



THE SENTINEL

Vol. 24, No. 3

The Newsletter of the New Scotland Historical Association

Spring 2016

IN SEARCH OF CAPTAIN HENRY CROUNSE (1818-1901)

By Sarita Crouse Winchell

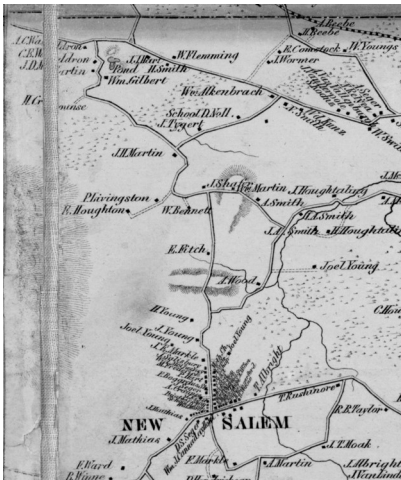


This spring the New Scotland Historical Association will be erecting a historical marker honoring **Captain Henry Crouse**, using grant money from the William G. Pomeroy Foundation. Located on Picard Road, just north of Helderledge Farm, this site is currently owned by Ulrich and Renata Czapski. The Czapski family operates the “Sunshine Farm” vegetable stand during the summer months on the property. While riding by the site, you can see the bright yellow house through the trees, the home Henry once lived in. There is also an original Dutch barn in back of the house.

Captain Crouse is listed in the *New York Town Clerk's Registers of Men who served in the Civil War, ca 1861-1865*, which is part of the New Scotland Historical

Association collection. This document was my first link to his story. From his Civil War records, we know that Henry entered the regiment when he was 42 years old, he was 5'7" and weighed 155 lbs. His record says he had black hair and blue eyes, but my guess is that his hair was a very dark brown, given pictures of his offspring. I do not have a picture of him.

The 91st Regiment of Infantry was organized in Albany, N.Y. between September and December 1861, and was made up of men from the Albany, Schenectady, Hudson and Castleton area. He was most certainly esteemed by his peers as he was elected by his company to the rank of Captain of Company D. Most of his military service time was far from the base of the Helderbergs. The Regiment left the State of New York for Washington, DC, January 9, 1862, and onward from there to Pensacola, Florida. That must have been quite the surprise to an upstate New Yorker. The Regiment was stationed in Pensacola, Bagdad, and Milton, Florida, and saw action at Gonzales, Florida, in late October. The Regiment then moved to New Orleans December, 1862. They were at Baton Rouge and in several operations throughout Western Louisiana including Irish Bend on April 14. It was at the siege of Port Hudson from May to July that Captain Crouse contracted a condition which affected his kidneys. He was placed in a hospital at New Orleans until August 31, 1863, and was discharged for disability Sept. 24, 1863. His injury affected him for the rest of his life.



But do we know more? Until the Historical Society started to document his background, he was just a name to me, my great-great grandfather. I knew that the site being commemorated had been in the Crouse family for a while, and that my grandfather, Myndert Crouse, Sr., had been born there. Crouse is an old name in this area, going back to Frederick Crouse who immigrated in 1754. Frederick had two sons, Frederick and Philip, and most Crouses of that time lived in Guilderland. How Henry wound up on this particular site was a mystery to me.

Portion of Town of New Scotland Map of 1854
The site of H Crouse is in the upper left corner

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SCOTLAND
HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION**

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Web Page

www.newscotlandhistoricalassociation.org
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President's Letter

Dear Members and Friends,

As you may already know, the New Scotland Museum has been closed since January 1 of this year, with plans to re-open in late spring. After great discussion, the board agreed that the museum needed to temporarily close to allow the NSHA Collections Committee to assess the current collections, and then determine our needs to ensure better preservation of the collections.

For many years, the main room of the museum has housed a permanent exhibit, featuring the history of the town since its geologic beginnings. It is now our goal to redesign the exhibit rooms for greater viewing access to our many wonderful collections that have grown over the years. Through the generosity of many town residents, the museum has acquired a number of historically significant items, and we hope to be able to exhibit as many as possible.

We will post information about the reopening dates on our website and Facebook page, as well as in *The Altamont Enterprise*.

We are also very excited to have been awarded two grants for historic site markers from the William G. Pomeroy Foundation; one for the Captain Henry Crouse homestead on Picard Road, and the other for the Miller family's "Lime Kiln Farm" on Clipp Road. We will post information regarding the unveiling of these two historic site markers on both the website and Facebook page as soon as the dates are picked.

Debbie Mahan

**Please Join Us for these upcoming programs at the
Wyman Osterhout Community Center**

**April 5, 2016 – The Impact of the Irish 1916 Easter Rebellion on
the Capital District** – Learn how this momentous event
affected our own region

May 3, 2016 – An Evening with George Wilson – Master fiddler
(Program follows the Annual Meeting)

Museum Closed

Thank you for your patience and understanding
while we evaluate our current collections and display areas.
The Museum will open again in late spring.

Mission Statement

The Town of New Scotland Historical Association preserves, protects and promotes history in the Town of New Scotland through the stewardship of material culture directly related to the town. The purpose is to promote an appreciation of local history, heritage and culture through research, publications and educational programs.

In Search of Captain Henry Crouse (Continued from page 1)

And now I can fill in so much more to the story. Philip Crouse, my fourth great-grandfather, did not come to this country with his parents. Why he was left behind in 1754 is not known. But he came from Württemberg in 1767 with his wife Anna Marie Swartz, which is documented in *“Early History of the Crouse Family in America”* by A. B. Gregg, and settled in Guilderland near his parents and brother. Philip had two children before immigrating and ten children born in this country. The seventh child born here was Johann Adam. Johann became better known as John P. Crouse. How Adam became P. is a mystery. John P. married Elizabeth Martin and had eleven children, one being our Henry Crouse. A little aside here. Henry is known throughout the area by the name Henry, which he used extensively in legal records. But his christened name was Samuel Henry. This can make tracing him somewhat confusing.

With a growing family to provide for, John P. Crouse bought the property being cited from Ebenezer Fitch on May 31, 1821. Henry was 3. There may have been a structure on the property, but my understanding from an uncle is that John P. Crouse built the current house. Upon maturity, many of John P. Crouse’s children left the area, but Henry stayed on the farm. John P. Crouse died in 1848, and by then Henry was running the farm. Henry married Hannah VanAlstyne. My great-grandfather, Cyrus Crouse (1850-1935), was one of their nine children. He was 12 when Henry went off to war.

Henry lived until March 21, 1901. His son, Cyrus, was working the farm then, and had married Angelica LaGrange. My grandfather, Myndert Crouse Sr., was Cyrus and Angelica’s fifth child. How I wish I had asked my grandfather more about the family as he knew Captain Henry very well. After Hannah died in 1887, Henry married Julia Chesboro. Following Henry’s death there seemed to be a bit of a tiff between Julia and Cyrus regarding the property, but I do not think it was about this piece of land as I have a copy of the deed to Cyrus dated before Hannah’s death.

Henry and Hannah Crouse are buried side by side in Mount Pleasant Cemetery, along with several of their children and grandchildren. Henry’s tombstone reads “Henry Crouse/ Capt/ Co. D/ 91, N.Y. Vol/ Born Feb. 28, 1818/ Died Mar. 21, 1901” - a glimpse of the past, and, hopefully, not completely forgotten.



Thanks to Chris Albright for his extensive research on property titles in New Scotland. Also, in 1821 the Town of New Scotland was still part of the Town of Bethlehem.

Debbie Mahan enthusiastically researched the 91st Regiment during the application process of the Pomeroy Grant.

THE CROUSE HOMESTEAD BELOW THE HELDERBERGS



SUNSHINE'S CORNER

March

By Mary Beth Frohlich Felice

The promise of spring without the reality: a waiting game. We live in my grandparent's "wedding home" of 1908, overlooking New Salem Road (85A) and Vly Creek. A sturdy farm house built in stages from the 1800s is now home to my parents, myself, my brother, Richard, and my grandparents during summer. Family in the 1950's.



But, it's not summer now, or even close to spring. The wind howls through the plank walls, and the curtains ruffle at the window edge. There is no central heat in the house. Both living rooms have an oil stove, and the one in the main living room has a stove pipe that goes through the second floor in my parents' room. That is the heating system.

Early spring at Willow Brook Farm: we are seeking warmth. The wind is howling, shutters rattling, but Richard and I find the perfect solution. Everyone knows that heat rises, so with great care and child's skill, we climb onto the backs of the sofas. Eureka! Suddenly it's like Florida—minus the sun and flowers. We spend the evenings on our lofty perches and dress for bed in front of a small space heater, turned on for the dressing event. The day ends as we tuck into beds outfitted with flannel sheets and down quilts. We are like bears in the lair.

When the days actually lengthen and blades of grass begin to appear, Mom likes to take me walking through our woods and fields. As we go, she points to the infant flora and fauna resurrecting after the long winter. Buttercups, woods' violets and trillium. It won't be too long before the Jack-in-the-Pulpit jumps up to greet us. Surely, it was my mom, Harriett Frohlich, who acquainted me with the beauties of nature that surrounded us, and connected us to the good earth. Even now, I hold that appreciation in my heart, and for years have loved to ride horseback through the woods and fields.

It seems fitting that I am stepping onto the journalistic spot vacated by Willard Osterhout. Will and I have a funny little history going back to Jr. High School at Voorheesville Central School where we met. Too young for "steadies," but certainly "interested" for a time. I'll say no more, Will, but I'll gladly carry your torch.



Spring: A Season of Changes

Mar. 2, Mon. Wind blows terribly. A little snow falling; March comes in like a lion sure.

Mar. 3, Tues. Wind still blowing very hard. I have not washed yet.

Mar. 4, Wed. Wind still blowing but I washed and hung out clothes. They took much hurt, clothes pins wore holes in a number of pieces. I will not hang clothes out in such a wind again if I know it.

So reads early **March** entries in **Harriet O'Brien's diary of 1896**.

What a treasure diaries are, providing valuable illumination on bygone days. They are probably the closest we will ever come to having a time machine. Through them we see first hand the tapestry woven together by everyday events, whether small or momentous.

What was going on around here in spring, 100 plus years ago? In their own vernacular, here are a few events garnered from the entries of three local diarists:

-Harriet O'Brien, b.1855 d.1906, of Clarksville (the great-grandmother of *Sentinel* contributor Mary Beth Felice)
-Vanderzee (Van) LaGrange, b.1845 d.1927, of Guilderland Center, then Unionville, and finally the LaGrange Farm on LaGrange Lane, the great-great-grandfather of our current Town Supervisor, Douglas LaGrange.
-Agnes Slingerland, b.1850 d.1908, of the Slingerland Farm between Clarksville and Unionville, great-grandmother to the farm's current owner, James Slingerland.

March brings spring, but as noted by Harriet O'Brien, its arrival can be quite cold and blustery. One of the biggest March blizzards of all time was recorded in **Van LaGrange's diary of 1888**:

M. March 12: Pressing hay (into bales that could weigh as much as 300 pounds). Great Blizzard commenced.

T. 13: Home all day it snowing and blowing all day.

W. 14: Opening the road and to Unionville (No town or county road crews back then.).

Th. 15: Opening road and to Clarksville.

Sun. 18: To Feurie Bush church.

T. 20: Opening road forenoon. Afternoon to Unionville. R. Winnie's sale.

March seems to be the month for auction sales and for moving. Also for hiring farm help. Typical wage: \$18 per month. Best to get affairs settled before the planting rush begins.

In **April**, spring activities begin in earnest. **April 1896. Harriet O'Brien:**

21, Tues: Julia and I cleaned kitchen, will put stove out tomorrow if weather stays warm.

22, Wed: Took up carpet in kitchen, fixed up bedrooms for a sewing room, put bureau in there. Cleaned up all good, varnished oilcloth after lamplight.

23, Thurs: Borrowed Mrs. Flagler's machine. Washed 4 woolen sheets, bedspread, and 1 breadth of carpet.

April 1886. Agnes Slingerland:

F. 16: Willie & Amasa (her sons) over to Ma's after a plum tree. We have 9 little chickens & 8 bantams. Sowed tomato & verbena seeds.

T. 20: Cleaned house. Case (her husband) had his horses shod. Snowflake had a calf.

F. 23: We cleaned the pantry. Grafted some. Tied up the grape vines.

Th. 29: Cherry trees are all in blossom. Sot 2 turkeys.

In **May**, farm, garden, and every kind of activity are in full swing!

(Continued on Page 7)



NSHA High School Junior Award

By Sherry Burgoon, Chairperson for Scholarship Committee

The New Scotland Historical Association is again offering the opportunity for high school Juniors who live in the Town of New Scotland to apply for a \$1,000 scholarship. The award is for serious students who plan to further their education. The award encourages the study and enjoyment of history in any of its aspects. Applicants should have a strong interest in some area of history or museum studies or the field of education.

Last year the association received eight applications from four schools in the town. The students selected one of five topics designated by the NSHA scholarship committee. The committee was impressed by the variety of issues that the students selected. The committee has already received several calls seeking information about the 2016 award. It is hoped that the winner will use the money to plan their post high school education. Perhaps the money could be used to visit colleges to learn more about their programs, pay college application fees, purchase necessary items for a dorm room, or invest in a new laptop or other piece of equipment.

Each applicant is required to submit a completed application form, along with a copy of his/her resume and high school transcripts, and a 250-350 word essay from a list of five questions provided with the form. All New Scotland Juniors are invited to compete for the award whether they are public high school, private school, parochial school or home-schooled students.

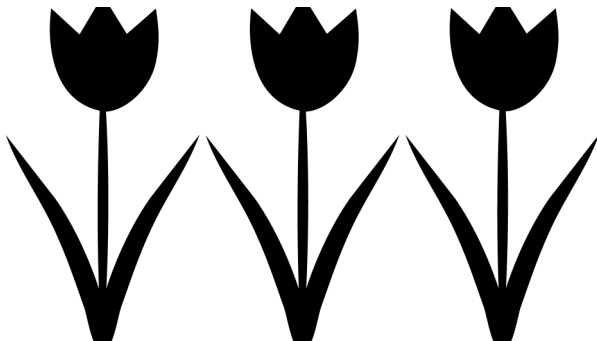
Applications are presently available at local public schools attended by New Scotland Juniors, the New Scotland Town Hall, as well as local public libraries.

All completed applications must be postmarked by **Friday, April 1, 2016.**

The winner will be announced at the New Scotland Historical Association's annual meeting on May 3, 2016.

THANK YOU!

It is through donations that the New Scotland Historical Association can fund the programs it provides to the community. Many thanks to local businesses that support our mission through our "Corporate Sponsors" program.



If you would like to become a member, please do so!

NSHA Membership Form

____ \$10 Individual
____ \$15 Family
____ \$25 Sustaining
____ \$100.00 Life (per person)

Name _____

Street _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Make checks payable to NSHA.

Please send dues to:

Sarita Winchell
NSHA Membership Chair
279 Helderberg Pkwy
Voorheesville, NY 12186

HILTON BARN AT LEVIE FARM SAVED FROM DEMOLITION

The Hilton LeVie barn, a historic hand-built structure previously slated for demolition, is scheduled to be moved to its new site along the Albany County rail trail on March 15, 2016.

Town of New Scotland officials approved resolutions for insurance, grants, and moving equipment costs at the town board's February meeting.

The project is expected to cost \$200,000 to cover a new foundation, site preparation, and the land it will stand on across from the barn's current location on Route 85A.

The Voorheesville Community and School Foundation was designated by the New Scotland Town Board to receive private donations from supporters of the relocation and reuse of the historic barn.

If you would like to support the project, you can make out your tax deductible check to :

"Voorheesville Community and School Foundation (VCSF)"

and mail to:

VCSF, P.O. Box 523, Voorheesville, NY 12186
Please write "Hilton Barn donation" on the memo line.

Spring: A Season of Changes (continued from page 5)

May (various years): Van LaGrange

T. 5, 1868: Sot 2 hens with eggs from J. Kelderhouse.

M. 30, 1870: Afternoon to Prospect Hill Cemetary. Dedication of soldier's graves.

Sat. 2, 1874: Afternoon to Merickels after trees: 50 apple, 2 cherry.

F. 4 – F. 26, 1883: Plowing & sowing oats in plum orchard. Setting out trees. Setting out berries. Plowing for potatoes and corn.
Painting beehives. Sowing beet & carrot seed.

F. 26, 1888: Making fences. Turned hogs out.

Sat. 18, 1889: To Albany after milk cans forenoon. Afternoon to T. VanAtten's barn raising bee & to New Salem Town Board.

Wed. 7, 1890: Making fence. At night to Tune VanAtten's to Pie Party.

Sun 1, 1892: To Union Church (Unionville). Elected Superintendent of Sunday School.

M. 20, 1895: To Albany. Buffalo Bill Wild West Show.

W. 18, 1898: Sowing fodder corn. 1 sheep killed, 2 lambs hurt on RR. 2 sheep died after about 1 month
(Van living on Unionville-Feura Bush Rd. at this time.).

F. 27, 1898: Oiling harness forenoon & on Railroad to see about RR killing sheep.

F. 14, 1909: Laying fireplace. Joslyn put in phone. Home Telephone No. 6 Clarksville
(Van now living on present LaGrange Farm, LaGrange Lane.).

May 1886: Agnes Slingerland

Sat. 1, 1886: Plowed the garden. Planted potatoes.

T. 4: Turned out the cows.

F. 7: Fixed up my flowerbed. Got some herring today for the first.

F. 14: We commenced to make soap. Sowed some peas yesterday.

M. 17: Sot out the geraniums that I had in the cellar.

Th. 20: Sot out tomato plants. Planted mushmelons, cucumbers, squashes, beans, & corn.

M. 24: Van (LaGrange) took Willie (Agnes' older son) and Jimmie (Van's son) along to LaGrange's Mill. They caught a few fish while they were there.

M. 31: Washed horse blankets today. Van bought Old Pomp (probably a horse) today. Washed sheep today.

And so meteorological summer dawns with the sheep freshly washed and ready to be rid of their wooly winter coats. The next season awaits!

-With thanks to Dennis Sullivan for finding and transcribing Harriet O'Brien's 1896 diary, and to Martha Slingerland for her painstaking transcription of the diaries of Van LaGrange and Agnes Slingerland..

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Museum Hours

**The museum is
open year-round
on Sunday**

from

2:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M.

Handicap Accessible

THE SENTINEL

New Scotland Historical Association

P. O. Box 541

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