

[Griswold, Ira]

Complete History of Babcock Hollow School District No. 11 (excerpt)

The very first settler on the west bank of the [Cohocton] river was Ira Griswold. He was born of Irish ancestry at Salem, Washington Co., in the year 1776. He had two brothers who fought in the Revolutionary War. He was a shoemaker by trade, and by this vocation he accumulated enough money to purchase a large tract of land which at that time extended from the Cohocton River to Little's bridge. When he came the land was a wilderness. He cleared a spot and built a log house for himself and family. The wild animals sent forth their discordant notes from every part of the forest. The Indians had rude log huts on this tract and they regarded this newcomer as an intruder on their magnificent hunting grounds. He was sometimes afraid of their doing him some injury, but he dealt with them and used them well. Finally they went away and he continued his clearing and getting his land ready for cultivation. The log house built by Mr. Griswold was of the primitive type and in this domicile he continued to live until saw mills became in use and lumber was plenty, then he built a frame house and in this he lived until death. He built the barn on the present site, but it has changed hands and additions have since been added.

In early life he married Miss Sally Munn, who became the mother of six children, viz: Adaline, Jane, Caroline, Ira, Asa, and James Ransom. In the year 1833 she died and later he married Miss Anna Wise who was born in Massachusetts of Yankee parentage. To them six children were born, as follows: Samuel, Mary, Harriet, Charles, Ruth, and Elmira. Mr. Griswold, familiarly called "Uncle Ira," was a communicant of the Universalist church, and was identified with the Free Masons of America. In politics he was a loyal Democrat. He believed in education, and he gave all his children the opportunities for good educational attainments. The land where the school house now stands is land that he donated for school purposes. In his home life he was a man who loved quietude, and in order to keep his children quiet he often amused them with stories about the Indians that once roamed over their land. He was a hardy pioneer farmer, and in his old age he enjoyed the result of his youthful toil and the esteem of his associates. His second wife was a woman of keen perception, and good business ability, which she manifested after the death of her husband. He died Jan. 20, 1856 at the age of 74 years. She departed this life March 28, 1887 in her 76th year. Both are buried in the cemetery here on land that came from the Griswold property.

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