

HISTORY
—OF THE—
TOWN OF CONESUS
LIVINGSTON CO., N. Y.,
FROM ITS FIRST SETTLEMENT IN 1793, TO 1887,
WITH A BRIEF
GENEALOGICAL RECORD
OF THE
CONESUS FAMILIES.

BY WILLIAM P. BOYD,

Author of "The History of the Boyd Family," Etc.,

CONESUS, N. Y.:
BOYD'S JOB PRINTING ESTABLISHMENT.

1887.

— CHAPTER XII. —

Schools and School Districts of the Town. &c.

NEARLY twenty long years rolled away after the first settlement of the town, before the pioneers realized the necessity of preparing a school to educate their young, that they might grow up to manhood and womanhood, and be leading men and women, in the society that would in the future surround them.

The first school of this kind was commenced and taught in the northern part of Conesus by Miss Polly Howe, in a little log school-house, situated in the "little orchard" of the late John D. Alger, north of his late residence. This school was kept in the winter of 1810. The next summer Miss Howe changed her name by marriage, to that of Mrs. Joshua Gills.

This school was soon after moved from here to lot No. 133. now owned by Ezra W. Clark. The school-house—which was a log building—stood upon the old road, leading from Foots Corners to Turkey Hill, and about one hundred rods north-east of the present residence of E. W. Clark, in what is now his pasture lot. The foundation stones, of the old wooden or stone chimney are plainly to be seen to-day; and that is all that is left to mark the spot where the birch rod, taught the pupil how to

shoot. This log school-house a few years afterwards was moved to the sight of the present school-house in District No. 1.

Before this date, the different schools in the town, were kept at private, or at log school-houses, regardless of districts, until the first organization in 1820. At one time there was no less than fifteen school districts in the town; but at the present day they have dwindled down to nine as follows:—

DISTRICT No. 1. The school-house of this district is situated in the northern part of the town on lot No. 24, and a little north of Foots Corners. This district was first organized by James King, Andrew Arnold and Benjamin C. Whitney as commissioners of schools, March 19th 1823. At this time, there was a log school-house (which we have already mentioned), stood on the lands now owned by E. W. Clark. On the 29th of December, 1829, the present sight was bought, and the next year the old log school-house were moved upon it, and in a few years afterwards torn down, and the red school-house built. This was succeeded by the present one in 1869.

While building the present school-house, there transpired one of the most singular inci-

dent, that was ever known to have taken place in the town. This took place on the 22nd day of September in 1869. The contractor (A. Keys) had several young men employd upon the same, who was very fond of hunting, shooting at the mark &c. South-east of the building was a lot owned by Mr. Franklin Foot, and nearly across it was a small rise of ground or knoll, with a hollow beyond it. Upon this rise of ground, there was several woodchucks, that had made this grounds their habitation, and through the day would come out to feed. These woodchucks was an eye-sore for the boys, and they long to try their skill as marksmen, in shooting at them.

So one day they brought a rifle, and in the forenoon they shot several times at intervals at the woodchucks, and as it seemed to them without success, as each time the woodchuck would disappear into their holes in the ground.

In the afternoon some of them happened to go over the rise of ground, and there to their surprise, found a two years old steer of Mr. Foot lying in a little hollow in the ground with a bullet-hole through its head. It seems that the steer as he was lying in the hollow, had been in a direct line of the woodchuck, yet so low in the hollow, as to be unnoticable to the marksman.

This discovery caused a commotion among the boys or workmen, as they all felt that Mr. Foot would be vexed at them for shooting on his lands without permission. But Providence had paved them a way out of trouble, and allow them to correct their wrongs. This day Mr. Foot had gone to Cohocton on his wedding day, and was to return the next day, on an evening train. The boys of the neighborhood had made arrangements to give him on his return a reception as it is termed, "a mid-night serenade."

As soon as this accident had happened, Mr. S. Thorpe—a personal friend of Mr. Foot,—saw that it would be better for all parties to have an immediate settlement, called upon his friend soon after his arrival, and explained how matters stood, and soon effected a settlement; which was the payment of a reasonable sum to Mr. Foot for the steer, and the postponement of the "mid-night serenade."

DISTRICT No. 2. This district is situated at the head of Conesus lake, upon lot No. 50, and called the "McMillen" district, on the account of the school-house being surrounded by lands owned by R. F. and B. F. McMillen. The district was organized by School Commissioners Andrew Arnold, James King and Benjamin C. Whitney, March 17th, 1823. A few years ago the district repaired the school-house, and is now in a prospering condition.

DISTRICT No. 3. This district is known as the Calabogue district, and is situated in the southern part of the town, and the house is upon lot No. 83. It was organized March 17th, 1823, under the direction of Andrew Arnold, James King and Benjamin C. Whitney as Commissioners. The school is quite small, to what it once was.

DISTRICT No. 4. Known as the Conesus Center district, and was organized under the direction of Andrew Arnold, James King and Benjamin C. Whitney as Commissioners March 17th, 1823. The first school-house, was a red house with two departments—one for the advanced scholars, and the other a juvenile department,—and was situated upon lot No. 52, a little north of the Methodist church, on lands that is now a part of the Conesus Center cemetery.

Through the winter of 1869-70, the district after a series of meetings, resolved to change the sight and build a new school-house. After

— CHAPTER XVII. —

Narratives and Record of Historical Events.

IT was not long after the settlement of the town, before the early settlers began the task of building saw and grist-mills, distilleries, woolen-mills, etc., to assist them in their manual labor, and to make the daily toils of life easy.

The first of these improvements, was the saw-mill, and the first one built in the town, was known as the "Henderson's mill," built by Esq. Henderson in 1795, near the present sight of Conesus Center. To raise this mill, he was obliged to obtain assistance from the surrounding towns. This mill stood upon the sight of the present grist-mill, and did good service for the early settlers.

The next saw-mill, was the Wing mill, that stood upon lot No. 104, built by Nathaniel Cole, in 1816. This stood in the Calabogue Hollow, of which we know but little about.

The next was the Purchase saw-mill, built by Davenport Alger, about the year of 1828. It was situated in the gully of that name, and about one hundred rods south of the residence of Jacob Wester. Another saw-mill was built by Hosea Gilbert in 1833 or '34, in the Mill gully, east of the residence of McMillen Bros. The old dilapidated frame of this mill is still

standing, being the only one standing, except Humphry's, which we have already described.

The first portable saw-mill ever used in the town, was by Charles Humphry about the year of 1881 or '82. It was used upon lands owned by Lawrence Webster, on the Marrow-back hills.

The first grist-mill was built by Purchase & Baker, in 1824. It stood in the Purchase gully, south of the residence of Jacob Wester, on lot No. 42. All that is now left of this useful enterprise, is the old foundation of the mill, the dilapidated ends of the mill-dam, the mill-stones that was shaped out of a solid boulder, found in our lands, and now lies partly buried up with the earth, and through the center, a woodchuck uses it as the mouth of his retreat. The next grist-mill was a mill that stood north of the residence of John Jerome, on land now owned by Franklin Foot. This mill was only used to grind grain for a distillery that was there. The next mill was the Rockafellow mill at Conesus Center, which we have already described.

There has been several distilleries at one time in the town. These aided the early settlers to a great extent, for they would take their