

- 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 Town of Croghan History

Volume 6, Issue 2

July—December 2014

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE PROJECTED LOWVILLE AND HARRISVILLE RAILROAD?

A railroad from Lowville to Harrisville was proposed but before it would be built a study had to be completed. In 1881 a corp of engineer survey was done for the projected railroad. The route along which this railroad was to travel would provide commerce—the tanneries were in their heyday (there were five tanneries located in the Town of Croghan). The virgin woods in the area would provide the hemlock bark to be used in processing hides. The hemlock logs provided lumber and kept sawmills busy.

The railroad would begin in Lowville and would take a direct course to Croghan. Before arriving in Croghan one could see a section of farming country under excellent cultivation with good farm buildings—principally new buildings and all, or nearly all, well painted. The study reported as follows:

In 1881 Croghan has a population of approximately 600 with “a better class of dwellings than is generally seen in a village of its size. A large Catholic Church and seminary are located here. There are five stores, two grist mills, two saw mills, two tanneries, one of which belongs to W. & Y. Rice, which tans 150 tons of dry skins yearly, producing 250 tons of leather.”

Belfort is three and one-half miles from Croghan and has a population of 100 with a large tannery which tans 180 tons of dry skins, producing 270 tons of leather annually. It has one hotel, two stores, one saw mill and one grist mill.

Indian River has a post office on Erie Canal Road, two sawmills, a large cheese factory and a store in the heart of a section of well-improved farms under good cultivation. Two sawmills are capable of cutting 3 million feet per annum. Leaving Indian River we enter hard timber land and pass through it to Jordon Falls (Jerden Falls) a distance of four miles. Here is located the larger W. & Y. Rice’s tannery which takes in 375 tons of dry hides which makes 525 tons of leather annually.

Inside this issue:

What Happened to the Projected Lowville and Harrisville Railroad	2
Cause of Death of Louis Bossie	2
Reminisces About Country School Christmas Plays	3
100 Years Ago in the Town of Croghan	4
75 Years Ago in the Town of Croghan	4
“The Beaver’s Tale”-the Beaver Falls High	4
From the Farmhouse Kitchen	5
From the Historian’s Desk	5
Pictures	6&7
Does Anyone Have Information About the Following?	8

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE PROPOSED LOWVILLE AND HARRISVILLE RAILROAD?

Near the west branch of the Oswegatchie, seven miles from Long Pond are the famous hunting grounds and fishing resort for sportsmen entering the Adirondack wilderness. W. & Y. Rice have a sawmill with a cutting capacity of 5 million feet per year.

Then a second line was proposed instead of the first one which would include going to Beaver Falls. Beaver Falls has two sawmills. Basselin's sawmill saws 10 million feet board measure annually. The line would pass within 40 feet of his largest mill. M. R. Lefever's tannery is located here which produces 243 tons of leather. There are about 30 tons of oils and acids used in manufacturing the above and about 2500 tons of bark. Beaver Falls Pulp Company has been organized by James P. Lewis, Charles Nuffer and M. R. Lefever. The operation of the company began around October 1881 producing 4 tons of dry pulp per day, which would be 10 tons wet in the condition in which it will be shipped and would ship at least 2500 tons per annum. There are two hotels, one store of general merchandise in which about 50 tons of merchandise is used annually located here.



The proposed railroad would go to Harrisville where there was a tannery plus other businesses.

In the Belfort news, JOURNAL AND REPUBLICAN dated March 13, 1884 a question was asked about the anticipated Lowville, Croghan & Harrisville railroad—what about it? It apparently was abandoned, perhaps due to lack of funding, difficulty getting easements along the route may have been a problem, perhaps the tanneries were slowly on the decline and would disappear from the area altogether. Whatever the cause the Lowville and Harrisville or Lowville, Croghan and Harrisville railroad never happened. It was not until 1906 when the Lowville and Beaver River Railroad appeared from Lowville to Beaver Falls and Croghan.

Source: JOURNAL AND REPUBLICAN 1881 and 1884)

Cause of Death of Louis Bossie

In Volume 6, Issue 1 of HIGHLIGHTING THE TOWN OF CROGHAN HISTORY it was mentioned about finding the body of Louis Bossie in his home by his wife. The death occurred in May 1914. Because of the mystery involved, it was considered a murder. In the May 21, 1914 issue of the JOURNAL AND REPUBLICAN an article

appeared that District Attorney Perry G. Williams and Coroner H.A. Bassett were at Beaver Falls to investigate the cause of death of Louis Bossie, who was found dead at home. An autopsy under the direction of the officials was performed by Dr. F. E. Jones, of Beaver Falls and Dr. Paul H. vonZierolshofen, of Croghan. They established that

the cause of death was due to carbolic acid poisoning.

There was feeling that the cause of death was due to Bossie getting into trouble and being roughly handled when he was in Lowville. The autopsy did not show that his death was due to this cause.

Reminisces about Country School Christmas Plays by Mary Sweeney

In November the teacher and the students would be getting ready for Christmas not only in making decorations to display around the room but participating in the Christmas play. Some of us were given poems to memorize and recite. On the night of the Christmas program, the teacher was there to help us if we forgot a word or line. It was a fun time and in December we spent time rehearsing. Our music class was singing Christmas songs which were included in the program.

There was a stage installed at the front of the room with a wire across the width of the room to put a curtain on, which was our stage curtain. It was usually a sheet.

The Christmas Story was read from the Bible with Mary, Joseph, shepherd and the three wise men along with an angel. It depended on how many children there were available to participate in the pageant.

We had a Christmas tree which we decorated. Our art classes consisted of making paper chains, paper wreaths, stockings, Santa Claus and would vary from year to year. Also, the individual teacher had her own ideas of what to do.

The night of the program was exciting and nerve wracking as we had to get up and perform in front of an audience. They were our parents and neighbors, members of the community. What if we made a mistake? But everything seemed to work out.

As the end of the program, we would hear sleigh bells and in walked Santa Claus as big as life in a red suit carrying a bag of presents. Santa passed out presents and we were busy unwrapping them.

It was a memorable evening and we didn't come back to school until the New Year—the beginning of school vacation.

~~~~~

Here is one of the recitations that may have been spoken. (Source: THE CHRISTMAS PROGRAM BOOK, Paine Publishing Company, Dayton, Ohio 1931)

### A BOY'S EXPLANATION

(For a small boy)

I wish that I could see old  
Santa

To tell him what I'd like.

I'd have him bring a coaster  
wagon,

A rifle, and a "bike."

But I suppose instead of these

Most likely I will get

An overcoat, and cap and  
shoes,

And rubbers so my feet won't  
get wet.

Now Santa Claus is mighty  
fine,

But just "tween you and me,  
I think Mrs. Santa does the  
picking

When he puts clothing on a  
tree.



Pictures taken in the 1950's of two plays that were performed at the Riverbank School, District #14, Town of Croghan and Town of Wilna.



## 100 Years Ago in the Town of Croghan

In 1914 the citizens of the towns of Croghan and New Bremen will vote on a proposition to construct a new bridge over the Beaver river at Beaver Falls, on September 15th, at a cost of \$8,000 to be divided between the two towns.

The bridge now spanning the stream is in an unsafe condition, owing to the spreading of the iron stringers. The frame work is also too light for present

travel. The taxpayers will be saved considerable money by getting the bridge now, before the completion of the new state highway, as the officials of the state department would insist on a bridge costing not less than \$15,000, nearly double the amount.

(Source: BLACK RIVER DEMOCRAT, dated August 20, 1914.)

NOTE: A vote approved the construction of the new bridge and bonds were obtained by both Town of Croghan and Town of New Bremen. Since that bridge was built several have replaced the bridge over the Beaver River throughout the years. The bridge has been advantageous to the hamlet.

~~~~~

75 Years Ago in the Town of Croghan

The annual meeting of the stockholders of Croghan National Bank was held in the banks office.

The following directors were re-elected: Fredlin Nortz, Dr. P.H. vonZierolshofen, Julius Farney, John F. Virkler, Benjamin F. Zehr and B.H. Demo. Immedi-

ately following the meeting of the stockholders, the directors met and re-elected the following officers: President, Fredlin Nortz, 1st vice president Dr. P.H. vonZierolshofen, second vice president John F. Virkler, cashier B.H. Demo, assistant cashier A.A. Henry. A dividend of ten

per cent was paid on the common stock as of December 23, 1938.

(Source: THE JOURNAL AND REPUBLICAN, dated January 19, 1939.)



"The Beaver's Tale"—the Beaver Falls High School paper

The first issue of the Beaver Falls High school paper, "The Beaver's Tale," was published under the editorship of Arlin Noftsier and JoAnn Lindsey. Several innovations have been introduced this year. From the articles submitted, one essay is picked as the composition of the month, and one poem is chosen as the academic poem of the month. This time "War Suffering" by Bev-

erly Lehman and a poem by Violet Noftsier were selected. "The Beaver's Tale" includes editorials, essays, poems, school news notes, jokes, reports of the school teams and comments on the paper of other schools. The staff is: Editors-in-chief, JoAnn Lindsey and Arlin Noftsier; business manager, Marjorie Hirschey; advertising manager, Jane D'Ambros; literary edi-

tors, Shirley Nuffer and Shirley Be-dard; art editor, Ermogine Spagnoli; humor editor, Nelson Baumgartner; exchange editor, Mark Zehr, sports editor, Glenn Fredenburg; mimeograph operator, Alexander Ritz; feature editor, Doris Sweeney, and news reporter, Barbara Moore.

(Source: JOURNAL AND REPUBLICAN, dated December 7, 1939)

FROM THE FARMHOUSE KITCHEN

In 1939 there was a recipe contest sponsored by Brer Rabbit Molasses. The national prize of a year's supply of groceries—\$500 worth—or \$500 in cash or local weekly prizes of \$1.00 or cans of molasses. A free cookbook was sent to all those who entered. Several women from Lewis County entered this contest. Mrs. Roscoe Wetmore, R.D. 1, Croghan, N.Y. was the winner the second week of the contest. Mrs. Katherine Doyle, Lewis Community Home Demonstration Agent was judging the contest for the paper.

Here is Mrs. Wetmore's recipe:

Ginger Honeycomb Pudding

1/4 cup lard

1 egg

1 cup sweet milk

1/2 cup Brer Rabbit Molasses

(Gold Medal)

2 teaspoons cream of tartar

1 teaspoon soda

2 cups sifted flour

1/2 package candied ginger

Preparation:

Mix and sift soda, cream of tartar and flour. Stir lard, egg and molasses together. Combine the two mixtures and add ginger cut into fine pieces. Put into greased mold and steam one hour. Serve with well sweetened whipped cream topped with crushed walnut meats.

Mrs. Wetmore has been awarded \$1.00 for her recipe, and her recipe was automatically entered in the Brer Rabbit Molasses Contest to compete for the Grand Prize.

Ruth J. Wetmore had another recipe appear in the paper as follows:

Molasses Fruit Puffs

1 egg

1 cup sugar

1 cup butter or lard

1 cup Brer Rabbit Molasses (Gold Label)

1 cup cold water

1 teaspoon soda

1 tablespoon each of ginger and cinnamon

4 cups unsifted all purpose flour

1 cup raisins or currants.

Preparation:

Cream egg, sugar, shortening and molasses. Add seasoning and water. Stir. Sift soda with 2 cups flour. Add to above mixture. Then beat in remainder of flour and add fruit. Drop from spoon on well greased cookie sheets and bake in hot oven.

Different recipes appeared in the paper for four weeks and gave a chance for anyone to enter the contest and may become a winner.

(Source: JOURNAL AND REPUBLICAN, dated November 1939)



From the Historian's Desk

We hope that you enjoy the newsletter. If there are any additions or corrections, please feel free to let us know. We try to be accurate but sometimes we make mistakes.

This year we will be undertaking the cemetery documentation project for the Town of Croghan cemeteries. We don't

expect to document all the cemeteries this year. We have several volunteers to help and if anyone would be interested, please contact us at 315-346-6201 to set up a time and place to work on this documentation. Hopefully the weather will cooperate and not be a wet year.

We do keep busy and if we can be of help to anyone, let us know. We will try our best but sometimes history remains buried in the past never to be dug up.

We can meet with anyone at the office by appointment at the convenience of the individual. *Mary and Jack Sweeney*



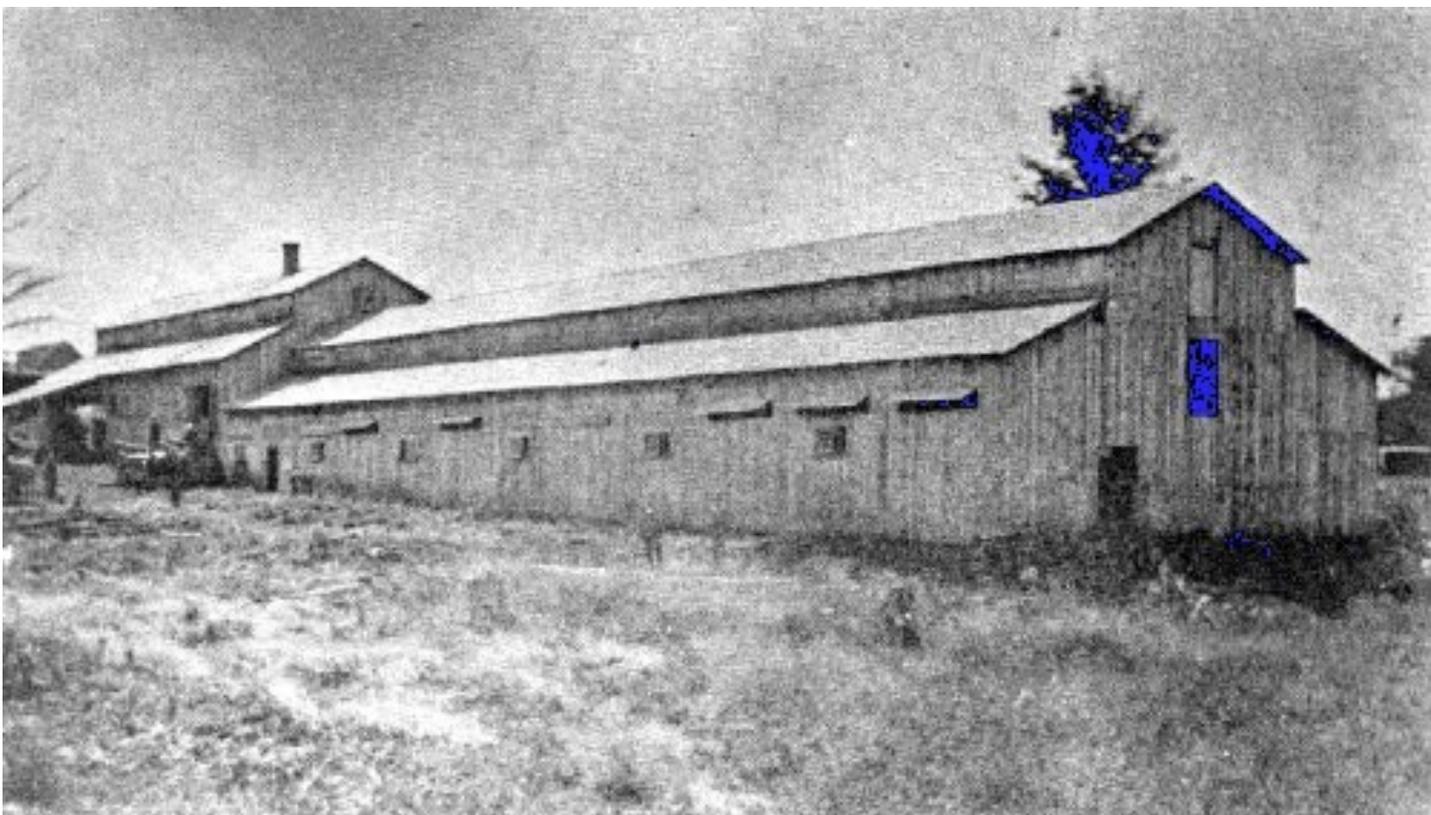
The Christmas Crib, St. Stephens Church, Croghan. Date unknown.



Christmas Decorations inside the Methodist Church, Beaver Falls located on Main Street. The church building is now home of the Beaver River Health Center. Date unknown.



Tannery at Beaver Falls on the banks of the Beaver River. Across from the tanner is T.B. Basselin's Sawmill..



The M. R. Lefevre Tannery at Beaver Falls.

Town of Croghan Historian's Office

Historian's Office Physical Address:
9882 State Route 126,
Beaver Falls, New York

Mailing Address: 9913 Second Road
Castorland, NY 13620

Phone: (315) 346-6201

Email: jsweeney@ridgeviewtel.us

**"History is a better guide than
good intentions."—Jeane J.
Kirkpatrick, U.S. ambassador
to the United Nations (1926-
2006)**

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

DOES ANYONE HAVE INFORMATION ABOUT THE FOLLOWING:

1. Does anyone know the whereabouts of wooden beer mugs that would have been on display at the Miller House. According to family information Mr. Bruet made the wooden beer mug and may have made more. If anyone knows if there are any of these beer mugs existing or existed or have information on them, please let the Historian's Office know and the information will be passed on to the family Thank you.
2. A query was received in regard to the Indian River Methodist Church. Would anyone know of its history or how or where to go to get information. It was listed in the 1895-96 Business Directory of Lewis County, NY—compiled and published by William Adams. The church was built around 1883 and by 1938 it was in a state of decay according to newspaper articles.
3. Does anyone have information on Pleasant View Cheese Factory and Swiss Creek Factory. Was Pleasant View Cheese Factory located in the same factory as Swiss Creek Factory or were they located in two separate locations? The factories were located near Naumburg on the what is known as the River Road or Route 126. Any help in clearing up this matter would be greatly appreciated.
4. Would anyone know why the Texas Road was called the Texas Road? It has been known by this name even before the Town of Croghan was formed in 1841.

Thank you for any information on any of the above questions. There are so many mysteries in history and hope that at least one or two can be solved.