

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

Highlighting the Town of Croghan History

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VILLAGE OF CROGHAN FIRE APRIL 30, 1912

On April 30, 1912 the township of Croghan had just started its 71st year of existence. Isadore Tiss was Supervisor and Jacob Weirich was Town Clerk. People were discussing the tragedy that occurred April 15 with the sinking of the Titanic that caused the loss of life of over 1,500 people. Little did the residents of the Village of Croghan know that life would change on the last day of April 1912.

Around 2:30 p.m. fire was discovered upstairs in the Grunert Block. Mrs. Grunert was in the kitchen when she could smell smoke. Here two children were taking a nap and by the time she tried to reach them, the smoke choked her and she was not able to reach them. John Leyendecker from Beaver Falls saw the smoke and rushed inside trying to reach the children to save them. Somehow he made it and was able to get the children out of the building but the two children did not survive the effects of the smoke.

The volunteer firemen were on the scene. Due to low water pressure, which was later remedied and the wind made the fire more unmanageable. The fire jumped across the street and destroyed buildings on both sides of the Main Street.

A call for help was made to the Lowville firemen. They arrived by train with manpower and chemicals to help fight the fire.

As word spread and the signs of smoke appearing in the sky, people were curious. There were spectators coming the day of and afterwards to see the results of this disastrous event.

After four hours home and business owners were surveying the results of the fire with over 40 businesses and homes destroyed. Those who suffered losses were most likely concerned where their next meal and lodging would be for the night. Questions they might have asked themselves -- Were they going to rebuild? Were they going to move? Would the insurance money be sufficient to cover the cost of rebuilding? These and other concerns were thought about.

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Village of Croghan Fire - April 30, 1912 Continued

Following is a list of the buildings that burned April 30, 1912 (*The spelling is as it appeared in the newspaper*): Clement Grounert building; the Birkler office building; Commercial hotel; Edward Monroe, harness shop and grocery store; E.M. Marillery, dry goods store; Opera house; E. S. Birkler, feed mill; Nicholas Martin's hotel; Central hotel; the Laporte restaurant and saloon; H.C. Henry, clothing store; M. Wirtz & Sons, general store; St. Regis Paper Mills offices; Dr. Spencer's office; James Fayre's livery stable; Isadore Tiss's residence; Thomas Shinnourne's residence; Austin Martin's residence; Raymond Lee's residence; Edward Moses residence; Fred Pierce's residence; Morris Canten's residence; Fred H. Hunzucker's residence; S.G. Simonette's residence; E.H. Radigan's residence; William Farney's residence; Jacob Bath's residence; Miller's residence; Murphy's residence; Steiner's residence. (Source: **Watertown Reunion**, May 1912.)

The lumbermen staying at the hotels that burned lost their belongings and possibly their money would soon find work in the saw mills around as there would be a demand for lumber. The lumbermen had just finished work in the woods and the logs were arriving via the river at various mills at Croghan, Beaver Falls, and Carthage.

In rebuilding some of the businesses wanted to have their buildings fire proof and so today you will see several that are made with cement blocks.

The resiliency of the people who lost everything was astounding. They cleared up the debris and many rebuilt. Today as you drive through the Village you see the buildings built in 1912 are still standing in this unique hometown.



E. M. Marilley Store being rebuilt after the 1912 fire.

Pictures from the Town of Croghan Historian's Office



Main Street, Belfort, New York (date unknown)



Cold Spring Park located outside Carthage. These buildings pictured here no longer exist. It is now the home of the Carthage Rod and Gun Club.

A view of Yousey's camps on the Oswegatchie River. Date unknown.



A LETTER REMINISING ABOUT FISHING

Recently the Historian's Office received a copy of a typewritten letter dated October 20, 1951 from Edward M. Anderson, M.D., Fulton, New York to Jarvis Tebido, who lived in the Belfort area, Town of Croghan. At the time the letter was written Jarvis was in a nursing home at Carthage and Dr. Anderson had received a letter from the Yanceys. Dr. Anderson recalls some of the experiences fishing in the North Country as follows:

"Do you remember Mary Taylor? Her father married Governor Flower's daughter and she used to come to Belfort. You guided here on fishing trips on Beaver River. Although she belonged to the Lake Placid Club she really loved the Beaver River. One day she caught a big trout with you and she took it home and had it mounted. Later on she married a young engineer. A few years later she died in childbirth. She had a wonderful character and I always felt her death was a great loss to everyone.

Your father told me that his father died 3 months before he was born and that your mother died 3 hours after he was born. This was in Plattsburg. A French woman had just had a baby and was nursing it and she nursed your father too, and brought him up as a Frenchman. But your father told me his father was a Scotsman. I think the name was Segarson. He said, "I am a Scotsman" but everyone always thought of him as a Frenchman. At this time your father was straight as an arrow, 6 feet tall, all bone and muscle. All he needed was a kilt and bonnet and there stood The Duke of Argyle - a true Scot.

He was the greatest axeman of the North Country and could take a beeline from Long Pond and walk through that dense wilderness straight into Old Forge - without a compass.

You and your father and I went up to Effley Falls one evening and fished in that spring hole below the power house. He said he used to fish there before the power house was built and before you were born. One day he was there and threw this fish over his head into that pine tree there. When he was ready to go home he could not find the fish. He looked up and saw a painter up in the pine tree and he said that painter (panther) had caught all his fish as he threw them out and had eaten them. I think he was kidding us. That night he kept throwing his fish up into the tree and we told him to stop it but he kept on. We could not find his fish. Going home up the hill I thought I'd do something about it. I threw five or six fish on the gravel road and said, "Look, these fish are right on the road." You said, "Paw, you threw them way up here from the river." He said, "Jarvis, I did not mean to throw them so far."

On the Beaver River Hogs Back Flow you said, "Right ahead is Farney in the Hole and next is Jake Zehr's springhole." My brother was along. He had a very expensive Leonard Rod, \$80.00, a tapered \$10 line and all Irish flies. He cast around there for a while but became disgusted and we took him to our camp as he said there were no fish there. A damp mist had come up--like a cloud nesting on the river. We were back at Zehr's springhole and I think you located some trout. Those trout they are down deep and do not rise to a fly. I got cold and went home but last thing I saw was you cutting spruce to make a shelter as it had begun to rain.

FROM THE FARMHOUSE KITCHEN

In May and June the gardens are being planted to grow fresh produce during the summer months as well as to preserve the vegetables. One of the versatile vegetables is the cucumber as there are many different pickles recipes to choose from depending on your families taste. One pickle recipe is for Dill Pickles, which follows:

1 quart vinegar

3 quarts water

1 cup canning salt (do not use table salt)

Place freshly washed cucumbers in a hot canning jar along with a sprig of fresh dill.

Bring to a boil the above three ingredients and pour over cucumbers and one clove of garlic and 1/4 teaspoon alum per

quart jar. Seal. (Process for 5 minutes in a hot water bath. The new canning instructions state that you have to process at least five minutes - no longer can you seal and store. This is a food safety precaution.)



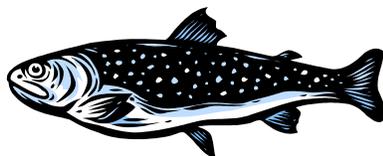
A LETTER REMINISING ABOUT FISHING *Continued*

A few days later I went to see your father and he said you had caught some trout and when asked about size said they were big ones but as he had no ice and the weather was hot, the fish had been eaten. I guess I said I doubted the story and he took me out back of the barn and there were two big fish heads. I opened one of their jaws and you could throw a baseball right into it.

Jarvis, you have fished for my family on the Oswegatchie, the Beaver and up at Pete Youseys. You have put up log houses and they are standing today, warm in winter at 40 degrees below. You could lay up a wall, put on a roof or do a good days work in the bush. In short you have been useful all your life and you know the woods like a book.

I remember going to Fish Creek one day from Youseys. Mrs. Yousey had given me some salt pork to cook the fish, some bread, a small frying pan and a can for coffee. We got over there and it was a bright shiney day and though there were trout we could not catch a one. You said, "I guess we'll have to fall back on the white tiger." I did not know what this was and you said "Get out the pork." You cut it up and fried it and made coffee and we had that pork on bread soaked in grease. It was the finest meal I think I ever had. Then I found I had forgotten my pipe but you made one out of a green limb, stem and all. I put in tobacco and it was O.K.

(There is more to this letter and it will be in the next issue of HIGHLIGHTING THE TOWN OF CROGHAN HISTORY.)



Town of Croghan Historian's Office



"What experience and history teach is this: that people and governments have never learned anything from history."--Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, German philosopher (1770-1831).

The Town of Croghan Historians 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

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 we have made an error, please let us know.

Thank you.

Jack and Mary Sweeney

From the Town of Croghan Historian's Desk

In this newsletter there is a letter from Dr. Anderson reminiscing about fishing in the Croghan area and his acquaintance with Jarvis Tebido. A special thank you goes to Kevin Trickey for sharing this letter. Letter writing is a dying form of communication making way to texting and email. Letters are one document that can be used in helping with family history as

well as giving us a glimpse into history at a specific period of time.

There is also an brief article on the Village of Croghan fire in 1912. After four hours, there were over 40 homes and businesses destroyed. The constitution of the people in Croghan was not to give up but a majority were ready to rebuild. Today in the Village we see the buildings that were built in

1912 making for an attractive community.

The Historian's office will start documenting the cemeteries in the town with a picture of the headstone along with what is written on the tombstone later in June. If anyone would like to help with this project, please let us know. Our home phone number is (315) 346-6201.