Charlotte, Vermont
Charlotte Four Corners / West Village
Sources of information:

Publications:

*Around the Mountains, Historical Essays About Charlotte, Ferrisburgh and Monkton* by William Wallace Higbee

*Busy Work, Stories of S. Russell Williams,* published in 1980 by the Charlotte Historical Society

*Gazetteer and Business Directory of Chittenden County,* Hamilton Child, 1882-83

*Look Around Hinesburg and Charlotte, Vermont* by Lilian Baker Carlisle, Editor

*Walking Tour of the West Village of Charlotte (The Four Corners)* with appendices regarding selected miscellaneous historical facts and locations in Charlotte, compiled by Francis J. Thornton, 2005

Online resources:

The Charlotte News archives

Library of Congress Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers

U.V.M. Landscape Change Program

Photos:

*Charlotte Historical Photos,* Compiled by the Charlotte Land Trust with the generous loan of images by Charlotte residents, Produced by Perceptions, Inc. 2003.

The collection of Nancy Sabin, photos by Wallace McNeil

Also:

Charlotte Historical Society and other town historians
Detail from the 1860 view of West Charlotte and Lake Champlain by Daniel Folger Bigelow in the collection of the Shelburne Museum.
1869 Map of Charlotte Four Corners and Charlotte Centre from the F.W. Beers Atlas of Chittenden County Vermont
Charlotte

Subscriber's Business Directory.

Alexander E. ... Dealer in Dry Goods, Groceries, Hardware, Crockery, Glassware, Boots and Shoes, Clothing, Drugs, School Books and Stationery, and cash Paid for Country Produce, Charlotte

Bates, A. ... Proprietor of Hotel, Point Pleasant

Byington A. A. ... Farmer, Dist No 8

Barber Lewis ... Farmer and Dairyman, Dist No 5

Barton C E. ... Farmer and Dairyman, Dist No 7

Clark C W ... Pastor of Cong Church, Charlotte Centre

Cook, C. B. ... Farmer, Dist No 2

Carpenter H. J. ... Farmer, Dist No 1

Dart D. M. ... Farmer, Dist No 6

Dean J. M. ... Farmer, Dist No 11

Edgerton A. ... Carpenter and Builder, "Floral Cottage," Charlotte

Eaton L. R. ... Farmer, "Point Pleasant"

Foot G. A. ... Farmer and Dairyman, Dist No 10

Ferris W. M. ... Farmer and Dairyman, Dist No 11

Field F. H. ... Farmer, Dist No 10

Holmes John ... Fruit Farmer, Dist No 8

Hill T. C. ... Farmer, Dist No 3

Hoeford W. E. ... Farmer, Dist No 9

Hazard Oscar ... Farmer and Dairyman, Dist No 11

Leavenworth Burk ... Farmer, Dist No 8

Lake D. C. ... Farmer, Dist No 15

McNeil James B. ... Farmer, "Lake View" Dist No 1

Newton R. ... Farmer, "Lake Side," Dist No 1

Palmer A C. ... Farmer and Dairyman, Dist No 14

Palmer O. C. ... Farmer and Dairyman, Dist No 14

Quinlan John ... Farmer, Cattle Dealer and Dairyman, Dist No 7

Root Noble A. ... Farmer, Dist No 4

Root H. C. ... Farmer, Dist No 5

Rawson C. L. ... Carpenter and Builder, Dist No 7

Read O P ... Farmer, Dist No 10

Stone L. D. ... Farmer and Dairyman, Dist No 5

Squier James ... Farmer, Dist No 6

Scott Wm. J. ... Carpenter and Joiner, and Butter Tub Manufacturer, Dist No 7

Thorp Henry ... Farmer, Dist No 8

Thorp J. G. & J. H. ... Farmers, Dist No 1

Varney W. H. H. ... Physician and Surgeon, Baptist Corners

Van Vliet ... Farmer, "Prospect View," Dist No 15

Wing M. E. ... Observer for Agl. Dept. at Washington, Dist No 2

Whalley S. ... Farmer, "Maple Cottage," Dist No 2

Whalley Thomas ... Farmer, Dist No 2

Wicker Ira B. ... Farmer, Dist No 8

Wilder John C. ... Farmer, Dist No 15

Williams Myron N. ... Farmer, Dist No 4

Willis Ed ... Proprietor of Washington Hotel, Charlotte
$5000 Fire at Charlotte

Whole Village Was Threatened With Destruction

Barre Daily Times, May 18, 1910

“great showers of sparks were blowing toward the north”

*Busy Work, Stories of S. Russell Williams*
Charlotte, Vt.
Chittenden County
July, 1915
Surveyed and Published by
Sanborn Map Co.
for the Mutual Fire Ins. Co’s of Vt.
Population 150
Prevailing winds N.W.
Water Facilities: None
Fire Dept: None
Streets not paved, No street lights

Fire Insurance Maps of Vermont
THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT LIBRARIES
Digital Collections

This collection contains large-scale maps of Vermont villages and cities produced to give fire insurance companies and underwriters accurate information about insured properties.
Photos of the West Village
1921 view of West Charlotte
1941 aerial photo from the U.V.M. Landscape Change Program
Post Offices in the West Village

Between 1790 and 1875 there was only one post office in Charlotte, at Charlotte Centre. A post office was located in East Charlotte from 1875 to 1912. Post offices on Thompson’s Point and Cedar Beach provided mail service for summer residents in the early 1900s. The Cedar Beach general delivery case is currently on display at the Charlotte Library, on loan from the Charlotte Historical Society.

1879-1916 Mrs. Nancy C. Pope (later Nancy C. Bush) served as postmaster in the office located on Ferry Road opposite the Brick Store.
1911 - Rural Free Delivery was introduced in West Charlotte
Circa 1915 - The office was moved across Ferry Road (now the residence at 260 Ferry Road).
1936 - Office was relocated to Greenbush Road. Frederick Horsford was postmaster from 1936 to 1941
1957 - Office moved to Ferry Road, William Bushey, Postmaster
1992 - Present office building constructed on Ferry Road
The Brick Store

While it is not known when the first store opened in this location, it is known that the store burned in 1840 while under the ownership of Noble Lovely. The current structure was built by business partners Dr. Luther Stone, Ami Stone and William Wright in 1850. There were several owners over the next 60 years.

In 1904, Stanton Williams took over ownership of the store. His son Wilson (Bill) Williams took over in 1934. He ran the store for 41 years, retiring in 1975. The store has changed hands several times in recent years, but all owners have maintained the historic character of the building.
Tina Duyette, telephone operator
From the minutes of the 1920 Town Meeting regarding a resolution to honor those who served in WWI

Thirty four boys went forth from among us to swell the numbers that our country was sending overseas, and to secure a suitable bronze tablet containing the names of our boys will cost about $350.

Your committee further recommends that a Roll of honor upon a bronze tablet be purchased and be placed on the wall of the Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted

J.K. Palmer
Geo. W, Prindle

It was moved that the report of the Memorial Committee be accepted and approved that the Committee be continued with full authority to buy and erect a memorial as suggested and that the Town Treasurer be authorized and ordered to pay the cost of said memorial but under no circumstances shall the amount paid exceed $350. Motion was carried.

A few years later the tablet was moved and placed on a monument at the intersection of Greenbush Road and Ferry Road. The Monument includes the names of 37 Charlotte veterans. 3 died in service from complications of the Spanish flu.

“We hold that the right to govern is with and by the consent of the governed”

Inscription at the bottom of the tablet
The Charlotte Female Seminary / Lake View Seminary

The Charlotte Female Seminary was organized on May 1, 1835 and the building erected in the following year. It prospered until 1840 when it was purchased by the Methodist Episcopal Society. A Select School continued until the building was destroyed by fire in 1880. By volunteer subscription a new building was constructed.

A public school was located on Greenbush Road north and can be seen on the 1869 Beers map. It is believed that School #5 or the “Barton School” burned. The Lake View Seminary became part of the public school system in 1895 and remained in use until the Central School opened in 1949.
Charlotte Female Seminary

FEMALE SEMINARY

This Institution will be open, under the superintendence of the New Board of Trustees, on Wednesday, the 6th of May next, at Charlotte Four Corners, Vt. The department of instruction is committed to the charge of Miss ELIZA HITCHCOCK.

Whose competency to instruct in all the branches usually taught in similar institutions is undisputed. Should public approval be sufficiently encouraging, an assistant teacher will be employed.

Terms of Tuition per quarter, as follows:
- English studies, including the higher branches: $4.00
- French, Latin, and Greek, each, etc.: $1.00
- Painting and Drawing, each, etc.: $1.00

Board can be obtained in pleasant families, contiguous to the Seminary, for $1.50 per week, without board, and with it for $2.75. Each quarter will consist of eleven weeks, and the school will continue for two quarters before there will be a vacation.

As this establishment has been transferred to the patronage of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Trustees make their appeal to their friends and the public in its behalf, that they may be enabled creditably to sustain it.

Young Ladies wishing to enter the Seminary as students, are recommended to call on Rev. J. C. Rice, by whom they will be introduced to families for board. The following gentlemen constitute the board of Trustees:

Rev. M. BATES, T. C. HILL, Esq.
- C. PRINCE, R. S. WHITE
- A. C. RICE, B. MERCER
- H. DUNN, R. H. REDD, Esq.
Dr. L. STONE, S. H. TUPPER

Charlotte, April 10, 1839.

Champlain and St. Lawrence R. R.

The original Seminary Building on South Greenbush Rd. at the Four Corners, built in 1836. It served as a Female Seminary then a Methodist School until 1880 when it burned. Charlotte Memorial Museum Collection.
The Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in 1801 by Rev. Ebenezer Washburn, and the first church completed in 1823. The Church and parsonage burned down in 1837 and the brick church built in 1840. The Breezy Point Library was established in 1899.

After a storm damaged the building in 1950, it was purchased by and moved to the Shelburne Museum. Other Charlotte buildings at the Museum include the “Stagecoach Inn” and log house referred to as the Settlers’ House.
Detail of 1915 map showing the Library and Lakeview Creamery
Destructive Fire at Charlotte.

A destructive fire took place at the village of Charlotte on Thursday the 9th instant, at about 10 o’clock, A. M. It appears the fire originated in the Methodist meeting-house, where some ashes had been not very carefully (or rather carelessly) left, containing embers or live coals of fire. The meeting-house was entirely consumed, together with some two or three dwelling-houses standing north of it in the immediate vicinity, and some sheds, &c. were destroyed. Two small dwelling houses, occupied by French families, were razed to the ground in order to check the further progress of the devouring element,—otherwise it is very probable it would have extended to the entire corner north, sweeping a godly number of other dwellings, as well as Mr. Martin’s store. Loss estimated $4000.—One building insured.

This unpleasant event, we think, should well be taken as a hint by every one to be careful how they leave hot ashes in or about buildings which may be endangered thereby.—Middlebury Free Press.

Vermont telegraph, May 24, 1837

Breezy Point Library around 1908
The Lake View Creamery building can be seen in the background.
Lake View Creamery

The Chittenden County and City of Burlington Directory for 1902-03 (Union Publishing Company) had the following listings for Charlotte:

Creameries: Lake View Creamery, Main St., Crystal Spring Creamery, East Charlotte.

Employees of the Lake View Creamery included:

Beach William V., butter maker at lake View Creamery, h Main cor Depot
Colt, Stephen, emp Lake View Creamery, h Main st
RUSSELL SIDNEY E. (S.E. Russell & Co.), and mgr of Lake View Creamery, h Main st
Lake View Creamery butter prints from the collection of the Charlotte Historical Society
Slate in Charlotte.

John Bradshaw, of Chicago, is superintending the experimental opening of a probable slate quarry on the L. D. Stone farm in Charlotte. That an immense slate deposit exists on this and adjoining farms there is no doubt, and Mr. Bradshaw and F. H. Horsford are spending some time in blasting down the solid rock to find out something of the quality of stone underneath. When the deep well for the Lake View creamery was being drilled, the drillers went over 180 feet in solid black slate, so far as they could judge. The ridge where they are now blasting is about a quarter of a mile north of the creamery.

Middlebury Register, August 21, 1903
The Depot Area

“A convenient mode of transportation for the abundant crops is afforded by the Rutland Branch of the Central Vermont Railroad, which extends through the western part of the town from the north to the south, with a station about one-half mile west of Charlotte Four Corners, on road 18. The advent of this road, in 1847-49, considerably increased the commercial interests of the locality, even though it was objected to by some at the time.”

Gazetteer and Business Directory of Chittenden County, Hamilton Child, 1882-83
Grist Mill, General Store and Livery can be seen on the west side of the tracks; freight and passenger depot and stores on the east side.
Wilbur Field’s hay-barn and hay-press / Charlotte Feed and Mercantile Co.

According to the 1882-3 Child’s Gazetteer and Business Directory, Wilbur Field’s hay-barn and hay-press “receives and presses about 700 tons of hay annually.”

The building was occupied by L.W. Kellogg as a feed mill and store when the buildings and contents were destroyed by a midnight fire in April of 1910. A Burlington Free Press article from 1915 reported that the grist mill at the Charlotte Feed and Mercantile company was operating and ready for business.

Burlington Weekly Free Press - April 28, 1910
“Hattie Spear, my grandmother had a store in front end of this building about 1914.”

Susan Horsford
Charlotte Railroad Crossing

Aunt Cora, myself and Katie.
Taken in 1927 - in Charlotte, Vermont

Left to right:
Cora Whalley (Mrs. Tom Whalley, Hugh Lewis' grandmother)
Jessie Williams (Mrs. Ezra Williams)
Harriet Spear - Mrs. Will Spear (mother of Ruth & Bill Spear)
On the 1915 map, the Slawson Decker Co. Milk Station and a structure being built are shown on the southwest corner of the crossing.
RUTLAND RAILROAD
CHARLOTTE VT.
LEASE TO
SHEFFIELD FARMS CO.
SCALE 1"=50' APRIL 9-1919.
RUTLAND RAILROAD
CHARLOTTE VERMONT
LOCATION FOR WAREHOUSE FOR
RICHMOND GRAIN CO. INC.
SCALE 1" = 50' JAN. 27, 22

Area 1300 sq ft shown Green
Sheffield Farms Slawson Decker Milk Station

“At one time there were cheese factories, but the main outlet finally became the CREAMERY. It was up to each farmer to transport milk to the creamery each day. This he did with his milk wagon and one horse. Later when the S.F.S.D. established their MILK PLANT, pickup trucks and larger vehicles were used, and the milk wagon disappeared. “

Busy Work, Stories of S. Russell Williams
TAKING MILK TO THE CREAMERY, SUMMER
1942 aerial photo from the UVM
Landscape Change Program
The West Charlotte Cheese Factory was organized in 1873. According to Child’s Gazetteer and Business Directory, in 1882 the cheese factory was receiving the milk of 300-400 cows and manufacturing about 40,000 pounds of cheese per year. After 1882 the site was used by A. E. Edgerton as a joiner’s shop and later in the 1800s as Alanson Edgerson & Sons’ Cider Mill. The cider mill was operated by horse power and turned out 20 barrels of cider per day.
Cider Mill at the base of Church Hill owned by N.D. Edgerton

“Near the foot of the meeting-house hill and where Edgerton’s cider mill now stands, was a distillery, and the plot of land surrounding it is designated in Charlotte land records as the “old still lot.””

W.W. Higbee in 8 January 1897 article
Some Village Houses
Drs. Frank and Fred Falby were twin brothers and respected doctors, Frank in Charlotte and Fred in Richmond. This house was built around 1890 in the Queen Ann Style popular in the late 1800s, and according to family accounts was modeled after a house Frank Falby saw in Georgia during a trip to the south. It was originally painted green.
Horsford House

This house has the date of 1796 on the porch lintel. A portion of the house may have been built between 1786 and 1791. It was owned by a Mrs. Irish in 1869, Dr. J. Strong in 1882 and then owned by the Sidney E. Russell family. Under ownership of the Horsford family, the post office was located here from 1936-1941.
Barton Tavern

The building was constructed as a tavern in 1810-11 by Joseph Barton. The second floor is referred to as a “swing floor”, sprung floor or spring floor built for dancing. The floor of the Charlotte tavern moved to the Shelburne Museum in the 1950s is currently being restored. This “floating floor” creates a space between the floor and the beams underneath to allow flexibility. Jeremiah Barton constructed an identical tavern on Ethan Allen Highway near Higbee Road. The telephone exchange was located here for a short period of time.
Abbey-Moore House
Your comments and questions may be sent to jenny@charlottepubliclibrary.org