-lived. About 1910 the Jamestown Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Gustav Lindgren, did good work and gave several concerts. This orchestra is still in existence under the direction of Miss Ebba H. Goranson. The Lyric Mandolin Club was a popular organization from 1895 to 1898. It gave concerts in Jamestown and surrounding towns. Bands have ever been a means of creating and fostering interest in music. The old-time organizations of this section were: Jack Wilbur's Band, Alex Johnson's Band, Gage's Celoron Gold Band, Fenton Guards' Band, afterwards known as the Thirteenth Separate Company Band. Later, two celebrated English Bands, the Black Dyke Mills, and the Besses of the Barns, toured the states. Their concerts in Jamestown led to the formation of the Anglo-American Band, under William Hainsworth. This band filled an engagement at the Toronto Fair in 1908. Newer bands have been the Jamestown Concert Band, formerly the Lutheran Church Band; The Imperial Italian Band, of Fredonia; the Imperial Band of St. James's Church, Jamestown; the White Eagle Band, of Dunkirk; the Park City Band, of Ellington. Bands have also been formed in Westfield, Silver Creek, and Randolph.
Music in the public schools, which is always such an important factor in the progress of the art and in arousing interest, has in Jamestown been under the direction of E. V. Clark, F. E. Bottsford, and the present incumbent, Miss Ebba H. Goranson. The public school music idea has gained favor throughout the county, and is well conducted in Dunkirk, Fredonia, Falconer, Lakewood, Celoron, Sherman, Panama, Cherry Creek and Randolph. The result of this public school music training is expected to be of great benefit to the art.

The Jamestown High School musical organizations have received high honors in the regional and state contests, and the High School Band has participated in the national contests.

Churches throughout the county are, as a rule, well equipped with up-to-date organs, several of them exceptionally fine instruments, on which performers of international reputation have given recitals. In addition, the churches have been well served by competent and conscientious organists and directors. Many of them have fine choirs, and thus the houses of worship have borne their share in the general musical advancement.

Chautauqua County music teachers have labored well and patiently for the understanding and dissemination of musical knowledge. Earl H. Hill for many years conducted a music school in Jamestown, which attracted pupils from many states of the Union, and whose principal pupil was Franklin Cannon, who afterwards studied the Leschetizky method in Vienna, and is now a nationally known teacher. The Jamestown Conservatory of Music has played a prominent part in the development of pupils throughout the county in many branches of music.
The Fredonia Normal School has in the last decade recognized the importance of music, and has conducted an up-to-date and entirely worth while music department, specializing in the training of candidates for positions as supervisors of music in the public schools. In addition, it has held a Western New York Music Festival every spring, at which school musical organizations, not only from Chautauqua County, but from the whole district heretofore, have participated as contestants in both the vocal and instrumental fields.

In a sketch of this length, it is impossible to name the thousands of those in this country who have achieved a greater or lesser meed of fame in the art. There are, however, two names outstanding, of individuals who have won not only national but international honors and recognition. One, Mme. Belle Weaver Cole, who died in England in 1905, and the other, Miss Lillian I. Gustafson, the most noted pupil of the Jamestown Conservatory of Music, both of whom have appeared in European centers with much success.

The commercial side of music has not been neglected in this county. With commendable enterprise, different firms have engaged from time to time in the manufacture of musical instruments and parts for other musical devices. The earliest firm of piano-forte manufacturers was Peterson and Schmidt, from 1865 to 1868. This was followed by Georgi and Brown, 1868 to 1871. A dissolution of this firm left George A. Georgi, 1871 to 1876,- a piano manufacturer,- and the Brown Brothers, 1877 to 1888, manufacturers and dealers. Julius Ebel was another piano manufacturer. The Ahlstrom Piano Co., of which Charles A.Ahlstrom, of Jamestown,
is the only survivor, was possibly the best known firm. The model for his first Ahlstrom piano was made in 1872, and the first completed piano was dated 1875. This make of instrument successfully competed with the well known high grade pianos. It was not only widely distributed throughout the country, but is found in hundreds of Chautauqua County homes, where its beauty of tone and durability are still highly appreciated. The firm was dissolved some years ago.

Factories in Jamestown, Falconer, Mayville and Randolph have from time to time been engaged in making piano cases, phonograph and radio cabinets, thus interesting hundreds of workmen in this branch of the art. Forest Cheney, of Poland Center, experimented for some time in developing a phonograph. His model proved very successful in competing with similar devices of good grade. Marshall Field & Co., of Chicago, finally took over the manufacture and distribution of this model. Mr. Cheney was also widely known as a violinist of more than average ability. The violin, the only perfect instrument, has always had an attraction for men of mechanical genius who were possibly imbued with an idea of excelling the products of the old masters. Every community seems to have an individual possessing this ambition. George Chase, of Celoron, seemed to have a particular genius for making fine violins. His instruments can be found in many sections of the country, and they were much in demand by players of discriminating taste.

This sketch of music in Chautauqua County would be incomplete if it did not recognize and pay tribute to the tremendous impetus given to the cultivation of the art by the attractions brought
to Chautauqua Institution every summer during its sixty years of existence. The Chautauqua programs have served as a standard by which to measure local achievements. The artists on the programs have offered opportunities for study to ambitious students. The Orchestra concerts have demonstrated music in its higher forms. The Chorus has given opportunity for first hand acquaintance with and impressions of many choral masterpieces. The Institution has a long roster of names ranking high in the musical world, starting with W.F. Sherwin, C. C. Case, Dr. I.V. Flagler, Dr. H. R. Palmer, Alfred Hallam, H. Augustine Smith, and Walter Howe, W. H. Sherwood, Ernest Hutcheson and Albert Stoessel. It has brought here the New York Symphony Orchestra, the Russian Symphony Orchestra, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, and for the last few years outstanding musicians combined to form the Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra. These attractions have proved a great convenience and an opportunity much appreciated in this community so far from large cities where these advantages are commonly available.

Thru all the past years, the spirit and joy of music have been kept alive thru the untiring energy and the sincere devotion of music-loving souls thruout this county, sometimes in districts the most remote from anything approaching an artistic center. All honor to these pioneers who have kept the spark aglow, and have sustained interest in the spiritual part of living. Their attainment may not always have been of the highest; their knowledge may not have been profound; their achievements, judged by modern ideas, may have appeared meagre; and their standards, measured by those of to-day, may have seemed pitifully low, but by their love of the better things, by their sincerity of purpose, and by their persistence
and enthusiasm, these pioneers have, not only in Chautauqua County, but thru the length and breadth of our country, made possible the splendid musical status which obtains to-day, and which, at its present rate of progress, it is expected and confidently believed, will equal that of any other nation.

The bewitching melody of their voices, the magic of their music, is now nothing but a memory and is, as the poet said:

"Such stuff as dreams are made on".

What joy would have been theirs had they possessed prophetic vision to gaze down the vista of the years, and see the glorious fruitage of their planting! They, like the great Johann Sebastian Bach, at the end of his long and active musical life, would doubtless have considered that:

"The aim and purpose of music is the glory of God and pleasant recollections".