

Town of Otto Comprehensive Plan



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Town of Otto Comprehensive Plan

Section 1 Introduction and Vision Statement

The Town of Otto is a mature, peaceful community which respects its residents and realizes the responsibility it has to move forward culturally, economically and globally.

Otto currently has a few active farms, several productive businesses all surrounded by rural residences. The primary goal of the Town of Otto is to encourage reasonable development while at the same time retaining the characteristics of a small country town.

Specific Guidelines:

Agricultural: Otto was originally established as a farming community. Farming remains very important to the economy and charm of the community. The town strongly supports continued and new environmentally friendly agricultural activities.

Economic Development: The Town of Otto will continue to encourage small business development. The hamlet area of Otto is located in the historic center of town and has the most appropriate infrastructure to support continued and future small business development.

Large scale industrial development may conflict with the community's rural character and may exceed the operating capacity of existing water, sewer and roadway systems. Also, any large scale business activity which may cause negative environmental impacts to the Town of Otto shall not be permitted.

Otto contains multiple home based businesses. This type of activity fits the current community character. Small home based businesses must comply with current zoning laws and will be encouraged.

Recreation and Tourism: Otto's overall natural makeup is a perfect outline for recreation and tourism development. The Town of Otto strongly encourages development of, to include, but not limited to, parks, nature trails, wildlife observatories, fishing and other outdoor activities. The town also wishes to partner with Cattaraugus County and its recreational focus on equestrian development.

The town would like to move forward with the establishment of publicly managed parks for use by the town's residents and visitors.

Residential Development: New residential development of higher density should be limited to the hamlet area. The hamlet area is served by water and sewer systems and therefore making higher density development compliant with current "Best Management Practices (BMPs)".

Residential Development where wells and septic systems will be utilized shall adhere to minimum lot size requirements.

Both types of residential development are welcomed in Otto and shall minimize and/or eliminate negative effects surrounding watersheds, natural areas and neighboring properties.

Expansion of the hamlet's area may be proposed in the future to accommodate both economical and residential development.

Energy Sources, Waste Storage Facilities and Cemeteries/Burial Plots: the Town of Otto will entertain privately owned companies' requests to generate and collect sources of energy. However, Environmental Impact Studies and strict adherence to all applicable laws shall be mandated. Costs for studies, mitigations, delineations or any other environmental protection means will not be the responsibility of the Town of Otto or its residents.

Energy collection methods such as current and future wind turbine technologies may be allowed within the Town of Otto. Energy source collection methods or waste storage practices (landfills) that adversely or have the potential to adversely impact the surrounding environment will be prohibited.

The Town of Otto recognizes that wind energy is abundant, renewable and non-polluting energy resource of the Town and that its conversion to electricity will reduce dependence on non-renewable energy resources, and decrease air and water pollution that results from the use of conventional energy sources.

Additional cemeteries and private burial plots shall not be permitted in the Town of Otto.

Community Wellness and Presentation: The Town of Otto shall work to protect the future health, safety and welfare of the inhabitants from hazards due to both natural and man-made causes. This will include the protection of persons, property, the reservation of water and air quality and the surrounding environment while minimizing of expenditures for relief. Otto will create a natural disaster policy so that grants may be applied for during or after any future natural disasters.

A major goal of the Town of Otto is to retain the existing rural character while fostering appropriate economical and residential development. To achieve this, Otto requires all businesses and residents to adhere to zoning laws and encourages each person who lives and works within the town to take steps above and beyond these laws to present Otto as a healthy, neat, clean, orderly, welcoming rural community.

Any activity, private or public, not referenced above which does not adhere to or comply with this vision statement may be restricted.

This vision statement shall not be used to inhibit equal opportunity or to discriminate against any person(s) based on race, religion, creed, gender, or disability.

Section 2 - History of the Town of Otto

Otto is a town in Cattaraugus County, New York. The name comes from Jacob S. Otto, an agent of the Holland Land Company. The Town of Otto lies on the northern border of the county.

Formation of the Town of Otto

The Town of Otto was formed from part of The Holland Land Purchase, which comprised all of western New York from a north and south line a few miles east of the present town of Batavia except for the Indian reservation and the Mile Strip along the Niagara River. The Holland Land Purchase was made up of four tracts of land collectively known as the Holland Land Company.

Before the land could be sold, surveying had to be done. This was started in 1789 by Joseph Elliot and was a party of 130 men. Meridian lines were laid out on the boundaries of the four tracts of land making up the purchase. Ranges running south to north approximately six miles wide were laid out, except for ranges 3, 4 and 7. Then lines running east to west were surveyed approximately six miles wide forming the townships. The ranges were numbered at the east transit line starting at one and proceeding westward through fifteen. The towns were numbered one through sixteen starting at the Pennsylvania border and running northward to Lake Ontario. The Town of Otto lies in ranges seven and eight, towns five and six.

Mr. Elliot, agent for Holland Land Co. advertised land for sale in newspapers and by handbills to all of New York State, and as far as Springfield, Massachusetts, and Hartford, Connecticut to take advantage of the westward migration from the New England States. Prices per acre varied with quality and location. In Cattaraugus County, land sold from 75 cents an acre for hilly undesirable land on upward. Up until 1811, the average price in the whole Holland Purchase was \$2.50 per acre. Prices of good lands in Cattaraugus County compared well with the rest of the purchase.

The laws of 1800 provided that no county could be formed until it had 500 voters, and no town until it had 200 voters. Therefore, in 1818, due to the settlement in the southern part of the county, Cattaraugus was formed from Genesee and Allegany Counties, all of the county being one township called Olean. As the town of Olean grew in population, it was partitioned into two townships, Olean and Ischua.

In 1814 the Town of Perry was formed from these two townships. Later this town of Perry was called Perrysburg. Otto was taken from Perrysburg in 1823. It composed of the greater part of Persia (that part east of the South Branch of the Cattaraugus Creek), all of Otto, most of the present town of East Otto, and a part of Ashford.

First Settlers in Zoar Valley

The first settlers in Otto came into the Valley of Zoar. They came mostly along the Indian trails. Some came down the Cattaraugus Creek by canoe from the direction of Springville. Many walked in with packs on their backs. Few had oxen and carts, and even fewer had horses and wagons.

About 1810, Joseph Bartlett came from Canada, John Adams and son Blinn from Madison County, and Phineas Orr from New Hampshire. In 1814, Samuel Hill, a native of New Hampshire came in from Allegheny Co. bringing his wife and children down the Cattaraugus Creek by canoe, and settled in Zoar. This made four families in Zoar at this time. Hill moved into the first house built by Phineas Orr. The

next year he bought a farm on the north side of the creek, in Erie County, and built a log tavern which he ran for thirty years. This site has disappeared due to erosion of the creek.

Most settlers, on their way to look for land, came in from the north, stopping at Samuel Hill's tavern. This tavern was built of logs: the floor being of black walnut logs, one to two feet wide split and smoothed with a broad axe. The windows were probably of oiled paper. The food, principally potatoes, johnny-cake, venison and bear meat, was cooked at the fireplace which also served as a source of heat. Other families stopped for a short time and then moved on.

Life must have been very hard for these first settlers. They had no shelter except for brush lean-tos until they could construct log cabins. They had to depend on local game, plants and fish to supplement the few supplies they brought with them. Before crops could be planted the land had to be cleared by chopping down the trees, putting them in piles and burning them. They then had to dig the earth between the stumps, working around them to plant their crops. The harvesting was also all done by hand, for most of the settlers had no horses or oxen. After the harvest the grain had to be pounded into flour with a mortar and pestle, for at this time there were no grist-mills in the vicinity.

Also living in Zoar at this time was Peter Pratt with his wife and ten children. They had settled here in 1812 and lived on the north side of the creek in the town of Collins. Other settlers came and settled on the bottomland along the Cattaraugus Creek.

The first settlement outside of Zoar was made by Ephraim Brown about 1818. After coming to the top of the hill out of Zoar, he took a southwesterly direction until he reached a line of blazed trees forming what is now the western boundary of many of the farms along the North Otto road. He followed this until he reached the jog in the present Ball Road. From there he went southeast to a point about one half mile east of the present North Otto Road (formerly known as the Buffalo Road). Of course, at that time there was no road at all. The trail that he took was known as "Ephraim Brown's Road". His property was on what is now known as the Bull Farm. This was a comparatively swampy area that was covered with timber, mostly hemlock.

Following this, settlement rapidly moved southward into the wide, flat valley and along the tops of the hills. Joseph and Wadsworth Foster settled near the line of Brown's Trail. Isaac, Benjamin and Stephan Ballard came from Vermont in 1819, and articulated 360 acres two miles north of the present Town of Otto. Adam Ballard settled on land that is situated on the corner of present North Otto and Swamp Roads, now owned by Robert Fuss. (While some settlers paid cash for their land, others "articled" for it. This meant that they contracted with the Holland Land Co. to pay for their land in ten years. If they couldn't get it paid for in that length of time they would get an extension for five years more).

Joseph and Albert Foster, Ira Waterman, and Joseph Allen also arrived in the township about this time. Mr. Allen had previously lived in the East Otto portion of Zoar. Isaac Skinner made his way to the South Branch of the Cattaraugus creek and settled in what is now known as Skinner Hollow. In 1820, Benjamin Austin came by ox team and settled near the Fosters. At this time, Able Butler and John Beverly took lots on what is locally known as the Hilltop region near the place the schoolhouse was later built. Luther Town and family arrived in 1821. Davis Benedict came in 1822. The first burying place in town was on his farm. It is now known as the Barber Cemetery.

Settlement at Skinner Hollow

In 1823, a few years after settling at the head of the "Breakers" on the South Branch of the Cattaraugus Creek, Isaac Skinner built a sawmill. Water from the creek powered the mill. Settlers

needed lumber for building, so naturally this was the first business established. There already was one in operation farther up the creek at Waverly. Later on, a grist mill was built. This was the first in the town. Settlers could now take their wheat and corn to have it ground for them. Before this, the nearest mill where corn could be ground was at Woodward Hollow, somewhere in Collins, and it took two days by ox team to go and return.

As more people settled in the Hollow, other businesses were started – a blacksmith shop, a store, a tannery etc. The first post office in the town was established here in 1825. Old maps show this as Skinner Hollow Post Office.

Settlement at Waverly

Settlement in Waverly (Otto) began in 1821. E.B. Parkinson of Springville selected a site on lot 1, on the north side of the creek and built a sawmill. This was near where the old bridge crossed the creek. He had Jacob Van Aernam and sons build the dam which was probably of logs, bush, rocks and dirt. Parkinson built the first frame building in town. Edward Farnsworth came in 1822 and built the first frame dwelling.

Other people were coming in and settling over the township. Some stayed and others stayed a year or two, sold their land and moved on. Alexander Little came in 1822, stopping at Hill's Tavern on the way and bought land from McNeal who the year previously had bought it for \$1.50 from the Holland Land Company. Little was a blacksmith and that fall built a log shop and started work. This was the first blacksmith shop in the town. During the winter of 1823, Dr. Edwin Putney stayed with the Little's and practiced medicine. He left in the spring. In 1823 Simeon Waterman bought fifteen acres on a hill north of Waverly and built a log house and ashery (where Ron Wasmund now lives).

Organization of the Town

This section having gained the required number of voters filed a petition asking for the formation of a new township. A meeting was set for the second Tuesday in February, 1823, at the home of Ephraim Brown. The town was named Otto in honor of Jacob S. Otto, agent of the Holland Land Company. The following officers were chosen: Supervisor: Abel M. Butler; Town Clerk: Tyler M. Beach; Assessors: Ira A. Waterman, Asaph Silsby, Luther Town; Overseers of the Poor: Samuel Tuthill, Benjamin Austin; Commissioners of Common Schools: Jaberz Hill, Ira Waterman, Harvey Butler; School Inspectors: Samuel Tuthill, Joseph Foster; Highway Commissioners: Davis Benedict, Justus Bartholomew and Ira Waterman.

Early Settlers of the Eastern Part of Otto

The Town of East Otto was part of Otto until the partition in 1854. The first settlement in East Otto was made in that part where the village now stands by Horace Wells, in 1816. At about the same time Joseph Bates settled there. In 1817, the three King brothers took up residence near the Cattaraugus Creek a short distance above the mouth of the Connousouley. In 1819 Jabez Hull came with his two sons. Around 1820, many settlers came in, among whom were the father and brothers of Horace Wells, Caleb Pierce, and Clark Holmes, a minister. In 1821 Moses T. Beach and son Tyler came from Massachusetts and purchased the land of Josiah Baker. In 1823, he erected the first sawmill, and in 1824 the first grist mill in East Otto. He also built the first frame house. Tyler M. Beach was the first postmaster of the East Otto Post Office located at East Otto corners. A tannery was built in 1829 by Griffin Swayne, and later a store.

John Pratt settled in the north part of the town, and later other Pratts came. Samuel Colvin, Sylvester Pierce, and Harvey Armstrong soon followed. Captain Leonard Utley came in 1835 and settled on a farm in the northern part of town. In 1835, Hasley Safford came and later, in 1867, erected the first cheese factory. In 1841, John Laing brought a stock of goods with him, and opened a store. His brother Steven came in 1847 and entered in trade with him until 1866, when he sold his interest back to his brother. Plato, in the southeast corner of the town, was quite a small hamlet having a store and post office in 1832. This post office was later discontinued. All through this time others were settling throughout this area. In 1854, enough population was reached so that an act was passed creating the Town of East Otto. Thereafter the part of Otto known as West Otto was now know as North Otto.

Otto in the 1820's and 30's

While some of the settlers were people of means, many were very poor. Few had any money at all. There were no jobs, and roads were few and poor. Landowners often worked out their road tax instead of paying money. Isaiah Tarbox walked in from Oneida County, in 1823 with an axe on his shoulder, a lean shirt, and ten cents in his pocket. He settled on land near his sister, which he had articed for her. The first year he, like many others, carried his grist on his back to Skinner Hollow to have it ground.

In 1824, Vine Plumb came from East Otto Corners and bought Waterman's home and ashery. He also installed shelves in his home and opened the first store in this part of the town. He operated this two years before selling out and moving to the village where he built the first frame house (he had a store on the ground floor) on the south side of the road at the foot of East Hill.

With the coming of the ashery, settlers at last had a chance to earn some money. Where previously they had just burned the trees from clearing the land because there was no available market for them, they would now make use of the ashes and realize some return. The ashes were leached, put in a hopper and water poured through them. The solution that drained through was then put in caldron kettles and boiled until it crystalized into "Black Salts" (potash). The best ashes for this was elm, beach, birch and maple. The settlers considered the price of \$2.50 per barrel of potash considerable. Imagine the amount of hard work that went into the making of one barrel of potash.

Roads were few and poor. Landowners often worked out their road tax instead of paying money. In 1824, Mary Price, a spinster, bought land and instead of paying the road tax, went out and held the scraper as the men did in lieu of payment. She was not admired for this!

Also in 1824, Alvin Plumb settled in the Lower Village. He built a log house and blacksmith shop, put a waterwheel on the creek to run a spinning wheel, and also manufactured cow bells for the farmers. He stayed only a few years. That same year, Daniel Botsford came from Connecticut and bought 150 acres. He later bought the farm of Ephriam Brown where he lived for many years.

Many others were settling throughout the township. The assessment roll of landowners shows an increase of ownership from 5 in 1819 to 85 in 1834. The town continued to grow and much building was then taking place. Sylvester Cox came in 1825, and was employed by Alexander Little. During his first year, he assisted in the building of 35 buildings, dwellings, barns and schoolhouses.

One of these schools could have been on Benjamin Austin's farm on what we know as Traffic Street, as it was built at this time. Another school built at this time was on Davis Benedick's (the Dake School).

In 1826, John Cotrael came from Schoharie County bringing with him a team of horses and sleigh to John Ferris from his father and father-in-law. He settled down to farming. In 1827, David Elliott, Livingston and William Cross came to Waverly. Livingston was a carpenter and worked on the grist mill

and at the tavern of Stephan Rogers, these being the first in town. He later had a sash, door and blind factory. Rogers had previously bought Parkinson's saw mill. William tended the grist mill. Elliot bought the Rogers tavern property and ran it for many years. James Borden, also from Schoharie, came that same year and being a tanner built vats in the back of his home to carry on his trade. The following year he built a tannery across the brook. His home still stands at the bottom of south hill. Bliss Loomis and wife emigrated from Bennington, Vermont in 1826-1827 and spent the winter in Waverly. In the spring of 1828, he located two miles east of Waverly and built a log cabin home.

About a half mile below Waverly, in 1829, Rosewell Knowlton set up a custom mill and carding machine. By 1830, the population warranted the setting up of a post office. This was called the Otto Post Office.

The next year, W.F. Elliot opened a store and dealt in black salts. He had an ashery a short distance down stream from the village. August Dake settled on a farm here in 1832, and dairy farming was carried on in the family for many years. John Strickland came in that year settling on fifty acres of land about one and a half miles north of Waverly. Constant B. Allen came in 1833 and carried on a mercantile trade for twenty years, also engaging quite extensively in the manufacture of pearlsh. He later purchased the woolen goods part at this time with Gibson until 1867 when it burned.

The town was growing and prospering. New businesses were needed to supply the inhabitants. The farmers needed wagons and in 1838 Nicholas Ballard established a wagon shop in Waverly. Waverly was the largest town around here and still growing.

Lumbering was the basic industry during the early days. Many saw mills were located throughout the town. Trees cleared from the land to make fields were sawed into lumber for dwellings, barns and businesses. Bark from the trees was used in the tanning of leather. Ashes were used in making potash.

Farming was in its infancy. Finding the climate too cold for wheat, the principal crops were oats, corn, buckwheat, and hay. These crops were used mainly on the farm in the raising of animals for meat milk, and wool, and for fodder for the horses. Markets were too far away to sell these products as they had to be transported by wagon. Farmers worked hard with scythe and cradle as the mower was not introduced in this area until about 1860.

Farmers coming from the lands of orchards planted fruit trees, mostly apples, with some pears, plums and cherries. Some flax was grown for their clothes. Hides from animals slaughtered for meat were taken to the tannery to be made into shoe leather and possibly harness leather. A little butter and cheese was being made on the farm. With most being used by family, the surplus was used to barter for goods at the store. Cheese was often traded pound for pound. A wagon load of butter and cheese taken to the Buffalo market by horses brought only 4 ½ cents per pound of cheese, and 12 ½ cents a pound for butter. Potatoes were raised abundantly for their own use. From the earliest settlers, the maple orchards were used for sugar making. This was another of the few things the farmer could do to earn cash.

The early settlers were fortunate that the Indians stayed on the Reservations not plundering and marauding as often happened in other parts of the country. The worst marauder the settlers had to contend with was the wolf that raided the sheep flocks. A bounty was paid on wolf scalps and by 1843 the wolf disappeared from this section.

One of the largest farmers at this time was Justus Scot, who came to Otto in 1843, and bought 60 acres from Russell Gibson (at Scot's Corners.) He and his sons cleared land and bought more until

they had 500 acres. He became a thrifty and prosperous farmer. In 1845 he borrowed \$500 from a bank and bought 50 dairy cows at \$12.64 each. He hired one of the Austins to teach his family to make cheese and that year sold cheese to the Plums of Gowanda for 5 cents a pound and delivered it to Buffalo.

Sayles Ross came to Otto in 1843 from Perrysburg and settled on a large farm on the Forty Road, Nathan Charlesworth came in 1845.

The population of Otto was growing, and the people were getting more prosperous. By 1850, the population had grown to 2,267 according to the US Census Report, with Otto having the biggest population of any town in the County (Otto and East Otto were still one township at that time).

In 1841, the Cattaraugus County Agricultural Society had formed in Ellicottville and held annual fairs there until 1852, when Waverly donated the use of some grounds and the fair was held there that year.

German immigrants began coming in the 1840's and 50's. With them came the Lutheran religion. Their main occupations were farming and cheese making.

In 1851, the New York and Erie Railroad was completed and a Station was established at Cattaraugus. With the opening of the station, a town began to grow. But this also curtailed the growth of Waverly. Farmers now had transportation to get their products to market and farming began its rise as a leading business.

Another business opened in Waverly in 1856 when John N. Burger opened a cabinet shop. He later bought the Waverly Inn (Otto Hotel) which he operated for many years.

Tornado Hits Village

On the 30th of May the village was nearly all destroyed by a tornado. About four o'clock in the afternoon a dark cloud was sighted approaching the town carrying fragments of buildings and trees in it. The first building to be hit was the Pike's. Mrs. Pike and their six children were in the house. It was destroyed but none were seriously hurt. Next it hit Allan and Gibsons Woolen Mill carrying away the roof. The foreman was injured and died, but the rest escaped. Another home destroyed was the Bailey's. The Borden Tannery was demolished (later rebuilt). Very few of the buildings in the village escaped damage and many were destroyed.

People were still moving into town. Charles O'Brian, a painter, came in 1859. Ralph Dewey started an iron foundry. John Harvey purchased a large farm and built a resident (Wulf Farm).

Union Army Enlistments

In 1820, Cattaraugus County was included in the Militia District of the 54th Brigade, 26th Division with seven Regiments, one of which was the 198th of Zoar District under the Command of Jehiel Hill, son of Samuel. In 1838, he was promoted to Brigadier General and in 1846 to Major General. Dr. Levi Gouldsbrough and Enos Austin of Otto were on his staff. Among the independent uniformed companies attached to this regiment were the East Otto Rifles and the Otto Riflemen. Joseph Hill, brother of Jehiel, was the fifer and led the Otto Rifles to the parade grounds at Lodi (Gowanda) for general training. These local militia lost favor and were abandoned after a few years. In 1852 the 64 Regiment of the 31st Brigade was mustered at Lodi, In this was Company C comprised of 43 men

recruited from Otto, East Otto and Mansfield, Parades were held in both Gowanda and Otto, an exciting time for all.

A call for volunteers for the Union Army brought many enlistments. Patriotism ran high. Among the first to enlist was Nelson Loomis and Charles O'Brian. Five sons of Elisha Shippey served in the Union Army. Thomas Wickham, Myron Babcock, Norman Foster, Joseph Charlesworth, Daniel Lent, Joshua Wilber, Henry Loomis, Dan Allen and Simeon V. Poole (Dr.) were among the 70 who served. They ranged in rank from private to captain.

Excerpts from Dairy kept by Nelson Loomis, Corporal, Company I of the 37 Regular New York State Volunteer:

May 13, 1861 – Enlisted at Ellicottville

May 19 – Left home enlisted in the Cattaraugus Guards, Captain Clark, Commander

May 20 – Marched for Elmira. Took quarters in preparation for march.

May 24 – Took quarters on Lake Street

May 25 – Marched for New York City

There follows an account of his service in the army, being wounded and spending the last few months of his service in a hospital camp.

November 13, 1862 – Found myself on the cars at daylight steaming toward home. Arrived at Hornellsville about sunrise and took breakfast. Arrived at Cattaraugus at 11:00. Took the stage for Waverly, the S.W. took me home. Found the old people alive but downhearted. Once more at home again. This end the book of my soldiering which I think is ended, if not I shall continue this book. The government owes me six months and eight days pay and mileage home.

Henry C. Loomis, brother of Nelson served as 1st Lieutenant Company C 64th New York Volunteer Infantry., Lieutenant Colonel in the 154th Regular, and later promoted to Brigadier General.

During the Civil War men could be conscripted but this was seldom done as most of the vacancies were filled by volunteers. If a man was conscripted and had the money he could hire a substitute, which usually cost \$300. Men from Otto served in ten different parts of the Army, the most serving in the 64th Infantry.

Proposed Railroad

In 1864, the Atlantic and Great Western Railroad planned a line from Randolph to Buffalo. This would connect with the Erie in Randolph, run northeasterly through Napoli, New Albion, and Otto, crossing the creek in Zoar Valley with a bridge about 300 feet high. Traces of this can be found on Theophilus Hill's farm, Howard Bosiene's, Ward Pratt's, Don Hill's and on to Traffic Street. No evidence of this is found in the Swamp, but is again found on Dave Philiip's, the Schleus farm, Bernard Grub's Ernest Grube's, Paul Stoltenberg's, William Arnold's and Eugene Borden's. Arrangements with the Erie Railroad by the A & GW resulted in the abandonment of this project at the close of the Civil War.

The 1860's brought Fredrick and John Truby to Waverly. In 1866, they opened a clothing and manufacturing business called F & J Truby. Fredrick was a cabinet maker and John a tailor. Ernest Truby, a shoemaker, came in 1862 to work for D.M. Lockrige. In 1863, he went into business with William Heppner for two years before buying him out. Andrew Burger, brother of John and Conrad, came in 1864 and entered in the furniture and undertaking business. Dolphus Brown also came in that year and later operated a stage between Otto and Cattaraugus for nearly ten years.

German Immigration

German immigration continued through the 1860's and 70's. While some went into the businesses, many became associated with the dairy industry. They often became farm laborers until they had enough money to buy a farm of their own. Others became cheese makers. In 1865, Josph and Minnie (Wulff) Dankert along with the Dunkleman's and Rupers from Mecklenburg, Germany, came to Waverly and went to work on farms. These families often suffered great hardships to get to this country. The Dankerts, Dunklemans, and Rupers all came on the same boat. They left Hamburg on the third of May, 1865 and arrived in New York on the 1st of August. The sailboat was caught in a bad storm, and lost the mast which had to be replaced with the spare. It was driven off course. Later there was a fire on board and some of the food destroyed. Sickness came and many persons died on the voyage.

Mrs. Dankert gave birth to a baby boy, who died and was buried at sea. Later the boat was threatened by a school of whales. After being held in quarantine several days in New York they traveled third class (box car) to Cattaraugus and walked to Otto. Mr. Dankert went to work for the Stricklands. Henry Gold came to East Otto in 1846 and with his family went to work as a farm laborer. In 1874, he purchased a 120 acre farm in Otto.

Cheese Making

P.F. Jark, a farm laborer from Holstein, Germany came to America and started cheese making for F.D. Stebbins of Mansfield, in 1867. Later he came to Otto to practice his trade.

Since the opening of the railroad in Cattaraugus, the farmers had transportation to market. Therefore the cheese factories flourished. By 1873 there were 7 cheese factories within the Town boundaries. C.A. Ross and Asa Ross started one on their large farm on the Forty Road and later purchased two built earlier on the road from Waverly to Zoar. Myron Barker had one, two miles northwest of Waverly. Fred H. Yerke had one near Scotts Corners. The American Association factory was located in the village. P.F. Jark, who had been cheese maker for the Stevvins Factory in Mansfield, bought the Scotts Corners factory in 1877, and later the American Association Factory at Waverly. He also bought factories in Mansfield and became the largest manufacturer of cheese in this area. These 7 factories in Otto processed the milk of approximately 2250 cows, making about 18,800 cheeses per year.

A great number of pigs were raised as a result of the cheese making. Farmers took their milk to the factory and returned home with whey in their cans to feed the pigs. When ready to market these pigs were hauled to the railroad by wagon.

In 1865, Earl Hemstreet's father, at sixteen, hauled milk by wagon from his grandfather's farm to the factory in Waverly, picking up his load as he went along. In hot weather he had to make two trips a day.

In 1866, Peter Aust brought a farm on a hill south of Otto where he engaged in farming. He also had a meat market in the village.

The Seventies

In 1871 David N. Brown sold his farm in Collins and purchased the grist mill in the village. The seventies seemed to be a period of prosperity for the town. The dairy industry was thriving, new businesses were opening. Fremont C. Laing of East Otto came to Otto and opened a general store that proved very prosperous.

Also at this time Edgar Devendorf ran a stage to Cattaraugus daily to meet the trains. Henry Facklam left the home farm and started dealing in farm implements and fertilizers.

The population of Otto at this time was about 1,000. There were seven cheese factories, a few grist mills and several saw mills. There were three churches in Otto, and one in North Otto. The Village of Otto had 1 school, 2 hotels, 1 bank, 4 dry goods, 2 clothing stores, 1 music store, 1 drug store, 1 jewelry store, 2 groceries, 1 hardware and tin, 1 cabinet shop, 2 millinery stores, 1 dressmaking establishment, 1 harness shop, 2 blacksmiths, 1 wagon shop, 2 shoe stores, 1 coopers shop, 1 dental office, 1 daguerrean gallery, a cider mill, a saw mill, a matching and planning factory, a sash door & blind factory, 1 grist mill, an iron foundry, a woolen factory and about 75 dwellings.

The Eighties

The eighties brought a few changes, some businesses acquiring new owners. One of these was George H. Wayne who came to Otto from East Otto after his blacksmith shop burned and continued in business. His smithy was next door to George Wilber's wood work shop. Mr. Wayne did the ironwork and Mr. Wilber, the woodwork on many of the vehicles made and repaired in town. He was joined in his business by his son-in-law Gardner Moore in 1896. One of the colorful highlights of the nineteen hundreds in their shop was the shoeing of wild horses brought to Otto by western cowboys, and sold to farmers.

1887 Disastrous Fire

In the late 1880's Otto suffered another disaster. In July 1887, when the E.H. Truby store and residence was destroyed by fire, about half of the north side of the business block between the old North Road and Jark Road also burned. These businesses included the Truby store and the Courter General store. These were rebuilt of brick and were ready for use in February 1888.

J.A. Harvey, after serving two years as clerk in Maltbies Drug Store, bought into partnership with Maltbie and formed the J.A. Harvey Co. Drugstore in 1891.

Until 1892 there was no bridge across the Cattaraugus Creek in Zoar. People suffered much discomfort and even death fording the creek. Alexander Ingraham was much concerned by this and was instrumental in having an iron bridge built. Skinner Hollow never had a bridge across the creek. The creek bottom at the ford was stone and did not prove so difficult.

Among the many saw mills of this time was the A.J. Setter circular steam saw mill in Zoar and the circular saw mill of Joel Perkins in Skinner Hollow.

More Modern Farming

In 1894, Anna Botsford Comstock and her husband bought the Hilltop farm from her father, Marvin, who had lived in Otto village since 1873. Anna had been in a log cabin on this farm. When the

Comstocks bought this farm, the farm was run down and the buildings in poor condition. Mr. Comstock built a new barn in 1895, and a new residence in 1897. He was a professor of entomology, not a farmer, so he consulted with a colleague at Cornell University, the Director of Agriculture and followed practices recommend by him. He was the first in this area to build silos, 20' in diameter, and fill them with corn. He was laughed at then, but in ten years other farmers were following his lead. On his farm, crops were rotated, fences fixed and fields cleared, modern machinery was used, the herd improved; and pure-bred stock was purchased. Water was piped 4000 feet to water cows in their stanchions, he being the first to do that in this region. His laborers wore white suits and caps when milking. The milk was weighed and records kept. Mr. Comstock managed the farm for 22 years, and it became a showplace. He followed the Cornell University practices so closely that many people thought the farm was an extension of the college (which it was not).

In 1899, George Brown came home to take over the running of the Otto Mills from his father, David N. Brown. George gave up steam railroading and came home to take over the running of the Otto Mills. The dam built of brush and stone was in bad repair so he had to put in a log dam. Later on, he faced the dam with cement. The dam stretched 240' across the creek. The E. H. Truby Company wanted to put a Western Union Office in their store. They purchased a dynamo and Mr. Brown ran it off his waterwheel and produced the electricity. This provided electricity for the mill and Mr. Brown's home, Trubys had light and power for their store and telegraph service, and power was sold to subscribers in the downtown area of the village. As there were no meters, power was assessed at a monthly rate.

Advertisement of 1890:

OTTO MILLS
Open 7 AM to 12 Midnight
Flour, Salt, and Mill feed
Custom Grinding a Specialty
G.M. Brown, Prop.

From Darkness to Light!
Let us light your residence.
Estimates cheerfully given.
Rates low.
Otto Elec. Light & Power Co
Otto, NY

Valley City Hose Company

At this time, there also existed a water system. This was mainly to supply the Crawford House. It was badly in need of repair. Mr. Brown took it over from Charles Crawford, replaced the pipes, enlarged the area supplied and generally modernized it. The water from five or six springs was piped into a covered reservoir for storage. There was also another reservoir that was not covered that stored water to supply hydrants in the village for fire protection. A group of 21 volunteers formed the Valley City Hose Company. The village still has a piece of their equipment.

Fire of 1904

With this fire protection, the inhabitants felt more secure. Yet in February 1904, the village suffered a more devastating fire than the previous one. The whole town was threatened, The fire started in the F & J Truby Tailor shop on the south side of the street. It spread to the west, engulfing the Drug Store on the corner. Eastward along the street it burned the Post Office, Gold and Co. General Store, Peter

Aust's Meat Market, B.J. Cotrael's Hardware, C. Phillip's Store, Crawford's and Ballard's Millinery Establishment and was stopped before it got to Isaac Wolf's Store. It also burned the Drug Store across the corner at the west end of the block being stopped before it reached Facklam's Store. The west side of the Facklam building was badly charred. For a time it was feared that the town would burn. Families that were burned out and those whose homes were threatened took their children to the Jark home and cheese factory because it was located a distance from the fire. The Fire Company fought valiantly, but had great difficulty as the fire started in the night and had a good start. Also the temperature was 20 degrees below zero and the pumper continually became frozen.

B.J. Cotrael replaced his building with a wooden structure. Gold's built a brick building. Phillips did not rebuild, but the Daguerrean Gallery was moved from its location between the present Wilber house and present Mary Miller house to the Phillips lot and converted into a store. Peter Aust continued his business in what is now the Fred Gehrke house. The millinery business was moved to the third floor of the Crawford house. The lot on the corner of South and Main remained empty for many years. The drug store on the corner of North and Main was rebuilt.

Telephone Company

Otto at about this time had a telephone company. This was owned by Theodore Truby. The office was in his store. They tended the switchboard themselves. He purchased right of ways from the owners of the properties and built lines to New Albion and Plato. The poles were obtained locally and local men were hired to set them. He strung the wire and installed the phones himself. These were party lines, all the people along a certain area being on one line. He sold out to the New York Telephone Co. a few years previous to 1920. The telephone office was moved into the Town Hall, the doors next to the Courtner Building. Nora Cosline Brown was the first operator for New York Telephone during the day. Clarence Cosline was the night operator. Ruth Salisbury was the day operator when the office was above the Facklan store, (which is no longer there), and went above the Gold Store (now Colleen's Pizza). Lucy and Mabel Schzaler were night operators. When Mrs. Phillips and her family moved into the Goul flat, they took care of the switchboard. Later the office was moved above Luke Wilber's drug store and Blanche Marshall was the last operator before the office was moved to Cattaraugus.

The Stage Line, in the early 1900's was being operated by Abram Salisbury. Twice a day he met the train and carried passengers, freight and packages between Otto and Cattaraugus.

Otto Schools

From the very first, people of the town have been concerned with the education of their children. Children of the early settlers living in the Zoar Valley first attended school across the Cattaraugus Creek in the Town of Collins. School was held at the home of Peter Pratt with Simeon Waterman as teacher. There were 23 pupils, two coming from the Otto side of the creek. Later he built a shanty to house the school and Otis Wheelock was the teacher. Four more children were added to the roll.

The first record of schools was at the first Town meeting held the second Tuesday of February 1823, when Jabez Hull, Willis Boutwell, Harvey Butler, and Ira Waterman were elected Commissioners of Common Schools. In a town meeting of March 1823, it was voted to raise by tax double the amount of school funds appropriated by the state. On March 18th, at a school meeting, it was voted to erect into a school district (District No. 1) the four tiers of lots from the east side of Township 5, Range 7 and District No. 2 being four tiers of lots from the west side of the township. On the 19th of March Districts No. 3 and 4 were formed; in May No. 5 & 6, in September No. 7. In 1825, No. 8, 9 and 10 were formed, and in 1826, No. 11. These districts were in what is now Otto, East Otto and Ashford.

The first school in the town of Otto was a log structure built in 1823, on Lot 14, Job Austin's land (now Ellis Ball farm). School was taught in summer by Betsy Chaffee of Springville. In the spring of 1825, a school was built on Ben Austin's farm near Traffic Street, and Philura Beach was the teacher. Another school was built the same year near Davis Benedict's Dake District. Soon all the Districts followed with building programs.

From the records of the School Commissioners, \$29.42 was raised in taxes and \$14.25 was received from the State. Of this, District No. 1 received \$8.85, No. 7 \$10.50, No. 15 \$13.82, and No. 13 \$11.50. Books in use at this time were Marshalls and Webster Spelling Book, The English Reader, Daybols and Adams Arithmetic, Murrays and Alexander Grammer, and Moses Geography. The first school in Waverly was held in the log home of Stephen Roggers in 1825. By 1826 eleven districts had been formed by petition to the School Commissioners, these being in what is now Otto, East Otto, and part of Ashford.

In 1847, Otto and East Otto still being one, there were 13 districts and parts of districts in the town. Whole districts in what is now East Otto were: Hull No. 1 (Beach), East Otto Corners No 2, Summer and Reed No. 4, Hall No. 9, Whitford Hollow No. 10, Mory No. 11 and E.D. Cox No. 12. Otto whole districts were: Ingram No. 3 (Zoar), Dake No. 5, Scott No. 6, Ballard No. 7, Beverly No. 13. Parts of districts were: Waverly No. 8, Skinner Hollow No. 14, Otto and Mansfield No. 1, Otto and Mansfield No 2, Otto and Mansfield No. 3, Otto and Ashford No. 3 and Otto and Collins No. 13. Later many of these boundaries were changed for the convenience of landowners, probably so that their children could go to the nearest school.

By 1851, there were 981 students over four and under twenty-one years attending school according to the report of the Commissioners that year. In 1879 the present Otto Township had eight districts left with 344 school children and nine teachers with a combined salary of \$16,733.99. Two of these districts were then absorbed into larger ones leaving only six.

District Schools

The Beverly School District No. 4, which replaced the first log schoolhouse on Lot 14, was relocated on the corner of Forty Road and upper North Otto Road. This school burned in 1908, when Coral Wood Rich was teacher and rebuilt within a year. Other teachers were Myret Rich, Olive Dake, Fronia Newton, Eugene Herdick, Elmer Easton, Florence Straub, Edward Marek, Mrs. Eber Allen, Lillian Meyer, Modeste O'Connell, Muriel Gleason Waite, Beula Northrup, Erla Perkins, Violet Hill Clark, Esther Hart and Helen Bird Mudgett. This school was used until two years after centralization and closed in 1946.

The Dake School District No. 5 was graded 1 – 8. This was the first school district in this area to have hot lunches. Water was heated in a long copper boiler on top of a long box stove. Jars of food brought from home was placed on a rack in the boiler and heated. Some of the teachers of this school were Ethel Baker, Lizzie Rush, Nellie Woodruff, Florence Holbrook, Esther Hart, and Mildred Green. This district closed one year after centralization in 1947.

The Scotts Corners School District No. 6 was graded 1 – 4. Some of the later teachers were Fred Dietter, Laura Machensen, Violet Clark, Grace Dawson and Nellie Houghton. An early 1930 record book states there were 15 children attending, hot food being served at noon, a morning health inspection, and four relief periods a day required. The Ballard School District No. 7, was considered to be an exceptionally good school. In the early days when teaching requirements were not so high many schools hired people who had finished high school to teach. But, the Ballard District hired only normal school graduates and the pupils could get one year of high school subjects before going elsewhere.

Among the teachers were Essie Babcock, Bessie Ballards, Lola Hemstreet, Ward Barber, Ernest Wheling, Alta Strickland, Helen Hoag, Mary Marek and Chloe Bruss. This school also closed in 1948.

The Brick School District No. 2 replaced the Traffic Street School. The early teachers were Silas Cross, Rosie Ballard, Sarah Rider, Austin Webster, Anna Bates, Max Wiese, Alta Strickland, Chloe Ford, Earl Hemstreet. Others were Rachael Ostrander, Louise Frye, Grace Gould, Clara Kieth and Hilda Erhart. Mrs. Kieth rode a horse back from Cattaraugus daily to teach. The building was damaged by fire in 1949 when Mr. Dietter was teaching and the pupils were transferred to the Otto School. The first school in the Village of Otto, District No. 8 was in the log house of Stephan Rogers, with Sidney Sterns teaching in the winter of 1826. The actual school building was across the creek on the road to North Otto. Later a brick school was built at the present site which burned. The present building was constructed in 1876 at a cost of \$2,200. This was originally a two room structure with a hallway comprising the third wing. A third classroom was added around 1900 extending the front wing and thereafter three teachers were employed. One of the early teachers, Mark Schingerland was said to have kept order with a maple ruler he used as punishment. In the winter the children all huddled around the big wood stove to keep warm. Later after the installation of a pipeline to Otto the school was heated with gas heaters in every room. A favorite past time at recess and after school was playing in the creek behind the school.

Around 1990 George Gilbert, Bertha Richardson, Alice Kysor, Mamie Wyant, Rebecca Borden, Sarah Rider, and Lee Putney were teaching. Some of the later teachers were Olive Dake, Alta Strickland, Dorothea Wilber, James Young, and Florence Brown. The Otto District became centralized in 1946 and continued in use as an annex of the Cattaraugus Central School. In 1955 when no longer needed as a school, it was sold as a residence. It is now a residence and antique shop. The other five schoolhouses have all been remodeled and are used as homes also.

Parochial School

Otto also had a Lutheran parochial school. On March 9, 1879, Reverend Engels began holding school on the first floor of the Masonic Hall. This was abandoned the following year when the pastor moved to Little Valley leaving the congregation without a pastor. In 1881 Reverend Kraft started up the school again in the same location. Later school was held in various places, the parsonage horse barn, the second floor of the parsonage, and then the upper hall of the church. An annex was built on the rear of the church in 1882 to house the parochial school. Reverend Sander replaced Reverend Kraft in 1836 and taught school in addition to his pastoral duties. In 1888 the annex was moved 65' west to form a separate building for the school due to enlarging the church. The congregation succeeded in securing Miss O. Siefers as teacher for the 1893-94 school term. Thereafter, the pastor no longer had the duty of teaching school. School continued until 1922 when it finally closed. The last teacher was Alma Saar Byer. The pupils were absorbed into the district schools.

After grade school, pupils had to provide their own transportation to the High School in Cattaraugus. Some walked to school, and some boarded in Cattaraugus. Later after Cattaraugus had school buses each district contracted with the bus owner for transportation of their pupils. After centralization in 1946-47, all children were furnished transportation by the school district.

Churches

The earliest record of religion in Otto starts shortly after 1813 when Joseph Bartlett felt compelled to preach the gospel. He and his wife and children lived in Zoar, first on the Otto side, then later on the Collins side of the creek. He was encouraged by Christian friends and decided to enter the ministry of the Christian denomination. An ordination was held at his house with three ministers of that

denomination present. After examination he was accepted and ordained. After this he preached around the county, at the schoolhouse on the bluff in Collins, at David Benedict's house in North Otto, and in many other places. He later moved westward. No church of that denomination was ever organized in the town, but the Reverend Joseph Bartlett has the honor of being the first minister in the early days of Otto.

Methodist

Very early, the Methodists started holding services in the West part of town (when Otto and East Otto were still combined) with Reverend John Cope as the first minister in 1824. An early minister in West Otto was John Griffith who organized a class at the home of Caleb Lewis, with Mr. & Mrs. Lewis, Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Botsford, Mr. & Mrs. Adam Ballard, and Humphrey Ingraham. Daniel Botsford was the first leader.

In 1826, the Methodists organized with the Boston Circuit. The Reverends John Wiley and Wilber Hoag were the first pastors. They preached regularly every two weeks on Tuesday evenings at the home of Daniel Botsford. Early records list family names of Ballard, Beckwith, Botsford, Butterfell, Foster, Ingraham, Lamb, Lewis, Moore and Morris. The first quarterly meeting was held in 1823 in the barn of Luther Sprague.

In 1836, the first church in the township was built on the site of the present North Otto Grange. The land was donated by Joseph Foster with the provision that it always be used for a church. He also gave financial aid. In 1842 he donated one acre of land for use as a cemetery which was situated almost directly across the road from the church. The silver Communion goblet and pitcher (now at the Historical Museum) was given to the church by Emily Foster and was in the care of that family for several generations. This building was replaced in 1870. Later this church was no longer in use and it reverted to the Foster Estate. It was sold in 1929 to the North Otto Grange No. 980.

That fall another class was formed at Waverly from the mother church by Garrison Ballard, his wife, W.H. Strickland and Mrs. Burroughs. The first meeting was held at the schoolhouse on Thomas Rodgers land. In 1840, revival meetings were held for several weeks with sermons two times daily. Thirty to forty persons from outlying areas stayed with Mr. Ballard as he was the only Methodist living in town at that time. The Otto Branch grew in membership and erected a church in 1845, at a cost of \$5,000. It was located across from where the old schoolhouse now stands. In 1860, a tornado badly damaged the church building and completely destroyed the horse sheds. This was repaired and in the '70's a new church bell and organ was purchased and a debt of \$1,525. was paid off. At this time, the pastor served the M.E. Churches at Mansfield, Otto and North Otto. This church continued until 1912 when it joined the Congregationalists and they formed the Federated Church. In 1917 the roof was blown off in a tornado (the second one to cause damage) and as it was no longer used, it was torn down.

Baptist

The Baptists organized in the East part of town (East Otto) in 1825 and the next year found Elder Pratt conducting services in Benjamin Austin's barn which was located near the corner of Forty Road and upper North Road. By 1831, the First Baptist Society of Otto and the Second Baptist Church of Otto were formed. In 1833, the East Otto Baptist built a church three-fourths of a mile east of East Otto Corners. It was later moved across the corner from the E.O. Methodist Church. It was later used as a town hall. The later Church building was purchased by the fire company and was used for a fire hall for a period of time. Services were held in schoolhouses in the west part of town for a few years. There is no record of the Otto group after 1839, nor did this group ever build a church.

Presbyterian

The Presbyterian organized in 1828 in the home of Silvanus Parkinson in Waverly. The founders of this church were the Parkinson's, Plums, Coxes, Bordens and Spauldings. Services were held in various places. In 1829, this body was received as a member of the Presbytery of Buffalo. In 1834, some members were dismissed to unite with a church being formed in East Otto. In 1858 Reverend Horton, who had been serving the Church for two years was ordained as a Congregationalist. The following year the church voted to change from Presbyterian to Congregationalist and was known as the First Congregationalist Church of Otto. In 1861, a church was built at a cost of \$3,000 and in 1873 was repaired at a cost of \$1,000. Over one hundred years ago a silver plated Communion Set was purchased for \$26.

Federated

From 1899 to 1911 this Church was without a pastor and Mr. Albert Bird read sermons and conducted services. In 1912, the Methodists and Congregationalist combined, formed the Federated Church with services being held in the Congregational Church building on East Hill. The first five ministers were sent by the M.E. Conference and later ones were Congregationalist. During 1925, new stained glass windows were installed, new lighting and heating equipment was purchased and the front entrance was changed. Mr. Frank Truby, a staunch supporter of the Church, purchased the ceiling of the old M.E. Church in Cattaraugus for \$6 and moved it to this building. The last ministers to serve this church were Reverend Horton, Reverend Blaise and Reverend William Dunstan, who served this congregation for 17 years in addition to his duties at the Congregational Church in Little Valley.

By the forties the membership had dropped and the last regular services were held in the fall of 1946. Reverend Dunn of the Cattaraugus Evangelical and Reformed Church was given permission to hold services during the summer of 1952, and Mr. Elmer Wilcox, a lay minister of the Assembly of God, conducted services for a few weeks in the summer of 1956.

In 1968, the remaining church members donated the building to the Area Historical Society to be used as a museum and so preserve the only remaining original church in Otto. This church was dedicated as a Museum August 20, 1972 during the Sesquicentennial Celebration.

Lutheran

The Lutheran religion came to town with the German immigrants. Pastor Ernst, first missionary to Otto, came from Eden Valley and conducted services at the Ayer home in the Lower Village. A controversy arose over a doctrinal question which led the group to disband after a few years. Reverend Brandt was summoned to preach and services were held in homes of worshippers. By 1864, most of the services were held in the home of Fred Busekist. Later on, as the group increased, services were held in the public school in Otto.

During the next eleven years the congregation grew and a church building was started. It was dedicated on November 12, 1876. During times when the church was without a pastor, the pastor from Plato served both churches. In 1878 the First Lutheran Church of Otto, NY was incorporated. A plot of land on Salisbury Hill was purchased in 1881 to be used for a cemetery. The property adjoining the church was bought and improved to serve as a parsonage.

In order to enlarge and renovate the church, the annex was moved to form a separate school building. In 1892, a church bell was purchased and the remaining debt paid off. A mission was started in Cattaraugus in 1898 and services were held in the home of Frank Bartlett.

Another addition was made in 1901 on the east side of the building and the entrance changed for their twenty-fifth anniversary. Two years later a new organ was purchased.

In 1911 it was decided that the services be conducted in English. The first English Confirmation was held in 1915. The name of the church was changed to "The Evangelical Lutheran Immanuel Church" of Otto, NY in 1924.

During the thirties electricity was installed, the basement was excavated to make room for Sunday School rooms and rest rooms, a blower was installed on the organ, the choir loft was enlarged, new stained glass was put in the windows, and the front entrance changed.

A proposal was made in 1945 to build a new church. Ground was donated by Mr. & Mrs. Ernest Grube and Mrs. Ruth Ellis. Plans were approved in 1951 and later the building began. On November 11, 1956 two services were held, one in the old church and one in the new, at which time the new church was dedicated. The old church was razed. In 1966 a mortgage burning ceremony was held.

Mrs. Augusta Wiese served 30 years as organist. Later pastors of the church were Reverend Sander, Reverend Saar, Pastor H. W. Brege, Reverend R. Mennen, Reverend Gabbert, Reverend Bartels and Reverend H.H. Droutz.

Gas Wells

Natural gas was discovered in this country in the early 1800's, but it was not until the latter part of the century that wells were drilled in this area. Producing wells were found in the Zoar Valley on the Erie side of the creek between 1895 and 1898.

The first well in the Town of Otto was drilled on the Sanders (Rich) farm in Skinner Hollow. Gas was struck in March 1910. This was a test well put down by the United Natural Gas Co. of Oil City, Pa. This was a good well comparing favorably with other wells of that time. It was approximately 3200 feet deep and production was estimated at 1-2,000,000 cu. ft. per day at 6-700 lbs. pressure. After this other drilling companies came in and leased land. A line was laid to connect the well to the pipeline from Bradford to Buffalo and plans were made to supply the Village of Cattaraugus with gas which was to be completed before November 1, 1910. Soon after this, gas was piped to the Village of Otto.

This first well was near the schoolhouse in Skinner Hollow. Oil was found in the drilling, but, as there was no refinery nearby, it was cased off and drilling went deeper until gas was found. A second well was drilled near the first and this proved to be a producing well also. Later on the two wells "salted" in spoiling them.

Other wells were drilled nearby. A dry hole was drilled on the Joel Perkins farm. Good wells were drilled on the Strickland farm and on the Abbey farm. A well was drilled by the Iroquois Gas Co. farther north on the Hill farm but proved to be poor quality.

Wells on the Strickland & Abbey farms produced for many years. For a number of years a pumping station, tendered by Frank Lampman and later Stewart Wilson operated drawing gas from the wells. This was piped to the Iroquois line in the Swamp and sold to them. These wells still produce a small amount. In recent years Iroquois Gas has held leases in the area and has drilled wells. None of these have been of any value.

Among those employed by Iroquois Gas Co. were Henry and Amil Rose. Amil started working for the company in 1914 and worked for 46 years until he retired in 1960. Henry Kriederman also worked for Iroquois Gas for a total of almost 41 years until he retired.

Social Life in Otto

Residents made their own entertainment in early Otto. Visiting neighbors, barn raisings and quilting bees were typical of the early 1800's. Parades were popular when the Militia held their training programs. Residents went to Otto, East Otto and Gowanda to attend. Later on at the turn of the century fire companies held parades, had hose races and water fights. Abram Salisbury was a member of Otto Hose. No. 1 which participated in the parade at Gowanda August 20, 1891. Other members were Fairfield Mercer, A.S. Courter, and S.G. Skeels. Following this, right after 1900, the Valley City Hose. Co. was organized. George Armstrong, Charles Schultz, Bert Aust, Elmer Young, John Salisbury, Charles Crawford, Frank Smallman, Charles Truby, Theodore Truby, Luther Borden, Joe Aust, Floyd Brown, Al Young, Edward Stebbins, Elmer Tibbets, Lou Grube, Ernest Schroeder, Will Young, Henry O'Brien, Frank Aust, Will Aust, and Reverend John Nelson were among the members. They also participated in parades going as far as Dunkirk. They had rather elaborate red uniforms with gold braid and carried a banner made by Reverend Nelson of the Methodist Church.

The Valley City Band was formed in 1909. Among the members were Will and Frank Aust, Theodore Truby, Joe Cosline, Henry Young, Dr. H.S. Campbell, John Pierce, Alphonso Weise, Frank Greim, John Jark, John Berg, Harry Miller, and David Botsford. The band built a band stand and speakers platform in front of Gold's store and took active part in the July 4th program and parade of 1910.

The young people of Otto frequently held parties. One was a Butterfly Party held in 1907 at the Opera House, upstairs of the old Town Hall. The Junto Club held regular meetings and put on programs for their entertainment, frequently having mock trials.

World War I

In 1917 the United States declared war on Germany. All males between the ages of 21 and 30 were compelled to register. There was also a Military Census taken of all persons, male and female, between 16 and 64 years. Many joined the Red Cross and made supplies and bandages, knitted socks for the troops, and gave to the Red Cross War Fund Drive. In an effort to produce more food, residents planted gardens. Housewives participated in "Hooverizing" (conserving food) and processing for themselves the food raised. Sales of some articles – flour, bread, sugar, butter, cheese and fuel, were restricted. Daylight Saving Time was instituted as a measure to conserve fuel. War Savings Stamps and Liberty Bonds were purchased.

Veterans of WWI were Arthur Barber (died in service), Arthur Ball, Ellis Ball, Lewis Beckman, George F. Brown, J. Milton Burdick, Dr. H.S. Campbell, Joseph Cosline, Frank Greim, Arnold Hufmayel, Dan Maus, Artie Root, Amil Rose, George Rose, Martin Schroeder, Gleason Sheldon, Clarence Smith, Charles Wickham, Vernon Wienk, Herman Wulf, Alphonso Weise, George McDonald, Martha Jark, RN, Peter Hillemin, Albert Truby, Willard Truby, Stanley Marek.

Needless to say, that when the armistice was announced the people were overjoyed. George Brown, on hearing the news, climbed to the top of the flagpole, 65' above the roof of the mill, to replace the tattered flag that had been flying throughout the war, completely forgetting in his excitement that he had placed a pulley and rope to lower the flag.

Following World War I, for several years the townspeople held a Memorial service on Decoration Day. Everyone took food and gathered in one of the public halls and held a dinner with guests and speakers to honor the dead.

In 1927, residents of Otto & surrounding towns were startled when an earthquake, lasting several minutes shook the area rattling things on shelves and causing rocking chairs to rock. No property damage was done.

The 1920's

During the 1920's Niagara Mohawk put a power line in to Otto, supplying the residents with electric power. This made a profound change in daily living. Not only did they have better illumination, but they had power to run washing machines, milking machines and other labor saving equipment, and that took the drudgery out of life.

Also during this time more people began to own automobiles and depended less on horses and trains. The radio was just coming into its own and was powered by batteries. Not until later were they run by electricity. This period following WWI was a time of prosperity. Light tractors were starting to be used on the farms along with horses. Not until about 1935 did the farm team start disappearing. Today there is only one large farm in Otto still using draft horses. Many people have horses, but they are ridden for pleasure. In 1926, a good dairy cow brought \$175.

The depression did not strike Otto as hard as it did the cities. Some people were out of work, but these were mostly those who worked in the steel mills and on the utilities. Farmers suffered from low prices. Milk went down to 34 cents cwt. in 1930. Good cows sold for \$40 - \$45. Dairies could be bought for \$28 per cow.

After 1935, prices started to rise again and with it wages. There was a new period of prosperity.

4-H Clubs

In 1936, a pilot program of 4-H Clubs was started in the County and the Otto "Future Americans" with Mrs. Arthur Aust as leader, was one of the five original clubs. Both boys and girls were members and held their business meetings at the Aust home. The boys and girls had separate work meetings. Programs were held in the upstairs of the Town Hall. The original club is no longer in existence, but Otto has had several clubs with mothers, fathers and other interested persons serving as leaders. There are now two 4H Clubs, one dairy club and the other a homemaking club.

Organized Fire Company

1939, many of the civic minded citizens of Otto, decided that a volunteer fire company should be organized, The Valley City Hose Co., having been out of existence for many years. Therefore an organizational meeting was held in May 1939, at the Town Hall with 17 members present. William Minekime was the last charter member. At the June meeting the name Otto Fire Co. was approved, and at a special meeting it was voted to buy a building for a fire hall.

The Fire commissioners approved purchase of a used fire truck if the firemen would donate labor and help defray expenses on repair of the hall. In October a committee was appointed to investigate the purchase of a fire truck. By December the company had a truck and a first aid kit to go in it. In January fire hose and hats were bought. The first Carnival was held June 7 - 8, 1940. Caps and uniforms for

parades were purchased, and later a drum corps was organized. Periodically fire training schools were held. The firemen continued to raise money for equipment and building improvements. A tank truck was added and later another fire truck. An ambulance was added to their equipment in the winter of 1948-49 to furnish service to the community. This ambulance has been replaced twice since. The tanker was also replaced.

A piece of equipment that was bought was a foam maker for smothering fires. The Firemen and Auxiliary participated in the Sesquicentennial Celebration.

The Firemen's Auxiliary was organized in November 1939 with 20 members present. There are no longer any remaining charter members with continuous membership. The last two charter members were Mary Miller and Ruth Salisbury. In the beginning the meetings were held at members homes and at the Town Hall until they moved into the new hall May, 1940. Auxiliary members helped at carnivals and dances using the money to help furnish the hall and to paper and paint the rooms. At first they bought white uniforms and later bought blue gabardine and made uniforms for marching. They also furnished lunch and coffee to the firemen at fires.

Seeing a need for sickroom equipment to loan, the Auxiliary purchased two hospital beds, wheelchairs, walker and crutches which are loaned free of charge to Otto residents, and occasionally to people from out of town. Later as gifts were received for its use, a Memorial Fund was set up to maintain and replenish the equipment. The Auxiliary also furnishes the linens for the Ambulance. They also support worthy charities.

In 1974 it was decided that there was a need to upgrade the fire equipment. At that time it was decided to buy a new pumper. This pumper was put in service in early 1975. It replaced the 1939 pumper which was one of the first trucks the company owned when it was formed. It was then sold to the historical society which they later donated back to the fire company with the request that they preserve it. It was soon discovered that what was needed was more room. The Brown lot on Jark Road was purchased in June of 1976. It wasn't until January of 1981 that the fire company started discussion with the fire district about a new fire hall. In May of that year the fire company and fire district approached the FHA about a loan. It was then decided that it would be in the best interest of both that the fire company build and own the building and lease it to the fire district. At that point, things moved fast and on October 9, 1982 an open house was held and the fire company moved into their new hall. In 1984 it was decided that more room was needed and a twenty foot addition was added to house a new utility truck. In 1999 the Jark property was purchased and the house was used for fire training for several years at which time the building was burned down as a training exercise and landscaped for other outside activities (this is the site of the current fire hall). Now in 2015 the fire company is in the planning stages of putting an addition on so the 1939 truck will have a permanent home inside.

December 7, 1941

The people of Otto were shocked on December 7, 1941 when it was announced on the radio that Japan had attacked Pearl Harbor. The United States declared war on Japan and Germany and shortly thereafter, many of our young men and some of our young women either volunteered or were drafted into the service of their country.

Many residents worked on war contracts and made parts for ships in Cattaraugus and as far away as Buffalo. Victory gardens were planted. Wages and prices were frozen. Rationing was instituted and stamps were needed for such scarce items as meat, butter, sugar, shoes, tires and gasoline. In an effort of conservation women wore their shirts shorter, men's pants were cuffless, and tin cans were

saved and flattened for collection. War bonds were purchased and children bought Savings Stamps with their dimes. An airplane watch was set up in North Otto and was manned by volunteers to report on aircraft sighted. VE and VJ Days were welcomed with joy.

New Town Hall

In 1967, a new highway building and Town Hall was erected. The old highway buildings had long been inadequate and the hundred year old town hall no longer met present day needs. The highway building has six bays in which to house and maintain its heavy grader, hi-lift, and four trucks. A stove and refrigerator were donated to the Town Hall kitchen and the Otto Homemakers Club, through a series of bake sales has raised money for draperies and for furnishing in the kitchen.

\$14,500,000 Dam

In March, 1969, Otto residents were amazed to read in The Buffalo Courier-Express that a reservoir in Otto, East Otto and Mansfield area was being planned by the Erie Niagara Water Resources Board. This \$14,500,000 multi-purposed dam would inundate 4,450 acres creating a lake 6 miles long and 2 miles wide, with exact acreage of surrounding lands to be taken unknown. This was one of the five proposed reservoirs in the Erie Niagara Basin given top propriety for flood control, water conservation, and recreation. A few days later, on March 27, some Otto residents attended a meeting held by the Erie Niagara Water Resources Board in Springville. Later members of this board were invited to a public meeting in Otto to explain this program and the proposed Otto Reservoir to the people of this area. According to this board the area to be flooded was a rugged, almost worthless terrain.

Supervisors from the three towns that would be affected appointed a joint study group of six persons. This committee, after due consideration, advised that in order to provide meaningful opposition, an independent association of community residents be formed. The Otto Community Preservation Association was formed and the following officers elected: Dr. Fred Van Deusen, chairman, and Mrs. Howard Clark, secretary/treasurer.

This association had a monumental task in gathering facts and compiling them to prepare a brief to support their stand in opposition to the reservoir called Lake Otto. A total membership of 558 was achieved.

In the summer of 1971 the brief was presented at a public hearing on proposal of the Erie Niagara Water Resources Board held by the Department of Environmental Conservation. On October 31, 1971, this Otto Project was found lacking in merit to deserve such prominent attention and the building of the Otto Reservoir was rejected. This association did not disband with the attainment of their goal, but rather decided to continue in the interest of the community.

Masonic Lodge – 1866

In the summer of 1866, a few Masons in Otto and the near surrounding area conceived the idea of organizing a Masonic Lodge in the Village of Otto. On September 17, 1866 a group of Masons met in the I.O.O.F Hall, of which some were members, under special dispensation of Ellicottville Lodge 307 F&AM to form a Lodge. At the next session of the Grand Lodge, a Charter was granted to Ralph Dewey, Phipps Lake and Horace Cross. There were nine charter members. On June 15, 1867, R.W. Clinton F Paige, Grand Master for whom the Lodge was named visited and installed the officers.

The Lodge met in the Odd Fellows Hall until October 4, 1869, at which time the Masons purchased the hall for \$700 and held the meetings therein until 1894 when the old hall was torn down and the present Temple erected at a cost of \$6,000. In 1895 new furniture, lambskins, tools and Jewels were purchased. In 1912, electricity was installed in the lower hall. The Otto Star Chapter was organized that same year. In 1913 gas stoves, jets and lights were installed. And in 1920 the hall was redecorated.

April 1, 1924 brought the burning of the mortgage. Since 1867 when this Lodge was born the Otto population has decreased about 30% and Lodge membership has also decreased.

From the horse and buggy, wood stove, and kerosene lamp days with nine members attending meetings with visiting members from surrounding Lodges, the membership grew to 106 in 1893. The membership in 1992 was 49.

Otto Star Lodge

Otto Star Chapter was organized under dispensation January 30, 1912. Twenty-three members were present. Several initiations were held and at the end of the first year there were 52 members. The installation of officers was followed by an oyster supper. Bills from that supper show that oysters were \$1.70 a gallon, butter \$.37 a pound, and rolls \$.10 a dozen. Kitchen help was paid \$.125 per hour. Dances and suppers were held to raise money to furnish the hall and to decorate it. They also sold Larkin products in 1917-1918 to acquire silverware as premiums.

During World War I, the members bought war bonds, knitted socks and sweaters, and donated to the Grand Chapter Ambulance Fund. In 1924 a piano was purchased to replace the old organ. From the time of its organization until 1925, the chapter met twice a month without cancelling any meetings because of bad weather. During the thirties depression years, many members were lost and new ones were hard to find. Nevertheless, they papered and painted and bought new curtains and carpeting. The chapter carried on its work and in 1952 celebrated its fortieth anniversary. In 1962, the Chapter celebrated its Golden Anniversary. Many life membership certificates have been presented to members on their 80th birthday. Mary Bobsein, Gladys Laing, and Ruth Salisbury joined the Stars the first year and have been continuous members for sixty years. The chapter celebrated its 60th anniversary in 1972.

Grange

The first Grange started in the Town of Otto was by Ira Porter, on February 21, 1876. It was organized as the Otto Grange No. 381. The Master was J.F. Wellman and secretary Scott. F. Crowell.

Records show that for eight years the organization was active. For the years 1884 through 1888 no officers are recorded, so it is assumed the Grange was inactive. In 1889 Grange activities began again and continued to 1895. This Grange appears to have been dormant until 1903 because no officers were listed.

The Grange was organized again on October 16, 1903. Charter members are: Walter Taft, Master; G.S. Burdick, secretary; Mrs. J.P. Strickland, A.A. Bird, Mrs. J.C. Bird, Mrs. W. Taft, D.B. Allen, Mrs. D. B. Allen, G.W. Ballard, Mrs. S.G. Burdick, Truman Ballard, Mrs. Truman Ballard, and F.J. Harvey. In as much as some of the Charter members of this organization are the same as listed as officers in the first Grange it is evident that this "new" organization was actually a reorganization with a new number 990. The name North Otto Grange was not used until the year 1924.

Prior to 1925 meetings were held in the members' homes, at the Allen Hall, Town Hall and the First Masonic Hall. During the year 1925 the Henry Bull house was rented to be used as a meeting place and was used until 1930 when the present hall was bought by the Grange. This building was the former North Otto Methodist Church built in 1854.

During the early thirties the North Otto Grange was a very active organization with a membership between 140 and 150. Records show the attendants at meetings averaged 100 members. During this time a baseball team was sponsored with the following members participating: John Maus, Arthur Aust, Ernest Rose, Bill Crowell, Clifford Charlesworth, Ralph Botsford, George Young, Sheldon Strickland and D. TenEyke. Non members were C. Brown, V. Frank and C. Schuppenhauer. Urchra games were always an after the meeting event among the men.

The North Otto Grange has had many members serve as officers in the Pomona Grange throughout the years of existence. They have also had the honor bestowed upon them of having two men serve as State Deputy. Mr. Clarence Smith held this office from 1937 until 1950. At the present time Ralph Botsford is holding this office after being appointed last year. (1992)

North Otto Juvenile Grange No. 173 was organized March 4, 1931. With Marie Rose as Matron, Elizabeth Hill, Master, Doris Wickham, Lecture, and William Dunkleman, Secretary. There were 17 charter members in addition to the above mentioned.

Juvenile Grange was active until 1945. In 1946 an attempt was made to reactive it, but lasted less than a year. There has not been a Juvenile Grange since.

At the present time (1992) Grange membership is 52 members with about 10 members attending meetings. Our modern and more plentiful transportation, more organizations and less farmers are some of the contribution factors to the dwindling membership.

Home Bureau

In 1919, in Ithaca, the Home Bureau was organized in conjunction with the Extension Service. A little later, probably in the early twenties, a unit was started in Otto. Mrs. Lotte Aust was thought to be the organizer as her husband was very active in the Farm Bureau. Nutrition, food preserving-water bath and later pressure cooker canning, sewing of clothes, and hat making were among the things taught in the early period. Later during depression times, furniture repair was taught. This included re-upholstery, refinishing and caning. Slipcover and the making of draperies came later. Of all things taught in Home Bureau, the furniture lessons have been used most consistently over the years.

The Home Bureau worked closely with the Extension Service until 1956 when they were separated by law. From 1957-1967 the Otto organization was called the Otto Home Demonstration Unit and was part of the Extension Service which is supported by county and state funds. Many programs have been available from Extension Service, some of which are home decoration, food and nutrition, family life, and landscaping.

In 1967 the Home Bureau was once again organized in the county and many of the Home Demonstration members wished to join. Because the women did not have time to belong to so many organizations it was decided to combine into one organization called the Otto Homemakers, and members could join whichever part they chose, the Home Bureau, The Extension Service or just the social club.

Great Changes

Otto has changed a great deal over the years. Farms are larger and fewer with machines doing much of the work done by man and horses. They are no longer diversified, their principal product being fluid milk. Very little pork, eggs, grain crops and maple syrup are sold. Cream, cheese and apples are no longer marketed. The saw mills are all gone, most woodlots are gone with only a small amount being harvested. Heavy rains in 1942 destroyed the dam and the mill had to stop grinding feed. The mill continued to sell feed for a few years, but has since been demolished. Blacksmith shops have given way to garages and manufacturing is no longer done. Electricity lights our homes, and gas and oil heats them. Candles and fireplaces are now a decoration and luxury.

In recent years people from the cities have moved here, building homes and living in mobile homes. Many commute to their jobs in the city. Many summer residents have bought lots and built cabins or placed trailers, others rent space at Lazy Acres, a Camping facility.

Early settlers, if they could return, would find little to recognize in Otto now.

NOTE: Most of this was taken from the History of the Town of Otto 1823 – 1973, published for the Sesquicentennial on August 18 - 20, 1972.

Section 3 - Statistics

According to the United States Census Bureau, the town has a total area of 32.3 square miles, of which, 32.2 square miles of it is land and 0.1 square miles of it (0.34%) is water.

The north town line is formed by Cattaraugus Creek and is the border of Erie County, New York, and the west town line is formed by South Branch (of Cattaraugus Creek).

The main highways through Otto are county roads. Cattaraugus County Route 12 is the main road through town, which extends southwestward Cattaraugus and northeastward toward East Otto, while Cattaraugus County Route 11 (North Otto Road) spurs northward from the hamlet of Otto through North Otto, and Cattaraugus County Route 13 (Maples Road) splits off east of the hamlet toward Ellicottville.

Communities and Locations in Otto, New York.

- Otto (formerly "Waverly") – The hamlet of Otto is near the south town line at the junction of County Roads 11 and 12. It is the only significant settlement in the town.
- North Otto – The sparsely populated and heavily agricultural area located along County Road 11 between the hamlet of Otto and Zoar Valley.
- Zoar Valley Multiple Use Area – A conservation area in the northern part of the town.

Town of Otto, Cattaraugus County

Population in July 2022: 766

Population change since 2000: -5.7%

Males: 52.4%

Females: 47.6%

Median resident age: 52.8 years

Zip codes: 14766

Estimated median household income in 2022: \$66,893 (it was \$43,422 in 2009)

Estimated per capita income in 2022: \$39,109

Estimated median house or condo value in 2022: \$157,813

March 2012 cost of living index in Otto: 95.8 (near average), U.S. average is 100

Elevation: 1266 feet

Land area: 32.2 square miles

Population density: 25 people per square mile (very low)

Single-family new house construction building permits:

- 1997 – three buildings
- 1998 – four buildings
- 1999 – six buildings
- 2000 – six buildings
- 2001 – seven buildings
- 2002 – two buildings
- 2003 – two buildings
- 2004 – two buildings
- 2005 – two buildings
- 2006 – two buildings
- 2007 – one building
- 2008 – one building
- 2009 – one building
- 2010 – one building
- 2011 - one building
- 2018 – one building
- 2019 – one building
- 2021 – five buildings

Latitude: 42.38 N, Longitude: 78.81 W

Area code commonly used in this area: 716

Unemployment in November 2020: 4.2% (New York State: 4.0%)

Tornado activity: Otto-area historical tornado activity is above New York state average. It is 34% smaller than the overall U.S. Average.

- On 7/24/1967, a category F3 (max. wind speeds 158-206 mph) tornado 7.8 miles away from the Otto town center caused between \$5000 and \$50,000 in damages.
- On 5/2/1983, a category F3 tornado 14.2 miles away from the town center killed 2 people and caused between \$500,000 and \$5,000,000 in damages.

Earthquake activity: Otto-area historical earthquake activity is below New York state average. It is 93% smaller than the overall U.S. Average.

- On 11/26/1999 at 22:33:01, a magnitude 3.8 (3.8 LG, 3.4 LG, Depth: 8.0 mi, Class: Light, Intensity: II - III) earthquake occurred 92.3 miles away from the city center
- On 3/12/1994 at 10:43:15, a magnitude 3.6 (3.5 LG, 3.6 LG, Depth: 0.6 mi) earthquake occurred 55.2 miles away from Otto center
- On 2/3/2001 at 20:15:15, a magnitude 3.2 (3.2 LG) earthquake occurred 72.7 miles away from the city center
- On 5/25/1995 at 14:22:32, a magnitude 3.0 (2.6 LG, 3.0 LG, Depth: 3.1 mi) earthquake occurred 42.4 miles away from the city center
- On 8/4/2004 at 23:55:26, a magnitude 3.2 (3.2 MW, 3.0 MD, Depth: 3.1 mi) earthquake occurred 95.0 miles away from Otto center
- On 7/19/2007 at 17:07:58, a magnitude 3.1 (3.1 LG, 3.0 MD, Depth: 3.1 mi) earthquake occurred 97.4 miles away from the city center

Magnitude types: regional Lg-wave magnitude (LG), duration magnitude (MD), moment magnitude (MW)

Natural disasters: The number of natural disasters in Cattaraugus County (19) is greater than the US average (12).

- Major Disasters (Presidential) Declared: 11
- Emergencies Declared: 8
- Causes of natural disasters: Storms: 9, Floods: 8, Snowstorms: 3, Snow: 1, Storm: 1, Tornado: 1, Blizzard: 1, Hurricane: 1, Ice Storm: 1, Power Outage: 1, Tropical Storm: 1, Winter Storm: 1, Other: 1 (Note: Some incidents may be assigned to more than one category).

Hospitals/medical centers near Otto:

- BERTRAND CHAFFEE HOSPITAL (Acute Care Hospitals, Voluntary non-profit - Private, provides emergency services, about 13 miles away; SPRINGVILLE, NY)
- BROOKS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL (Acute Care Hospitals, Voluntary non-profit - Private, provides emergency services, about 28 miles away; DUNKIRK, NY)

Colleges/universities with over 2000 students nearest to Otto:

- SUNY at Fredonia (about 27 miles; Fredonia, NY; Full-time enrollment: 5,406)
- Jamestown Community College (about 28 miles; Jamestown, NY; FT enrollment: 2,816)
- Saint Bonaventure University (about 30 miles; Saint Bonaventure, NY; FT enrollment: 2,154)
- Erie Community College (about 35 miles; Buffalo, NY; FT enrollment: 9,949)
- D'Youville College (about 37 miles; Buffalo, NY; FT enrollment: 2,265)
- Canisius College (about 38 miles; Buffalo, NY; FT enrollment: 3,849)
- Medaille College (about 38 miles; Buffalo, NY; FT enrollment: 2,594)

Church in Otto: Immanuel Lutheran Church of Otto

Cemeteries: Barber Cemetery, Otto Cemetery, Lutheran Cemetery, North Otto Cemetery

Streams, rivers, and creeks: South Branch Cattaraugus Creek, Waterman Brook, Mansfield Creek

Otto compared to New York state average:

- Black race population percentage significantly below state average.
- Hispanic race population percentage significantly below state average.
- Median age above state average.
- Foreign-born population percentage significantly below state average.
- Renting percentage significantly below state average.
- Number of college students significantly below state average.
- Percentage of population with a bachelor's degree or higher significantly below state average.

Strongest AM radio stations in Otto:

- WWKB (1520 AM; 50 kW; BUFFALO, NY; Owner: ENTERCOM BUFFALO LICENSE, LLC)
- WGGO (1590 AM; 5 kW; SALAMANCA, NY; Owner: CATT COMMUNICATIONS, INC.)
- WGR (550 AM; 5 kW; BUFFALO, NY; Owner: ENTERCOM BUFFALO LICENSE, LLC)

- WNED (970 AM; 5 kW; BUFFALO, NY)
- WHAM (1180 AM; 50 kW; ROCHESTER, NY; Owner: CITICASTERS LICENSES, L.P.)
- WSPQ (1330 AM; 1 kW; SPRINGVILLE, NY; Owner: HAWK COMMUNICATIONS, LTD.)
- WHLD (1270 AM; 5 kW; NIAGARA FALLS, NY; Owner: CITADEL BROADCASTING COMPANY)
- WTOR (770 AM; daytime; 9 kW; YOUNGSTOWN, NY; Owner: BIRACH BROADCASTING CORPORATION)
- WXRL (1300 AM; 5 kW; LANCASTER, NY; Owner: DOME BROADCASTING, INC.)
- WBEN (930 AM; 5 kW; BUFFALO, NY; Owner: ENTERCOM BUFFALO LICENSE, LLC)
- KDKA (1020 AM; 50 kW; PITTSBURGH, PA; Owner: INFINITY BROADCASTING OPERATIONS, INC.)
- WNAE (1310 AM; 5 kW; WARREN, PA; Owner: KINZUA BROADCASTING COMPANY)
- WKNR (850 AM; 50 kW; CLEVELAND, OH; Owner: CARON BROADCASTING, INC.)

Strongest FM radio stations in Otto:

- WTSS (102.5 FM; BUFFALO, NY; Owner: ENTERCOM BUFFALO LICENSE, LLC)
- WNED-FM (94.5 FM; BUFFALO, NY; Owner: WESTERN NEW YORK PUBLIC B/C ASSOC.)
- WDCX (99.5 FM; BUFFALO, NY; Owner: KIMTRON, INC.)
- WBUF (92.9 FM; BUFFALO, NY; Owner: INFINITY RADIO OPERATIONS INC.)
- WQRT (98.3 FM; SALAMANCA, NY; Owner: CATT COMMUNICATIONS, INC.)
- WNJA (89.7 FM; JAMESTOWN, NY; Owner: WESTERN NEW YORK PUBLIC B/CING ASSOC)
- WNSA (107.7 FM; WETHERSFIELD TOWNSHIP, NY; Owner: ADELPHIA COMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION, DEBTOR-IN-POSSESSION)
- WPIG (95.7 FM; OLEAN, NY; Owner: ARROW COMMUNICATIONS OF N.Y., INC.)
- WBKX (96.5 FM; FREDONIA, NY; Owner: CHADWICK BAY BROADCASTING CORPORATION)
- WFBF (89.9 FM; BUFFALO, NY; Owner: FAMILY STATIONS, INC.)
- WCOT (90.9 FM; JAMESTOWN, NY; Owner: FAMILY LIFE MINISTRIES, INC.)
- WOLN (91.3 FM; OLEAN, NY; Owner: STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK)
- WGRF (96.9 FM; BUFFALO, NY; Owner: CITADEL BROADCASTING COMPANY)
- WWSE (93.3 FM; JAMESTOWN, NY; Owner: MEDIA ONE GROUP, LLC)
- WBRR (100.1 FM; BRADFORD, PA; Owner: RADIO STATION WESB, INC.)
- WKZA (106.9 FM; LAKEWOOD, NY; Owner: CROSS COUNTRY COMMUNICATIONS, LLC)
- WUBJ (88.1 FM; JAMESTOWN, NY; Owner: STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK)
-

TV broadcast stations around Otto:

- WNGS (Channel 67; SPRINGVILLE, NY; Owner: CAROLINE K. POWLEY D/B/A UNICORN/SPRINGVILLE)
- WKBW-TV (Channel 7; BUFFALO, NY; Owner: WKBW-TV LICENSE, INC.)
- WNYB (Channel 26; JAMESTOWN, NY; Owner: FAITH BROADCASTING NETWORK, INC.)
- WIVB-TV (Channel 4; BUFFALO, NY; Owner: WIVB BROADCASTING, LLC)
- WGRZ-TV (Channel 2; BUFFALO, NY; Owner: MULTIMEDIA ENTERTAINMENT, INC.)
- WNYO-TV (Channel 49; BUFFALO, NY; Owner: NEW YORK TELEVISION, INC.)
- WNED-TV (Channel 17; BUFFALO, NY; Owner: WESTERN NY PUBLIC BROADCASTING ASSOC.)
- WUTV (Channel 29; BUFFALO, NY; Owner: WUTV LICENSEE, LLC)
- WNLO (Channel 23; BUFFALO, NY; Owner: WIVB BROADCASTING, LLC)
- WDTB-LP (Channel 39; HAMBURG, NY; Owner: WORD OF GOD FELLOWSHIP, INC.)
- W46BA (Channel 46; JAMESTOWN, NY; Owner: WESTERN NEW YORK PUBLIC B/CING.ASSN.)

Otto fatal accident list:

- Aug 31, 2012 9:49 PM, North Otto Rd., Vehicles 1, Persons: 1 Fatalities: 1 Drunken drivers: 1
- Oct 22, 1999 4:05 PM, Thompson Rd., Vehicles: 1, Persons: 1, Fatalities: 1
- Nov 5, 1983 3:00 AM, County Route 12, Vehicles: 1, Persons: 1, Fatalities: 1, Drunken drivers: 1

National Bridge Inventory (NBI) Statistics

- Number of bridges: 8
- Total length: 15 meters (49ft)
- Total costs: \$6,019,000
- Total average daily traffic: 7,192
- Total average daily truck traffic: 537
- Total future (year 2018) average daily traffic: 8,913

FCC Registered Private Land Mobile Towers: 1

Corner Maples & East Otto Rd (Lat: 42.355333 Lon: -78.815861), Call Sign: KNFZ614, Licensee ID: L00056040

Assigned Frequencies: 158.745 MHz

Grant Date: 06/04/2002, Expiration Date: 07/22/2012

Registrant: Otto, Town Of, Box 66, Otto, NY 14766, Phone: (716) 257-3111

FCC Registered Amateur Radio Licenses: 1

Call Sign: KC2QVQ, Licensee ID: L01236331

Grant Date: 01/19/2007, Expiration Date: 01/19/2017, Certifier: Jason R Tojowski

Registrant: Jason R Tojowski, Otto, NY 14766

2006 National Fire Incident Reporting System Incidents:

Fire: 3

Municipal Government

SUPERVISOR.....Ronald Wasmund, 8441 N. Otto Road, Cattaraugus 14719

HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT..... Robert Barber, Jr., 9574 Forty Road Cattaraugus, 14719

CLERK/TAX COLLECTOR/REGISTRAR Trisha Priest
Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 5:30 – 8:00 pm; Saturday 9:00 - noon

ASSESSOR..... County Assessor, Little Valley, NY

TOWN JUSTICE.....Honorable Warren Dickerson
Court: 2nd & 4th Mondays at 7:30 PM

TOWN COUNCIL (meets 3rd Tuesday of the month)..... Marlene Gregory
..... Brenda Mallaber
..... Paul Stang
..... Kevin Walker

PLANNING BOARD (meets 1st Wednesday of the month)
Chairperson..... Karen McAndrew
..... Ron Hebner
..... Terri Steinbar
..... Marsha Salisbury
..... Randy Beenau

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
.....Emily Moore
..... John Vanderbosh
..... Daniel Steinbar

BOARD OF ASSESSMENT
..... Ron Hebner
..... Victoria Dickerson
..... Kimberly Walker

BUILDING CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER Jeff Holler, 8346 Swamp Road, Cattaraugus 14719

ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICERMary Dankert, PO Box 119, Otto 14766

TOWN HISTORIANCandace Broughton, 9800 Forty Road, Cattaraugus 14719

WEBSITE: www.ottony.org

Section 4 - Goals and Objectives

These goals and objectives are reflective of the community's desires for the future of the Town of Otto. They will provide guidance to the community in making future policies and decisions, and provide the basis for future land use, growth and development of the Town.

The goals are broad statements of policy. The objectives are more specific, measurable statements of desired ends. Fulfillment of these objectives will ensure the attainment of overall community goals.

I. Community Character & Town Development

Goal: To promote and plan a pattern of development that maintains the rural character of the Town, while providing and assuring many opportunities for investment and development in areas suited for these purposes.

Objectives:

Maintain and preserve the rural agricultural character of the Town by encouraging agricultural, residential, recreational and commercial land uses that are appropriate to the land and to the community setting, thereby ensuring a safe, healthy, sustainable and attractive community for the future.

Cooperate with the Amish population in areas of mutual concern.

Maintain and encourage the preservation of natural woodlands, wetlands, floodplains and the retention of productive farmland. Encourage development patterns for residential and commercial activities that minimize intrusion into natural areas and open spaces.

Guide new development into areas and patterns adequately served by transportation facilities, fire protection, and utilities and do not conflict, risk or interfere with the surrounding area, other developments or residents.

Preserve water quality and natural resources by conservation, erosion control measures and land use regulation.

A. Agriculture

Goal: To maintain, protect and promote, small and large farming, dairying and agricultural activities and ensure the viability of the Town's prime agricultural land and economy.

Objectives:

Support agricultural practices that minimize soil erosion, surface water runoff and contamination of the environment.

Use site development techniques to minimize the potential loss of prime agricultural land and disruption of farming operations from new non-farm development.

Limit the intrusion of municipal utilities, roads, power lines and other public investments in agricultural areas and districts except when required for public health and safety.

Agricultural areas should remain in agricultural usage whenever feasible.

The Town should support Cattaraugus County's Right-to-Farm Law and the goals and policies contained in the Cattaraugus County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan, which encourages farmland preservation.

B. Residential Development

Goal: To provide a suitable living environment and encourage the availability of a variety of housing types, including vacation and seasonal homes and building sites in appropriate areas of the Town. Provide sound planning and development techniques to encourage and promote the highest quality and safety of life for residents.

Objectives:

Protect residential areas from incompatible commercial and/or industrial development.

Promote residential development density compatible with the natural and physical environment, transportation, utility and available services that are adequate to satisfy family and social needs.

Require adherence to current local, New York State and International Construction Building Standards and Codes in the construction of new housing and promote the maintenance of sound existing housing in the Town.

Ensure that minimum lot size, currently five acres in the Town, will accommodate a private well and septic system. The Cattaraugus County Health department will ensure that the lot size is adequate for a septic system.

C. Industrial/Commercial Development

Goal: To encourage and promote business, commercial and industrial activities using sound planning techniques and Smart Growth principles to enhance and promote the economic stability of the area.

Objectives:

Encourage and permit the development of commercial activity, industrial, neighborhood businesses and services for the convenience of local residents.

Promote the development of home-based businesses to provide employment opportunities for local residents.

Encourage placement of retail and intensive commercial uses in areas that have adequate space and transportation facilities. Discourage strip commercial development along highways.

Require site plan review for all new commercial and industrial development to ensure proper site design, grading and drainage, off-street parking, building placement and traffic ingress and egress.

Maintain a balance between commercial and residential land uses, recognizing the essential rural residential character of the Town.

D. Recreation

Goal: To encourage and promote recreational facilities and activities, programs and plans to provide the community with safe and healthy activities and stimulate economic growth. The recreational needs of local residents and visitors to the area could best be served by enhancing the availability of sites and facilities within the Town.

Objectives:

Consider the recreational, social and activity needs of local people, ensuring adequate open space be reserved as development takes place.

Maintain the essential rural character of the Town by preserving natural woodlands, wetlands, flood plains, and productive farmland and concentrating high-density residential areas into patterns that minimize the intrusion into natural areas and open spaces.

Recognize the validity of various uses of land, such as agricultural, wooded areas, residential and recreational. Promote equal consideration of all classes of land use appropriate for the Town setting.

Guide new development into areas and patterns adequately served by roads, fire protection and utilities.

To develop a Town Park for the use of all Town Residents.

II. Land Use and Zoning

Goal: To prevent the town from "blight". Given a choice, most of us would choose to live in an attractive community. We like to see well maintained homes and a community that is free from blight and clutter. Inoperable cars and trucks, old appliances and other junk have a negative effect on the appearance of a community and on the outlook of the people who live there.

Objectives:

To make every effort to use, maintain and/or improve our existing infrastructure.

Future projects will be located in developed areas, or areas that are designated for development in the zoning regulations.

Participation in "community-based planning and collaboration, as well as "predictability in building and land use codes" will ensure that the residents of Otto will be treated fairly and equally.

III. Transportation

Goal: To maintain and promote the various modes of transportation that are currently available within the Town and encourage development of alternate modes beneficial to the majority of residents of this

community. Ensure maintenance and improvement of all local highways to provide safe, efficient, and economical travel within the community.

Objectives:

Periodically review the adequacy of Town roads and services in order to meet local needs.

Budget for and encourage maintenance, improvement and safety of vehicles, employees and equipment. Ensure repair and replacement of Town roads, bridges and culverts as needed in order to provide safe travel particularly in areas of increased traffic or new development.

Encourage developers, when planning and constructing private roads, to use Town road standards for grade, width, etc. Adhere to the policy of requiring proper standards of construction for all new roads. Any private roads (sub-division roads) need to meet proper standards to ensure fire protection.

Encourage the need for rural transportation services in the area for necessary travel outside the Town and for medical appointments of the increasing age of the Town population.

IV. Utilities

Goal: To ensure that homes, businesses and other land uses have access to adequate safe water supply and sewage disposal, electrical and other utility services as may be economically feasible. Encourage development of alternate methods of utility and energy resources which are energy efficient relying on natural resources without disturbing the balance of nature and the environment.

Objectives:

Require that on-lot water and sewage systems be in accordance with County and State Health Department requirements.

Require that central systems be in accordance with County and State health requirements in areas where natural conditions or development densities do not permit on-site water and sewage systems.

V. Environment & Conservation

Goal: To protect, maintain and enhance the natural rural character of the Town, by deliberative planning, to prevent expansion and development of activities which would have an adverse impact on the agricultural or residential character of the Town.

Objectives:

Encourage the retention of prime agricultural land and minimize the conversion of such land whenever possible.

Discourage development and prevent encroachment into the flood plain and wetlands. Maintain the existing watershed drainage courses in the Town.

Promote the retention of forestlands, especially on steep slopes, and encourage sound harvesting practices and reforestation.

Control the extent and location of sand, gravel mining resources, and require restoration procedures and buffer areas.

Promote and enforce local ordinances pertaining to littering, illegal dumping, improper burning or disposal of trash and brush, and dilapidated or unsafe buildings.

Utilize and support Local, County and State regulations and agencies to curtail air and water pollution. Avoid open burning in concentrated residential areas.

Promote developmental practices which maintain the slope and soil conditions of the land.

Protect the air and water quality in the Town while seeking to preserve the visual and biological qualities of natural areas, through conservation, erosion controls, land use regulation and other actions.

VI. Infrastructure

Goal: To plan for aging infrastructure of Town property

Objectives:

To demonstrate the feasibility of infrastructure projects and to provide accurate cost estimates before applying for financial assistance. Lack of this planning may prevent the Town from obtaining State and Federal funding.

VII. Economic Outlook

Goal: To facilitate, support, and create economic development in the Town, which will positively affect the community without negatively affecting the rural environment.

Objectives:

Encourage cottage industries, such as technology, teaching and manufacturing of crafts, skilled and unskilled services, spas, personal care salons, and Amish crafts and baked goods.

Develop and encourage tourism attractions and recreational activities with trails for hiking, biking, horse back riding, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, and motocross and promote hunting, fishing and boating.

Encourage agricultural markets for crops, organic foods, vegetables, fruit, dairy and cheese, grass fed beef, pork and open range poultry.

Encourage small scale timber harvesting and wood products.

Encourage bed and breakfast inns, development of day care facilities, pre-school, senior care, or home care and assisted programs or facilities, medical, physician and clinical services, machine repair, farm implement sales and service, and sales of other goods.

Encourage tourist and recreational attractions such as hunting, fishing, boating, hiking, cross country skiing, motocross, and horse back riding, snowmobiling, swimming, bowling, ice and roller skating, exercise spas, Amish crafts and baked goods.

Encourage, determine and develop shared services and positions between the Town, other municipalities and the Country to provide more comprehensive and economical services to Town residents.

Section 5 - Future Development Potential

The Town of Otto should encourage development of facilities and service programs for varying age levels of the population from pre-school to seniors.

Encourage development of medical, physician, emergency services and clinics; cottage industries, farm and garden produce stands; greenhouse plants; maple syrup products; tree services, fuel and vehicle repair service stations; specialty shops and stores; personal service and other service providers such as small machine shops and repair, plumbing, heating, carpentry industries, agri-industry, hi-tech companies (bio fuel or other), farm implement and recreational vehicle sales and services while maintaining our agricultural dominant community.

Investigate and encourage the development of cable and broadband internet services.

Encourage recreational and tourism activities.

Encourage medical and health care services, clinics, and housing that would be added assets.

Section 6 - Plan Summary & Implementation Strategies

The purpose and context of this Comprehensive Plan is to provide the basis for public policies and procedures that will promote orderly development and land use change. This Comprehensive Plan approach strives to be well balanced, recognized the needs of the people and protects the rural agricultural environment, residential, business, commercial and industrial areas of the Town of Otto.

Shared Service Policy and Agreements

We currently share many services with surrounding towns and the county, and will continue to do so.

Codes and Ordinances

It is recommended that a policy and procedure be adopted to ensure that all changes to local code revisions, amendments, and adoption be compiled and filed promptly in all copies of the Code Book of the Town of Otto. The adoption of the Town Codes, Uniform Fire and Building Codes, NYSC and ICC must occur promptly and regularly as changes occur to enable consistent and equal enforcement to avoid misunderstandings. (see Appendix A)

Telecommunications (Towers)

It is recommended that the Town of Otto consider adopting a zoning law regarding communication towers. It is recommended they are restricted as to height, wattage, etc.

Lithium Batteries

It is recommended that the Town of Otto adopt a zoning law regarding lithium batteries, and they must have a SEQR established by an engineering firm.

Wind Farms

It is recommended that the Town of Otto develop a policy to address the possibility of wind farms, while promoting, preserving, maintaining the aesthetic qualities of the environment and the residents' quality of life. It is recommended the Town assess, review and encourage all forms of energy efficient programs and systems that would be beneficial to the residents, and businesses of this area.

Commercial and Industrial Development

It is recommended that the Town of Otto encourage and promote commercial and industrial development to utilize appropriate areas within the Town.

Goals	Action Item	Timeline	Data Source	Responsibility
Section 4 – I - Community Character & Town Development				
Publish a business directory	Promote a business friendly environment that supports mixed use to encourage a strong economic base	2026	Public Records Public Survey	Planning Board
Section 4 – I - d Recreation				
Develop a town park	Feasibility of a Town Park, including acquiring land, obtaining money for essentials, determining upkeep for park	2026		Planning Board
Section 4 – II - Land Use & Zoning				
Fair zoning & regulations for both businesses and residents of the town	Continue to enforce NYS & local ordinances, including ADA regulations	Ongoing		Code Enforcement Officer
	Continue process to update all local zoning laws	Ongoing		Planning Board
	Encourage property owners and businesses to improve the appearance of their properties	Ongoing		Code Enforcement Officer
	Foster a business friendly attitude in local government	Ongoing		Town Board Planning Board
Section 5 - Plan Summary & Implementation Strategies				
Historical Society Building	Get deed transferred to the Town of Otto	2024		Town Board
	Create a committee for restoration	2024		Planning Board
	Obtain funding for restoration (grants)	2024		Restoration Committee
	Restoration	2026		Restoration Committee

Section 7 - Rural Rights

The following statement of "Rural Rights" defines what is meant by "rural" to the residents of this community. This statement shall be distributed to new landowners or to those applying for building permits or subdivision approval.

TOWN OF OTTO RURAL RIGHTS STATEMENT

The statements below assume that these rights are exercised with regard to the health and safety of neighboring properties in accordance with all applicable laws.

1. The right to own and maintain private property.
2. The right to conduct standard farming practices
3. The right to own and care for pets, animals and livestock.
4. The right to enjoy the quiet and fresh air of the countryside.
5. The right to expect roads will be maintained as they are: seasonal, gravel or paved and not expect upgrades unless in the best interest of the Town.
6. The right to maintain private driveways so as not to present a hazard to the road or other drivers.
7. The right to accept that creeks, streams, and wetlands were here first and may change course or overflow into natural floodplains.
8. The right to run for public office, or volunteer as a firefighter, planning board, appeals board member or other community service post.
9. The right to respect and protect the land, natural habitat, plants and wildlife.
10. The right to respect and treat neighbors as one would expect to be treated.

Section 8 – Appendixes

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**Location
of the
Town of Otto
in Cattaraugus County, New York**



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