

# CELORON HISTORY

**T**HE Lake was called "Jah-da-gwah" by Indians. The area, crisscrossed by many miles of moccasin-worn trails, was used as a hunting and fishing grounds. In 1699-1700 the lake was part of a huge area in the Ohio and St. Lawrence river valleys that the explorer de LaSalle claimed for the French. Then, in 1749, the Ohio Land Company charted the region for the British. Responding to France's ancient enemy, the Marquis Pierre-Joseph Celoron Sieur de Blainville retraced de LaSalle's expedition to again assert the right of the French during June 1749. At the end of the French and Indian Wars in 1763, France, in the Treaty of Paris, gave all of its mainland

territory in North America to England. The Indians, never a part of the European negotiations, showed their displeasure with this treaty by rising up and nearly destroying the westward movement of the white men.

Following the American Revolution this part of southwestern New York was claimed by the states of Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and New York. In a marathon session of land swapping conducted by the new United States government, the three states reached an agreement which resulted in the Chautauqua Lake region becoming a part of New York State. In September 1797 by a treaty with the Senecas at "Big Tree" on the Genesee River, the Indians sold all their interests

in this region except specified lands set aside as Indian Reservations. A year after the treaty this area was purchased by members of the Holland Land Company.

During the early 1800s this area had a very small population consisting of early English, Irish and Scottish settlers. The county was incorporated in 1811 when the legislative requirement was met by having the specific number of eligible residential taxpayers. Ellicott township was formed on June 1, 1812 and was named after the local Holland Land Company agent and surveyor, Joseph Ellicott.

At the time Jamestown was incorporated as a village (1826), the area along Chautauqua Lake three miles to the west of the new village was known as Sammis Point, near Sammis Bay (named after an early settler, Charles Wheeler Sammis). This same area was later renamed after a second settler, Joseph F. Burtis, who purchased the

## WHO WAS THIS FELLOW NAMED CELORON?

Captain Blainville De Celoron, a chevalier (French noble) of the Order of St. Louis, was given the task of re-establishing France's claim to the watershed of the Ohio River Valley, a claim originally made by another Frenchman, La Salle.

In 1749, De Celoron set sail from Canada with his force of 214 soldiers and 55 Indian allies, landing near present day Barcelona. He then pushed over the difficult portage to the head of Chautauqua Lake, where he arrived on July 22nd. On his

arrival, he and his companions must have been impressed with the lovely and tranquil scene as it appeared on that summer day. He saw before him a placid and sequestered lake, stretching away southeast into the primeval forest, its beauty enhanced by the dark and silent wilderness that surrounded it. Not long did he tarry there.

The next day he embarked. His fleet of bark canoes passed the maple groves and the wild deer straying from the forest depths to sniff the cool breezes of the lake. He passed the narrows of the lake and passed into the broad expanse of the lower lake, and encamped for the night upon the shore three miles above the outlet—a place which 150 years later would come to bear his name.