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# Highlighting Town of Croghan History

**Volume 3, Issue 2**

**July-December 2011**

## Croghan District 6 - 'Rock Bound School'

In this issue we are highlighting another Town of Croghan country school which was located on the Old State Road near the Branagan Road. This school is in the Carthage School District. District 6 was perched on the north side of the road and was set on a shelf of rock scarcely large enough to hold it, with a cliff rising on one side and a drop-off of 10 feet on the other. From its vantage point, looking west, is obtained a commanding view of Croghan farming country.

This was not the first Number Six school, and the school site itself is of recent origin, compared with the age of the other sites. District No. 6 was established May 10, 1851. Its territory was taken from Districts 16, 4 and 7, as they were then numbered. On April 2, 1877, the whole of the eastern portion of District 6 was separated and formed into a new district to be known as No. 19. A schoolhouse was then erected behind the home of William Sheldon (in the area where William Meyer lives today). The life span of No. 19 was 24 years, at the end of which, in 1901, it was divided among the adjoining districts. Number 19 was dissolved and the western portion was given back to District 6, the eastern portion to District No. 4, with Swiss creek as the dividing line. The reorganized District 6 was directed to erect a new school building, for a cost not to exceed \$500.

Apparently the schoolhouse of No. 19 was moved from its location on the Sheldon farm and set on a new foundation at the site first described in this article. About this time, or very soon after, the old schoolhouse of District 6 burned. This was said to be the second fire on the old site, a former building having burned some 20 years before. District No. 6 seems to be harassed by fire, for in 1938 the No. 6 school burned for the third time and never opened again. The district received \$700 insurance and placed it in the bank. The No. 6 school was in operation for 87 years, for three years in the 1930's when the pupils were transported.

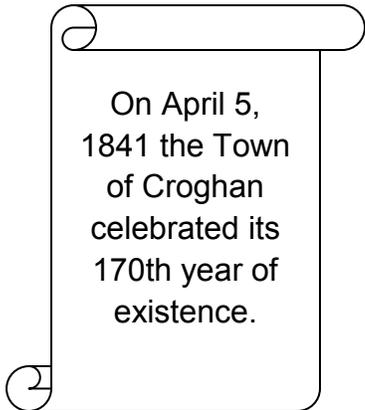
Lizzie Branagan, Nellie Cruikshank, Nora VanDuzee and Kate Murray were known to have taught in the No. 6 school before 1900. Among those who taught prior to 1913 were Anna Strife, Celia Hoch, Belle Shay, Lena Belcher, Agnes Shay, Hazel Ramsay, Amelia Pate and Vera Honer.

The roll of teachers beginning in 1913 was as follows: 1913-15, Alice M. Filer; 1915-17, Walter H. Noblet; 1917-18, Mrs. Kathleen Connelly; 1918-19, Mrs. Marie B. Bintz; 1919-20, Ceolia F. Walsemann; 1921-22, Grace S. Bintz; 1923-24, Ceolia Walsemann; 1924-25, Mabel Waggoner; 1925-28, Anna Sweeney; 1928-30, Kathleen Connelly; 1930-31, Mrs. Minnie Rounds; 1934-35, Mrs. Rose M. Smith; 1935-36, Mrs. Minnie Rounds; 1936-37, Gabrielle Simonin; 1937-38, Gabrielle Simonin and Mrs. Claude Gill.

When District No. 6 passed out of existence July 1, 1954, the town of Croghan was without this district for the first time in 103 years. The district survived division and fire,

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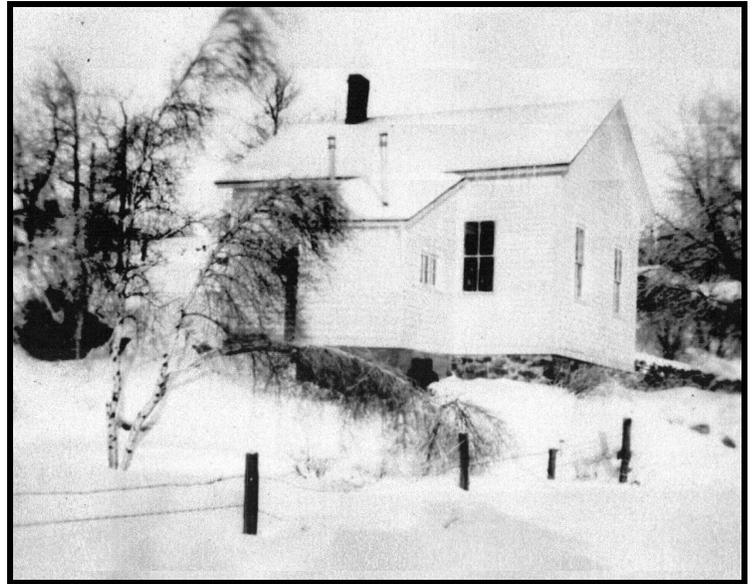
## CROGHAN DISTRICT 6 - 'ROCK BOUND SCHOOL' cont.

but it was powerless to fight alone the rising cost of education, or to meet the ever higher standards demanded of the state.

Note: The last officers of District 6 were Floyd Branagan, trustee; Mrs. Branagan, clerk; and Milton Walsemann, collector. Members of the Branagan family were included among the taxpayers from first to last; The Branagan homestead is located near both sites of the No. 6 school.

(Source: Thirty-Two into One: the Schools That Became the Carthage Central School District)

*(Picture at the right is a photograph of Rock Bound School, date unknown. How the name of the school was arrived at is plain to see as it is situated on rock.)*



## BEAVER FALLS BEACH

With the hot days of summer approaching, one thinks of cooling off in the swimming hole. This article appeared in the JOURNAL AND REPUBLICAN, July 28, 1955 in OVER THE RIVER by Ralph N. Van Arnam:

"The other morning at 11 am. I watched the small fry getting their daily swimming instruction at the local beach under the able tutelage of Miss Monnat. She has over 80 pupils. It is impressive to see about half a hundred kids lined up in the water and being put through their paces in unison. It reminded me once more of the advantages which the kids enjoy today. Since World War I hardly a kid of either sex has grown up in Beaver Falls without becoming an adept swimmer. Surely the children here cannot complain of boredom and nothing to do for amusement. This Over the River country is fine territory in which to raise children. With all this wholesome sports activity there is not so much incentive to indulge in juvenile delinquency as besets our less fortunate youngsters in the cities. It was a little different in my time. We kids had no instruction in swimming or any other sport. We learned to swim, if at all, in back of the old red pulpmill, which has been gone these many years. I well remember my first swim in the Beaver River. I was in the water in back of the pulpmill with the late Louis Stoffle and Leighton Van Arnam. On this horrid day, I lost my footing on those slippery rocks, was caught by the swift current and swept under the railroad bridge into what was then the J.P. Lewis Co. millpond. It was a case of sink or swim, so I swam, while Louie stood in the water upstream convulsed with laughter at my discomfiture. That is how my generation learned to swim."

Times change and today kids learn to swim in school and the beach opens during the summer and gives swimming lessons. It is a place for all ages to go and swim with lifeguards on duty. There is a place to picnic, a playground and a place to play volleyball.

### Cemetery Documentation

Volunteers are still needed to help with documenting and photographing the cemetery stones in the Town of Croghan. There are 14 cemeteries plus one mausoleum in the Township. This project will not be completed this year as it will take time. If you are interested in preserving some of the town's history, please feel free to contact us for more information. Volunteers are important and we appreciate all the help we can get. We presently have two volunteers.

## FROM THE FARMHOUSE KITCHEN

In August and September before farm equipment got bigger and the combine and chopper wagons appeared, cutting oats and corn was a farming community effort. Usually one person owned the threshing machine and would go from farm to farm. The farmers worked together at each of the farms getting the crops in. It was a time of hard work, conversation and good food. The farm wife had the responsibility of preparing meals while the workers were there. It was usually dinner and supper. Other farm wives came and helped with the meal preparation as there could be ten or more extra mouths to feed. Usually the menu consisted of meat, potatoes, gravy, vegetables, pickles, relishes, bread and butter and dessert.

There were cakes and pies and one cake to find its way to the table is chocolate cake. One recipe for chocolate cake is as follows (there was no such thing as a cake mix.)

### Classic Chocolate Cake

2/3 cup butter or margarine, softened

1-2/3 cups sugar

3 eggs

2 cups all-purpose flour

2/3 cup baking cocoa

1-1/4 teaspoons baking soda

1 teaspoon salt

1-1/3 cups milk

Chocolate frosting or confectioners' sugar

In a mixing bowl, cream butter and sugar until fluffy. Add

eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Combine flour, cocoa, baking soda and salt; add to creamed mixture alternately with milk, beating after each addition until smooth. Pour batter into a greased and floured 13-in. x 9-in. x 2-in. baking pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 35-40 minutes or until cake tests done. Cool on a wire rack. When cake is completely cool, frost with chocolate frosting or dust with confectioners' sugar. Yield: 12-15 servings.

(This recipe appeared on a can of Hershey's Cocoa way back in 1943.)



## How the Civil War Affected People in the Town of Croghan

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the Civil War between the states. The Town of Croghan was also affected by this war. There were many who served from the Town of Croghan. In one family history, Henry Harber (Harper) and his family came from Prussia and eventually settled on the Beech Ridge Road in a log cabin. One reason he left Prussia was because all the men there had to serve in the Army. There is irony in life and he

ended up serving here in the Union Army with the 10 NY Artillery. He enlisted on August 6, 1862 and served until May 31, 1865.

While he was serving, his wife and family were left to take care of the home. They lived in a log cabin and the area was still a wilderness. According to family lore, a bear came to visit them but they didn't do anything to alarm the bear and it went off leaving

them alone. What hardships did the soldier and the families left behind endure? Language was one obstacle as many who settled in the Prussian Settlement area spoke German. Only written and oral histories can only begin to describe what actually happened during this period in history.

If you have a story to share about an ancestor serving in the Civil War, please let us know.

## FROM THE TOWN OF CROGHAN HISTORIAN'S ARCHIVES



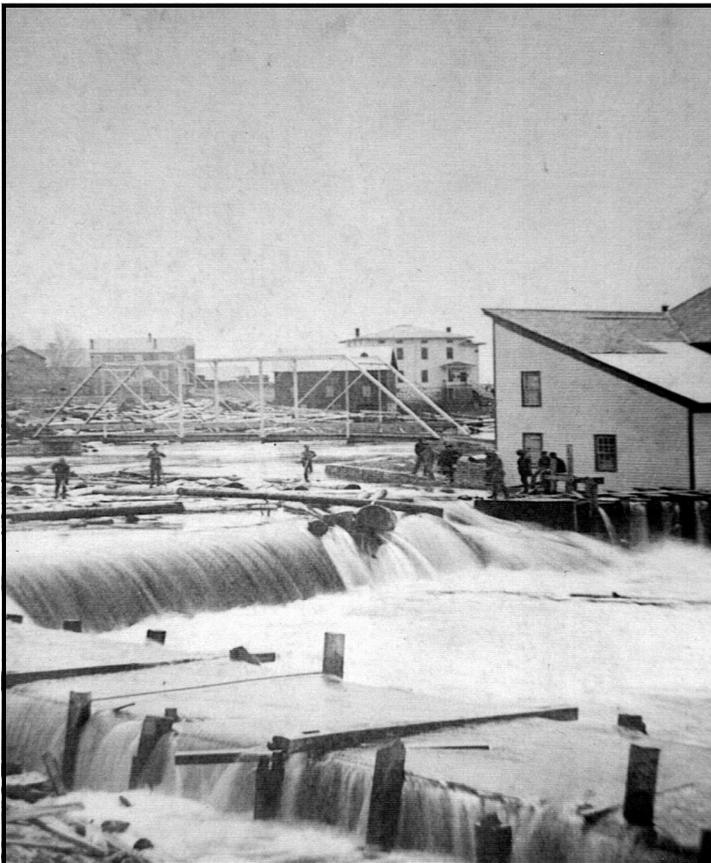
These camps are located along Yousey Road near the Oswegatchie River in the Long Pond area. People would come to rent the camps during the summer or hunting season.



This is a picture of Fish Creek Log-Drive. The logs were cut off the Basselin lot, Bald Mountain, and were hauled to Fish Creek with steam sleigh and drove down Fish Creek into Beaver River above Soft Maple, which ended up at his mill. This picture gives an example of the work that the log drivers were required to do during the log drive.



The Titan Tractor with threshing machine. The men in the picture are: on the tractor, Howard Hoppel and standing his brother, Ed Hoppel. This picture was taken on corner of Third Road and Second Road. You can barely see the Johnson house in the background..



The dam in Croghan on the Beaver River. Grist Mill on right. Flume to unknown mill where Interface Sealing Products is now . For more pictures of the Croghan Island dam go to: <http://en-gb.facebook.com/pages/Croghan-Dam-Restoration-Initiative-for-Local-Buisness-and-Renewable-Energy/177887828922809?sk=wall>.

## Town of Croghan Historian's Office

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"History must speak for itself.  
A historian is content if he has  
been able to shed more light.  
William L. Shirer, American  
author and journalist (1904-93)

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 us at our home phone: (315) 346-6201

We do not have regular office hours but we are available by appointment anytime. Just give us a call to arrange an appointment.

This and previous newsletters can also be downloaded from Town of Croghan web site:  
[www.townofcroghan.com](http://www.townofcroghan.com)

If there is a special topic you would like to see in this newsletter or if we have made an error, please let us know. Thank you.

*Jack & Mary Sweeney*

## Historical Tidbits

- August 2, 1951 - Damage amounting to more than \$100,000 was done in little less than half an hour Wednesday evening in a fierce fire of undetermined origin at the Lehman & Zehr lumber company's sawmill, storage shed and store at the village of Croghan. The firm's storage shed beside the sawmill is still standing but was so badly burned out that it is a total loss, and the office and hardware store were burned out at the rear and many large windows were broken. The company's garage was also partially burned at the back end.
- September 21, 1962 - A strike involving 100 members of the Beaver Falls Local 799 International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite and Papermill Workers has caused the shutdown of the J.P. Lewis plant at Beaver Falls.
- November 9, 1962 - The 50-day-old J.P. Lewis Co. strike in Beaver Falls has officially ended.
- March 22, 1888 - Theodore B. Basselin of Croghan has been reappointed state forest commissioner by the governor.
- June 1, 1900 - The upper dam of Beaver river at Beaver Falls, of Lewis, Slocum & Lefevre's, went out yesterday caused by water working under the dam. It was about 350 feet long, and 100 feet of the center went out, letting a large number of logs down the river. It is thought that it will cost about \$2,000 to repair the damage, and the pulp mill will have to be shut down two or three weeks.
- May 30, 1889 - Mr. R. LeFevre, Beaver Falls, has commenced his bark job on the Texas Road, in the Town of Croghan. He employs twenty-five men, and will get 1,200 cords of bark this season.
- November 3, 1892 - The Haller Cheese Factory at Beaver Falls was destroyed by fire Monday night together with about \$2,000 worth of cheese. The factory was insured, but there was no insurance on the cheese. The fire probably originated from the stove in the curing room.

