

**ONCE BRANDRETH STATION LIVED; TODAY IT'S ONLY
FOUNDATIONS
10/17/95**

Brandreth Station was located a short distance above Beaver River on the M & M Railroad. In 1920, when C.J. Strife and his wife, Arlean, moved there, it was a bustling community with 25 to 30 structures.

A large sawmill and hot pond to hold logs was central to various support buildings. There were some 20-odd two-story homes in which the families of the mill and woods workers lived. A commissary, bunkhouse for the single men, and schoolhouse completed the gathering along the railroad.

C.J. Strife's job was to supply logs to the sawmill. The logs, for the most part, were hauled to the mill via the Mac-A-Mac Railroad. This was a private railroad placed strategically through the 30,000 plus acres owned by the Brandreth Corporation. It terminated at the station where either logs or lumber from the mill could be loaded on cars of the M & M to be shipped wherever.

Helen Codega was one of the five Strife children of four girls and one boy. When it came time for Mrs. Strife to deliver one of the children, she would leave a month before for Croghan. The last child was born in Tupper Lake after a trip there by railroad handcar.

Dr. Lindsay made on regular trip a year to Brandreth and everyone saved their aches and pains until then. All the children had a physical and inoculations. If necessary, Dr. Bob would spend two days to care for everyone. The rest of the year he came for emergencies only.

Lyle Campany, C.J.'s cousin, was the teacher at the one-room schoolhouse that served students through the sixth grade.

The schoolhouse also served as a community center. On Saturday nights the desks were cleared out of the way and a dance was held.

Early Sunday morning, Catholic Mass was held, followed by a Protestant service. Monday morning it was back to school. Helen recalled as many as 15 children attending school at one time.

There was no liquor at Brandreth, but it was just a step to the Beaver River Hotel, if you were so inclined. After long, hard days in the woods, many of the lumberjacks, in particular, made the track.

There were several trains a day and it was the only access to much of the area. Helen recalled the station agents calling ahead on up the line when Joe Jenkins, the game protector, was on patrol.

C.J. learned much of his expertise in the logging business during his years at Brandreth, which I am sure, shaped much of his success in later years.

He also learned a bitter and hard lesson. In 1930, he ended up loading and shipping logs that had cost \$28-a-thousand to cut and put up, for \$19-a-thousand board feet. In short, he went bankrupt to the tune of \$1 million.

There is no doubt that this had to be the low point in his life. The timber was exhausted and Strife was moved with his family to Big Moose, determined to pay back his bankruptcy debt.

The mill burned at Brandreth and today nothing remains except cellar holes and foundations of a once proud little Adirondack settlement.