

*A Guide to
Family History Research,
Cattaraugus County, New York*

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Please consider this pamphlet an introduction to sources of information available to assist you in your genealogical research. Many other specialized directories and books are in the stacks at many libraries. Every line or mention of an ancestor will deepen your understanding of who you are and who they were.

Sharon Fellows, Cattaraugus County Historian

(compiled 02/02/03; updated 2006 , 2011, 2013)

Freedom of Information Act

The Freedom of Information Act provides researchers ways to view records. The 1967 act requires federal government agencies and the armed forces to release certain records to the public. Information on adoption, illegitimacy, or mental health requires a court order.

The Registrar's Procedures Manual of New York State specifies that birth certificates, death certificates and the indexes related to each are not subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Law and are not open to public inspection. Access to vital records maintained by local registrars and clerks are subject to the New York State Public Health Laws 4173 and 4174 as well as the New York State Health Commissioner's Administrative Rules and Regulations sections 35.1 through 35.8.

Information from birth and death records on file may be provided for genealogical research in the form of an uncertified copy or abstract upon written application and payment of a fee. The search of the files may be conducted only by the registrar, subject to the following limitations: no information shall be issued from a record of birth unless a record has been on file for at least seventy-five years and the person to whom the record relates is known to the applicant to be deceased nor from a record of birth that has been placed in a confidential file; no information may be issued from a record of death unless the record has been on file for at least fifty years. Marriage record information may be provided in the form of an uncertified copy or abstract upon written application. No information shall be issued unless the record has been on file for at least fifty years and the parties to the marriage named in the record are known to be deceased. (Vital Records Review, Spring 1979).

County and State Offices

Cattaraugus County was incorporated March 1, 1808. Its many offices are located throughout the thirty-two townships of the county. The primary offices for information relating to family research are the County Clerk's Office and the Surrogate Court's Office located at 303 Court Street, Little Valley, New York. The Surrogate's Court Office is part of the New York State court system. These two offices are repositories for tens of thousands of pieces of information including:

Office of the County Clerk

Census Records	1825 – 1925
Court Records: Civil & Criminal	1850 - present
Divorce Index	1850 – to present**
Land Records	1817 – present
Marriage Records	1908 – 1935
Military Records	Sealed – no access
Miscellaneous Records	1800 – 1967*
Naturalization Records	Assorted beginning in the 1850's

Miscellaneous records are an interesting source of information if you take the time to search through them, especially the older ones. Included in these indiscriminate files are commendations from volunteer fire departments and transfers of gold mines.

* After 1967 miscellaneous records are filed with the records of deeds.

** Index is listed in the Judgment & Foreclosure Book

Census records are available at the County Clerk's Office or at the County Museum. Microfilms from 1820 through 1930 may be viewed at the museum. The census enumeration ledgers from 1825 through 1875 are at the museum. The ones beginning with 1880 are at the County Clerk's Office.

Surrogate Court's Office

The documents held in trust by the Surrogate Court Office begin as early as 1820. Records include commitments, foreign wills, guardianship papers, letters of administration, probate of heirship, wills probated and wills contested. The fee schedule to obtain copies of wills is set by New York State.

Probate: actions of an estate with a will	1820-present
Administration: actions on an estate without a will	1820-present
Guardianship: actions dealing with minors/estates	1820-present
Estate Taxations	sealed beginning May 25, 1999
Adoption Records	Sealed

Some County History

Cattaraugus County was incorporated on March 11, 1808 from both Allegany and Genesee counties. The first court, the Courts of Common Pleas, was established with the organization of Cattaraugus County on March 28, 1817. Prior to that time legal matters were handled in either Allegany or Niagara counties.

As the county became more populated the townships were formed by subdividing previously established townships. Two sources of information on the formation of the townships and early settlers are *The History of Cattaraugus County, New York 1879* published by L. H. Everts and *The Historical Gazetteer and Biographical Memorial of Cattaraugus County, New York 1893* Edited by William Adams. Both are available at the Cattaraugus County Museum and most libraries in the county.

Another useful book at the county museum is *The Historical and Statistical Gazetteer of New York State 1860* published by R. P. Smith, Syracuse, New York. It contains the history for each county in New York State including each township and the names of the villages, cities and hamlets in each township.

Naturalization

There are three steps in the naturalization process to become a United States citizen. First, the immigrant had to complete and file a Declaration of Intention; second, after a waiting period of five years, a Petition Requesting Citizenship was filed; third, a court issued an Order Granting Petition.

It is unusual to find all three naturalization forms on file for an individual in Cattaraugus County. Often applicants would have to travel to another county for the judicial decree required to become a citizen. The nearest county with a sitting judge was Erie County.

The United States passed its first naturalization law in 1790. Prior to that date, the states handled the citizenship process. Until the American Revolution, ancestors from Great Britain were considered British subjects simply changing addresses.

Records prior to 1906 are scattered among state and federal archives, courthouses, and libraries. Papers for naturalization after 1906 are kept with the records of the court that handled the case. If you don't know where an ancestor might have applied for citizenship, contact an office of the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service for the correct form to submit to have a search initiated through this agency.

The index covering individuals applying for citizenship while residing in Cattaraugus County is in the County Clerk's Office. There are over twenty ledgers containing naturalization papers. Some of the forms from the 1920's have black and white photographs attached to the application.

Veteran Information

Information on veterans, no matter what war or conflict he or she served in, is considered confidential information. Some reference books do containing listings. Everts' 1879 "***History of Cattaraugus County***" contains a chapter entitled 'A Roster of Soldiers in the War of the Rebellion' (Civil War). The chapter includes each known enlistee, his regiment, synopsis of service record, and rank.

"***The State of New York Report of the Adjutant General 1901***" contains information on Civil War veterans. The two volume set is in order by regiment followed by the veterans in alphabetical order. A summation of military service is included for each veteran. Similar publications were completed for the New York State Legislature in 1903 and 1904.

The Twin Tier Civil War Roundtable published "***Civil War Veterans Cemetery Locator***", edited by Craig F. Senfield, contains information on regimental enlistments, casualties, and burials of Civil War veterans in Cattaraugus County cemeteries.

Some township histories contain information on veterans from other wars. The Town of Leon, in the above referenced 1879 history, lists veterans of the War of 1812.

"***New York in the Spanish-American War 1898***" is a three volume set published in 1900. It contains a general overview of New York State's involvement and specific listing of veterans.

New York State's adjutant general's office commissioned an ***Enrollment of Persons Liable to Service in the Militia under Chapter 41, Laws of 1909***. The listing, compiled in 1918, includes the name, place of occupancy, date of birth, occupation, and previous military service for all males under fifty years of age in our county.

Town, City, Village Clerks and Vital Records Offices

The mailing addresses and telephone numbers are for the business offices. Individuals holding public office change due to elections and many work out of their homes. Write or telephone to inquire about office hours and name of the clerk and historian.

Town of Allegany
52 West Main St.
Allegany, N.Y. 14706
716-373-0120

Town of East Otto
P. O. Box 47
East Otto, N.Y. 14729
716-257-9875

Town of Ashford
P. O. Box 306
West Valley, N.Y. 14171
716-942-6016

Town of Ellicottville
P. O. Box 600
Ellicottville, N.Y. 14731
716-699-2240

Town of Carrollton
P. O. Box 146
Limestone, N.Y. 14753
716-925-8842

Town of Farmersville
8963 Lake Ave., Farmersville
Franklinville, N.Y. 14737
716-676-3030

Town of Coldspring
P. O. Box 20
Steamburg, N.Y. 14783
716-354-9290

Town of Franklinville
P. O. Box 146
Franklinville, N.Y. 14737

Town of Conewango
4762 Route 241
Conewango Valley, N.Y. 14726
716-358-9577

Town of Freedom
P. O. Box 89
Sandusky, N.Y. 14133
716-492-0961

Town of Dayton
9100 Route 62, Markham
South Dayton, N.Y. 14138
716-532-3758

Town of Great Valley
P. O. Box 427
Great Valley, N.Y. 14741
716-945-4200

Town of Hinsdale
P. O. Box 95
Hinsdale, N.Y. 14743
716-557-2478

Town of Humphrey
P. O. Box 100
Great Valley, N.Y. 14741
716-945-2319

Town of Ischua
1850 Mill St., Unit 1
Hinsdale, N.Y. 14743
716-557-8787

Town of Leon
12195 Leon-New Albion Rd.
Leon, N.Y. 14751
716-296-8132

Town of Little Valley
201 Third St.
Little Valley, N.Y. 14755
716-938-6441

Town of Lyndon
852 Lyndon Center Rd.
Cuba, N.Y. 14727
716-676-9928

Town of Machias
P. O. Box 87
Machias, N.Y. 14101
716-353-8207

Town of Mansfield
7691 toad Hollow Rd.
Little Valley, N.Y. 14755
716-257-9288

Town of Napoli
4672 Allegany Rd.
Little Valley, N.Y. 14755
716-938-6836

Town of New Albion
14 Main St.
Cattaraugus, N.Y. 14719
716-257-3661

Town of Olean
2634 Route 16 North
Olean, N.Y. 14760
716-373-0582

Town of Otto
8842 Otto-East Otto Rd.
Otto, N.Y. 14766
716-257-3111

Town of Perrysburg
P. O. Box 250
Perrysburg, N.Y. 14129
716-532-4090

Town of Persia
8 West Main St.
Gowanda, N.Y. 14070
716-532-4042

Town of Portville
P. O. Box 630
Portville, N.Y. 14770
716-933-6658

City of Salamanca
225 Wildwood Ave.
Salamanca, N.Y. 14779
716-945-4620

Town of Randolph
72 Main St.
Randolph, N.Y. 14772
716-358-9701

Village of Allegany
106 East Main St.
Allegany, N.Y. 14706
716-373-1460

Town of Red House
8642 Lonkto Hollow Rd.
Salamanca, N.Y. 14779
716-354-5052

Village of Cattaraugus
14 Main St.
Cattaraugus, N.Y. 14719
716-257-3661

Town of Salamanca
4295 Center St. Ext.
Salamanca, N.Y. 14779
716-945-4775

Village of Delevan
P. O. Box 216
Delevan, N.Y. 14042
716-492-1424

Town of South Valley
11888 Sawmill Run Rd.
Frewsburg, N.Y. 14738
716-354-2090

Village of East Randolph
72 Main St.
Randolph, N.Y. 14772
716-358-9701

Town of Yorkshire
P. O. Box 6
Delevan, N.Y. 14042
716-492-1640

Village of Ellicottville
P. O. Box 475
Ellicottville, N.Y. 14731
716-699-4636

City of Olean
P. O. Box 668
Olean, N.Y. 14760
716-376-5604

Village of Franklinville
P. O. Box 167
Franklinville, N.Y. 14737
716-676-3010

Village of Gowanda
27 East Main St.
Gowanda, N.Y. 14070
716-532-3353

Village of Portville
P. O. Box 436
Portville, N.Y. 14760
716-933-8407

Village of Limestone
P. O. Box 88
Limestone, N.Y. 14753
716-925-8508

Village of Randolph
72 Main St.
Randolph, N.Y. 14772
716-358-9701

Village of Little Valley
103 Rock City St.
Little Valley, N.Y. 14755
706-938-9151

Village of South Dayton
P. O. Box 269
South Dayton, N.Y. 14138
716-988-3833

Village of Perrysburg
P. O. Box 307
Perrysburg, N.Y. 14129
716-532-1515

*Historians are not listed
separately. Contact city,
village, or town offices
for contact information.*

Town Clerks & Cemetery Records

Cemetery records and tombstone engravings provide basic information. Most clerks and registrars will have a listing of the cemetery associations within their municipality and can provide the name of a contact person. Municipalities are required by New York State to maintain cemeteries within their boundaries if an association does not exist.

An excellent book for locating cemeteries in Cattaraugus County is *A Guide to Burial Sites, Cemeteries, and Random Stones* by Marlynn McNallie Olson. It is available at the county museum and many area libraries.

Vital Statistic on File at Cities, Towns & Villages

Town	Birth	Marriage	Death
Allegany	1887-present	1887-present	1887-present
Ashford	1896-present	1914-present	1896-present
Carrollton	1887-1954	1908-present	1893-present
Cattaraugus(v)	1898-present	1898-present	1898-present
Coldspring	1914-present	1908-present	1914-present
Elko*	1880-1967	1908-1967	1910-1967
Conewango	1888-present	1888-present	1890-present
Dayton	1913-present (1872-1913 various delayed births)	1908-present	1913-present
East Otto	1893-present	1894-present	1893-present
Ellicottville	1892-1973	1892-present	1892-present
Farmersville	1888-present	1888-present	1888-present
Franklinville(t)	1885-1964	1884-present	1887-present
Franklinville(v)	1890-present	1890-present	1890-1907
Freedom	1847-1849 1887-1960 1983-present	1847-1849 1887-present	1847-1849 1887-present
Great Valley	1919-present	1919-present	1919-present
Hinsdale	1882-present	1883-present	1883-present
Humphrey	1887-1948	1892-present	1887-present
Ischua	1883-present	1883-present	1883-present
Leon	1847-present	1847-present	1847-present
Little Valley	1888-present	1888-present	1888-present
Lyndon	1847-1850 1880-1939	1847-1850 1888-present	1890-1963
Machias	1887-present	1887-present	1887-present
Mansfield	1889-present	1889-present	1889-present
Napoli	1847-1849 1886-present	1847-1856 1889-present	1847-1849 1889-present
New Albion	1889-present	1887-present	1889-present

Vital Statistic continued

Town	Birth	Marriage	Death
Olean ©	1882-present	1882-present	1882-present
Olean (t)	1847-1848 1887-present	1887-present	1896-present
Otto	1894-present	1894-present	1900-present
Perrysburg	1847-1850 1883-present	1847-1850 1883-present	1847-1850 1883-present
Persia (t)	1914-present	1885-present	1914-present
Persia (v)	1885-present	1885-present	1885-present
Portville	1890-present	1880-present	1880-present
Randolph (t)	1889-present	1908-present	1886-present
Randolph (v)	1886-present	at town clerk	1886-present
E. Randolph (v)	1910-present	none	1910-present
Red House	1892-1981	1892-present	1907-present
Salamanca ©	1887-present	1887-present	1887-present
Salamanca (t)	1894-present	1894-present	1894-present
South Dayton(v)	1915-present	none	1915-present
South Valley	1889-1952	1892-present	1892-present
Yorkshire	1887-present	1887-present	1887-present

- Elko records are in the Town of Coldspring
- © designates city
- (t) designates town
- (v) designates village
- Cattaraugus (v) is in the Town of New Albion
- Gowanda (v) is the Town of Persia
- South Dayton (v) is in the Town of Dayton

Unless specified, village records are held at the town clerk's office.

Libraries in Cattaraugus County

Allegany Public Library	90 W. Main St.	Allegany
Blount Library	5 N. Main St.	Franklinville
Cattaraugus Free Library	21 Main St.	Cattaraugus
Delevan-Yorkshire Public	28 School St.	Delevan
Ellicottville Memorial	6499 Maples Rd.	Ellicottville
Gowanda Free Library	56 Main St.	Gowanda
King Memorial Library	Rt. 16, Maple St.	Machias
Memorial Library of Little Valley	110 Rock City St.	Little Valley
Olean Public Library	134 N. 2 nd St.	Olean
Portville Free Library	2 N. Main St.	Portville
Randolph Free Library	26 Jamestown St.	Randolph
Salamanca Public Library	155 Wildwood Ave.	Salamanca
Seneca Nation Library	Broad St. Ext.	Salamanca
South Dayton Village Library	17 Park St.	South Dayton

Many of these libraries contain collections of town and village directories, histories, family genealogies, maps, gazetteers and microfilmed newspapers. Prior to televisions, radios and telephones, newspapers were the mass media.

During the 1800's into the early 1900's, communities would publish columns in local papers covering what was happening to who and where so and so went. Social events, marriages, births, divorce notices, legal notices, gossip information and church news would be on the front page with economic conditions and wars. It wasn't until the 1920's that obituaries, as we know them, appeared in newspapers.

Sometimes you find a newspaper clipping inserted in a family scrapbook or a box of photographs. Unless the publication information was noted on it, the article may cause more frustration for you than help you in your research. When you find an obituary

or a couple of lines in the "what happened" column about your family in the newspaper, be sure to note the newspaper's name, publication information and date on it.

Newspapers on microfilm are available at the Allegany, Olean, Portville, Randolph, Salamanca and Franklinville libraries, the Dayton and Gowanda Historical Societies and the County Museum. Each will have a different selection of newspapers.

New York State Newspaper Project

The Newspaper Project was a program which strived to locate, catalog, and preserve documents from the nineteenth and early twentieth century. It was funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities as part of the United States Newspaper Program.

To find newspapers anywhere in the state, go on line to New York State Newspaper Project. Click on the county your are interested in and a listing of microfilmed newspapers and where each it available will be listed.

Cattaraugus County Museum & Research Library

The Cattaraugus County Museum contains reference books, county histories and local author publications. County maps dated 1856, 1869 and 1915 are also available. The museum houses a large quantity of information on the Civil War and many veteran letters from that period.

Hours of operation are Tuesday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and the third Saturday afternoon of the month, from May through October, 10: a.m. to 2:00 p.m., holidays excluded.

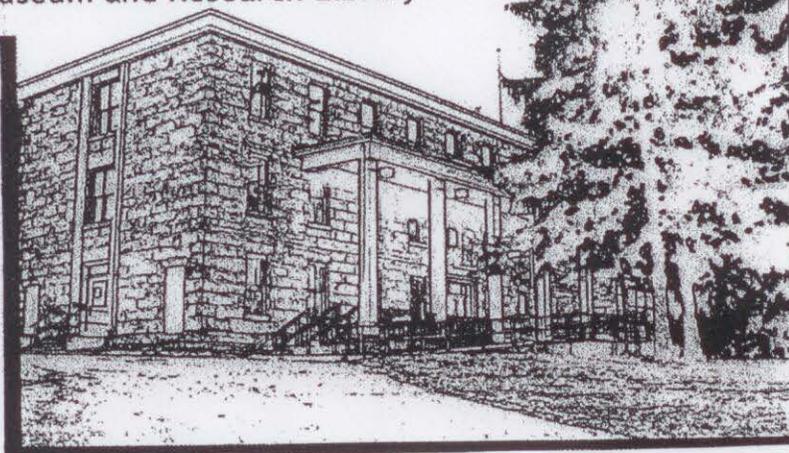
The Cattaraugus County Historical Museum and Research Library was created by an act of the Board of Supervisors in 1912. The original museum building was a memorial erected to the soldiers and sailors who served in the Civil War. The museum was moved to the Stone House, Machias, New York in September, 2004. Erected in 1868, the Stone House is the last original building of the Cattaraugus County Alms (poor) House.

The purpose of the Cattaraugus County Historical Museum was to perpetuate the memory and spirit of the men and women who originally settled in the county and contributed to its spiritual, cultural, agricultural, and industrial development. This to be achieved by collecting, preserving, maintaining and displaying the many memorabilia, artifacts, and historic documents now in the possession of the museum and those to be acquired in the future. All museum resources are to be used for the education and recreational purposes of the public.

The museum collections policy is to identify, collect, preserve, display and interpret to the general public, ideas, objects and artifacts relating to our county and to carry out educational activities related to this purpose, as may be necessary, or useful in the accomplishment of this purpose. The museum will acquire such items by grant, gift, purchase or bequest and hold and dispose of the same, subject to the limitations prescribed by law.

Cattaraugus County

Historical Museum and Research Library



Museums & Historical Societies

Allegany Area Historical
Association
25 N. Second St.
Allegany, N.Y. 14706
Phone n/a

Ashford Historical Society
Museum, School St.
West Valley, N.Y. 14171
716-942-6669

Bartlett House
302 Laurens St.
Olean, N.Y. 14760
Phone 716-376-5642

Cattaraugus County
Research Library
9824 Rt. 16, P.O. B. 352
Machias, N.Y. 14101
716-353-8200

East Otto Historical Museum
Reed Hill Rd.
East Otto, N.Y. 14138
716-257-3337

American Museum of
Cutlery
9 Main St.
Cattaraugus, N.Y. 14716
716-257-9813

Ball Museum
East Main St.
Otto, N.Y. 14719
Phone n/a

Cattaraugus Area
Historical Museum
25 Main St.
Cattaraugus, N.Y. 14716
Phone n/a

Dayton Historical Museum &
Society & Museum, P.O.B. 15
Dayton, N.Y. 14041
716-532-3758 or 988-5065

Ellicottville Historical
Society Museum
2 Washington St., P.O.B. 485
Ellicottville, N.Y. 14731
Phone n/a

Gowanda Historical Museum
2 Chestnut St.
Gowanda, N.Y. 14070
716-532-2264

Ischua Valley Historical
Society
9 Pine St.
Franklinville, N.Y. 14737
716-676-2590

Leon Historical Society
Route 62.
Leon, N.Y. 14751
716-296-5709

Olean Point Museum of
Local History
302 Laurens St.
Olean, N.Y. 14760
716-376-5642

Perrysburg Historical Museum
Town Hall
Perrysburg, N.Y. 14129
716-532-1558

Portville Historical &
Preservation Society
17 Maple Ave.
Portville, N.Y. 14770
716-933-8917

Randolph Historical Society
P. O. Box 143
Randolph, N.Y. 14772
716-358-5322

Salamanca Area
Historical Society
125 Main St.
Salamanca, N.Y. 14779
716-945-2946

Salamanca Rail Museum
170 Main St.
Salamanca, N.Y. 14779
716-945-1104

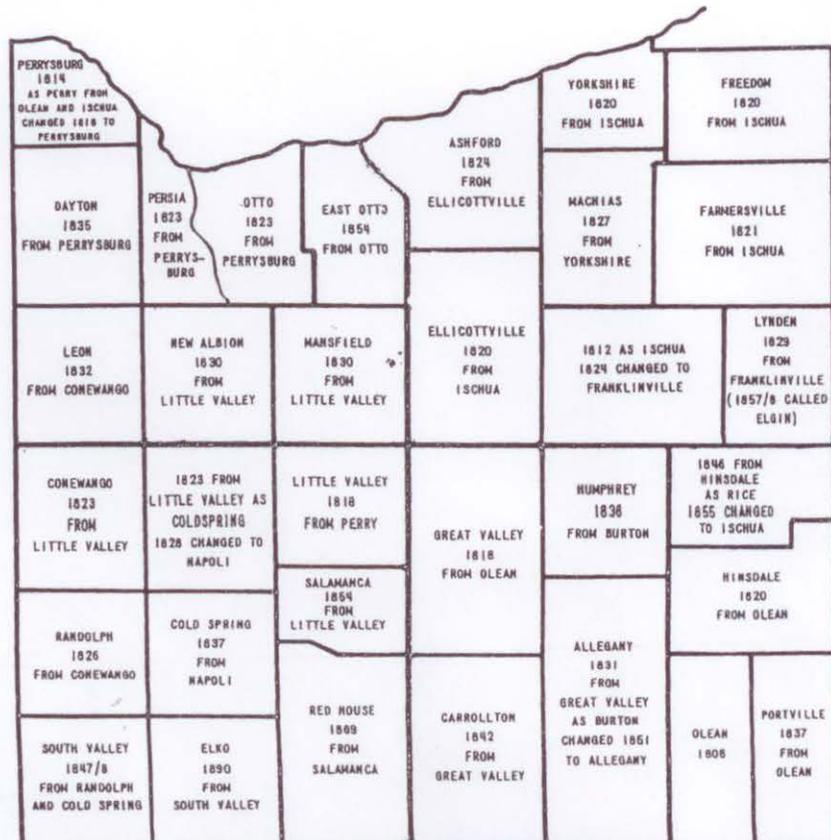
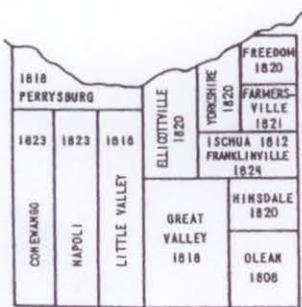
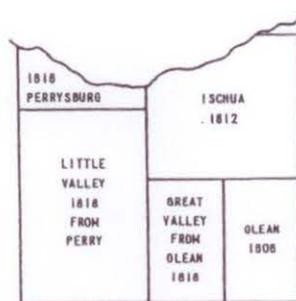
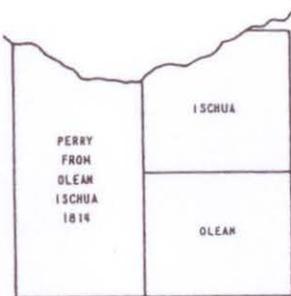
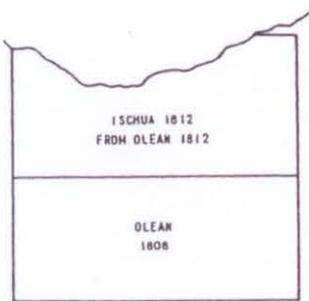
Seneca Iroquois National
Museum
814 Broad St.
Salamanca, N.Y. 14779
716-945-1738

Note: village, city and town historians are generally unpaid positions and change periodically. Contact village, city or town clerk for historian's name and contact information.

CATTARAUGUS COUNTY

Cattaraugus County was formed March 11, 1808 from territory of Genesee County and the western ranges of Allegany County. However, it did not begin to function until 1817. Up to that time, Allegany courts administered the eastern part and those of Niagara the western part.

Olean was the name of the one and only town in the new county, but in 1812, it was divided into Olean and Ischua. The later developments are indicated in the maps below.



Cattaraugus County's
Museum & Research Center

Address: Route 16, Machias, NY 14041

Phone: 716-xyz-abcd

Website: www.CattCo.org/Museum

We're in the Enchanted Mountains of
Western New York State



Visitor Information

Address: 303 Court Street, Little Valley, New York 14755

Phone: 1-800-331-0543

Website: www.EnchantedMountains.com