The migratory instincts of man, spurred on by the needs created by the fancies of fashion and luxury, such as the demand for beaver pelts in the making of men's hats, has pushed back the frontiers of empires.

The age old search for a land flowing with milk and honey, has, from the time of Moses in the wilderness, to that of Mussolini in the torrid wastes of Ethiopia, left but a small portion of our globe unexplored and unsettled. To get people with their goods, in and out of these far places, and to render communication easier, has been a problem that has engaged the best thought and efforts of man in all climes from the dawn of history.

Chautauqua County with its unique position of being located upon the great natural highway between the East and the West, furnishes an excellent example that covers all of these changes. In no other section does the watershed of the Ohio and Mississippi basins approach so closely to the Great Lakes as in this section; providing as it did in the Portage days the easiest crossing available, and now furnishing a route for four of America's trunk line railways and for two trunk highways.

The hunters and explorers who came here in advance of the pioneers, found ready at hand, worn trails, carved deeply in places, among the roots and knolls of the virgin forest, by countless generations of migrating animals and the silent moccasined feet of the wandering red man. Philip Tome in his book of Thirty Years a Hunter, writing locally of the period immediately following the Revolutionary War, tells of the elk trails made by the large bands of those animals, sometimes 150 in number, following each other in single file, and making deep and easily travelled paths. One of these ran from the mouth of Cattaraugus Creek to the Alleghany River. Another much travelled Indian trail, paralleled Lake Erie along one of the higher beaches.

The earliest work of the whites in the county was the cutting of a military road in 1755 from Barcelona to Chautauqua Lake, in order to improve the line of communications for the French. Six years before De Celoron had travelled over this route, with his party of explorers, and has been thought to have been the first white man to chart his travels across Chautauqua County. Walter Jack, our historical minded friend and neighbor of Erie, Pa., has recently secured photos of French maps filed in Paris and Montreal, made a generation earlier, depicting very closely, our lakes and streams.

Before the opening of our highways, we find that Olean, at the foot of the rapids in the Alleghany River, was for a generation the most important settlement in western New York. It was here between 1804 and 1825 that the west bound settler came with goods and chattels, loaded them upon flat boats and journeyed without change to Ohio and nearby states in their search for new homes.

The more easily cleared lands in the Western Reserve, were surveyed and ready for settlement shortly before the land in this section. To assist in their opening, Gen. Paine was sent by that company, with a force of men to cut a road across this county west of Cattaraugus Creek in 1802, taking a route along one of the ancient beaches paralleling Lake Erie. It was along this rough and crudely built road that our forefathers watched the passing of that never ending stream that filled the middle west with pioneers before the building of the railways. As many as 300 of those picturesque covered wagons, drawn by animals of all sorts, were counted as passing in a single day. No mile was without its tavern, ready to furnish sustenance and refreshment to man or beast. I have the account book of my
paternal grandfather, which still carries many unpaid items of toddies and slings charged in shillings and pence. All of these old time hostelries have long since been closed by the changing means of travel. But again the changing cycles of time has brought back to each mile of main highway its inn or tavern, the minds of whose patrons are no longer bent on carving out and winning a new home, but in many cases seem more interested in squandering and getting rid of the old one.

The Holland Land Company found that in order to attract settlers away from the middle west, it would be necessary to make a large outlay in building bridges and opening roads. One of the first contracts being made with John Kent to build a road from northern Chautauqua to Kennedyville at $10.00 per mile, one-fourth cash and the balance in land.

We find among the early statutes several incorporations of state authorized roads, the earliest being one from Bath to Lake Erie in 1805 which route was finally used by the N. Y. and Erie Railroad. $1250.00 was authorized in 1814 to construct this highway of 94 miles.

Early acts provided a road from Fredonia to Perry 6 rods wide. In 1824 one of the same width from Fredonia to Buffalo, crossing the Cattaraugus Creek near the old Indian saw mill in the Village of the Cattaraugus Indians. In 1837 a state highway from Fredonia to Jamestown was authorized, the commissioners to take oath to lay out the road without fear or favor. In 1838 an act provided a road from Work's Mills to the Pennsylvania state line in Carroll near the Conewango Creek.

Our road system has now developed into a system of 1961 miles, more than one third of which is improved with a capital investment of over $15,000,000.

The completion of the Erie Canal and its prospective fabulous earnings ushered in the canal age in this state and started an orgy of promotion and speculation that reached this section. Chadwick's Bay or Dunkirk had a wild boom for a time under the false hopes that it might be selected as the western terminus of the canal.

It was never practical to parallel Lake Erie with a canal for a distance of 40 miles before uniting with the Great Lakes and the future city again lapsed into peace and quiet. Early canals were financed by a special tax of 12 ½ cents per bushel on salt and $2.00 on Hudson River steamboat tickets in addition to the tolls. Convict labor was leased to contractors and those escaping were banished from the state under pain of death.

The outlet of Chautauqua Lake was declared to be a public highway in 1806 and in 1829 five commissioners were named by the Legislature to improve it for navigation between the Wilcox Warehouse and the James Prendergast saw mills and construct necessary locks under an appropriation of $10,000.

An act of 1825 authorized a survey from the head of Chautauqua Lake to Lake Erie in the Town of Portland. The thrill of a canal boat ride down Thayer Hill never materialized and is still left to the imagination. The Cassadaga Navigation Co. was incorporated for $20,000. in 1827; 20 feet was reserved for a tow path on one side of Cassadaga Creek, running from the lakes to the Conewango, the channel was cleared and straightened, and the first of a line of freight boats constructed. The improvements to the stream lowered the stage of water and the 25 foot Durham boat was left stranded high and dry on its first trip and the beginners in a long line of local investors were left to gaze sadly upon worthless but beautiful certificates of stock. Again we find that in 1829, two surveys were authorized.
to connect the Erie Canal with the Alleghany River by means of a canal via either the Conewango or the Cassadaga Valleys. The cry of "low bridge" which would make more than half of an audience instinctively duck in some communities, never became common words of warning in Chautauqua County.

The great natural waterways of the Great Lakes and the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, whose basins touch our county, have been important factors in the development of this section, since La Salle sailed along our shores in 1679.

The ancient head of navigation in French Creek which passes Port Le Bouef, has been fixed by the War Department in a recent survey to be well up into the Town of French Creek. The Big Brokenstraw Creek was declared to be a public highway below Peter Jaquin's mill in the Town of Clymer by the legislature of 1845.

The building of the 40 ton schooner King Bird by Haven Brigham at the mouth of the second gulf in Sheridan in 1815, was followed by many others. At one time there were two large hotels for ship carpenters at Old Irving where the continuous ringing of hammers and adzes, marked the construction of many early schooners and canal boats built with the fine pine and oak timbers rafted down the Cattaraugus Creek from the Four Mile Level in the Reservation.

Cargoes brought down from the upper lakes included wheat, 16,000 bushels of which made a full schooner load. The grain was transferred to waiting canal boats moored alongside by a bucket brigade extending from the hold of the schooner to the deck of the canal boat. More than 20 captains have hailed from the rural community of Sheridan, the most of them from the "North Woods" settlement in that town. Great Lake records that have never been broken were made by two of them. The schooner record between Buffalo and Chicago was made by Captain "Hank" Reed in the C. E. Alma covering the distance entirely by sail in a little less than 4 days, and the steamer record between the two ports in 52 hours time by Captain "Halt" Robinson in the Erie liner Owego.

The Walk-in-the-Water 240 tons burthen, was the first steamer to ply the lakes in 1818, stopping at Dunkirk on her weekly trips, the fare from that port to Black Rock being $.35.

Cargoes destined for "down river" developed a large portage business at Irving, Erie and Barcelona; the last named was the shortest and most popular route. On this route, it took a full day for two yoke of oxen to make a round trip over the rough and steep climb. Buttons Inn near the summit was a welcome resting place where a hard working pump furnished a part of the refreshments. Onondaga salt was one of the principal items of cargo, 6 barrels making a wagon load on which the transfer charges were $.10 per barrel.

In 1827, Eliphalet Tinker was given authority to build wharves and storehouses at Portland Harbor, now Barcelona and grew wealthy upon the high rates that he imposed. The harbor was made a Port of Entry in 1828, its lighthouse being lighted by natural gas, conveyed to the beacon in hollow logs. E. T. Poote came into the picture in 1845 by building a competing warehouse followed by a $20,000. dock \\text{\textit{milling}} in 1847. He later sold out for $12,000. when the advent of railroads had practically wiped out the portage business.

Keelboating had its headquarters at the Mayville end of Chautauqua Lake and brought together as rough and tough a motley crew of hard drinking roughnecks as were ever assembled in one place. The Justice court records of Squire Akin speaks of one of the gentry having an eye gouged out and who retaliated
by chewing his friend’s ear off. Another star in the profession was temporarily disabled by having his scalp knocked loose and which blinded him by hanging down over his eyes and which had to be sewed back before he could resume operations.

Following the days of Keel or Durham boats on Chautauqua Lake first came the horseboat in 1824 propelled by sweeps to which relays of horses kept upon the boat were attached. This type of boat was soon proved to be a failure. The first steamboat appeared upon the lake in 1828 and the Chautauqua Steamboat Company was incorporated the next year. Included in other interesting developments were the 154 store boats built and stocked with goods by Captain Nathan Brown, sent down the river and sold with their goods.

A long chapter could be devoted to the rafting days that saw the magnificent forests of Southeastern Chautauqua, that were said to be inexhaustible, swept away, the proceeds barely realizing the cost of cutting and shipping. There are authentic records at Albany, of trees in that forest 255 feet in height and 7 feet in diameter. Twenty five saw mills at one time in the Town of Carroll were busily engaged in this wastage of our natural resources when over 40 million feet of pine lumber were exported annually.

General Harrison Parsons of Ellery may be cited as one of the outstanding figures of those days. 6 feet 6 inches tall weighing 250 lbs., he was a raftman for 45 years, making 247 round trips, at times 9 per year to Beaver, Pa., below Pittsburgh, and walked back 143 times, frequently covering 60 miles per day.

The financial success of the pioneer railways, brought to this section visions of fortunes to be made. The Erie R. R., longest in the world when built, in its first year earned 17% of its total cost and carried over 1,000,000 passengers. The most pretentious of these early ventures and one that nearly materialized was the railroad to Nowhere so interestingly described by Bruce Miner from records recently located at Ithaca. The first survey for this road which was to run from Lake Erie via Randolph and up the Cassadaga Valley to Bear Lake where there was a drop of 506 feet in one and a half miles. A coasting plane road of 9 miles to Lake Erie was planned by the engineers to start from the top of the hill, the cars to descend by gravity, as the engines could not make the steep descent. No feasible plan was devised to get the cars back to the waiting engines. Similar coasting plane roads on a smaller scale were then in operation on the New England coast, and the engineers prided themselves with being able to work out plans for a railroad crossing New York state with only one of such coasting roads. A new survey was made in 1836 and the first construction in the great west started in 1838, 98 years ago. A loan from the State Legislature made the beginning of the work possible.

In 1841, 410 miles was under contract, when the road was abandoned in 1842 because the state would no longer underwrite the bonds on account of the increasing profits of canals, $600,000 was due contractors and 6 or 7 million dollars needed to cross some of the valleys. The rails were taken up and sent by lake and canal from Dunkirk to the Hudson and used mute witnesses to testify to the squandering of several hundred thousands of dollars. During its short life trains were run to stone quarries in Sheridan to transport stone for Dunkirk’s early breakwaters.
We find our own versatile Judge Peacock associated with Martin Van Buren and others in promoting a railroad, incorporated under Chapter 12 of 1832 for $150,000 to build a line from Buffalo to Lake. Stock subscriptions were not forthcoming and in 1834 another act was passed, reducing the amount of incorporation to $15,000 and extending the time to 1837.

In 1832, Judge Peacock again headed a commission of 15 and obtained a charter to build the Buffalo & Lake Shore, incorporated for $450,000 with branches to Seneca and Lockport; neither project materialized. A charter was granted in 1836 to build a railroad from Fredonia to Van Buren Point and another in the same year to build one from the junction of Cassadaga Creek and the outlet westerly through Jamestown and the Town of Harmony to the Pennsylvania line. Writing our old friend E. T. photo handling the commission for this new corporation.

The completion of the Erie to Dunkirk in 1851, the Lake Shore in 1852 and the road into Jamestown in 1851 were marked by lurid celebrations, to which the potent inspirations of those days contributed no small part. At the Dunkirk celebration in 1851, "resident" Fillard Fillmore arrived upon a flat car seated in a rocking chair, accompanied by Daniel Webster, Stephen A. Douglas and other celebrities, who profusely confessed to being nearly overcome by the overruling hospitality that had been pressed upon them by the community en route.

Stage coaches played their spectacular part in the travel of pioneer days; rushing up to the taverns with a final burst of speed, unloading their mail where expectant residents could pay it over, their daily arrival and departure was the most colorful event of the day.

Tumblin' or toll roads and their immovable owners deserve a brief mention. 100 miles of these chartered roads were built at a cost of $60,000. Those going to "mill or meetin'," for a doctor or midwife, to court or funerals or to military training were passed through the gates free; if a bad road developed, the town had to make repairs in three days or open the gates. Always in disfavor and with business falling off on account of parallel short miles and better highways the whole investment was a final loss.

The valley age, ushered in more recently with bright prospects of revolutionizing transportation, was soon overshadowed by the rutted wheels of the auto upon which the world is moving today, causing a disastrous financial loss to the stockholders of the abandoned B. & E., Chautauqua Tremont and Jamestown-Jamestown lines.

At the time of the world war, a census was taken of the motorized resources in this county, with a view of conscripting them across to help crush the Kaiser. 1153 passenger cars and 92 trucks were found and with this great asset we felt much more secure; now there are over 25,000 cars and nearly 5,000 trucks with over one-third of the population licensed to drive.

Whate'er the future holds in store is not safe to predict, but it is safe to say that the revolutionary changes brought about by the inventive genius of man will continue and that our present day networks will appear as antiquated 30 years from now, as do the horse and buggy days of our father.

May 33, 1936.