

- Hamlet of Beaver Falls
- Hamlet of Belfort
- Hamlet of Indian River
- Hamlet of Naumburg
- Village of Croghan
- Beartown
- Forest City
- French Settlement
- Gooville
- Jerden (Jordon) Falls
- Long Pond
- Prussian Settlement
- Sisterfield

Highlighting the Town of Croghan History

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A Brief History of the Town of Croghan

The Town of Croghan has a rich and unique history with the struggles and hardships of the first settlers down to our present day residents. Life has become easier but may be more stressful.

The Town of Croghan is a large township with over 111,018 acres. The rivers—Beaver, Black, Indian River, and Oswegatchie—flow through or like the Beaver River and Black River create some of the boundaries of the town. The natural resource, water, as well as the forests made it possible for tanneries to operate here. There were five tanneries here at one time. One was in Beaver Falls, two in Croghan, one in Belfort and one in Jerden (Jordon Falls).

Other industries were able to locate here due to water power and the natural resources that are available.

The Town and the Village was named after George Croghan who was from Locust Grove, Kentucky. He was known for his military battles at the battle of Tippecanoe and the sieges of Fort Meigs and Fort Stephenson in the War of 1812.

Two names were presented in a bill at the State level of either naming this township Tippecanoe or New France. On the third reading in the house, the name of Croghan was substituted and that is what our town has been called since.

In March 1848 part of the Town of Croghan was lost when the Town of New Bremen was formed. Kirchnerville was at one time in the Town of Croghan but is now a hamlet in the Town of New Bremen.

Bent's Settlement, now known as the hamlet of Indian River, may have been one of the earliest settlements in the town. In 1824 Thomas W. Bent from Watson had a farm here. At one time there was a cheese factory, a Methodist-Episcopal Church, a Catholic Church, St. Anthony de Padua Church, a hotel, a grange hall, a post office and a school. In the late 1900's, Veronica Terrillion, a folk artist created statues and figures out of cement, created a spot in her yard with her sculptures dotting the landscape. Many people would stop and visit with her and tour her yard. The Methodist-Episcopal Church no longer stands. The Catholic Church was sold and converted into a store. The grange hall is a private residence. The cheese factory is gone and the Indian River Hotel burned. Abel's Landscape and Eddie's Meat Market are the two businesses here. Eddie's make a Croghan style baloney and sells meat and cheese.

In 1830 P. Somerville Stewart moved to Belfort and built a saw mill and store and brought in settlers. He later erected a grist mill. Two of the buildings were consumed by fire in 1833. A post office was located here and during the years there were two stores, a tannery, grange hall, school, grist mill, saw mill, a carpet store and the home of the Beaver River Trading Company. a Catholic Church, St. Vincent de Paul.



General George Croghan, our town's namesake

Inside this issue:

A Brief History of the Town of Croghan	2
A Brief History of the Town of Croghan 125 Years Ago	4
100 Years Ago	4
50 Years Ago	4
From the Farmhouse Kitchen/ Invitation	5
Pictures Around the Town of Croghan	6



This Catholic Church is considered to be the oldest this side of the Mohawk Valley. At Christmas time, a Christmas service has been held here. The church closed its doors in June 1989.

The Wetmore Electric Company started here and Taylorville, a power plant, is located about two miles from Belfort. With the Beaver River flowing through this hamlet, the use of its natural resource has been important. There was a Methodist Church here at one time and then became known as Gospel Hall. The church building was torn down.

Beaver Falls was originally known as Rohr's Mills and then Beaverton. When it came time to have a Post Office here, Beaverton was a post office in another location, so the name was changed to Beaver Falls. The tannery was one of the first industries here with papermaking eventually being the main manufacturing business. Today there is located in the hamlet Omniafiltra LLC, Interface Solutions, Inc., Beaver Falls library, Beaver Falls Fire Department, three churches (United Methodist, Salem Christian Fellowship Church and New Life Fellowship Church), Beaver Falls Grange, which is still active, Co-Gen Plant, Beaver Inn which opened a restaurant in 2015 and Beaver River Health Center. During the summer the Beaver River Recreation Association provides a place for area residents to come and swim. This small hamlet continues to be active.



St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church



The J.P. Lewis Mill now home to Interface Solutions Inc.. Date of photo unknown.



Beaverite Products, Beaver Falls—2001

The Hamlet of Naumburg had a school, blacksmith shop, a hotel, three churches, and a post office among the farming community. Today there is the Naumburg Hotel, Naumburg Mennonite Church, Beaver Valley Methodist Church and Pine Grove Mennonite Church as well as the River Valley Mennonite School, a body shop and B&H Sawing. In 2015 the one-lane VanAmber Bridge was removed and a two-lane bridge was built. The Naumburg area was known as Prussian Settlement due to many people coming here from Prussia and Germany.



River Valley Mennonite School—2001



Pine Grove Mennonite Church—2001

The Village of Croghan was known as French Settlement. In the spring of 1906 it became incorporated and the first officers of the village were: Honorable T.B. Basselin, president, Dr. P.H. VonZierolshofen and Dr. I.D. Spencer trustees and S.R. Virkler was the treasurer. Part of the Village of Croghan is located in the Town of Croghan and a part in the Town of New Bremen. There are two museums here: American Maple Museum and the Railroad Historical Society of Northern New York (RHSNNY). There is a post office, Croghan Free Library, Croghan Fire Department, Croghan Meat Market where the famous Croghan baloney is made, Wishy's noted for its ice cream, Croghan Island Mill, plus many small businesses.



The former T.B. Basselin home, Main St., Croghan—2001

There is a wealth of history in the Town of Croghan that is not included here. In the next issue of **HIGHLIGHTING THE TOWN OF CROGHAN HISTORY** we will be bringing some more snippets of our town's rich history. Each day history is being made for what we do today will be history tomorrow.



St. Stephen's Catholic Church, Croghan—2001

As you drive towards Croghan, you can see the red steeple of St. Stephens and you know that the Village is close by. One of the Town of Croghan landmarks.

1891—125 Years Ago

Lewis County Democrat—June 10, 1891: “George Bushwa, of Croghan, works in the bark woods on a job four miles north of the village and goes home every Saturday night. When he reached the Texas road last Saturday evening, he discovered an old bear and two large cubs. He succeeded in killing all of them with his rifle and secured their pelts.”

The Journal and Republican—February 12, 1891: “Beaver Falls—M. R. Lefevre has over 3,000 cords of bark at his tannery and there is considerable more to be drawn.

-The pulp company are putting in large stock of wood and logs this winter. (Beaver Falls)

-Quarterly meeting services were held at the Evangelical church last Sunday by Rev. Mr. Holsworth of Syracuse. (Beaver Falls)”

The Journal and Republican—July 23, 1891. Croghan News: “Blackberries and red raspberries are plenty this year.”

Lewis County Democrat—July 1, 1891: “On Sunday last Daniel Cleveland and J. Johnson, of Jerden Falls, were arrested by Game

Protector Moyer and Deputy Sheriff Carroll for violations of the game law. They were charged with catching and selling trout less than six inches in length. The case was settled by defendants paying \$94, including costs. Mr. Moyer is very prompt in prosecuting offenders, and has done much, in the past three years to lessen the number of violations of the game law.”



1916—100 Years Ago

The Journal and Republican—January 6, 1916—The fair for the benefit of the village, under the auspices of Croghan Fire Co. No. 1 will be held in the opera house, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, January 27, 28, and 29. There will be a grand display of fancy articles, and several new attractions will be introduced. The Victrola which is being demonstrated at the moving pictures Saturday evenings is a very good one and will be among the articles to be disposed of

during the fair. In order to make the fair the grand success which it justly merits the co-operation of all will be necessary.”

The Journal and Republican—February 3, 1916: “The three nights fair for the benefit of the village, under the auspices of Croghan Fire Co. No. 1, was brought to a successful close Saturday evening. The proceeds of the fair was \$530. The committee in charge deserve great credit for their

skillful management and for the successful termination of their efforts.”

The Journal and Republican—January 13, 1916: Croghan News—”W.L. Waterhouse has sold his cement blacksmith shop to Joseph F. Farney, and in turn Mr. Waterhouse has purchased of Mr. Farney a residence on Church street in Lowville. Mr. Waterhouse expects to move to Lowville in the spring.”



1966—50 Years Ago

The Journal and Republican—January 6, 1966—Naumburg News: “Theodore Wisner, dog enumerator of the Town of Croghan, has filed the dog census for the year with the town clerk. The report shows 365 dogs were enumerated.”

The Journal and Republican—June 39, 1966—Croghan News: There were 13 young men and women who were the last graduating class of Father Leo Memorial

High School, Croghan. The high school closed at the end of the term. Diplomas were presented on June 25. The Most Rev. Thomas A. Donnellan, Bishop of the Diocese of Ogdensburg was the speaker. Those graduating were Colleen Andre, Timothy Schack, Sally Bush, David Nortz, valedictorian, Carl Hoppel, Christine Andre, Robert Hoppel, Lorraine Snyder, Marjorie Chartrand, Robert Adams, Mary Ann

Owens, Randall Davis and Joyce Gerow.

The Journal and Republican—April 7, 1966—A&P ad shows whole or half hams @ 79 cents a lb.; Medium white eggs @ 99 cents a dozen; fresh asparagus @ 29 cents a lb.; elbow macaroni—2lbs. @ 39 cents a package. Prices have gone up over the years for our groceries.



From the Farmhouse Kitchen

Sometimes we don't always have the ingredients on hand to make a frosting but here is a cake recipe that a frosting is not needed.

Poor Man's Cake

1 cup brown sugar
1 cup water
1 tsp. butter or oleo
1 1/2 cup flour
3 tsp. baking powder
1 cup sugar
1/2 tsp. salt
1 tsp. vanilla
3/4 cup milk

On bottom of deep dish or bread pan, put 1 cup brown sugar, water and 1 teaspoon butter or oleo.

Mix the rest of the ingredients and pour on top. Bake at 375 degrees.

As spring approaches, the sugar maples are tapped and maple syrup is produced by the sugar makers in our area whether it is from a large sugar bush or from a small one-man operation. Here is a recipe for using that golden maple syrup.

Maple Pralines

Stir over medium heat till sugar is dissolved. Let cook till 230 degrees:

1 cup sugar
2/3 cup milk
1/2 cup maple syrup

Add 2 tablespoons butter. Continue cooking to 234 degrees; remove from heat; add: 3/4 cup nuts.

Let stand 1-3 minutes,

then beat by hand till cloudy. Drop by teaspoon on waxed paper or aluminum foil.

Another recipe using maple syrup:

Maple Syrup Cookies

Sift dry ingredients into a large bowl:

3 cups flour
1/3 cup sugar

1 tsp. salt

1 tsp. soda

1/4 tsp. nutmeg

Cut in: 3/4 cup shortening.

Combine: 1 1/3 cup maple syrup and 1 Tbsp. vinegar

Add and mix well. Add 1/2 cup chopped pecans or walnuts. Drop on cookie sheet and bake at 400 degrees 10-12 minutes.

An Invitation to the 175th Anniversary of the Town of Croghan

You are Cordially Invited

To the 175th Anniversary of the Town of Croghan

Saturday, April 9, 2016

11:00 am—4:00 pm

Town of Croghan Municipal Building

9882 State Route 126

Beaver Falls, New York

Guest Speakers—Historical Displays—Light Refreshments



Beaver Falls Grange was placed on the State and National Register of Historic Places in 2015.



This photo by H.M. Beach shows the bark houses at Jerden (Jordan) Falls. There will be a program on “Tanneries in the Town of Croghan” on January 23, 2016 given by Neil Keib from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm at the Beaver River High School Auditorium. Everyone is invited to attend.



Bald Mountain House now known as Widrick's Lodge, Oswegatchie FFA Camp, Long Pond.



Forest City School, District #20. The old district #20 school burned January 27, 1936. This building was build circa 1937/38. Today this building is a private home.

**Town of Croghan
Historian's Office**

Town of Croghan Historians
Mary Sweeney
and
Laurie Halladay

History must stay open,
it is all humanity. —
William Carlos Williams,
(1883-1963)

The Town of Croghan Historian's Office is located at the Town of Croghan Municipal Office, 9882 State Route 126, Beaver Falls, New York. If you have any questions or additions to the articles in this newsletter, please feel free to contact Mary Sweeney's home phone:

(315) 346-6201

This and previous newsletters can also be downloaded from Town of Croghan web site:

www.townofcroghan.com

If there is a special topic you would like to see in a newsletter or if an error has been made, please let Mary Sweeney or Laurie Halladay know.

Thank you.

Mary Sweeney and Laurie Halladay

From the Desk of the Town Historian

This year is a special year in the Town of Croghan's history. The Town of Croghan was formed 175 years ago on April 5, 1841. The Town will mark this special event on April 9, 2016 at the Town of Croghan Municipal Building, 9882 State Route 126, Beaver Falls from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm.

The 175th Anniversary Committee is busy making plans for this momentous event. Presently the Lewis County Dairy Princess will be present along with various

government dignitaries. There is to be a stamp cancellation. Cake and light refreshments will be served. Historical displays along with PowerPoint presentation of the Schools in the Town of Croghan—highlighting the country schools.

We also have other events in the planning stages.

Leading up to April 9th, there will be several programs.

January 23, 2016—In the Beaver River High School Auditorium from 2:00 pm to

4:00 pm—Neil Keib will present a program on "Tanneries in the Town of Croghan". There were five tanneries here at one time.

February 28, 2016—time and program will be announced. It will held at the Maple Museum.

March—time, date and place will be announced. The topic will be on the Mennonite Heritage in the township and surrounding areas.

April 9—Keep watch for more details on this event. Hope to see you at all of the events.