

## Croghan Reservoir Road/Erie Canal Road Tour

Sunday afternoon, October 16, 2022

Leave from Croghan Mennonite Church and turn left onto the Croghan-Kirschner Road; left onto the Erie Canal Road.

Note 1: (no stop) At the intersection of the Erie Canal Road and the Yousey Road, turn right. Drive .5miles.

This was the Bishop Christian (Chris) and Anna (Moser) Nafziger residence. Presently, it is the Michael (Gus) Tabolt farm.

Chris was born in Germany in 1861; came to Lewis County in 1883 as a young adult at draft age. He married Anna Moser, daughter of Joseph and Mary (Nafziger) Moser, on October 28, 1886. They settled here after their marriage. Deceased children buried in the tree line (son and daughter before Joseph Nafziger born in 1898), but markings are no longer visible. Per Arlene Yousey and Arlene (Nafziger) Zehr, two infant children are buried in the garden near the house at the right corner property on the Yousey Road.

Chris and Anna also built a house prior to this one, which was before the bend in the road on the same side of the road. There are no remains of the structure. The family eventually moved to Martinsburg.

Children of Chris and Anna Nafziger: Joseph Nafziger (m. Rose Widrick), Menno Nafziger (m. Marie Jantzi), and adopted twins Anna Hersh Nafziger (m. John L. Roggie), and Beatrice Hersh Nafziger (m. John A. Roggie).

Stop 2: Continue to drive .9 miles to the Joseph Steria/Andrew Moser prior residence. There is a driveway on the right side of the road. The barn remains are on the right. The house foundation is across the road to the left. (See pp. 236-237 in *Strangers and Pilgrims* by Arlene Yousey.)

Joe was born in France in 1824; came to America in the 1840s; married Catherine Moser (John and Joe Moser's sister) on November 20, 1847. They settled here near the Mosers' residence.



Children of Joseph and Catherine Moser) Steria: Madeline Steria (died at the age of five; buried at the Zehr Amish Cemetery), Catherine Steria (twin sister to Madeline, m. Joe B. Yousey),

Joseph Steria II (m. Mary Widrick), and Mary Steria (m. John Yousey, a widower with five children).

The next owners of the farm were Andrew Moser, son of John (pioneer) and Catherine (Steiner) Moser, (m. Anna Roggie; rm. Nancy Beller). The first marriage had two children who deceased at a young age and are buried in the garden on the property; Katie m. Christian Lyndaker, Fannie m. Daniel Widrick, and John B. m. Mary Yousey. (See pp. 46-48+ in *Jacob and Catherine Zehr Roggie* by Arletha Zehr Bender Yoder.)

Stop 3: Continue driving .4 miles. The former Joe B. and Catherine (Steria) Yousey is on the right.

Joe was born March 28, 1840, son of John Yausie and Elizabeth Boshart (others say Kate Gingerich) who came to America from France in 1832 and worked in the Carthage-Champion area. His mother died shortly after his birth. His father, John, then married Kate Nafziger and later moved to Canada, taking Joe B. Yousey along. He returned to Lewis County as an adult and worked on the John Widrick farm.

Joe married Catherine Steria on June 8, 1871. Their first two children were born while they still lived with Joe Steria. By the time the third one was born, they had built a log cabin on this property. They lived in the log cabin until a frame house could be built. Madeline, the youngest, was born in this house on September 2, 1897. In 1909, the small house (which still stands) was



added on for Joseph and Catherine to live in during their older years. Around 1910, Joseph's fifth son, Menno and his wife Lena (Moser) Yousey, purchased the property, but they didn't receive the deed until March of 1917. Five of their six children were born there. Sometime during 1919, the Bush farm (Brewery Hill farm on Route 812) became available. Menno and Lena purchased that farm also because the cheese factory in

Kirscherville closed and a concrete floor in the stable was required to ship milk to the milk plant in Croghan. The property on Croghan Reservoir Road was used as a grazing spot for heifers. They were herded there in the spring and returned to the Brewery Hill farm in the fall. In the 1940s, the main house on the Croghan Reservoir Road was disassembled. The studs and siding were reused to build a garage on the Brewery Hill farm and a garage for the Croghan house on Mechanic Street where Menno and his second wife Mary would later move to.



Benjamin and Irene (Widrick) Yousey purchased the property from Mary Yousey (Menno's second wife) in October 1970, although they had use of the property long before then. Jane Yousey, second to the youngest of five daughters of Ben and Irene Yousey, and her husband Ned

Nafziger purchased the property of 103 acres in October 2009 and plan to have the second addition renovated. Plans are being made to move the smokehouse to the Mennonite Heritage Farm.

Children of Joe B. and Catherine (Steria) Yousey: Katherine Yousey (m. Joseph N. Widrick), Joseph Yousey (m. Lena Zehr), John Yousey (m. Minnie Ulrich), Christian Yousey (m. Katie Moser), David Yousey (m. Mollie Mary), Menno Yousey (m. Lena Moser; rm. Mary Lehman), Solomon Yousey (m. Anna Moser, rm. Daniel M. Zehr), Mary Yousey (m. John B. Moser), Jacob Yousey (m. Anna Widrick), Anna Yousey (m. John N. Lyndaker), and Madeline Yousey (m. Benjamin Roggie).



“The two sons who died in infancy, one stillborn and the other lived less than a day (1890 and 1894) are buried on the homestead. They lie in the garden that ran parallel to the back of the house. Aunt Mary Yousey Moser said by just stepping off the back porch you were almost in the garden. On the upper west end of the garden was a row of plum trees and the fence and beyond was the apple orchard. Here on the upper end of the garden they were buried in a home-made

wooden box. Grandma always had sweet peas blooming over the graves in the summer time. They were blooming in the 1980s.” (Arlene Yousey, 1999, “Passing the Torch.”)

Stop 4: Continue driving another .4 miles. John and Barbara (Martin) Naftziger residence on the right with remains of the house and barn. You may walk in where you see the blue tubing by the road. (As a landmark, there is a huge rock across the road from the blue tubing.) If you drive to a metal gate or reach the “Croghan Water Supply” sign, you have gone too far.

John was born in Germany April 11, 1829; came to Lewis County when he was 11 years of age; died February 16, 1917; married Barbara Martin in 1859; born April 10, 1838, in France, came to Lewis County at the age of 8 years; died February 19, 1917. Six children from this family died of typhoid fever over an approximate 14-month period (three daughters within two weeks); Joseph (27), Christian (23), Elias (5), Lydia (8), Susanna (16), and Maria (24). John was ordained deacon in 1874 or 1875 and served until 1909.

Other children were Catherine (m. Joseph Beller), Rebecca (m. John Sauer, rm. David Farney), Anna (m. Daniel Beller Moser), and Barbara (m. Jacob Stoltzfus). (See pp. 340-341 in *Strangers and Pilgrims* by Arlene Yousey.)

Stop 5: Continue driving to the end of the Croghan Reservoir Road. Turn left onto the Effley Falls Road. Drive to the end. Turn left onto the Belfort Road; a quick left onto the Erie Canal Road. Drive 1 mile.

David H. and Veronica (Widrick) Zehr house foundation is on the right side of the road. After their marriage in 1920, they purchased the dairy farm that belonged to Veronica’s parents, Christian and Katherine (Schrag) Widrick. The ten children of David and Veronica were born and raised on this farm that was maintained 27 years until the house was destroyed by fire in 1948. The family who yet remained moved with their parents to a larger farm on the Old State Road between Copenhagen and Watertown. David and Veronica lived at their Copenhagen farm

until retirement when they sold the property to son Clifford and his wife Geraldine (Gingerich) and later to son Wayne and his wife Donna.

Children of David and Veronica Zehr: Henry Zehr (m. Mabel Steria), Rosella Zehr (m. Walter Thompson), Estella Zehr (m. Clyde Yancey), Grace Zehr (m. Elmer Steria), Clifford Zehr (m. Geraldine Gingerich), Sherwood Zehr (m. Joan Gingerich, rm. Linda Smith), Rachael Zehr (m. Sherwood Widrick), Elinor Zehr (died as an infant), Florence Zehr (m. Daniel Lehman), and Gilbert Zehr (m. Janet Widrick).

Stop 6:

On the right side is the former John N. and Veronica (Erb) Widrick; sold to John's brother, Jacob and Lena (Martin) Widrick about 1909; son Elmer and Ruth (Lyndaker) Widrick; and son John and Mary Ellen (Yousey) Widrick. The farm is currently owned by Eugene and Loreen (Plett) Zehr (since 1989).

Note 7: (no stop)

On the left side of the road is the John and Anna (Nofziger) Widrick residence. Ownership of the home passed onto Daniel and Fannie (Moser) Widrick; son Nelson and Esther (Widrick) Widrick; and son Arlon and Karen (Honer) Widrick. Daniel and Fannie have a child buried at this home near the garden.

Note 8: (no stop)

On the left side of the road is the Kirschnerville Cemetery. About 1870, John (minister) and Catherine Moser donated a piece of farmland adjacent to the road for cemetery use. As was often the case, the deed process was delayed, but on January 17, 1874, they executed the legal papers and deeded the land. Their original intent to donate the parcel and convey it by deed proved legally impossible, so a mandated price was set. Stipulating a \$5.00 charge, five members contributed one dollar each, namely Deacon Joseph Steria, Minister John Moser, Bishop Jacob Roggie, and neighbors Joseph Moser and John Widrick. The transaction took place about the time a fire destroyed Christian Beller's barn. John Moser donated the \$5.00 to Mr. Beller as aid in his loss. The first burial grave is reported as Mrs. Barbara (Hirschey) Noftsier. (See p. 7, *Strangers and Pilgrims* by Arlene Yousey.)

Since the cemetery was cleared land, there were no trees, and John Moser's wife, Catherine, whose kitchen window looked out toward the cemetery, often longed for a tree to provide an air of coolness and to break the starkness, especially after her young son John died. To give her a focal point for her beloved son, John Moser, Sr., and another son planted a small pine tree in the plot on sixteen-year-old John, Jr.'s grave (died March 1882). Today it remains the only tree in the plot itself, although large maples fringe the boundary line running parallel with the Erie Canal Road. (See p. 140, *Strangers and Pilgrims* by Arlene Yousey.)

Note 9: (no stop)

The Mennonite Heritage Farm (1989-present, former ownership of John (pioneer) and Catherine (Steiner) Moser, son Philip and Katie (Roggie) Moser, and son Menno Moser.

Note 10: (no stop)

On the right side of the road is the former ownership of Joseph (pioneer) and Mary Noftziger (Nafziger) Moser, son Daniel and Lena (Roggie) Moser; son Daniel and Catherine (Widrick) Moser; son Julius and Avis (Lyndaker) Moser; and presently Todd and Amanda (Roes) Waugh, great-nephew of Julius Moser.

Another location not made on this trip is the Joseph and Barbara (Ebersol) Martin farm on the Croghan-Belfort Road, which would have been between the presently owned farm of James and Leona (Nolt) Zehr, past ownerships of Joseph and Kate (Noftsier) Roggie, Andrew and Mollie (Roggie) Zehr, and Anthony and Arlene (Nafziger) Zehr; and the Timothy and Helen (Moser) Burkholder residence (presently owned by Hannah Good). No foundation remains are present in the field today.