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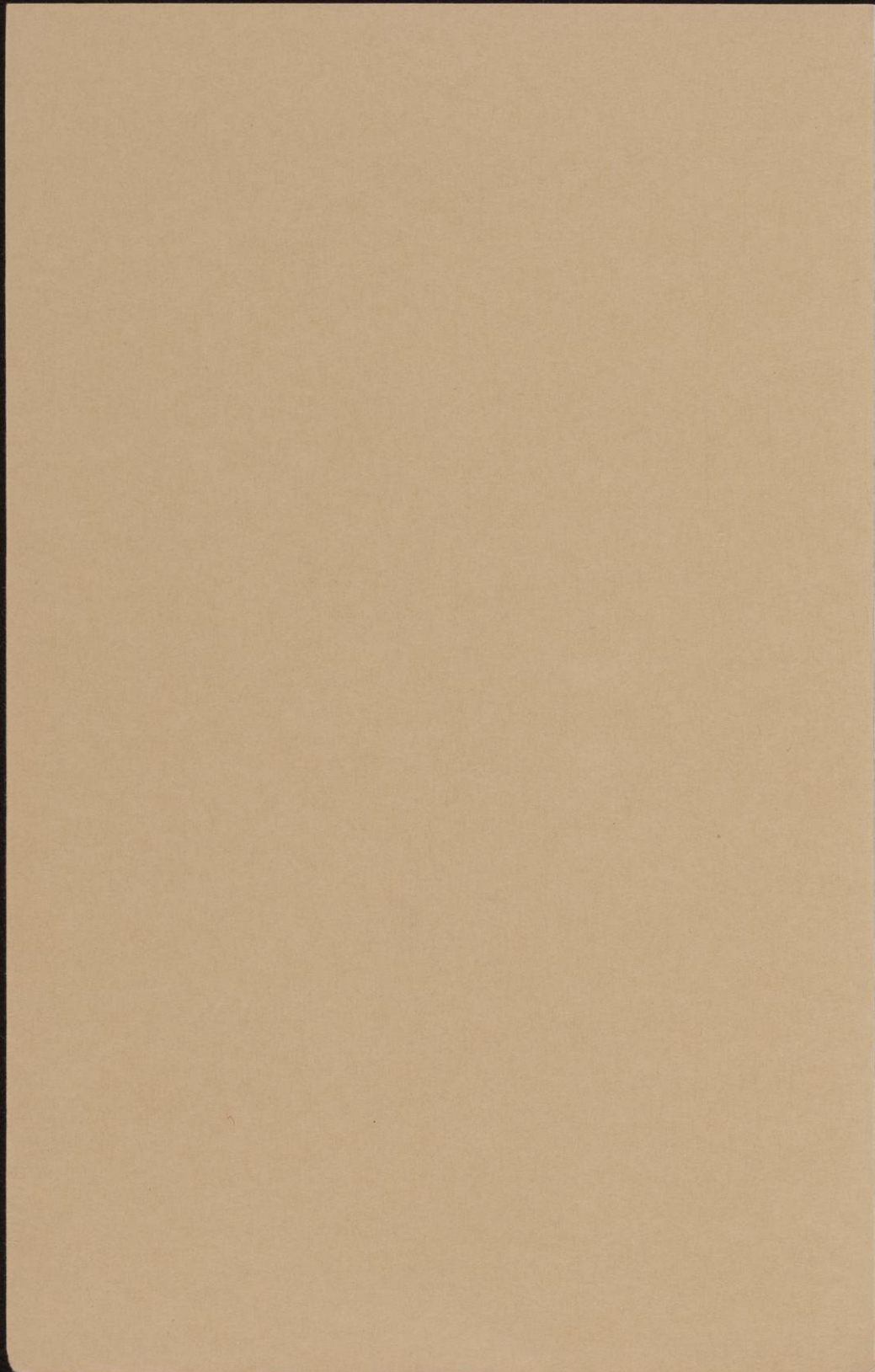
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FITCHBURG  
TOWN HALL





THE  
FITCHBURG BICENTENNIAL COMMITTEE  
PRESENTS

FITCHBURG  
MA HISTORY

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FITCHBURG BICENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

1976

COUNTRYSIDE PUBLICATIONS

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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We would also like to thank Roland Littlewood who did a professional job of indexing the book, the committee that indexed the book on file cards many years ago, and the 1998 committee that proofread Rollie's index and helped find errors in spelling and photo identities in the original book.

## **DEDICATION**

To all who share a timeless love  
of the  
rural country side  
and  
cherish its preservation

## **A TRIBUTE**

Our warmest and deepest thanks go to our Bicentennial chairman, Bill Stoneman. His moral support, guidance, and knowledge of the town were indispensable in the preparation of Fitchburg's history. It was a pleasure to work with such a person of patience, kindness, and endurance.

Fitchburg Bicentennial Committee



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## INTRODUCTION

Over the years, Fitchburg had its own village and various thriving settlements with at least five post offices, twelve schools, three churches, and numerous taverns, stores and businesses.

As methods of transportation evolved to the point where large numbers of people could easily go great distances, the consolidation of services seemed to be the most efficient and practical move. Perhaps the fact that the wagons, stages, railroads and auto each took separate routes through the township accounts for the separate short lived communities in Fitchburg. Those evolving modes of travel have determined the settlement, lifestyle, and unique pattern of development found here.

At first, a simple covered box with wheels called the prairie schooner conveyed a man, his family and all their worldly possessions to their new homesteads. The man soon needed more than the territorial road that got him to Fitchburg, he needed a way to reach markets for his crops and to procure better provisions for his family. He wanted to tell others about the good life he found.

The stagecoach was lighter and faster and helped answer some of those needs. Settlements sprung up around stagecoach stops. Oak Hall was the first with a post office, inn, and a church. Then came Lake View and Dogtown.

However, steam power in the form of the railroad came along and revolutionized travel. It took new routes and the settlements of the stagecoaches lost a good deal of their prestige. A busy village began to surround the town's main depot on the Illinois Central. It was known as Fitchburg Village and became the main town center with stores, a mill, lumberyard, granary, school and taverns — everything necessary for a thriving village that seemed destined to grow.

The advent of the automobile denied all of this to Fitchburg Village which ultimately became just a whistle stop. It was simpler and cheaper to truck milk, livestock and crops with Oregon, Verona, or Madison just minutes away. It was a period when many sons and daughters left Fitchburg for the cities while the family homestead remained with a descendent who was content to truck his commodity out and drive his provisions in. The local post offices and schools gradually closed, their functions taken over by larger surrounding communities.

Increasing American prosperity and a questioning of the lifestyle it provided have resulted in a large scale return to the good life of the rural countryside. That prosperity rendered the commuter's

country homesite feasible with the two car family. Housing developments appeared where fertile prairies once stood. This new wave of immigration into the town is viewed with mixed emotions as many residents wonder what now lies ahead for Fitchburg.

# THE PRAIRIE SCHOONER ARRIVES

## THE LAND

"This is a good township of land, mostly gently rolling with a good soil; is not well watered; otherwise holds out many inducements to the farmer. It has some springs and streams on the east side. On this township we saw many deer and prairie wolves."<sup>1</sup>

In 1833 government surveyor, Lorin Miller, had completed his survey of what was to become Fitchburg and penned this appraisal.

The survey was authorized by the Land Ordinance of 1785 which provided for a government survey of the Northwest Territory. Land was divided into townships of 36 square miles, each township separated in 36 sections of one square mile each (640 acres) and each section into quarter sections. Four sections in every township were reserved as bounties for soldiers of the Revolutionary War while Section 16 was set aside for public schools. The remainder of the land sold at public auction for \$1 per acre.

An early Fitchburg historian, William Vroman, records his impression of the township:

"Town 6, range 9, town of Fitchburg, is situated in the central and southern part of Dane County, bounded north by the town of Madison, west by the town of Verona, south by the town of Oregon, and east by the town of Dunn. It is one of the best agricultural towns in the county, with very little or no waste lands, about equally divided between prairie and oak openings. The soil is very rich and climate healthy. There are several creeks and springs, of which the Nine Springs, situated in the northeast part of the town, are justly celebrated."<sup>2</sup>

Nearly a century later, the *Town of Fitchburg Development Plan* reported on glacial features that created this unique area.

"The topography of Fitchburg is the direct result of the considerable glacial activity that restructured the surface of much of the State some 15,000 to 18,000 years ago. Fitchburg lies right on the boundary between the glaciated areas of the State and the driftless or unglaciated areas. As a result of this location, the most dominant glacial features are two terminal moraines deposited by the Green Bay Lobe of the Continental Glacier. These terminal moraines, which run from the northwest to the southeast, were created at the farthest point of the glacier, where the ice melted and deposited all the debris carried by the glaciers. These

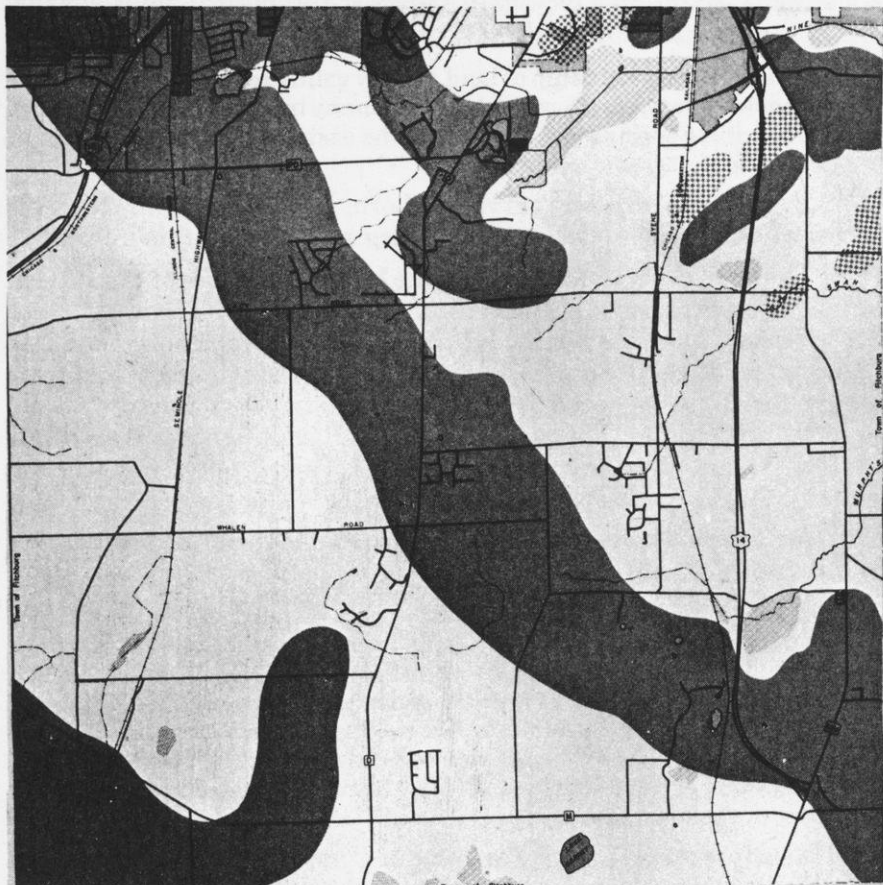
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<sup>1</sup>Lorin Miller, *History of Dane County* (Chicago: Western Historical Society, 1880) p. 373

<sup>2</sup>William Vroman, *Madison, Dane County and Surrounding Towns* (Madison: Wm. J. Park and Co., 1877) p. 456

## THE PRAIRIE SCHOONER ARRIVES

terminal moraines are ridges of unconsolidated material ranging from small fragments to large boulders."<sup>3</sup>



<sup>3</sup>Town of Fitchburg Development Plan, 1974, p. 16

The Johnstown Moraine, marking the furthest extent of the Wisconsin glacier, extends across the southwest of the Town, while the Milton Moraine is located more in the center of the Town. The flat to rolling hill terrain is the result of this glacier depositing rock and glacial till or outwash. On the ridges this may be only a few feet deep, but in the valleys, it may be hundreds of feet to bedrock. On moderately high ridges in the Town moraines, one can clearly see the Capitol building in Madison and twenty miles to the west to Blue Mounds. Fitchburg contains several of the highest points in Dane County.

"In addition to these terminal moraines, there are some unusual and significant glacial features. In the northeast there is a series of elongated hills called drumlins. These hills of glacial till are confined to the limestone belt which underlies the area. The long axis of these oval shaped deposits, which are found in only three areas of the United States, are always parallel to the direction of movement of the ice sheet.

The only lake in the Town, according to the report 'Surface Water Resources of Dane County' by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is Lake Barney located in Section 34 on the southern edge of the Town. This lake is small with 31 surface acres and shallow with a maximum depth of six feet. This is a landlocked drift basin, currently managed by the DNR as a warm water predator fish rearing pond."<sup>4</sup>



(picture courtesy of P. Fox)

**Lake Barney. Created by one of the southernmost chips of the glacier.**

<sup>4</sup>*Town of Fitchburg Development Plan, 1974, p. 14 and p. 16*



EARLY SETTLEMENT

Soon after the government survey, easterners became aware of this attractive land. "Wisconsin fever" began around 1835, due to the publicity generated by the Black Hawk War in this new territory and because it was considered the open "West" where the land was newly surveyed and on the auction bloc cheap. The new Erie Canal drew people westward through New York to Wisconsin and put the shores of the Great Lakes in communication with world markets.

"Wisconsin became the talked about place where speculative profits were to be made, fat farms awaited the plow and the new American Eden beckoned."<sup>5</sup>

The first settlers of the early '40's were mostly Yankees who found their native state becoming crowded and read in Lapham's 1844 book "Wisconsin, Its Geography and Its Topography" that Wisconsin was quite similar physically and climatewise to New York. Increase Lapham was the State's first weatherman and surveyor and creator of the first accurate detailed map of Wisconsin.

In 1837, John Stoner opened the first farm in Fitchburg on Section 17 which became known as Stoner's Prairie and through which the southern half of Seminole Highway now extends. As the third settler to reach the Madison area he had a choice of literally thousands of acres of virgin land.

"He went out to the farm on Monday mornings and took his rations with him for the week. He erected a shanty, open on three sides, covered with oak shakes, which turned most of the rain; a fire in front on the ground for cooking purposes; a bundle of straw and blankets; a few camp stools, constituted the furniture in this cabin, in which he managed to keep open house. Many a weary traveler and visitor has partaken of his hospitality, and many a night has the writer of this slept with him in this improvised house, open upon three sides, and nothing but the broad canopy of shakes."<sup>6</sup>

Since Stoner worked the farm during the week and returned to Madison where he lived weekends with his family, the title of first permanent settler passes to the Vroman brothers, William, George and Joseph. They were Dutchmen from New York trained as carpenters and were among the first group of men arriving in Madison to build the capitol. The capitol site was picked and building begun before Madison was even settled.

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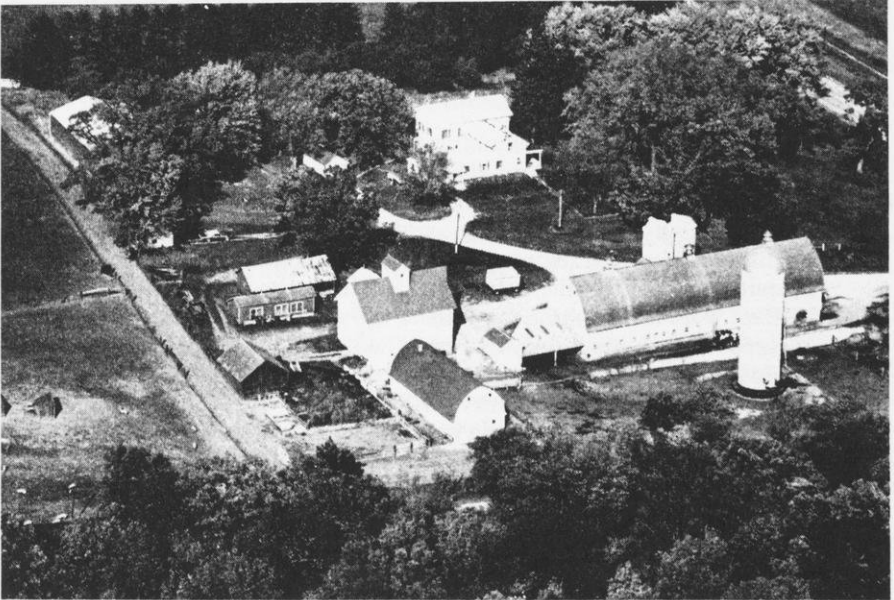
<sup>5</sup>Robert Nesbit, *Wisconsin: A History* (Madison: the University of Wisconsin Press, 1974) p. 104

<sup>6</sup>William Vroman, *Madison, Dane County and Surrounding Towns* (Madison: Wm. J. Park and Co., 1877) p. 457

The Vromans opened a farm in 1839 and built the first house between Madison and New Mexico, now known as Monroe, Wisconsin. Soon after, Joseph married Mary Westrope. She was a strong pioneer woman of 19 who had already seen much of frontier life, having lived in Fort De Sallust, one of the battle sites of the Black Hawk War of 1832. Mary Westrope Vroman was the first white woman in Fitchburg.

“They were quickly followed by Dr. William H. Fox, George Fox, Joseph Fox, James Fox, Rev. Matthew Fox, and the Rev. William Fox, their father, from County Westmeatte, Ireland, William Quivey, William True, George and John Keenan, P. Pritchard, Cyrenus Postle, Frank Nott, the Salisburys, Charles and John Watkins. These were the pioneers of the Town of Fitchburg: good, generous, true hearted men, just the men to open up a new country; men of whom you never asked a favor in vain; men that you could tie to; that believed in the golden rule; you were welcome to their homes, and their latch strings always hung out.”<sup>7</sup>

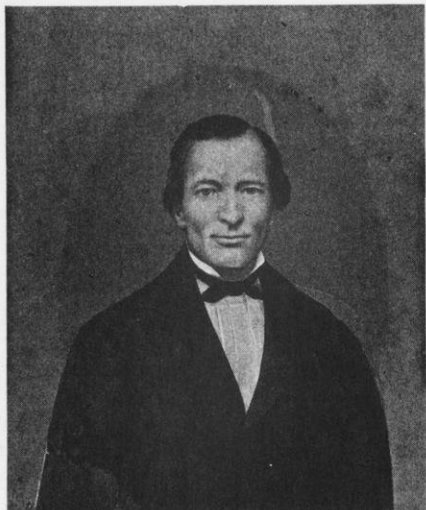
An account of the final leg of P. M. Pritchard’s journey from New York to Fitchburg reveals the intense desire for a prosperous new life that drove the early pioneers to help blaze the trails west.



(picture courtesy of G. Vroman)

The Vroman home built in 1839 still stands proud amidst modern barns and sheds.

<sup>7</sup>William Vroman, p. 458



(picture courtesy of G. Vroman)

**Joseph Vroman, an ambitious young carpenter and farmer, one of our first permanent settlers.**



(picture courtesy of G. Vroman)

**Mary Westrope Vroman, Fitchburg's first white woman, lived many years filled with the dangers and rewards of frontier life.**

“William True, a former schoolmate, had made a location near Indian Ford, and Mr. Pritchard joined him by following an Indian trail, thence up the Catfish past Third and Fourth Lakes, and by a trail to what is now known as Oak Hall; he then entered 80 acres of his present farm and sought more civilized regions; his skill with the clarinet was brought into requisition at Janesville, July 3, and in Milwaukee, July 4; his affairs in the East were in bad shape, owing to the panic of 1837, and this caused his removal with his family in June, 1843; a terrific storm burst upon the little party as they were nearing Janesville, and the horses and wagon becoming mired down, the brave wife, after the extrication of one of the horses, mounted him and rode into the then village, though she had a narrow escape from drowning while crossing a stream swollen by the freshet; a gloomy outlook for them, as their entire capital was \$2.62; finally the doorless and floorless cabin of Mr. True was reached, and here with carpets hung for doors, and bedsteads made of poles, they began life in Wisconsin; it was two or three years before Mr. Pritchard was able to build even a log house of his own; but since this time his progress has been rapid; 200 acres of splendid land, a tasteful brick farmhouse, three or four substantial barns, with windmill, outbuildings, etc., are his reward.”<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup>*History of Dane County* (1880), p. 1257



(picture courtesy of P. Fox)

Pritchard's tasteful red brick 1840's farm house still stands as the McManus home just south of the "M" and "D" intersection known as Oakhall.

Soon after Pritchard's arrival, "Wisconsin fever" and the speculative boom discovered Fitchburg and the surrounding county. The get-rich-quickers joined dirt farmers in the race for new land.

In the summer of '43, "many eastern people came out here viewing lands. They liked the climate, soil and general face of the country; but thought it very far to a mill or blacksmith shop. We had no church or school, and few roads so they could not stand it. Our nearest mills were Mr. Hickcox's, in Ridgeway, Iowa county, Beloit, and Columbus, either one about forty miles distant. The nearest blacksmith shop was at Madison, a long road around the head of Lake Wingra, and the smith not always in a working mood ..."<sup>9</sup>

A few of the easterners decided they "could stand it", unloaded their prairie schooners and settled in. They joined together building homesteads, roads, and schools.

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<sup>9</sup>William H. Fox, *Madison, Dane County and Surrounding Towns* (Madison: Wm. J. Park and Co., 1877) p. 450

## THE PRAIRIE SCHOONER ARRIVES



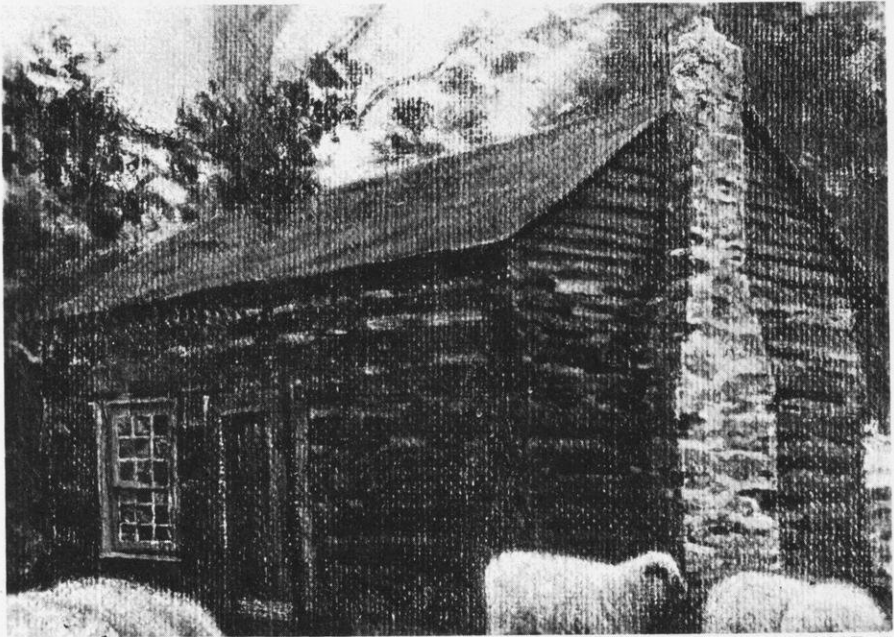
Fitchburg's prairies once served as a convenient prairie schooner crossing.



(picture courtesy of State Historical Society of Wisconsin)

Travel in the prairie schooner meant many weary hours through wild unfamiliar territory.

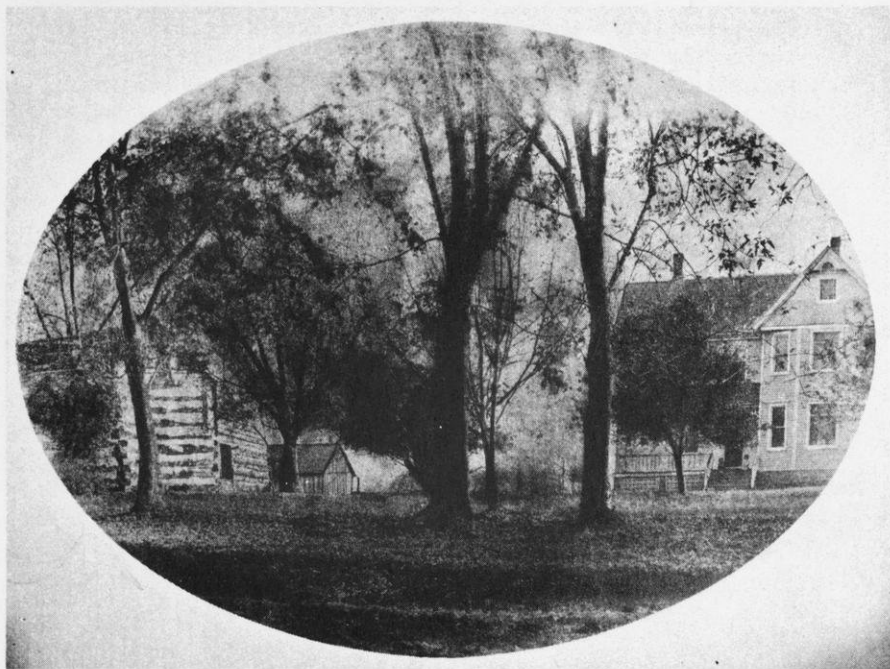
“Some of the early settlers came into the county in large wagons drawn by oxen. The wagons were covered, and whole families with their household goods would travel in this way until they located. They had a long rope attached to the oxen, and their stock tied on each side of the rope to keep them straight. There were also what we called emigrants who came by land. Others would come in wagons, move upon their land, turn their wagonbox upside down, and sleep under it; while others would set boards around a tree and move in and cook their meals outside in true camping style, and live in this way with no rent or hotel bills to pay, until they could build their log houses. Others would join in with their friends until they could make provisions for themselves. Log houses were very elastic in those days — they were like an omnibus, never full, but always room for one more.”<sup>10</sup>



(picture courtesy of A. Fox)

Fox log cabin: Photo from oil painting of log cabin built during 1842 by my father, Dr. Wm. H. Fox, and my mother, Cornelia Averill Fox. Occupied by them for ten years, when they built a frame house, now the east wing of the old home standing on Woodside Farm, ten miles south of Madison. All the children were born in this cabin except Katherine, born early in 1842 at Lima, Indiana, and myself, born in the frame house in 1855. After they vacated the cabin, it housed farm help; later was a school taught by Katherine, then a corn-crib. I had the painting made after the cabin was abandoned, in order to preserve it in Memory.

<sup>10</sup>William Vroman, *Madison, Dane County and Surrounding Towns* (Madison: Wm. J. Park and Co., 1877) p. 461



(picture courtesy of W. Kinney)

The Kinney log cabin stood for many years as a reminder to the family in the big house of the rugged life Irishman Andrew Kinney lived in 1843 when he first came to Fitchburg after helping build the Erie Canal.

### EARLY TOWN GOVERNMENT

As Dane County became populated, it was necessary for the Territory of Wisconsin to be more organized. So, on February 2, 1846, by an act of the Wisconsin Territorial Legislature, a town was created to include Townships 5 and 6 North of Range 9 East, and Township 6 North of Range East. The town was called Rome and included the present towns of Fitchburg, Oregon and Dunn.

The inn and home of William Quivey located on Fish Hatchery Road and M, served as host to the first Rome town meetings in 1846 for the election of officials. The Territorial Legislature stated that the voting booth was to be at the "Quivey's Grove Precinct."

A year later Fitchburg separated from Rome to become the independent Town of Greenfield. The new name was chosen to describe the lush rolling fields of the town. An act of the Territorial Legislature approved this move on February 11, 1847.

At the first town of Greenfield meeting on April 6, 1847, the new government concerned itself with electing officials to begin the exciting and demanding job of setting up a new town in the budding Wisconsin territory. Meeting again at the accommodating home of William Quivey, 55 voters were present to vote in 14 people. The first government strongly believed in representative democracy and public participation in local affairs.

GREENFIELD'S FIRST ELECTED OFFICIALS  
APRIL 6, 1847<sup>11</sup>

Chairman .....	Joseph Vroman
Supervisors .....	George L. Dike Stephen Varnol
Clerk .....	Robert Salisbury
Treasurer .....	William H. Fox
Collector .....	John McWilliams
Highway Commissioners .....	Joseph Vroman Stephen Varnol
Commissioner of Common Schools .....	Robert Salisbury
Assessor .....	Isaac Eaton
Constable .....	John McWilliams
Fence Viewers .....	Andrew Kenney John Keenan David Travis
Sealers of Weights & Measures .....	Lewis S. Augur
Roads and Schools .....	Robert Bennet

Wisconsin historian, Robert Nesbit states:

“Once settlement was made, transportation became the central problem of the Wisconsin frontier.”<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup>Greenfield Town Clerk Records (1847)

<sup>12</sup>Robert Nesbit, *Wisconsin: A History* (Madison: the University of Wisconsin Press, 1973) p. 148

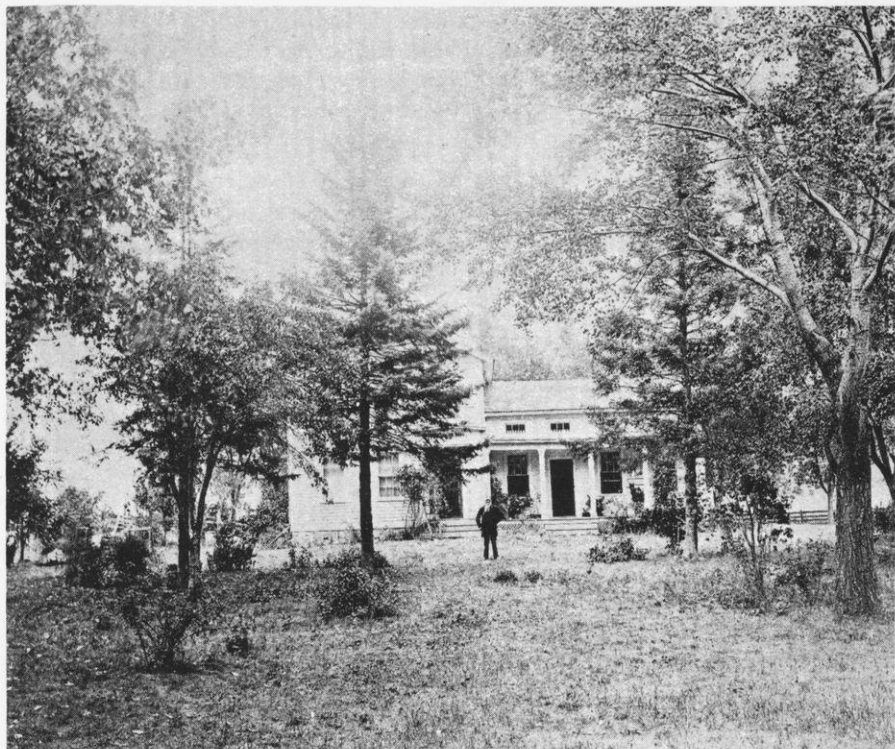




(picture courtesy of *Dane Co. History 1880*)

William Vroman served as Dane County treasurer from 1860-1864 and co-authored a Fitchburg history section with Dr. William Fox in an 1877 county history book.

The settlers needed defined roads once all the open land was taken up and so the development of thoroughfares became the main business of the town's government. According to the town clerk's records, highway commissioners were definitely the busiest town officials. They laid out seventeen roads in the township within less than a year. William Vroman, an early road commissioner, gives a personal account of his demanding job:



(picture courtesy of A. Adams)

Lewis L. Adams had lived twenty years in his log cabin when he erected this beautiful home in 1868 for his wife Mary Salisbury.

“I now have a realizing sense of the labor performed for the money received. Three towns to travel over, to lay out into road districts, appoint path masters, make out warrants, and lay out roads. I spent 20 days in the service of the town, for which I brought in a bill of \$7 and the Town Board cut me down to \$4. Four dollars for 20 day’s work! Well, the people were poor, and they said we must take turns in holding office. If the politicians of the present day were paid as *liberally*, they would not be as anxious for office.”<sup>13</sup>

Two territorial roads were already established when Fitchburg Road Commissioners began their work. Running north and south were the Madison to Monroe Road, part of present Seminole Highway, and the Madison to Janesville Road, now Highway MM. Fitchburg’s Commissioners laid out Adams Road first. L. L. Adams was a new settler in 1847 having purchased 120 acres along the proposed road.

<sup>13</sup>William H. Fox and William Vroman, *Madison Dane County and Surrounding Towns* (Madison: Wm. J. Park and Co., 1877) p. 458

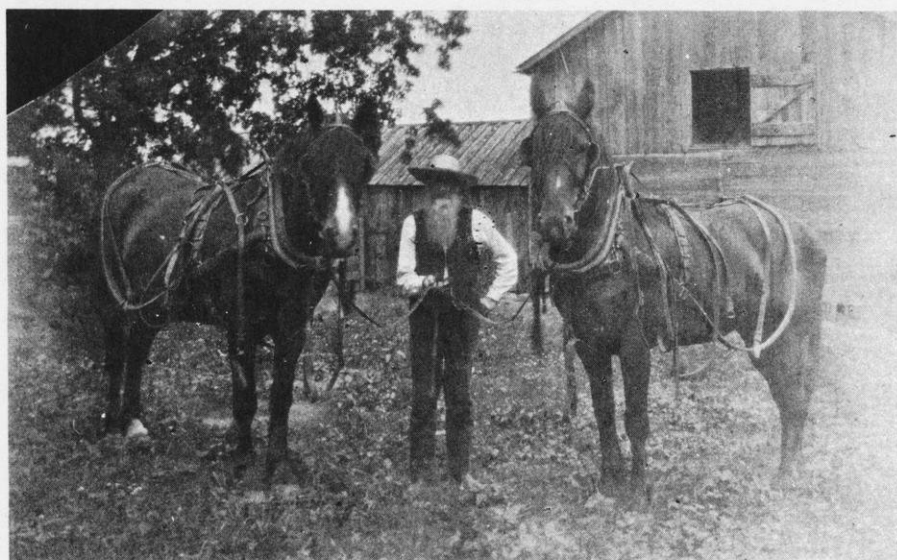
## THE PRAIRIE SCHOONER ARRIVES

“He came West in May, 1847; spent some time looking over the country, footing it to Baraboo; R.W. Salisbury showed him his present farm; Mr. A. at once entering 120 acres where his buildings now stand; this paid for, his only remaining capital was health and pluck.”<sup>14</sup>

Recognizing a need for the supervision of roads, the Commissioners, in 1848, divided the town into four road districts and appointed these men as overseers: William H. Fox, A.S. Wood, C. Postle and F.G. Stevens. By the 1860's, energetic Fitchburg had established 16 road districts.

While road building was crucial for the early government, the Board also supervised the establishment of schools, raised taxes for school support, and negotiated disputes about farmers' fence lines. Occasionally, these disputes moved from Fitchburg's Town Hall to the higher courts in Madison. On November 26, 1885, the *Oregon Observer* notes that ...

“A large number of Fitchburg people were summoned to appear before the court last week as witnesses in the case of James Monks, Sr., and



(picture courtesy of A. Adams)

L. L. Adams was justly proud of his fine workhorses and improved 240 acre farm.

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<sup>14</sup>Lorrin Miller, *History of Dane County* (Chicago: Western Historical Society, 1880) p. 1253

Alfred Bitney about some pigs. The case was conducted by Olin, LaFollette and Vilas on one side, and O'Connor and Burr Jones on the other."

... Nearly a year later, the November 11, 1886 edition of the *Observer* printed the outcome:

"The Syene pig case between James Monks, Sr. and Alfred Bitney which has been in various courts the last two years was settled yesterday. Each man paid his costs, shook hands, and went home wiser men."

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors' Office,  
DANE COUNTY, WISCONSIN.

To the Clerk of *Fitchburg*

You are commanded to carry out on the

Assessment Roll of your Town, Taxes for the year 1858 for the following purposes, to wit:

For State purposes, .....	\$ 829. <sup>12</sup>
For County purposes, .....	\$ 664. <sup>05</sup>
For County Poor purposes, .....	\$ 193. <sup>47</sup>
For County School purposes, .....	\$ 157. <sup>57</sup>
The Equalized value of Real Estate, .....	\$ 3589.49
Assessed value of Personal Property, .....	<del>Error</del> \$ 499.12
Total Real Estate and Personal Property, .....	\$ 3988.526

Given under my hand, and Seal of the County Board  
of Supervisors of Dane County, Wisconsin, at Madison,  
this 21<sup>st</sup> day of November, A. D. 1858.

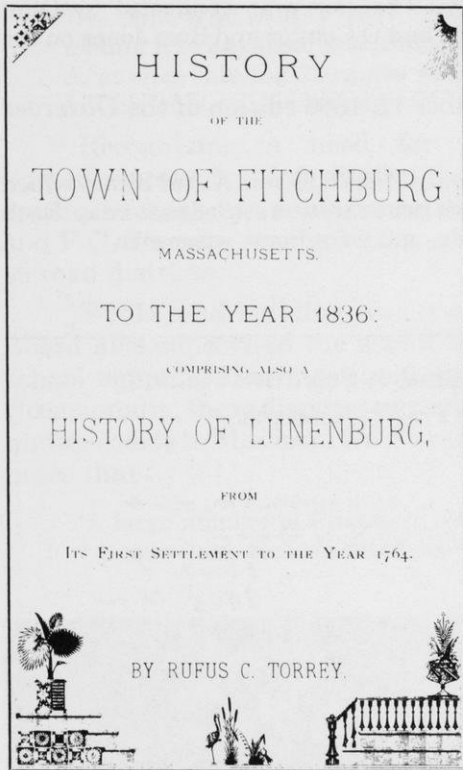
*E. G. Reuter*  
Clerk of Board of Supervisors, Dane Co.  
*J. N. M. Gray sep*

*Town Tax 927*

(picture courtesy of Town of Fitchburg)

Getting books to balance at tax time is an eternal problem as attested by the Fitchburg Clerk's records of 1858.

Greenfield's name changed to Fitchburg in 1853 due to confusion with the Greenfield in Milwaukee County. Ebenezer Brigham, the esteemed pioneer patriarch of Blue Mounds, suggested the name of Fitchburg. It appears he chose that name since it was familiar to him as a neighboring town of Shrewsbury, Massachusetts, his home town. The original Fitchburg, Massachusetts was named for John Fitch.



History of our sister city. John Fitch and his family were kidnapped by Indians in the 1700's and held captive by French Canadians who bribed the Indians to take part in their scheme. The French raised money for their part in the French and Indian War by selling back English families for a bounty from England.

(picture courtesy of Fitchburg Mass. Historical Society)

### EARLY EDUCATION

The Northwest Land Ordinance of 1785 not only ordered a system of survey for townships, but was the basis of free and universal public education. It stated,

“Religion, morality and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and means of education shall be forever encouraged.”

In 1839, the territorial Wisconsin Legislative Assembly passed the first law governing operation of elementary schools. The county was divided into school districts to supervise the schools and levy taxes for school support.

Fitchburg concerned itself with the education of its children from the beginning. At the first government meeting in 1847, the people of Greenfield elected commissioners of common schools who approved the establishment of common schools within Fitchburg and apportioned money from taxes to each of the schools. Within a year or

two, schooling moved out of the homes and into the official schoolhouses of Lake View, Stoner, Prairie View, Oakhall and Syene.

### FITCHBURG'S DISTRICT SCHOOLS

#5	Lake View	1848 —1930	Keenan District
#1	Syene	1850*—1952	
#7	Stoner	1850 —1938	reestablished 1953-64 Vroman District
#8	Prairie View	1850 —1937	
#4	Oak Hall	1850 —1949	
Jt. 2	Swan Creek	1855 —1925	Joint District with Dunn
#10	Camp Badger	1857 —1964	
#6	Fitchburg Center	1860*—1962	Gorman District
#9	Fish Hatchery	1860*—1962	Dogtown
Jt. 12	Maple Corners	1864 —1964	Joint District with Verona

\*approximate date

### IMMIGRATION

There was a remarkable increase in European immigration in the late 1840's and 50's with the potato famine in Ireland accounting for most of Fitchburg's growth. Several German families came after the large Irish influx and in the early part of the century. There were 11,000 people in Wisconsin in 1836 when the territory was organized, 31,000 in 1840, 305,000 in 1850 and 776,000 in 1860.<sup>15</sup> Wisconsin surpassed all other states in this phenomenal rate of growth for several reasons. It was the first state to establish an office to advertise and encourage foreign immigration. By 1853, this Wisconsin official located in New York City to work with the steamship and railroad agents in directing land seekers to the Badger State. The application of steam to inland transportation provided steamboats on the Great

<sup>15</sup>Robert Nesbit, *Wisconsin: A History* (Madison: the University of Wisconsin Press, 1973) p. 147

## THE PRAIRIE SCHOONER ARRIVES

Lakes and steam powered railroads making the journey westward less arduous. In addition, the large scale European immigration occurred when Wisconsin was very open and available.

Most of the immigrants were destitute leaving their native countries hoping for a new prosperity in America. Wisconsin often was praised in letters from earlier immigrants and was the byword of everyone from the ticket taker to the baggage clerk that the newly arriving immigrants met. Families endured many hardships to reach the American dream even arriving penniless, having sold everything they owned for their fare in the ship's cargo hold.

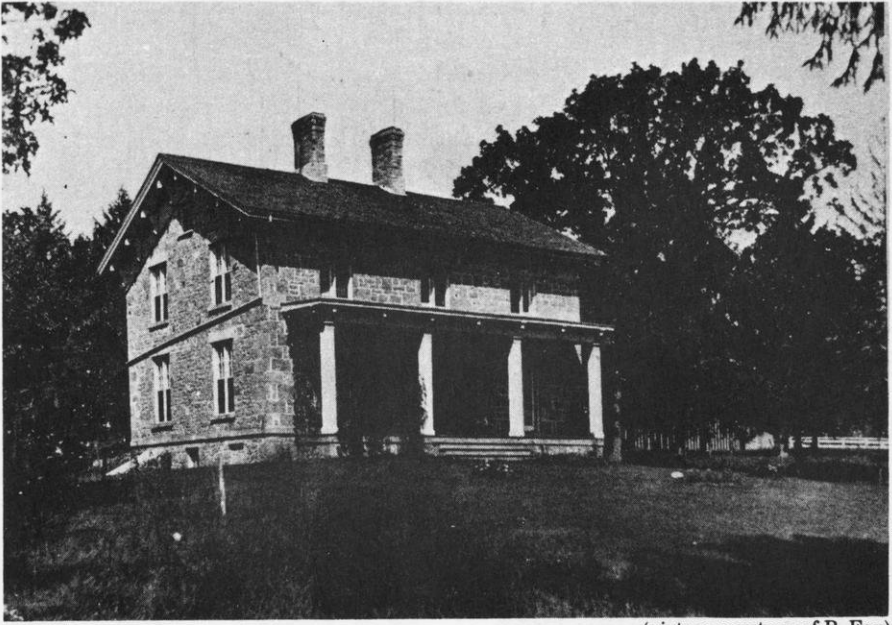
Gerald O'Brien, of Seminole Highway, recounts a story concerning his family: *"Because of oppressions and famine, many families were moving to other countries. The voyage was both difficult and dangerous and there was an Irish law that prohibited any baby under a year old from leaving the island. The O'Briens had a baby less than a year old and in order for the family to leave together, they packed the baby in a sack of potatoes. The story goes that great-grandfather Michael O'Brien shouldered the sack and walked up the gangplank past the custom officers and out to the boat, unsure of the destination — it was a cattle boat bound for Venezuela!"* They slowly worked their way to Wisconsin, settling in the area in the late 1800's. There are now O'Brien farms along Seminole on the original Stoner's Prairie.

Some Irish settlers came to America to escape persecution by the English. The Fox family was one of these, settling very early in Fitchburg. Anna Fox, who lives with her brother, Phil, as the fifth generation in the original stone family home on Highway M, remembers a story handed down to her about her great-grandfather, George Wilkinson Fox: *"He was just 12 years old when he came over on the sailing vessel. Apparently he got rather obstreperous — I suppose he got sick and tired of the whole thing, so the captain put him in a lifeboat trailing along behind the sailing vessel. Here was this poor little kid bouncing around in the waves until the passengers made such a fuss that the captain dragged him on board again."*

George Fox's family had been Irish nobility, forced off their estate by the English before they came to America. George and his older brother, William, came "looking land" in 1841 leaving their families in Indiana. They came through Chicago and Janesville following an Indian trail, guided by Harvey Bush who described Fitchburg as "fine land but in such an out of the way place."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>*History of Dane County* (1880) p. 1254



(picture courtesy of P. Fox)

Original Fox stone house built by George Fox from local limestone and lumber shipped across Lake Michigan.

Returning to LaGrange, Indiana, George married Catherine Keenan and all of the Keenan and Fox families set out in prairie schooners to settle permanently in Fitchburg.

The Fox settlement was widely known and this large family has been closely identified with the progress of Dane County. William H. Fox,...

“was one of the veteran physicians of the state, a member of the constitutional convention of 1847, and a man of influence in the formative days of the commonwealth.”<sup>17</sup>

... He helped write the Wisconsin State Constitution being a member of the committee on preamble, boundaries, franchise, internal improvements, taxation and finance, militia, eminent domain and bill of rights.

Dr. William Fox was a close personal friend of Charles Stuart Parnell, an outstanding Irish leader, and he was prominent as the

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<sup>17</sup>Milo Quaife, *Wisconsin: Its History and Its People* (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1924) p. 240

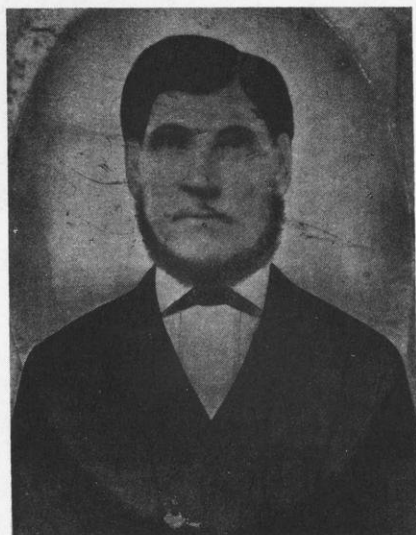


Wisconsin President of the Parnell Land League in helping Parnell free the Irish tenants from their English landlords. Dr. Fox was deeply impressed with hardships endured by tenants in Ireland having seen wives of evicted tenants eating nettle blossoms along roadsides to sustain the lives of their nursing babies. His family was dispossessed of much of their property for secretly teaching Catholic children to read and write when English penal law forbade them the privilege.

Most likely, emigrating Irish families tended to gravitate toward a supportive settlement in America such as that of the Foxes and Keenans and these new families attracted their own friends and relatives thus accounting for the unusually large Irish population in Fitchburg.



**Rosa (Killian) Bryne**



(picture courtesy of C. Bryne)

**David Bryne**

The Brynes, parents of thirteen children, were from County Wicklow, Ireland. They arrived by steamboat in Milwaukee, bought horses and reached Fitchburg in 1854.

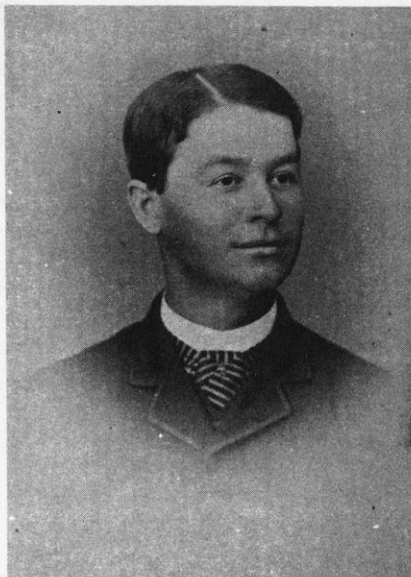
### ROUGH AND READY DAYS

The Pre-Emption Act of 1841 gave recognition of squatters rights on land he had selected and improved before it was ready for public sale. Local Mutual Protection Groups grew out of a mass meeting in Milwaukee in 1837 to establish claims associations to protect squatters from newcomers who would buy lands and "jump



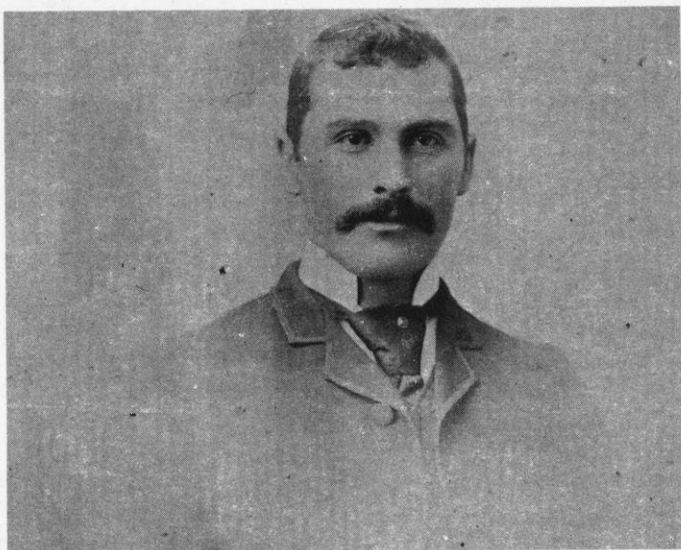
(picture courtesy of G. Purcell)

Mrs. Moses Lacy and her husband left Ireland for a new life in Fitchburg, a strong-hold of the Irish.



(picture courtesy of L. Lacy)

Her son John Lacy stayed on the family farm homestead by the Irish immigrants.



(picture courtesy of E. Blaney)

Will Blaney of Wales came to Fitchburg as a top sheepman with 300 head of stock from England ordered by A. O. Fox. The Blaney family prospered true to the immigrants dream.



their claims." The Fitchburg Mutual Protection Society was formed for this purpose and met at the home of George Fox. Some unfortunate speculators were hauled to Lake Barney where a hole was chopped in the ice and they were dunked until their notions about "claim jumping" were cooled. Another time,

"Two men claimed the same forty of land, one belonged to the club while the other did not; the man that did not belong to the club having obtained the money first, entered the land. A committee of the club waited upon him and insisted on his deeding the land over to the first claimant; refusing to do so, they then called a meeting of the club and notified him that they would meet at his house on a certain night and use such persuasive arguments as would induce him to deed over the land. He remained stubborn, so the club met at his house in the evening, some fifty strong, with axes and guns. They surrounded his house in a rather noisy manner, and a committee, sufficient to fill his house, entered with a justice of the peace, the money, deed all made out; he finally came down gracefully, by signing the deed, and taking the money, and then acknowledging that he signed the deed of his own free will and accord, without-fear, favor or intimidation, although surrounded by some fifty noisy men, threatening all manner of things. I do not think the deed was worth much, but it was never contested, and I think in the end justice was done."<sup>18</sup>

It was a time when men literally had to take matters into their own hands to protect themselves and help their neighbors. William Vroman went all the way to Cross Plains to help at a barn raising as did a good many other men.

"They came from a distance of 25 or 30 miles around, from Madison, Sauk, Blue Mounds, and Ridgeway, Iowa County and a right jolly set of men they were, when they got together on such an occasion."<sup>19</sup>

Dr. William Fox describes how he felt about his Fitchburg neighbors:

"What the early settlers lacked in many of the conveniences of life, they made up in self-reliance and that kind of genial good neighborhood that is usually found among the pioneers. They were hospitable, cordial, ready to do each other a good turn, and were not much troubled with those kind of cast iron conventionalities which take the heart out of social intercourse. They had few elements of discord among them; no pimps; no whiners; and had not the fostering care of that self-sacrificing class of people, whose principal occupation is attending to other people's business, and repenting for other people's sins."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>William H. Fox and William Vroman, *Madison, Dane County and Surrounding Towns* (Madison: Wm. J. Park and Co., 1877) p. 460

<sup>19</sup>William H. Fox and William Vroman, *Madison, Dane County and Surrounding Towns* (Madison: Wm. J. Park and Co., 1877) p. 462

<sup>20</sup>William H. Fox and William Vroman, *Madison, Dane County and Surrounding Towns* (Madison: Wm. J. Park and Co., 1877) p. 451

Just as they turned to each other for help and protection, the pioneers found comfort in each other's company. Weddings were always a cause for celebration and helped unite Fitchburg. As Donald Gill, of Swan Creek, says, "*all the Irish in Fitchburg are related by either blood or marriage.*"

The couple to begin this tradition was George Keenan and Mathilda Fox. This Irish union proved as strong as the tiny lass herself. Like her own mother, who was born in an Irish castle and died in a small log cabin in Fitchburg, Mathilda Fox Keenan proved she was equal to frontier life.

"Mrs. George Keenan was spending the day at Geo. Fox's; in the afternoon she started for home, about one and a half miles distant, carrying an infant in her arms; about half a mile from her house she met a full grown bear on the path. She would not turn out of the path into the tall prairie grass, lest she might trip and fall; neither would the bear turn out, but raised himself up for the usual mode of salutation, and as they met, placed his paws over Mrs. K.'s neck. Mustering all possible strength, she held the baby tight with her left arm, with her right dealt the bear a blow on the side of the head, and springing back at the same time, got clear from him; she then took off her sun bonnet and flung it on the path, which he stopped to smell and shake in his mouth, and thus enabled her to get some distance ahead. But soon the bear caught up again and raised for a charge. Mrs. K. turned and faced him, when with an angry growl he caught her, and put one paw on the baby, causing it to cry. She struck at him as before, and sprang back, pulling the baby,

Irish noblewoman Eleanor Loftus Lynn, wife of William Maine Fox and mother of Mathilda, George, Joseph, Mathew, and William Fox.



(picture courtesy of P. Fox)



(picture courtesy of C. Bryne)

**Frenchman H'Elair Gill who arrived in 1854 proves you don't have to be Irish to have a large family, but it helps to have an Irish wife.**



Limestone walls are the reminders of a forgotten pioneer family.



(picture courtesy of P. Fox)

**Mathilda Fox Keenan, legendary heroine of Fitchburg's pioneer days.**

while the bear also pulled, tearing off its cloak, and then began shaking it in his mouth, while Mrs. K. again ran for the house, which she gained just in time to save another attack. The next morning the neighborhood turned out to hunt for the bear; did not find the old one, but found two cubs in a thicket not far from the house.”<sup>21</sup>

Hungry wolves were a constant threat and good sized bounties hurried the taming of the wilderness of Fitchburg. The Vromans had a near escape according to Gordon Vroman. *“I remember I heard one time how they were hauling salt pork clear from Milwaukee. My granddad was telling me they were overtaken with wolves. One guy was going to stop and climb a tree. They said ‘No, don’t do that, they’ll keep you there all night.’ So what they did is they took an axe and then broke up a barrel and threw out meat every now and then til they got to a station along the way and the guys heard the wolves and they came out with shotguns and drove them away.”*

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<sup>21</sup>William H. Fox and William Vroman, *Madison, Dane County and Surrounding Towns* (Madison: Wm. J. Park and Co., 1877) p. 453



BREAKING THE SOD

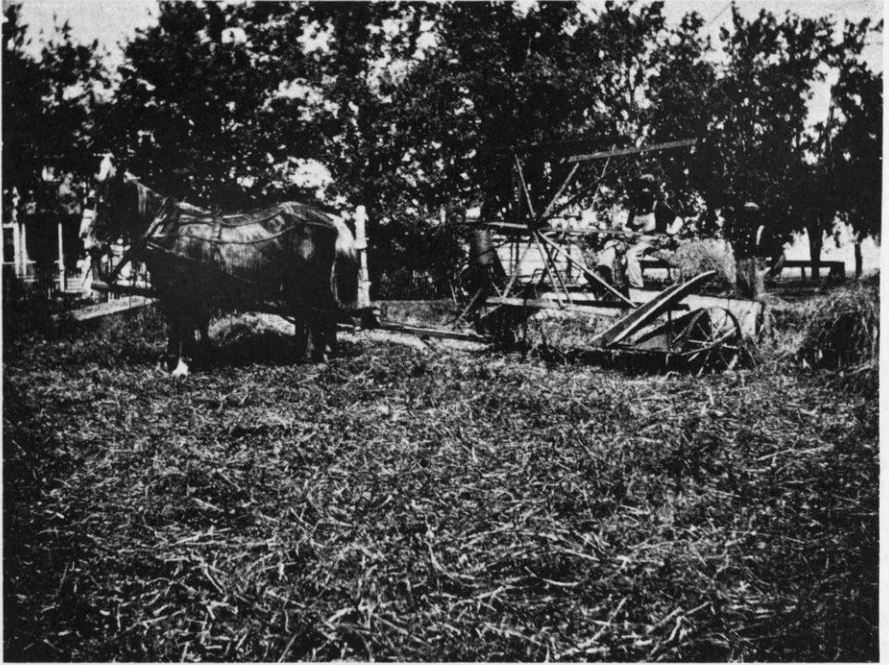
Although deer, bear and other wild game was plentiful, these pioneers had come to farm the rich prairies of Fitchburg. Once the land was cleared and the sod was broken, farmers looked for a cash crop. With wheat the "King" in New York, the first settlers planted what was most familiar to them. Soon, the need for a grist mill nearby to process the wheat was recognized. George Vroman was the leading spirit in the erection of Badger Mills of Verona begun in 1842 along with his brother, Joseph and W.A. Wheeler.

Wheat required little capital — only a breaking plow, a team of oxen, a harrow, and seed. It was a product that stored well and required a minimum of work for the busy pioneer farmer. He needed only to break the sod, sow the wheat and harvest it. Joseph Vroman was the envy of the local farmers in 1847 when he introduced the reaper to Fitchburg. The harvesting of wheat provided opportunity for socializing according to a story handed down to Gordon Vroman. *"Years ago, if you wanted help for threshing, you had to furnish whiskey. If you didn't have any, why, the help went and got it someplace. One day, my great-grand-dad, Joseph, came home from town with the whiskey for the threshing crew and he had a piano he was bringing. He apparently stopped at Last Chance Tavern by Nakoma and lost the piano. He must have been feeling pretty good because he didn't even know it."*



(picture courtesy of G. Vroman)

A farmer's pride — neatly stacked shocks of corn.



(picture courtesy of L. Lacy)

John Lacy on his grain binder, proving farming always inspired new-fangled machinery.

### INDIANS

Although the farmers put a good deal of land into production, the local Indians were content since the woods and waters of Fitchburg were still open to them.

The Winnebago Woodland Indians predominated in Southern Wisconsin. They were a sedentary people who lived in communal groups. For their livelihood, they engaged in agriculture and seasonal hunting. In the 1830's, they were forced to cede land to the United States government and were settled on a Nebraska reservation. However, they kept returning to their native Wisconsin and in 1875 they were permitted to take up Wisconsin homesteads.

Generally, the Indians in Fitchburg came to camp near water to hunt and fish for several months before moving on. Believing the land belonged to anyone who used it, they felt no qualms setting up their wigwams in the middle of a white farmer's claim. They continued their tradition of locating along Lake Barney, on the wooded mound above

Nine Springs, and close to John's Springs and Murphy's Creek at Lake View. Legend has it that Bowman's Hill was a gathering place for Indians assembling for the Black Hawk War.

Fitchburg's settlers accepted the Indians' nomadic ways and there seemed to be a general compatibility between them. Dorothy (Manson) Lyons remembers hearing stories about Indians who came to her Grandma Manson's door for sugar and flour. She explains, *"Having received the items that Grandma had to give them, they cheerfully said 'Sago' which was 'thank you' in their language. Then they would dash off riding bareback on their ponies. Aunt Rebecca Manson praised them for keeping their horses so well groomed."*

Kate (Keeley) Fahey remembers Indians when she was a girl. *"They camped in the wilds right across the road from my folks' home. They loved to come visit my mother because she was a good baker and made lovely bread. She would never know they were there because they wore moccasins and they would step so quietly into the kitchen. They were kind and loved the baby and my sisters. They loved those children and wanted to hold the baby."*

A heart rendering incident occurred among the Winnebago Indians near the Keeley home. Mrs. Fahey describes, *"Some other Indians came to visit — they were Black Hawks. An Indian that came along was intoxicated. The baby was sleeping on the floor and the Black Hawk Indian stepped on the baby and it died. The Indians felt very, very lonesome and sad. They asked my father if he would build a little fence around the baby's grave. Dad did and the fence was there for years and years and years."*

A. O. Fox, in 1936, recorded stories of the respectful relationship between his father, Dr. William H. Fox, and the Indians. Fox wrote,

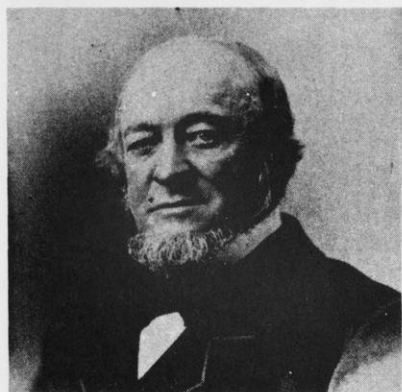
*"My father sympathized with the Indians as to what he believed the wrongs done them by the federal government prior to, during and since the Black Hawk War. Because of my father's sympathy, and also because he was what they called a 'medicine man' the Indians finally became very friendly toward him, and consulted him concerning their tribal affairs. On certain occasions, the various chiefs would gather in our dooryard and ask my father to help them determine certain tribal questions. When he finally decided and told each one what he thought they should do, they would grunt their assent and proceed to carry out his suggestions.*

I remember one story where some young white men surprised young Indians girls and assaulted some of them. My father and Uncle George, hearing of this, immediately communicated with the families of each of these boys, and persuaded the fathers that unless they were willing to stand the chances of their whole families being massacred, it would be

## THE PRAIRIE SCHOONER ARRIVES

best to make an example of these boys in the presence of the Indians, for the purpose not only of setting the proper example, but to prevent the Indians from retaliation. Accordingly, these boys were taken into the presence of the Indians, their clothing removed and a sound horsewhipping administered to each, my father taking particular pains to tell the Indians that such conduct of the whites toward the Indians would not be tolerated in that community.

I can remember clearly his (Dr. Fox's) frequent discussions with William Vilas (Dr. Fox's son-in-law) about the iniquitous treatment of the Indians by the government, and suggesting certain modifications of treaties that should be made. Later, after my father's death, I was informed that Colonel Vilas, while Secretary of the Interior at Washington, had worked out some modifications that my father had suggested."



(picture courtesy of P. Fox)

**Dr. William H. Fox, son of William Maine Fox and father of A. O. Fox — pioneer doctor, signer of State Constitution, friend of Indians and co-author of a Fitchburg study in the county history of 1877.**

Dr. Fox was repaid for his interest in the Indians. As A. O. Fox wrote,

"The Indians were generally very lightfingered, never knocking for entrance to a settler's home and after entering, would pick up whatever looked good to them in the way of food or clothing and carry them away unless prevented. They also had the general reputation of stealing calves, sheep and lambs, and, particularly visiting unlocked granaries and corncribs and helping themselves. They did not consider it stealing and it was difficult to persuade them to the contrary. However, realizing my father's kindness and generosity toward them, the settlers noticed that the Indians never took any of Dad's cattle or sheep, in spite of the fact that he did not brand them as others did. Neither did they visit his granaries or corncribs. In fact, the Indians seemed to know all of father's property wherever located and never touched it."

A. O. Fox remembered having great fun with the Indians.

“Sometimes, these Indians would bring feathers and beads and little moccasins and they would take me and doll me up like a little Indian, which, of course, tickled my heart and made me feel very friendly toward them.

### A BIT OF THIS AND A PINCH OF THAT

It wasn't long before Fitchburg's settlers settled in sufficiently to move up the hierarchy of basic physical needs. They wanted more variety in their simple fare as well as ways to treat the aches and pains of pioneer life. With a roof over their heads, water within fetching distance, plentiful wild game in prairie and woods, and newly sprouting wheat crops, they were ready to put it all together. Sometimes, the wives brought a treasured collection of recipes or household remedies from the civilized society they had left. More often, particularly with the immigrants, the directions were saved in their heads to make less weight on their backs for the long trek into the wilderness.

Taking a few needed provisions from the nearest general store and adding it to Mother Nature's vast storehouse, the Fitchburg housewife could treat anything from hungry rumblings in the belly to gout.

#### CURE FOR QUINSY (STREP THROAT)

Roast four large onions. Peel them quickly and slightly pound. Add to them a little sweet oil. Place them while hot in thin muslin bag that will reach from ear to ear, first rubbing the throat and in this way getting a good circulation of blood. Apply as warm as possible to the throat. Change when the strength of the onions appears to be exhausted. Flannel must be worn around the neck after the onion is removed.

Mrs. Ed. Guetzke

Other families swore by such a concoction but preferred to drink it. By adding a little sugar, Ed Fleming's family called it cough syrup, as did Mildred Whalen's grandmother. Rachel Haight's mother added beer. “*We always knew winter was really here when we came home from school and could smell this cooking.*” A gentler version of cough

syrup — a blend of butter, honey and vinegar — was used at Alma Manion's house, but she is in agreement with the rest of the Golden Agers of Fitchburg that nothing beats goose grease on the chest for the terrible colds brought on by the Wisconsin winters. She also recommends a bread and milk poultice to draw out the soreness of sores and to help heal them.

### THE HOUSEKEEPER'S POCKET-BOOK

(brought from England by the Haight's)

*To cure head-ache.* Stamp some Ivy, and then let the patient snuff it up the nostrils.

Or, take one handful of red rose leaves and vinegar boil'd together till the leaves are soft, then put in one handful of wheat flour, spread it on cloths, and apply it on the temples.

*For a fever.* At the beginning of the fever, or when the party rageth, take Sheeps' Lights and lay to the soles of the feet, and it will draw it quite out of the head. Sometimes it causeth a Loosenes but then comfortable things must be given.

*To Stop a Loosenes.* Take Conserve of Marigold flowers, the quantity of a little nutmeg, for three nights, if it does not stop, take it in the morning. Take a pound of Marigold flowers to a pound and a half of sugar to make the conserve.

*To Stop Vomiting.* Apply a large onion, slit, to the pit of the stomach.

*Liniment to Make the Hair Grow.* Take Gum Laudanum six Drachms, Bear's grease two ounces, Honey half an ounce, Southernwood powder'd and mix very well. This is recommended for those places which are bald, but they are first ordered to be rubb'd with an onion till very red, and then to be done over with this, which is to be repeated two or three times a day for three months.

Peddlers traversed the backroads with their medicine shows praising their lifesaving potions at the stage stops at Lake View and Oakhall. Even the friendly Winnebagos tried to share their knowledge with the greenhorns of southern Dane County. Gen Purcell says: "*One of my early memories is of the call of the Indian Man with the then cure-*

*all stick salve.*” Pauline Field’s mother had her own combination of plantain leaves, bee’s wax, and butter for a salve that was sure to aid infections. Mustard plasters were popular and Margaret Whalen remembers her mother would wet it with the white of an egg to prevent blistering. According to Lawrence Mandt, a piece of egg skin makes a good poultice if used on a boil.

Mrs. Tom Fahey says *“some home remedies for aches and pains were such things as mint tea for stomach-ache, flax-seed poultice for a tooth ache; for colds — goose grease, kerosene applied for rheumatism; puff balls were dried, then broken and dusted on a cut, a hot cake pan or hot potato were used like a heating pad.”*

An old English country cure did the trick for Gladys Stoneman: *“When I sprained my foot as a child they put my foot into warm cow manure (and it worked!)”*

Everyone had their own spring tonic or all around cure. Mildred Whalen’s grandma said to use a mixture of sulphur and molasses in the spring of the year for whatever was wrong with you. Rachael Haight says: *“Joe always told me that Mother Haight had a remedy for everything — cold, headache or what have you. It was Castor Oil! No one ever complained of being sick around here.”*



(picture courtesy of R. Haight)

The 1867 residence of the Haight family. Rachel Haight, Fitchburg Municipal Justice still resides there.



(picture courtesy of P. Fox)

Dr. Phil Fox, well-loved country doctor, followed Dr. William, his uncle, into medicine.



Mrs. Paulson knew eating vegetables and fruit, using plenty of homemade soap, and getting a good dose of sunshine were the answer to good health.

Julia Fluckiger shares the directions for the first homemade soap she could remember. *"My folks had a large barrel with a few holes drilled in the bottom placed over a tub where they put wood ashes. Then they would pour water over daily. After draining this possibly two weeks, it was lye. It was used to make soap with lard and tallow. It had to be boiled together to make soap. My mother used a large black kettle which my father used to heat water for hogs in winter."*

Alma Lacy had a later method for making home soap. *"You use any tallow or fat that is left after you butcher. After it is cooked you strain and heat the fat. You add Lewis Lye to the fat. Boric acid powder is also added. This hardens and you cut it in squares."*

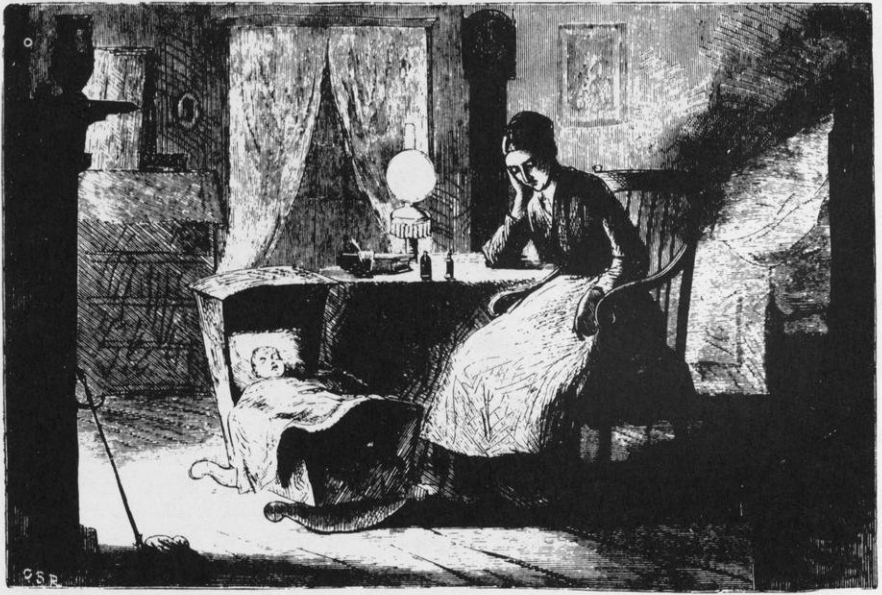
When home remedies failed, "Old Doctor" Fox was sent for. Dr. William Fox, as the first practicing physician of Dane County, began a tradition of doctors in the family. His territory was spread over 40 miles and often meant riding hard into the stormy night until his boots filled with water. He was forced to guide himself in the rough country by turning a cheek against the wind. Leo Barry was tolerant of the old practices: *"Old man (Pat) Caine came and Dr. Fox bled him. He sat until he was tired. Then he got up and went back and he was all right for another season. This was done to horses, too!"*

Miss Catherine Byrne reflects on a time about 1895. *"Young children were very subject to pneumonia. When the child was found going out the door because 'the Indians were after me', the parents called a physician. A very high fever ran for seven days and at the crisis, the fever suddenly left leaving the patient very weak. If the physician could be present for the crisis, it was helpful but if not, two strychnine pills were given to the patient. After the recovery, the physician ordered a vest made of cotton batten which the child was to wear for five weeks after the illness."*

All in all, the population of Fitchburg was a healthy lot and generally managed to survive their cures.

They knew tastier things to do with molasses, eggs, sugar and all the other ingredients they found at their doorstep such as wild plants, fruits and nuts.

Kate Fahey recollects the bounty of old Fitchburg. *"We picked horse radish which we liked to eat on Easter ham. For greens we had watercress, dock, mustard, red root, dandelions and lambs quarter. Among the fruits were blackberries, dewberries, gooseberries, elderberries, plums and apples. In the woods were hickory nuts, walnuts, butternuts and hazelnuts."*



Waiting out the crisis.



(picture courtesy of G. Vroman)

Mary Vroman making butter, one of the numerous "start from scratch" food pioneer women mastered.

*We were able to store many vegetables for winter use in the root cellar and we had a great variety of home canned foods such as sauerkraut, fruits, preserves and pickles of all kinds so even though we were a large family we fared well."*

Ed Fleming gives a few important techniques in reaping from the wilds:

#### CATNIP TEA

Gather catnip and hang upside down to dry. Add boiling water to a small amount for a good cup of tea.

#### NETTLES FOR GREENS

Pick nettles in the spring using gloves to protect the hands. Wash and cook in a small amount of water until tender. Serve with a little salt, pepper and vinegar.

In 1900, cookbooks were the rage and the good women of the Syene area took advantage of their knowledge of the culinary arts to benefit their churches and schools. They ventured into Madison to solicit advertisements to underwrite the cost of producing their collection of recipes. These enterprising ladies from Fitchburg convinced 15 of Madison's most prestigious businessmen that it was to their advantage to advertise on the pages of "THE SYENE COOKBOOK".

Not without a sense of humor, the cooks advised a call to the local undertaker to be sure of his availability should the recipes be foul.



**Lightening Yeast.**

Twelve medium sized potatoes, boil and mash very fine, pour over the water in which they were boiled: add three tablespoonfuls of sugar, three of salt and three of flour; stir thoroughly; to this add three quarts of boiling water. When cool enough add two well soaked yeast cakes. When it is light and foamy it is ready for use. For bread, use equal parts of yeast (warmed) and warm water.

CAROLINE WHITSON.

**Steamed Brown Bread.**

One pint corn meal, one pint flour, one pint sour milk, one-half cup molasses, one-half cup shortening, one teaspoonful soda, salt. Steam three hours.

MRS. H. C. WILLIAMSON.

**Indian Bread.**

Three cups corn meal, two cups white flour, one cup molasses, one tablespoonful soda, one of salt, three and one-half cups sour milk, (buttermilk is better), steam three hours, serve hot.

MRS. R. E. TIPPLE.

**Johnny Cake.**

One cup sour milk, one-fourth cup molasses, two eggs, one cup corn meal, one teaspoonful soda, thicken sufficiently with flour.

DELLA GETTS.

*Syene Cook Book.*

---

*Before trying Recipes  
look up the*

**GILL BRO'S**

**NUMBER.**



(picture courtesy of M. Lalor)

EVERYBODY  
KNOWS

**FINDLAY'S**

CAN SELL YOU THE  
INGREDIENTS

To Fill the Enclosed Receipts. Call  
And Try.

**Findlay & Co.**

**Fruit Pudding.**

One cup molasses, one cup sweet milk, two eggs, one tea-  
spoonful soda, three cups flour one-half cup melted butter, one  
cup raisins, one cup currants, steam three hours.

☐ Sauce: Rub smooth in cold water one tablespoonful flour,  
two of sugar, add one cup hot water, boil, add small piece butter  
flavor with vanilla.

FLORENCE McCOY.

**To Cure Beef for Drying.**

To every 25 or 30 lbs. of beef, allow one tablespoonful of salt  
petre, one quart of fine salt mixed with molasses until the color  
is that of brown sugar. Rub the piece of meat with this mix-  
ture and when done let all stick to it that will. Pack into jars  
that the pickle may cover the meat. Let it remain in this forty-  
eight hours. Then hang up to dry, let all the mixture stick to it  
that will.

**For Cornish Beef.**

To one gallon of water, one and one-half pounds of coarse salt,  
one-half pound of brown sugar, one teaspoonful salt petre, pep-  
per, and sage, boil, skim, turn on the meat when cold. When it  
has stood one week or when it gets bloody pour off and scald.  
Keep covered with brine, a heavy weight needed.

MARIA R. TIPPLE.

**The Largest**

Dry Goods Carpets and  
Millinery

HOUSE IN MADISON

We Carry None But the Reliable and up-to-date  
Goods in Every Department

Dress Goods, Silks and Velvets.

Mens, Women's and Children's Underwear and  
Hosiery.

Jackets, Capes and Furs.

Carpets, Rugs and Mattings.

Linens, Napkins and Towels.

Look to Your Interests and see us  
Before You Buy.

**KEELEY NECKERMAN & KESSENICH**

15-17 N. Pinckney St.

MADISON, WIS.

**Scalloped Oysters.**

Have ready a plit of fine cracker crumbs, butter an earthen  
dish, put a layer of cracker crumbs on the bottom; wet this with  
some of the oyster liquor; next have a layer of oyster; sprinkle  
with salt and pepper, and lay small bits of butter upon them.  
Then another layer of cracker crumbs and oyster juice. Then  
oysters, pepper, salt and butter one so on, until the dish is full.  
The top layer to be cracker crumbs. Beat up an egg in a cup of  
milk and turn over all. Cover the dish and bake thirty minutes.  
When baked, remove cover and brown.

EMMA SUTHERLAND.

**Potato Salad.**

One egg, one teaspoon of mustard, one teaspoon salt, one tea-  
spoon sugar or more if wanted, small one-half teaspoon of corn  
starch, mix all together then put a small one-half cup of vinegar.  
Cook until thick before using, when cold put in one-half cup of  
sour cream.

LUCY SYKES.

**Graham Bread.**

Three cups graham flour, one cup wheat flour, one-half cup  
molasses, one-half cup sugar, two cups sour milk, two level tea-  
spoonfuls soda, and one of salt. Mix and turn into baking  
tin, let rise one hour and bake one hour.

MRS. WILL TERWILLIGER.

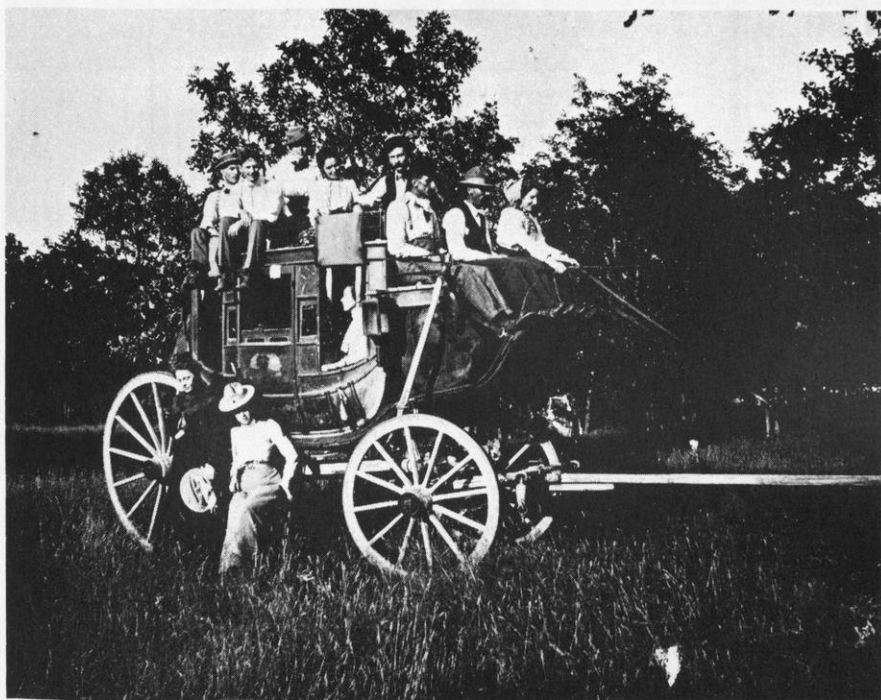
(picture courtesy of M. Lalor)



## STAGECOACH YEARS

After the Fitchburg area was settled, prairie schooners became a less common sight. They still were useful in hauling large loads such as lead, wheat and other goods, but were too slow and cumbersome to transport people and mail. William Vroman describes wagons that passed through the town as they gave way to the stagecoach:

“The commerce of the country at this early day was mostly carried on by Sucker team, a large Pennsylvania wagon with from four to six yoke of oxen to haul it. We called them prairie schooners, and they used to go in fleets, sometimes as many as eight or ten wagons together. These covered wagons going over the prairie at a distance, resembled very much a fleet of schooners, hence the name. Their principal loading on the journey to Lake Michigan was lead, and the back freight sundry goods for our merchants. They carried with them long goad poles, some ten feet long, and a lash to correspond; you could hear the crack of their whip for a mile away. They were the kings of the roads. Everything had to give way for them, until stage coaches were put upon the road, when the



(picture courtesy of State Historical Society of Wisconsin)

The stagecoach passes through with a full load of dusty, jostled passengers.

drivers got long stretches with knives in the end, and raked their teams, sending them bellowing from the road, which caused them to give the stage coaches a wide berth."<sup>1</sup>

Though the reign was also short lived, the stagecoach took over as king of the road. Stagecoach lines spread into the new territory traveling regular routes in short hops or stages with stopovers at various inns. The routes generally followed old territorial or military roads, stopping to pick up mail, water the horses and refresh the driver and riders. Settlements usually developed around these inns started by

MILWAUKEE DIRECTORY.

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# WISCONSIN STAGE LINES.



Leaves the General Stage Office, No. 13, Wisconsin street for Galena, via Prairieville, Delafield, Summit, Concord, Aztalan, Lake Mills, Cottage Grove, Madison, Dodgeville, Mineral Point, and Platteville to Galena.

With a branch running from Watertown, Beaver Dam, Fox Lake, Fond du Lac, to Green Bay.

Leaves the same office for Galena, via New Berlin, Mukwanago, East Troy, Troy, Johnstown, Janesville, Monroe, Wiota, Shullsburgh, and White Oak Springs to Galena.

With a branch running from Janesville, via Union to Madison, in due connection with the Galena line.

Also, a branch running from Janesville via Detroit, Roscoe, and Rockford to Dixon; connecting with the Chicago, and Galena Lines, at Rockford and Dixon.

Leaves Racine every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, for Janesville; Also, leaves Southport for Madison and Galena same days.

Leaves the same office for Chicago, via Oak Creek, Racine, Southport, Little Fort and Wheeling, to Chicago—connecting at Chicago, with the St. Louis and Michigan Stages.

Leaves the same office for Sheboygan, via Mequon, Hamburg, Saukville, Port Washington, and Sheboygan Falls to Sheboygan.

JOHN FRINK & Co. Proprietors.

Milwaukee, 1848.

(picture courtesy of State Historical Society)

**This early stage route ran through Fitchburg.**

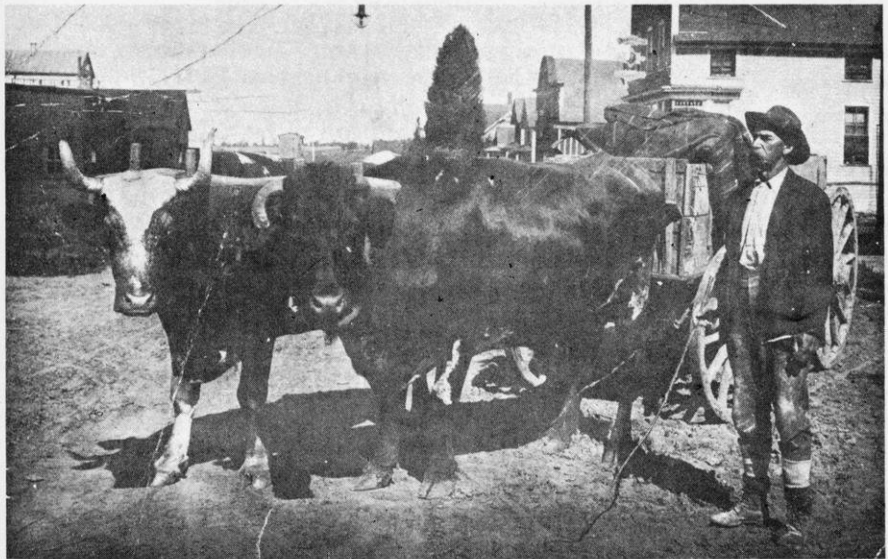
<sup>1</sup>William Vroman, *Madison, Dane County and Surrounding Towns*, (Madison: Wm. Park and Co., 1877) p. 459



the earliest settlers who extended the hospitality of their humble dwellings to travelers and newcomers. In Fitchburg, during the 1840's, '50's and '60's the stage was the mode of transportation that helped determine where community settlements would grow. There were inns at Oak Hall and Lake View and a tavern at Dogtown that served as stage stops encouraging further business and settlement.

### OAK HALL

Unless you've been here long, the name Oak Hall holds no meaning. Yet years ago, Oak Hall was a lively crossroads neighborhood; the original community center to be found where Fish Hatchery Road "D" crosses "M." Around 1840, William Quivey built a double log cabin just south of the intersection which served as inn, postoffice and pioneer style town hall as the town grew. It was along the all important lead trail from Mineral Point to Milwaukee and was known all over southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois as a good place to get water for the oxen and food and a bed for the men. This route, was chosen by the lead teamsters to avoid Fitchburg's treacherous Nine Springs Hill, better known as Break Neck Hill in those days.



(picture courtesy of S. Cross)

A good pair of oxen and sturdy wagon remained the most practical way to haul a big load since the stagecoach was too small and the railroad a bit costly in the early days.

## STAGECOACH YEARS

The name Oak Hall was given to the 1850 oak log hall built by the Quivey neighborhood as a gathering place 200 yards north of the corners. Among the settlers around "Quivey's Grove" was a man from a musical family by the well known name of Pritchard.

"The Pritchard Bros. were a good band of local musicians in the early history of Dane Co. and Wisconsin, as they played from Milwaukee to the Mississippi and the State line to Watertown and Baraboo, all keeping the pledge made to their mother to drink only tea and coffee while thus engaged. E. P. Beebee, a cousin, was also with them and the five were a whole team at music."<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Pritchard organized a small band with Fleet Knott and George Clapp filling the hall that gave the district its name with music and dancing.

A GRAND  
FESTIVAL  
AT OAK HALL,  
On Monday Night, January 6, 1868.  
FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE  
CATHOLIC CHURCH  
MUSIC BY THE EVANSVILLE BAND.  
Managers: CON O'BRIEN, WM FOX and THOS. WALSH.  
Good Supper. Tickets \$2 per Couple.

(picture courtesy of R. O'Brien)

Good times were had in the neighborhood Hall.

Tom Reynolds continued the tradition of hospitality begun by Quivey and Oak Hall when he opened the Oak Hall Tavern and Hotel. It was patronized as a popular rest spot for travelers going north or south too, since Madison was a comfortable half day's journey away. The stagecoach line ran from Madison through Oak Hall Corners carrying mail and passengers to Mt. Vernon and points south.

"A half mile from the Tavern stop the stage driver blew his horn, one blast or two, depending on whether he drove two or four horses. Then the storekeeper knew how many pails of water to bring out for the animals. If more than six passengers rode the stage, the extras sat on top with their feet hanging down, and baggage waited until the next trip. Mineral Point miners sometimes waited a month for their sacks."<sup>3</sup>

The Oak Hall post office also moved north of Quivey's beside the Oak Hall Tavern and was conducted by Fleet Knott, his daughter,

<sup>2</sup>*History of Dane County*, 1880, p. 1257

<sup>3</sup>Oregon Observer, Souvenir of Oregon Centennial — History of Community's Progress. 1941

Mary, and at later times, Mr. Salisbury, Hec Clapp and Wayne Bentley. Mail was delivered twice weekly by stage coach. Leo Barry says, "If there was a letter for you at the post office, somebody would stop off and tell you. It cost 25¢ to pick it up. They charged you for getting a letter rather than sending it. Sometimes letters sat a spell before you could come up with the money."

Due to confusion in the late 1800's between Oak Hall and Oakhill, another post office in the state, Fitchburg was asked to come up with a new one syllable name. Floyd, the name of local farmer, Floyd Gurnee, was selected by the postal department from those submitted by Hec Clapp. The name of the corner settlement changed from Quivey's Grove to Oak Hall and then Floyd while the name of the township went from Rome Corners to Greenfield and then Fitchburg. The face of the settlement underwent many changes as well.

To accommodate the bustling oasis, a blacksmith shop owned by Tilman Bentley and A. Love was started up and in the 1890's Hec Clapp opened a store on the southwest corner now owned by the Webb McManus family.

Being an adventurer of sorts, Joe Wallace of Oak Hall left his crossroads community to try something new. While traveling in the east, Wallace gained an interview with a difficult to reach President Teddy Roosevelt by dashing off a poem and convincing a White House aide to pass it to the Chief Executive. The poem that caught Roosevelt's interest was about his *Rough Riders*, a group Wallace admired while he also was in the Spanish American War. He traveled to Chicago where he was a cop on a beat and west where he was a cowboy. According to



Joe Wallace, official campaign picture when he ran for county treasurer in 1900.

(picture courtesy of Oregon Observer)

Leo Barry, "*Joe Wallace tried everything. He went west, tried to be an undertaker. In six months they didn't have one funeral so that didn't pay.*" In spite of his roaming, Joe's heart was back at Oak Hall as evidenced by his book *Songs of a Badger*. Here he pays tribute to:

## THE OLD TAVERN\*

Where the tavern stood at the old cross road,  
 And where many a good man got his load,  
 Old "Long Jack" would welcome you in  
 To treat or trade or drink some gin.  
 He sometimes slept, but never wept,  
 And never told a lie;  
 But he could rule Dame Nature's school,  
 At drinking corn and rye.

The next proprietor was "Slim,"  
 And when old Tom got tired of him,  
 Although his tears began to flow,  
 He said, "My boy, you'll have to go."  
 He loved to dine on beer and wine,  
 And all things that were nice,  
 Like the balky mare he didn't care  
 Who had to pay the price.

Uncle Tom, with smiles and tears,  
 Had owned this old hotel for years;  
 He had a will, and close to the "till"  
 You'd find that good old man,  
 He wouldn't trust so he couldn't bust,  
 But he didn't improve the clan,  
 And many a time he made a loan,  
 That in after years caused him to groan.

His old friends still were Phil and "Til,"  
 Good neighbors they had been;  
 They changed off works and cursed the shirks,  
 And sometimes said "Amen."

They ruled the Board and helped to hoard  
 A good round surplus there,  
 But you couldn't fool one of that school  
 By what they call "hot air."

The old hotel I know so well,  
 For many years had stood  
 A monument of early days,  
 Framed from good oaken wood.

---

\*Written at San Jose, California, 1911. This is a tale of an old tavern at Oak Hall which was owned by Uncle Reynolds for many years and afterwards leased to two neighbors whom I have described in this poem.—J. W.

The old dance hall that stood at Oak Hall,  
 Where the boys and girls would meet  
 To sing a song, or plod along,  
 And shake their nimble feet.

And when the dance was breaking up,  
 That good old crowd of boys  
 Would often say toward break of day,  
 "We haven't made a noise."  
 Some wound up in a drunken fray,  
 And some would stay till break of day,  
 While others dreamed as the bright sun beamed,  
 When they slept in Prichard's hay.

One man I know, we'll call him "Cune,"  
 He drank from morn till afternoon;  
 And when he'd swallowed all in sight  
 His only impulse was to fight.  
 Fight he would, and fight he could,  
 If memory treats me right,  
 But bruised and sore he struck the floor  
 Sometimes an awful sight.

With wine and blood, there comes a flood  
 To make a man think twice.  
 But slow is he who cannot see  
 Stacked cards and loaded dice.  
 With good old rum, man's troubles come  
 For better or for worse,  
 But brave is he who leaves the "skee"  
 That makes a man accursed.

Farewell, farewell to the old hotel,  
 But not to those at Oak Hall;  
 For I have found, from New York to the South  
 That they are best of all.  
 So here's a toast without a roast,  
 To my dear friends, one and all,  
 And here's to the boys with many joys  
 I used to know at Oak Hall.

Joe Wallace didn't stop there describing the good times and good people of Fitchburg. He composed a *Fitchburg Primer* running down the alphabet of local names from Adams to Zebina and was so inspired he wrote four more.

### THE FITCHBURG PRIMER

A stands for Adams and well may we pause  
 To speak of a man who helped every good cause,

## STAGECOACH YEARS

L. L. Adams was great in his day,  
We all mourned our Adams when he passed away.

B stands for Barry and Fitchburg is proud  
Of that old name of Barry, so sing long and loud;  
B stands for Bently who lived at Oak Hall,  
He pounded hot iron from spring until fall.

C stands for Coggins who bought that good farm,  
And old Charlie Coggins n'er did a man harm.  
A good Priest once said that he looked for his horns,  
But I'd say that Coggins had his crown of thorns.

D stands for Daniel who doctored fat hogs,  
Fought with his neighbors and worshiped false gods.  
Well I remember him, dark, straight and tall,  
Master of urchins and lord over all.

E stands for Ed and Wright was his name,  
He was one of the boys S. O. Y. tried to tame,  
He never was lured by a Syrian's song  
But he toiled and moiled and plodded along.

F stands for Fox who lived in the wood,  
Close to Dan Cullens where the oak trees stood,  
The boys they bothered the old man some  
And many a time he made them run.

G stands for Gory who lived near Syene  
Where the pavement runs down through that grand old ravine,  
The only good sight that is seen there at night  
Is the flash and the glare of the "Limited" light.

H stands for Helms, who lived by the school,  
And take it from me, no Helms was a fool.  
Homer and Hud I'd pick from the crowd,  
And of old Lady Helms all Fitchburg was proud.  
God bless her memory not passed or gone,  
For the name of a good woman always lives on,

I stands for Indian, "Indian Jim,"  
Lank as a greyhound, tall and slim.  
Jim was a boy I used to know,  
One of the many in days long ago.

J stands for Jones, who lived at Oak Hall,  
He worked and he toiled from spring until fall.  
"Rus" was the one I knew very well,  
And Roy is the fellow if you've goods to sell.

K stands for Kinney, and Mike was the one  
Who marched with the boys in the year '61.  
At times he held office, the law well he knew,  
And old Michael Kinney could teach me and you.

L stands for Lem and its Stanley you know,  
 A jolly good fellow I knew years ago.  
 He went to Seattle, he lives on the Sound,  
 And don't you forget he "Fortune" has found.

M stands for Monks who were old settlers there  
 And a family of boys who went here and there.  
 Bloom was the one without worry or fret,  
 And the father and mother you couldn't forget.

N stands for noble and Fitchburg is proud  
 Of the boys back in '60 who went with the crowd,  
 Way down to the Southland where shot and shell tore;  
 Those boys held the colors though covered with gore.

O stands for Oak Hall where the Oak Tavern stood  
 And where old Uncle Tom had a large pile of wood.  
 When my throat parched dry from the hot summer blast  
 One drink of those "dew drops" my troubles all past.

P stands for pugilist, the fighting man Tom,  
 With a graveyard as long as the dashing Yukon.  
 Those upper left cuts that he used to give  
 The chances were doubtful to die or to live.

Q stands for quick and many of us know  
 The boys from old Fitchburg were not very slow.  
 Wherever you travel they've left a good trace,  
 A credit to Fitchburg and not a disgrace.

R stands for Robert Bennett, you know  
 He lived in Fitchburg many years ago.  
 I'm told he's a preacher and one of renown,  
 With honor and prestige in many a town.

S stands for Sweeney, who lived in the glenn;  
 It was old John Sweeney, the finest of men.  
 He sometimes would fight but then he was right;  
 And no man a dollar he owed.  
 He toiled and he sweat and don't you forget  
 John Sweeney could carry life's load.

T stands for Thomas, it's Tom Byrnes I mean,  
 One of the very best men I ever have seen.  
 A Christian he was and one of the kind  
 You'd tramp thro' this world and never could find.

U stands for Usher who lived on the hill,  
 But misfortune kept after that man of good will.  
 Ah, God in your mercy, look after your kind,  
 And sight restore to my friend who is blind.

V stands for Victor and Fitchburg is proud  
 Of her list of good victors so cheer long and loud.

I might name the list, I know very well  
To you my dear reader their names you may tell.

W stands for Whalen and "Doc" was my friend,  
He'd stay with a comrade to the very last end.  
He may have his failing, but this I will say,  
That no better fellow I've met on my way.  
And now as I write of the living and dead,  
I'd share with "Doc" Whalen my last loaf of bread.

X stands for the unknown and don't you forget  
That Fitchburg has X's, you'll hear from them yet.  
Wherever I travel, wherever I roam,  
I hear of those boys with good records from home.

Y stands for youth, and in Fitchburg the springs  
Bring youth and renewals all things, but wings.  
The springs that I mention are owned by the State,  
They are free to the public, drive in at the gate.

Z stands for Zebina, my dear brother Paul,  
The best friend that the boys ever had at Oak Hall.  
The boys and the girls that he used to know  
He made them all happy wherever he'd go.  
He rests on the hillside asleep and alone  
And over him stands a large granite stone,  
But God in his mercy who crumbles the dust  
Will surely reward the true and the just.

### THE FITCHBURG PRIMER.

A stands for Adams and May's left alone  
Right near the station and place they called home.  
I well recollect in days gone by  
My best recollection is good apple pie.

B stands for Barry I now come to Pat,  
He lived at Oak Hall and wore a slouch hat.  
How well I remember his good advice given  
That I like a big fool and sunk in oblivion.

C stands for Coggins who met the cyclone,  
It tore down some buildings, but left him the home.  
The pond that he pictured has never gone dry,  
But what's the use, Charley says, for me to cry.

D stands for Daniel. I'll drink once again  
To the prince of hog-doctors, the King of the pen.  
A jolly good fellow was old "Uncle Dan,"  
And many a time when he looked how I ran.

E stands for Emanuel long, lank and lean,  
Counted in pots was the money so green.



Horseman and hunter, pedagogue, too,  
Jolly good fellow and always true blue.

F stands for Fitchburg, peace now at her door,  
The thinkers and doers are holding the floor.  
The days of the battles with blood in a stream,  
I think of them only in some horrid dream.

G stands for Grady, I mean "Uncle John,"  
If any are better, please state where they're from.  
As tough as pine-knot, honest and true,  
Long may he weather the skies that are blue.

H stands for Henda, he tashed for them once  
And he counted the bushels for that awkward dunce.  
His feet were like steamboats, his hat a hayrack,  
And worst of it all the big head was cracked.

I stands for "Indian," one I'll call Jim,  
Lived on the hillside where timber grew slim.  
Battered and broken, sometimes a sight,  
But Jim was a fellow that always did right,

J stands for Jenkins and old "Uncle Nat"  
Lived near the corner and wore a cravat.  
One neighbor close by stood on wooden pegs  
And old "Uncle Nedward" had roosters laid eggs.

K stands for Kinney and Ed's was the fate  
To make out a list of his father's estate.  
His good early training was then brought about  
And not even one single item left out.

L stands for Lydon and he passed away  
To rest with his maker till judgment day.  
His jolly old smile would drive away blues,  
Peace be to his ashes now give him his dues.

M stands for McCune and "Old Jack" has gone,  
The light has departed and something has flown.  
He had his failing as many of us do,  
But to this barefoot lad he was always true blue.

N stands for "Napoleon," whom shall it be?  
For I've in mind only one greater than he.  
A big black moustache like a banner unfurled  
With Reverend before when it comes to the Herald.

O stands for Oak Hall and the old Tavern's gone,  
Likewise the old settlers departed for Home.  
The gray-haired proprietor no nod or wink  
But himself and Tom Reynolds went in for a drink.

P stands for Purcell, I mean "Farmer John,"

## STAGECOACH YEARS

He lived near the station that I looked upon.  
He never said much but always sawed wood,  
By a great many people was not understood.

Q stands for "Quaker" and now let me see,  
That title was vested in old man Gurnee.  
If boys had a horsewhip in days that were fast  
I think that the "Quaker" could smile at the past.

R stands for Robert, I mean "Bobbie" Curran,  
He went to Dakota the green sod to turn.  
They say he has prospered and owns a fine home  
And vows and declares he ne'er more will roam.

S stands for Sweeney and old "Uncle Pat"  
To my certain knowledge had n'er bought a hat.  
A burden of life he made for the boys  
Who tried to steal apples without making a noise.

T stands for Time and it's now fleeting fast,  
The writer and verses will soon be all passed.  
And when I am sleeping beneath the green sod,  
I trust that my soul will be resting with God.

U stands for Usher and he's gone alone,  
Awaiting his children to all journey Home.  
His God-given sight was taken away,  
Now it's not darkness, all bright as day.

V stands for Victor and I'm here to tell  
That boys from old Fitchburg, tho not very swell,  
When duty demanded they made a brave stand  
And many responded with musket in hand.

W stands for Whalen, I now come to "Bump,"  
He worked for two weeks on a big white oak stump  
Of course, accomplished what he tried to do,  
But blackened and bruised he said, "I am through."

X stands for the unknown, the school teachers say,  
For that's what she told me that sweet face of gray  
And now what I'm thinking with time drifting o'er  
Where is that dear teacher that I'll see no more.

Y stands for youth with cheeks all aglow  
When we join the procession we're not moving slow  
But Time catches up at a fast-driven pace,  
Life's just what you make it; don't be a disgrace.

Z stands for Zebina, my grandfather's name,  
He came from New England, that old hall of fame.  
Dame Fortune's smile he could not gain,  
Knowledge and peace was his only aim.

## MY FAREWELL.

Farewell to "Til" and farewell "Phil,"  
 Adieu to the tavern calm and still.  
 Farewell to the boys and girls all,  
 But never farewell to my friends at Oak Hall.

## THE FITCHBURG PRIMER.

A stands for Adams, and Elon has gone;  
 A good friend and neighbor departed alone.  
 For hard work and long hours no equal he had,  
 And his habits and customs were not very bad.

B stands for Barry, and old Phil lives there;  
 He walks with a cane and has snowy white hair.  
 He's resting at ease from his labor on earth,  
 But men like Phil Barry Fitchburg has a dearth.

C stands for Clapp, they lived on the hill,  
 Where the wind blew like sixty and made your blood thrill.  
 George and "Heck" I knew best of all,  
 And "Neely" was my classmate in school at Oak Hall.

D stands for Divet, the "political boss,"  
 Who organized dances and drove a bay "hoss."  
 He had a red mug, and the boys called him "Smug,"  
 But he never went back on the little brown jug.

E stands for Edward; which shall it be?  
 For I've in mind Edwards one, two, and three.  
 Edward the first was a very good one,  
 And Edward the second chuck full of fun.

F stands for Fox who were old pioneers;  
 They chopped down the timber and yoked up the steers;  
 They toiled and they moiled both early and late,  
 And they were good citizens of a new State.

G stands for Gilbert and old Tom could swear  
 With oaths so artistic, he had some to spare;  
 A good friend he was, a kind neighbor to all;  
 He lived on the eighty justy east of Oak Hall.

H stands for Henry, a jolly old elf,  
 Who, back in the sixties, had foundered himself.  
 Opportunity knocks at every man's gate;  
 Why didn't he fence it and own all the State?

I stands for Inman who lived near the line;  
 And back in the seventies those boys did shine.  
 Westward they went to the Iowa loam,  
 And now they are settled n'er more to roam.

## STAGECOACH YEARS

J stands for Jenkins who lived at Dogtown;  
A family of butchers, some of renown.  
Frank and Ed to the city had gone,  
And old "Natty Bumpo" was left all alone.

K stands for Kinney. Old Michael has gone  
To a land undiscovered where travelers are borne.  
He never was rich and he never was poor;  
To all he gave welcome who passed in his door.

L stands for Lydon, a good honest man,  
Who rolled off the sweat since his life-work began.  
His loud "hello" and his jolly laugh  
Would always sift wheat from a big pile of chaff.

M stands for Monks; and here's where I quit,  
For that combination of wisdom and wit.  
The old man was as jolly as any you'd see,  
And bold Jack and Jim good fellows could be.

N stands for Nicholas, a big bonded slave,  
Who worked on the corner for old "Uncle Dave."  
They say he's ascended as high as the stars,  
But I wouldn't use him for plugging up bars.

O stands for Oak Hall, and long live the name!  
The home of my boyhood, I greet you again!  
The friends I knew there, and good deeds they've begun,  
Will mark a new era when life's work is done.

P stands for Palmer, and old Jack was deaf,  
And while he kept talking one had some relief.  
But when he got dancing and swinging his hand,  
You felt like departing for some foreign land.

Q stands for "quick" and it's quick-shot I mean,  
When Ed used to pick off the mallards so green.  
On water or wing, it mattered not,  
The little lead bullet sped on for the spot.

R stands for Roe, and I'll jump from the town  
To do honor and credit to one of renown.  
A book he has written, which all better read,  
For knowledge comes best to men who succeed.

S stands for "Satan" who lived at Dogtown;  
He tried to shoe horses but always fell down.  
A good fellow was "Bill" — the truth I will tell —  
But the oaths that he uttered would send one to h —.

T stands for Tillman, and I can't forget  
The smile of the blacksmith as it lingers yet.  
He was a friend, the true and the tried,  
And all I can say it's a pity he died.

U stands for Usher, and he's gone at last  
 To the Greatest of Judges, where troubles are past;  
 I hope he fares well in the bright new abode,  
 While on earth he was pulling his part of the load.

V stands for Vroman, an old pioneer,  
 George, he was noted, a great engineer.  
 Hiram was honored by county and town,  
 And old Joe Vroman, one man of renown.

W stands for Whalen, and John slept till four,  
 When a cannon exploded just outside the door.  
 He jumped for the wagon and soon rolled along,  
 And the milk cans were rustled with music and song.

X stands for the unknown, and Fitchburg has boys  
 Who'll climb to the summit without making noise.  
 I might name the list — there are many you know —  
 And all will remember the writer as Joe.

Y stands for Young, and old "Cap" with his gun,  
 March off with our boys in the year '61.  
 Wrestlers and fighters who slept on the grass,  
 But old Sherm Ellsworth stood head of the class.

Z stands for Zebina, my dear brother's name,  
 Struck down in his manhood with no one to blame.  
 He left us to mourn. Alas! it's too true,  
 And I'm the one that's penance done and penance more will do.

#### MY FAREWELL.

Farewell to the rich, and farewell to the poor,  
 Farewell to the Jap, and farewell to the Moor.  
 Farewell to the traveler, the best of all,  
 But never farewell to my friends at Oak Hall.

#### THE FITCHBURG PRIMER.

A stands for Adams, and this is the tune,  
 He lives on the hillside, 'twas owned by McCune.  
 The ditches and rocks are still over there  
 And the "veal calf" is slumbering alone in his lair.

B stands for Barry, and Garret I've met,  
 A jolly good fellow you couldn't forget.  
 When he told a story it made us all laugh;  
 His business was sifting the wheat from the chaff.

C stands for Caine, and the old "white oak hill"  
 Resounds with an echo from that man's good will;  
 The stones that he struck were six in a rod,  
 And how could that victim make peace with his God?

D stands for Daniel, and he's gone alone  
 To sit with St. Peter upon The Great Throne;  
 I hope that forgiveness will stand o'er the door  
 And Dan with his soup plate won't ask for some more.

E stands for Edward, who lived on the hill;  
 Reminded me often of "Buffalo Bill" —  
 He wore a big hat, also a broad smile,  
 And he took things easy and made life worth while.

F stands for Fitchburg, the station I mean;  
 In days past and gone the sights there I've seen,  
 With blood in the corner upon the wood floor,  
 While the man with the bald head was asking for more.

G stands for Gorman, and he the brave man  
 Took one to the station to teach him a plan;  
 And homeward he came a-driving his team  
 Where the road wasn't wide enough near the ravine.

H stands for Hudson, a prospector, too,  
 Who dug in the mountains away from our view.  
 Of all the old prospectors traveling the West,  
 The one I have mentioned I think was the best.

I stands for "Indian," head of the crew,  
 Gallant and dashing as some boy in blue.  
 Jim traveled upward and onward, they say;  
 May God watch his movements till Judgment Day.

J stands for Jenkins, and Nat peddles pills  
 Guaranteed to cure you of all little ills.  
 He says they have built up some good men before,  
 But if you run backward, don't ask for some more.

K stands for Kinney, and brave "Sandy Mike"  
 Went down to Jim Nevins to take a big bite;  
 But Jim grabbed a boot-jack that sat near the door,  
 And Mike wasn't hollering for any more.

L stands for Lydon, and Mike I knew best,  
 He dug out a fortune up in the Northwest;  
 Came back to the farm and rolled up his sleeves,  
 And drove the big Normans that never had heave.

M stands for Monk's, and old "Uncle Jim"  
 Was known as a wrestler, altho tall and slim;  
 When he wore the big belt that Simon Dunn made,  
 "Old Jim" was a champion, that's what they said.

N stands for Noonan, and "Bill" lived up there  
 Where wild birds were singing out in the fresh air.  
 He's worked for John Grady some twenty years,  
 And I never saw any sweat on his brow.

O stands for Oak Hall and the old settlers gone,  
 But Phil near the corner is left all alone.  
 Of all the old timers I knew him the best,  
 May peace and prosperity find him at rest.

P stands for Purcell, and Thomas alone  
 Has gone to his maker to sit on the throne;  
 But back in the eighties, when I knew him well,  
 I though that his pathway was straight down to hell.

Q stands for quickshot, and old "Daddy Wright"  
 Could pick off a mallard with only one sight.  
 The melons and grapes that grew on the hill  
 Where the sweetest I've tasted till I had my fill.

R stands for Richard, and I speak of Dick;  
 He fought with Gus Sweeney about a tooth-pick.  
 And Gus was a scrapper in days long ago,  
 But when he met Richard he fell to the foe.

S stands for Sweeney, and Pat's John they say  
 Is still looking forward to Judgment Day;  
 He did run a section upon the St. Paul,  
 But times are now changing and that'll be all.

T stands for Thomas, and he was my friend;  
 I valued his friendship until the sad end.  
 I stood at the coffin and gazed on the dead  
 And hope that he met with his God overhead.

U stands for Usher, and Henry so blue;  
 In days long ago when he came into view.  
 He stood at the corner and mocked "Uncle Hud,"  
 But by a quick movement went down with a thud.

V stands for Vroman, and old George I knew;  
 He sat on the right side and drove her clean thru.  
 A sixty-mile pace he went on the rail;  
 From North Platte to Sidney he flew on the trail.

W stands for Whalen, I think 'twas "straight Mike,"  
 Went down near the corner the teacher to strike.  
 But when he recovered he lay on the floor;  
 Next think he remembered he shot thru the door.

X stands for the unknown, and many a word  
 From teacher and preacher to scare all the herd.  
 But give me one verse from old "Hoosier Jim,"  
 I'll fight all the battles till I meet with him.

Y stands for youth, and the boys from Oak Hall  
 Have always responded to what's best for all —  
 Some fought with their musket and fell with the crowd,  
 Went down near the banner that made them a shroud.

Z stands for Zenith, and the top of the world  
Will be known to the fairest when flags are unfurled —  
When darkness is daylight and light is the truth,  
Then will I realize dreams of my youth.

FITCHBURG PRIMER.

A stands for Adams and they've gone away,  
There's none on the old place I hear people say.  
How well I remember that old dinner-bell  
That brought all together good stories to tell.

B stands for Barry and Francis so gay  
Now reigns in Denmark close to the highway.  
He looked like a man when I saw him last  
And I hope that the kingdom from him soon will pass.

C stands for Coggins and Harry now goes  
To shoulder a musket and fight foreign foes.  
I'm proud of the boys from Fitchburg I know  
Who've gone to the trenches to strike a death blow.

D stands for Doctor and "Rod" Fox you know  
Will soon be at Woodside to make the thing go.  
They say that he's prospered and has a fine start.  
But all I admire is his great big heart.

E stands for Edward, and Dinnis so brave  
Has grown up and prospered since he was a slave.  
He lives in a city and runs a big store  
Where money rolls in thru the wide-open door.

F stands for Florence and I knew her well  
Back in the school days when Blanch rang the bell.  
I now see the crowd as we march in the door  
Where the school ma'am was standing upon the pine floor.

G stands for Gurnee and brave S. O. Y.  
Now lives above us up in the blue sky.  
I hope that the Savior forgives all our sins  
Else my friend "Be Jabers" will rest upon pins.

H stands for Helms and Homer now rests  
At his home in Nebraska with good children blessed.  
I spent my last birthday at his happy home  
And had I such luxuries n'er more would roam.

I stands for Ira and he lived up there  
Where wolves and the foxes were camped in their lair.  
And when the sun set in the evening twilight  
The wolves and the foxes crawled in for the night.



J stands for Jones who lived at Oak Hall  
 Across from the creamery that now has a fall.  
 The wheels they were humming not so long ago  
 And what the d'el happened I don't even know.

K stands for Keenan and brave Anzelo  
 Dealt James of the Lakeside a terrible blow.  
 But Jim soon recovered and landed a whack  
 Which sent the brave prize fighter flat on his back.

L stands for Lacy, a boy with some grit,  
 Who's shouldered a musket and gone to the pit.  
 I'm proud of that boy and his mother so brave  
 Who urged him to go his country to save.

M stands for Monks and old "Uncle Jim"  
 Has moved to the city where I last saw him.  
 He's taking things easy where shadows fall round  
 And I hope he stays on top of the ground.

N stands for Nimble and old "Daddy Wright"  
 Was swifter than lightning when boys took a flight.  
 The raids on the melons and grapes were at night  
 But please don't forget it we kept out of sight.

O stands for Oak Hall, there's nothing left now,  
 Except the four corners where we had a row.  
 The eggs they were flying and feet moving faster  
 And all that I thought of was some great disaster.

P stands for Purcell and one of the boys  
 Has gone to the trenches to share grief and joys.  
 But when he returns in Khaki so brown  
 I hope they will honor him in that old town.

Q stands for Queen and the "bell" of the ball  
 Was a girl dressed in white I met at the hall.  
 The grass it has grown on her grave long ago,  
 I still see the sweetheart that I used to know.

R stands for Richard and I speak of "Dick,"  
 And some of the boys on him tried to pick.  
 But when they recovered just after the rush  
 They found themselves lying face down in the brush.

S stands for "Solomon," Jawn has retired  
 And some say from Fitchburg the Brave man was fired.  
 He ought to be stranded, branded and tied  
 And "prince of the fakers" burned into his hide.

T stands for Tusler Lute lived on the hill  
 Where Hudson and Homer good places did fill.  
 Hudson has gone to a "Haven of Rest,"

## STAGECOACH YEARS

And Homer is still in the land of the blessed.

U stands for Union and boys from Oak Hall  
Have stood by the colors when many did fall.  
But still that old banner is waiving on high,  
And no dirty Prussian our name can decry.

V stands for Vroman and old Uncle High  
Will just keep on living while some people die.  
As chirp as a cricket and spry as a bird  
He looks like a cow puncher heading the herd.

W stands for Whalen and old Uncle Mike  
Stood up at the meetin' and fought for his right.  
His boy, the brave Michael, was out in the sun.  
"Bloom" said it warped him when that day was done.

X stands for the unknown and some people say,  
It's up to his Reverence to go and bale hay.  
For strength is not lacking and muscle is good,  
And as for his appetite, that's understood.

Y stands for Younger and Alec met Dan.  
A series of friendship they had man to man.  
But all of a sudden a bomb flew on high,  
And "Scottie" to drown it said, pass me the rye.

Z stands for Zenith. I've climbed to Pikes Peak.  
In trying to reach it I got very weak.  
I stood on the summit the tenth of July,  
And saw the snow fall miles above the blue sky.

### MY FAREWELL.

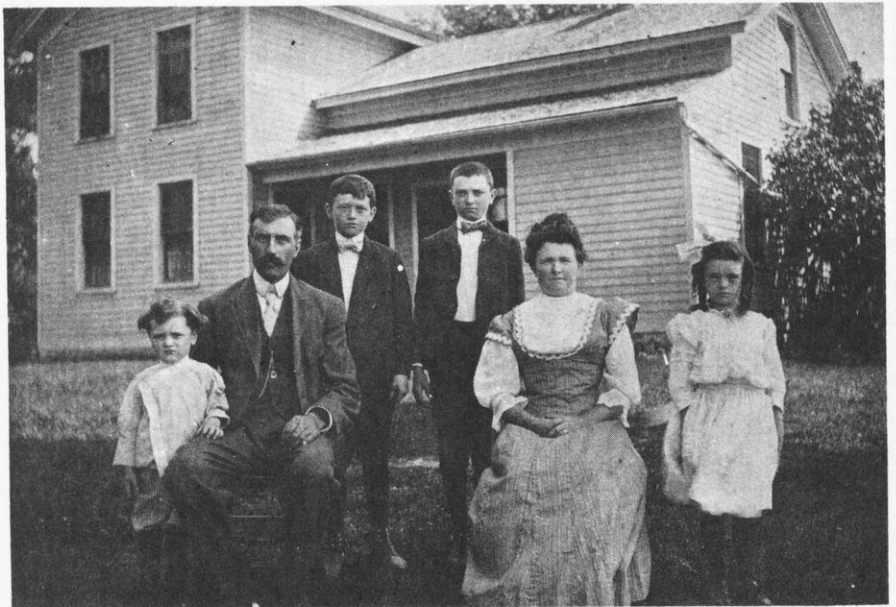
Farewell to the darkness, farewell to the light;  
Farewell to our passions, farewell to our plight;  
Farewell to the tavern where they had the ball,  
But never farewell to the boys at Oak Hall.

The gay saloon and dance hall at Oak Hall was not held in the same esteem by the whole community. In 1892, Phil Barry found his much needed farm hand collapsed on the kitchen floor after a spree at the tavern. In disgust he bought the land the failing saloon was leased on, closed it up and moved the building on his brother Pat's land. Leo Barry says his father "*put hay in the upstairs and cows in the downstairs.*"

There were still plenty of shenanigans going on around the Oak Hall corners after the tavern was gone. Oregon barber, Cletus Brown, who was born in the old general store on the corner tells a story about "Country Bill" Sweeney. Bill, at 78, is still one of the hardest working men on the Fitchburg Parks Crew. It seems "Country Bill" and the



**“And you lie there, quite resigned, whiskey deaf, and whiskey blind.”**



(picture courtesy of W. Sweeney)

**The Sweeney's around 1910, little Paul, Father John, a railroad man, country Bill, Ed, Mother Brigit and Ann.**

Oak Hall Creamery Co.		Floyd Me.
In account with		Dr. P. H. Fox
For the month ending February 28 1898		
Total pounds milk furnished by you	2087	
Your avg. oil test	4.2	
Your milk @ 82¢ per 100° units to		17.11
Butter rec'd by you 46½ lbs @ 19¢	3.14	
Cost of hauling milk @ 10¢ per 100°	2.09	
Credit for hauling _____ lbs @ 10¢		
Enclosed find draft to balance		11.89

Business Statement of entire Creamery  
for the month ending February 28 1898

Total unit milk rec'd for the month	259610°
Total unit butter	12114°
Avg. test of Factory	3.95
Avg. butter yield from returns	4.67
Shrinkage of Churn over test	18%
Rate paid for 100° milk testing 4% as computed from total unit rec'd for butter and avg test of Factory	78¢
Avg price rec'd by patrons for milk per 100°	77¢
Avg price butter net at Factory	19¢
Cost of making butter per lb	2½¢
Net price rec'd by patrons for butter	16½¢

J. W. Wallace  
Secy.

(picture courtesy of P. Fox)

The Oakhall Creamery carried on the name of the fading district of Oakhall renamed Floyd. Within 20 years they too were gone, the town center had moved to the railroad depot at Fitchburg Village.

Denton brothers devised a devilish scheme to harrass old man Haskins. One of the Dentons put on some old rags and got his face all blackened with soot trying to pass himself off as a fugitive slave. After Haskins sent him away with a shudder the rest of the troupe of troublemakers drove up in their horse and buggy, hollered whoa, and yelled for Haskins to help find that dangerous fugitive. *"Old Haskins got so all fired excited and scared he bit the stem off his pipe as he joined the hunt. They headed north to Barrys,"* chuckled Cletus. *"Well now, the poor old devil got himself so worked up he ran straight through the screen door."* By the time the whole farce was figured out, Bill Sweeney and his friends were sternly disciplined and Bob Denton lost his job.

In an effort to recapture the respectability and prosperity of Oak Hall, a creamery was formed as a farmers' cooperative in 1895. Making use of his ag school education, Phil Barry drew up plans for the venture. Joe Wallace was secretary and Phil Barry president. A. O. Fox was a member and the Fahey and Kinney families also remembered their milk was hauled there.



(picture courtesy of C. Bryne)

Sunday afternoon at the Barry's (now Doerfer's) during the Oakhall Creamery's peak years. Phil, Howard, Grace and Mary Phil Barry, Mary Frances Bryne, Mary and Eugene Barry.

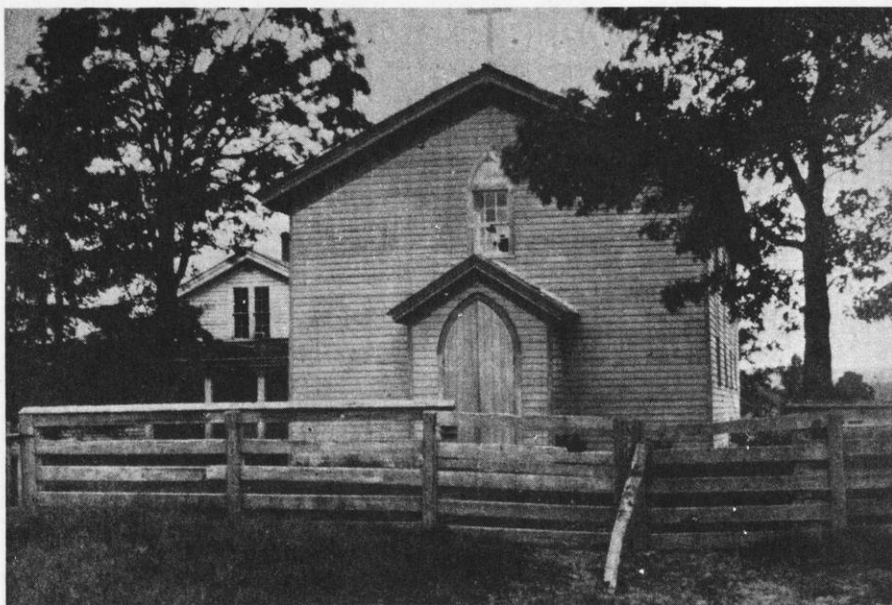
## STAGECOACH YEARS

Despite the gradual shift of the Fitchburg business district from the outmoded stage's settlement of Oak Hall to the new railroad depot settlement at Fitchburg Village, the Oak Hall Creamery met with success. It was a thriving business for 20 years with branches in Oregon and Storytown.

Oak Hall's first church and cemetery, St. Mary's, was Catholic, built in 1857, just west of the present State Farm. Reverend Hugh McMahon confirmed 40 the first day and took charge of the Fitchburg congregation's white frame church and parsonage which served the spiritual wants of Fitchburg, Oregon, Dunn and Rutland.

"The land for the first church and cemetery, two acres in the southeast corner of the West ½ of the Northwest ¼-Section 35-Town 6 North, Range 9 East, Fitchburg Township, was deeded to the parish by Barney McGlynn and wife, consideration one dollar."<sup>4</sup>

Although there was a parish church at Syene for Methodists, a church was also built at Oak Hall in 1897. Accustomed to a circuit rider tradition, their preacher explained "*the Catholics will go to Oregon, but the Methodists expect the word of God to come to them!*" The first



(picture courtesy of P. Fox)

In 1885 the congregation of St. Mary's voted to move to Oregon from the Oakhall Church they felt was too small and dilapated. The dismantled building was used to build a residence on the Edward Bryne Farm.

<sup>4</sup>Caine, Mrs. Joseph, "*Our Sweetness*" *Holy Mother of Consolation* 1856-1956, Oregon, Wisconsin

sermon in the area was preached in the home of Robert Salisbury in 1845 by the Methodist circuit-rider Reverend Hawks.

The church was in existence only a short time, the Methodists recognizing it was a matter of practicality to converge with Oregon. By the 20's, it was only ten minutes away once you got the Model T cranked up.

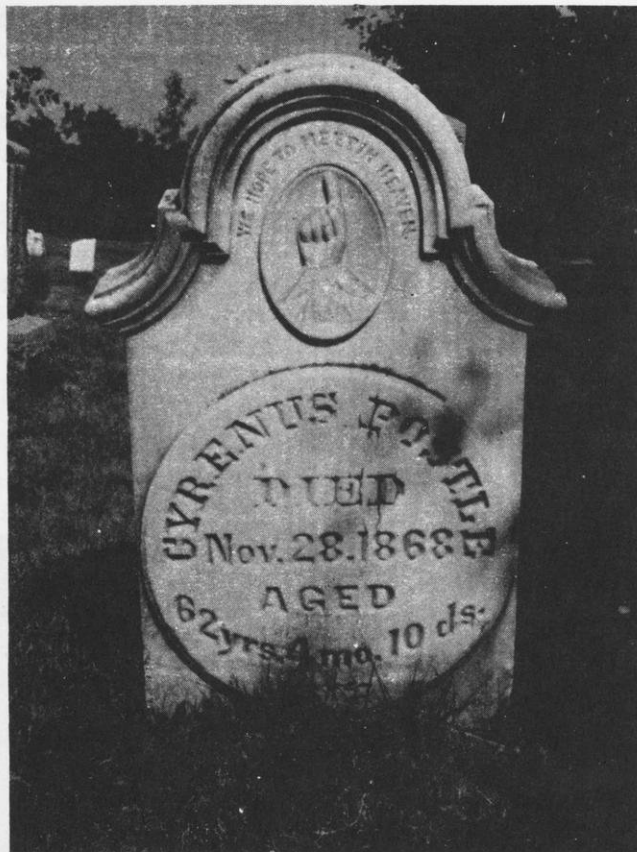
"One by one, the buildings where the stage stopped at Oak Hall disappeared. Now the Leo Barry farm stands where Oak Hall Tavern did and modern homes surround the crossroads. Except for Pritchard's red brick house, only a tiny windblown cemetery at the crest of a hill on M, half a mile west of the four corners remains of the busy little settlement. Old tombstones memorialize neighborhood pioneers like McKeebey, Bennett and Bentley. Though no 'curfew tolls the knell of parting day', there is still an occasional burial in Oak Hall's country churchyard."<sup>5</sup>



(picture courtesy of P. Fox)

**Oakhall Cemetery — final resting place for Fitchburg's pioneers.**

<sup>5</sup>Janet Schlatter, *Years Erode Pioneer History*, Wisconsin State Journal, January 16, 1966



(picture courtesy of P. Fox)

Cyrenus Postle, one of the first handful of men to reach Fitchburg, inscription reads: "WE HOPE TO MEET IN HEAVEN".

### LAKE VIEW

Although it never had the status of being considered the town center like Oak Hall, the stagecoach settlement at Lake View was of considerable importance in the development of eastern Fitchburg. This crossroads settlement developed on an important early road, the old military road from territorial days. It was called Lake View although the lake (Waubesa) can no longer be seen from the point we know as the junction of B and MM on Oregon Road.

Abraham Murphy was the first settler there and the creek which winds south of his homestead, now the Walter Uphoff Fellowship

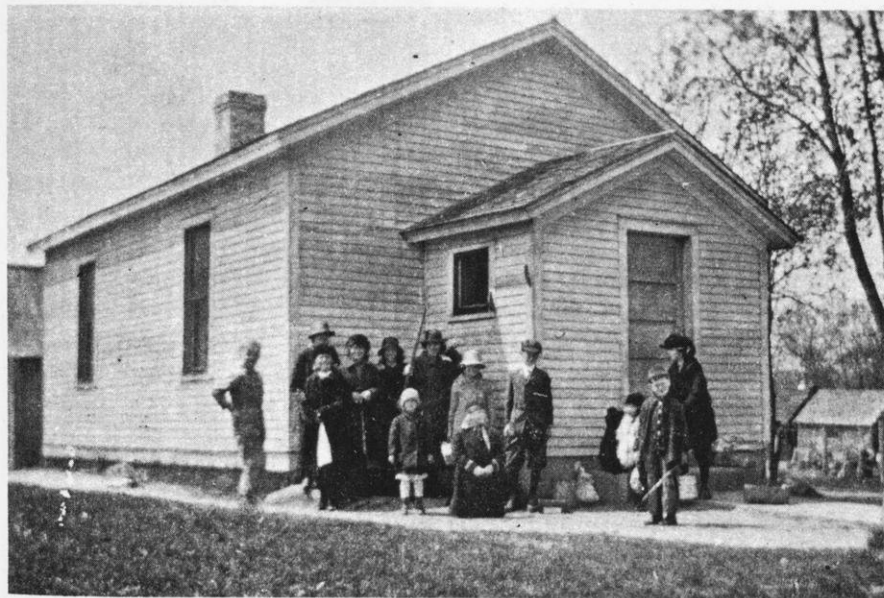


Farm, yet bears his name. His first dwelling was a log cabin east of the road by the Murphy Spring opposite his still standing 105 year old-second house.

In 1848, just south of the Murphy home, a Mr. Sanford built a loghouse in which his wife taught an early day school. A regular school house was built in 1848 which served the district until 1930 when the pupils were sent to Oregon. It was a typical school with some of the usual problems. According to the Oregon Observer, the school was closed in 1899 due to mumps. "*The teacher, Miss McDougal, is home laid up with the same.*" (Oregon Observer, Jan. 10, 1889.)

One of the first half dozen ministers to preach in Wisconsin, Reverend Matthew Fox, conducted his services in the log school house until he and his parishioners built the Lake View Presbyterian Church about 1851. It was located just north of Lake View.

Reverend Matthew and his father, William Maine Fox, were Irish but protestants in religious affiliation and helped establish many of the protestant churches in Dane County. They carried the word of God to surrounding areas and according to A. O. Fox's writings:



(picture courtesy of F. Kellor)

Lake View School from the days when there was a schoolhouse in every neighborhood and it became a community center for the whole family.

## STAGECOACH YEARS

"On one occasion, being requested by the presbyterians in the Scotch settlement on Sugar River to administer the Lord's Supper, it was found that a large log saloon was the only place big enough to hold the congregation, so the saloon keeper met the situation promptly, consenting to the use of his saloon. Those who heard grandfather said that his forceful discussion of the subject won two converts among the toughs who *'came to scoff but remained to pray'*. His honesty and fearlessness won the confidence and respect of all who knew him. He made a point of knowing the toughs of each town, making friends with them and trying to influence them to a better life."

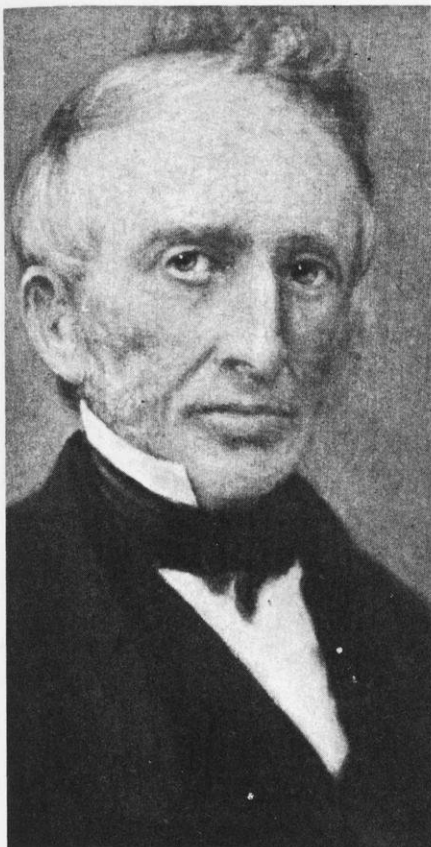
When Reverend Fox was called to build a church in Oregon in 1873, the Lake View Presbyterian church was bought by Nathaniel Haight for \$100. He sold it to the Syene Methodist Society who moved it to Lacy Road and MM. They called it the Swan Creek Church after the lovely winding creek in the neighborhood and it was again a local gathering place.

Conrad Getts was an old-time developer of sorts, having built in 1845 the double log hotel that was used as a stage coach stop and post office. He sold his establishment to John Kurtz who with his brother, Andrew, became the early businessmen of Lake View. The inn was a favorite stopping place for peddler wagons as well as stages since Murphy Creek was a handy place to water their horses. Andrew Kurtz opened a general store on the east side of the road across from the Inn.

On leaving the Inn, Conrad Getts built a store on the north east corner and Mike Hogan opened a shoemaker shop next door. Later, around 1860, the hotel and tavern was run by Joe Bowman with the tavern in the basement. Mr. A. C. Kellor, who later owned the home, found an old stone cupboard with wooden doors which was used to store the wine. When excavating for a water system, Mr. Kellor came upon an old well which had been used as a beer cooler. It operated on a lever device so that the container could be raised and lowered. Raised, it was held stationary by a large stone. On one side of the well was a small bar where the thirsty traveler could obtain his drink of cold beer.

With the exception of the blacksmith shop run by Knowiton, Day and Hayes and the saw and grist mill run by the Yagers, most of these early buildings are still standing.

Two sets of springs known as John's Springs and Murphy's Springs made the location attractive to travelers. Abraham Murphy counted up to 25 wigwams camped around the springs in the summer as the Indians hunted and fished. Even in the early 1900's Indians would stop to water their horses and beg food according to Mrs. Marie Christensen who grew up on the corner as an adopted granddaughter of Conrad Getts.



(picture courtesy of P. Fox)

William Maine Fox, traveling preacher in a letter to his son George in 1857: "I am beginning to feel old age. I shall, if faithful, join your dear Mother in that blessed world where there is no Sorrow, Sicknes, or Death — Oh George, live for the eternity of glory in heaven. Your dear Mother is in my thoughts almost always, her memory is dear to me, thank God for that blessed hope of soon meeting where parting is no more. Give my love to all for they are too numerous to name. Your ever loving Father. William M. Fox."

no, but the one thing — might the salvation of the immortal  
 soul, which nothing but the blood of Christ can cleanse, prepare  
 for a throne of bliss at God's right hand in Heaven, and think of this  
 think for my health is as good as I could expect at any time of life  
 but I am beginning to feel old age, I shall soon if faithful  
 join your dear Mother in that blessed world where there is no sorrow  
 sickness or death or George live for eternity of glory in heaven  
 your dear Mother is in my thoughts almost always, her memory is  
 dear to me, thank God for that blessed hope of soon meeting where  
 parting is no more. Give my love to all for they are too numerous to name.

Your ever loving Father  
 W. M. Fox

(picture courtesy of P. Fox)



(picture courtesy of D. Bertelino)

**Grandpa Getts and his adopted Granddaughter Marie in their parlor of their home and store on the N. E. corner.**

John's Springs became the mecca of all local picnics and even the army, on its way to Camp McCoy, would stop.

In the late 1800's, the stage coach stop and dance hall taken over by Mr. Fisher, was a most popular place and mention was often made in the *Oregon Observer* of the gay parties held there.

Unfortunately, the prosperity of the area was noticed by the unscrupulous as the *Observer* of 1884 noted: "*Lake View: Tramps broke into James White's residence one day last week and made away with over \$50 in cash bound in an old mitten hanging on the rafter upstairs.*"

The names of the families living here have changed but most of the buildings yet stand. The Kellor family conducted business there until recently. The corner has known Murphys, Getts, Kurtzs, Sanfords, Tusslers, Kivlins, Augers, Sutherlands, Mandts, Kellors, Hogans, McAvoy's, Stones and more. Lake View seems to have attracted people who understand and cherish its history and are



(picture courtesy of Bicentennial Committee)

The Conrad Getts Inn of 1845 was later owned by Kurtz, Fisher, Bowman then Kellor.

preserving the settlement. Conrad Getts' stagecoach inn is presently restored as a home and his store has been authentically redone and preserved as an antique shop and home by the Bertolino family.

The stagecoach and peddler wagons are long gone and the railroad gave up its plans to go through Lake View when it found cheaper land along Syene. The settlement has changed. There are still many families living near Lake View since it is on a well traveled highway, but where can you get together now?

### DOGTOWN

Only a few can remember hearing of a stage coach stop at Dogtown, the intersection of Fish Hatchery Road and Lacy Road. Since there was no Dogtown postoffice the stage was required to deliver to, an inn must have been the inducement to stop there. Old-timers point to an exposed cellar on the Purcell land at the northeast corner across from the United Bank Building and suppose the old Purcell store was the site of the stage stop tavern. The location could have moved across Lacy Road because it is said by some that the Gallagher place was the inn and stage stop.



(picture courtesy of J. Buchner)

In 1925 the enterprising Buchners turned an old Lakeview store into a gas station. In keeping with the changing times they had one of the 1st gasoline pumps ever installed.



(picture courtesy of Bicentennial Committee)

In 1976 the gas station is again filled with customers but now they search out nostalgic pieces of the past in the 120 year old structure.



(picture courtesy of F. Kellor)

In 1919 A. C. Kellor built this modern filling station and sold it to his son Carroll in 1934.



(picture courtesy of F. Kellor)

Kellors store was modernized over the years with stucco and Coca-Cola signs only to be demolished by a gas explosion. It occurred minutes before the school bus dropped off neighborhood children who always went inside for ice cream and candy.

## STAGECOACH YEARS

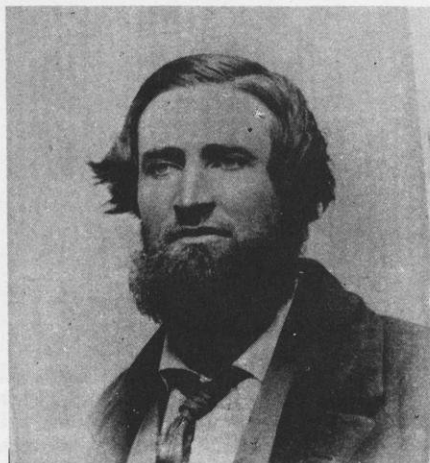
The settlement around Fish Hatchery Road and Lacy boasted a meat market in addition to the usual blacksmith shop, general store and school. Bones were thrown out the back door resulting in a constant canine congregation and thus the label Dogtown Corners.

The Gallagher family holds a different legend, attributing the Dogtown name to the numerous prairie dogs that inhabit this vast prairie in Fitchburg.

Town meetings were held in the corner blacksmith shop before a town hall was built. Those were rough and ready days according to a Fox family legend about "The Blacksmith with a Black Heart" told by A.O. Fox:

"The blacksmith was Tom Satan, a big, burly fellow who, for some reason or other, had acquired a dislike for my father, based, I believe, on some political difference. Tom was known as a surly cuss, ready to fight at the drop of the hat. On the occasion in question, there was a town meeting being held for some purpose and Tom had secretly told some one of the crowd that he was going to get Doc Fox before the meeting was over. He also told the party that he had a knife in his coat, ready for use if occasion required it.

The party receiving the information believed it was his duty to pass it on at once to the Doctor. Whether he did it personally or otherwise, I do not know, but father immediately communicated with his brother, Uncle George, who was in the crowd at the time, and together they decided to call Tom's hand at once. Uncle George was a big, powerful man, probably able to handle Tom alone, and facing him, my father told me he knew of his plan and for him to drop that knife immediately or he would fill him full of lead. Uncle George stood ready to give Tom a wallop if he resisted. The result was that Tom dropped the knife to the ground.



(picture courtesy of P. Fox)

Uncle George Fox, a man you could count on.



School Dis No 9 Fitchburg 1920-21

Oct 8	1	Bessie Morrissey	118	20
Nov 5	2	Bessie Morrissey	119	40
Nov 8	3	P Le Pease - chemical	12	00
	4	Walterman & Son - coal	90	00
	5	Draper & Rhodes - shade	13	00
	6	John Purcell interest	30	00
Nov 17	7	Eliza Crapp cleaning school	7	20
	8	Joe Crapp cutting weeds	5	00
	9	Eliza Crapp cleaning	1	00
Dec 5	11	Bessie Morrissey teaching	118	80
	10	First National Bank	60	20
Dec 17	12	Bessie Morrissey teaching	59	40
Jan 28	13	Bessie Morrissey	118	80
	14	Viola Crapp cleaning	2	00
Feb 7	16	First National Bank note out	1021	20
" "	18	Capitol City Bank	358	25
" "	17	New York Store bulletin board	8	40
	18	James Hasset Int	148	00
Feb 14	19	May Crapp cleaning	2	00
" 21	20	Walterman & Son coal	37	00
" 25	21	Bessie Morrissey teaching	118	80
Mar 25	22	Bessie Morrissey	118	80
Apr 25	23	Mrs J Crapp cleaning & fires	11	00
Apr 28	24	Bessie Morrissey teaching	118	80
May 20	25	Bessie Morrissey	118	80
June 3	26	Bessie Morrissey	59	40
			<u>2071</u>	<u>33</u>

(picture courtesy of L. Lacy)

On the Fish Hatchery or "Dogtown" School accounting book a new bill is listed - coal. Earlier entries showed various neighbors supplied wood and started the fires on a regular basis.

Uncle George then picked it up, took it in both hands and broke it across his own knee. Then they told Tom to get out of the meeting and go home and stay there or they would finish him then and there."

Another colorful character, but from Dogtown's later days, was six foot tall Mrs. Crapp. Robert Eby, who used to run Quarry Hill Farm Dairy down Lacy Road shares his recollections with amusements. *"She was quite a sight, a big woman, wearing a Merry Widow hat with an ostrich plume and a big black coat. I can see her now loading up those 126 lb. milk cans. She had a milk route and picked up with the best of the men. The men were kind of embarrassed but she had all those kids to feed and was on her 4th husband."*

Mrs. Crapp's name can also be found on the pages of the Fish Hatchery School's accounting book. While Miss Olive Elmergreen and Bessie Morrissey were teachers, 1917-1927, Mrs. Crapp and her family earned several dollars a month cleaning the school, building the fires and taking care of the yard.

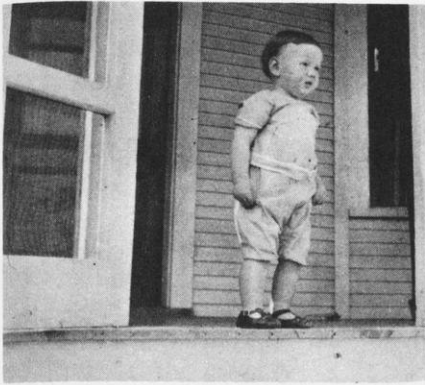
Not far up Lacy Road a light-fingered family by the name of Swenson rented a farm on Whalen property. Leo Lacy says of Old Swenson *"him and work had a fallin' out!"* Leo hasn't forgotten the night his father decided to catch their chicken thief. Hearing a noise, his dad jumped out of bed, dashed out into the moonlit barnyard and grabbed the culprit by the neck. The next thing Leo heard was *"I'm Herman Swenson, don't choke me!"* Leo learned at an early age to respect his neighbors' property.

Dogtown was remembered less as a stage stop and more for its school which was the neighborhood focal point.

At Fish Hatchery School, according to Bill McKee, former town chairman, *"There were 8 grades, no kindergarten, you had to be big enough to get through the snow when you walked to school."* Walking to school continued to be the accepted mode of travel even when students attended high school or the University of Madison. *"Sometimes they could catch a ride with the train or milkman,"* says Willie Kinney.

Chores were occasionally combined with the trek to the Fish Hatchery Schoolhouse. The Whalen children drove cattle down and put them in their orchard to pasture on their way to school and brought them home after school.

Many of the young ladies who came to teach school remained in their districts ever after. *"Leta Jordan was one of the teachers, at Fish Hatchery, then she married John Purcell, whose farm was located across from the school house. This was standard procedure for teachers in those times,"* said McKee, *"they married the closest farmer. Then we*



Ed and Frances McKee and little Bill who can't wait to join the big kids at Dogtown School.



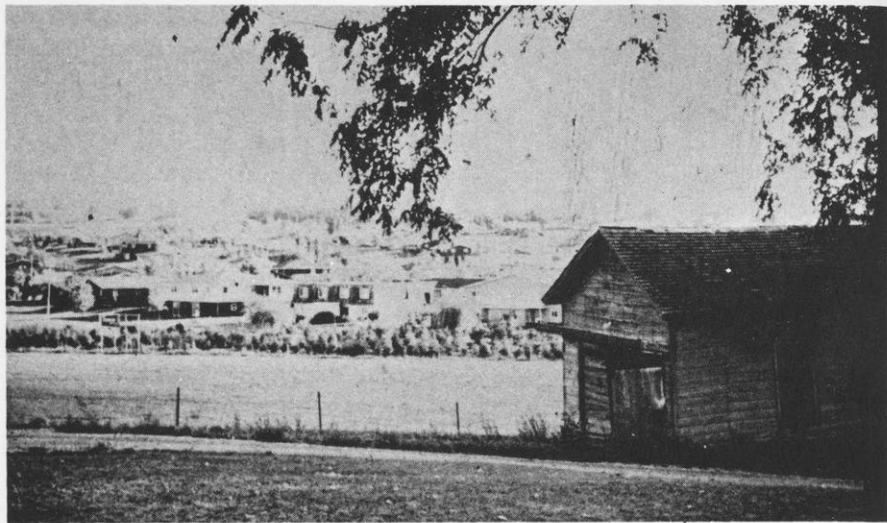
(picture courtesy of W. McKee)

had Nora Grady for a teacher, she married another of the Purcell boys." Esther Muhlmeier married Webb McManus and Katherine Keeley wed Tom Fahey. At Maple Corners school in the Fitchburg Village district, more teachers married the local boys; Dorothy Legg to Erwin Lappley, Florenna Hansen to a Wendt boy and Genevieve Lacy to Maurice Purcell. Syene had their Ed Blaney and Elsie Wall romance. Recesses were reported to be unusually long when the school marms were busy with an across the fench chat.

The original Fish Hatchery schoolhouse still stands on the Fish Hatchery curve overlooking the Tower Hill development of its present owner, Bill McKee. It is a grey weather beaten garage now but has

## STAGECOACH YEARS

outlived the two large schoolhouses that were built to replace it. Leo Lacy can remember when they added a four foot extension to the small one room schoolhouse which then (early 1900's) had to accommodate 44 children.



(picture courtesy of Bicentennial Committee)

**The original Dogtown schoolhouse stands in the shadows — a reminder of the neighborhood school.**

### **Mysterious Fire 1937 Destroys School**

The Fish Hatchery school will probably open in the Fitchburg town hall this fall, as a result of a fire of unknown origin which destroyed the school building early Friday morning, with a loss estimated at \$6,000, which is only partially covered by insurance.

Firemen and watchers were unable to save the desks, the library, including a new encyclopedia set purchased last year, and other school equipment.

A dairy truck driver, passing by the school, saw the fire and drove to a neighboring farm to turn in the alarm. The top of the one-story building was in flames when No. 6 company arrived. The firemen soon had the fire under control, but the water supply gave out, and the flames burst out over the building. The school building has been modernized since it was built in 1919 at a cost of \$5,500.

The school was to have opened Sept. 6, with about 23 pupils, the same number as last year.

A special school district meeting will be held in the Fitchburg town hall on Tuesday, Aug. 31, to decide upon definite plans for the school.



(picture courtesy of L. Lacy)

(picture courtesy of Bicentennial Committee)

**Betty Osmundsen, Paul Lacy, Louis Sundstrom and Shirley Bancroft stand proudly in front of their new school and the teacher's car in 1938.**

**The second school, built in 1919, burned down 18 years later.**

The Fish Hatchery grade school, nicknamed Dogtown School, received letters even up to the 1950's from people all over the country wanting to attend the Fish Hatchery School to learn to operate a hatchery.

Despite the homely name, Dogtown inspires warm memories. Bridget Lydon on whose father's land the first school was built, was 12 years old in 1917 when she penned this tribute:

"DOGTOWN

The old school house at Dogtown  
Is built upon a slope  
Which makes the children forward bend  
When it comes to jumping rope.

But forwards been the motto  
Of those girls and boys who played  
On the old hillside at Dogtown  
In sunshine and in shade.

From out that happy number  
Some have joined the Heavenly Choir  
And some have gone across the sea  
Their country's gun to fire.

More have to the city gone  
A livelihood to gain  
And quite a few among them  
Sign M.D. to their name.

Others till the stubborn soil  
Their place in life to fill  
And proudly watch their children  
As they play on that old hill.

But the Board of Education say  
The old schoolhouse must go  
And a building on the level stands  
One half a mile below.

And the merry little teacher  
Who now rules on the hill  
Will perhaps take up her studies  
A higher place to fill.

So "Forward" is our motto  
Our souls alight with hope  
That in heaven we meet our playmates  
From that dear old sunny slope"

## STAGECOACH YEARS

During the period of thriving stagecoach settlements here, two national events interrupted the calm in Fitchburg. The first, the discovery of gold in California in 1849, lured a few young men away from their family homesteads, but aroused more curiosity than actual gold seekers.

The second event, the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, was felt far more.

## CIVIL WAR

In Wisconsin's earliest days, the sentiment ran pro-slavery since southern money and masters were managing some of the lead mines. Later, as eastern people began settling Dane County's farmlands, they took offense at the use of slaves in the southwestern lead mines of Wisconsin. Soon Dane County residents, particularly the Germans, held meetings to give expression to their moral views. This anti-slavery sentiment of the State met at Madison in 1854 forming the Republican Party. The strength of the abolitionist viewpoint in Dane County was reflected in the fact that the County sent 400 more men and \$6000,000 more than requested.



(picture courtesy of Bicentennial Committee)

The former Mathews Hatchery on Verona Road was a link in the underground railroad helping slaves reach freedom.

Fitchburg generously aided the war with both men and money. Out of an 1860 population of 1,177 men, women and children, total Fitchburg enlistments were 97 leaving sixteen men dead. When the war started, Fitchburg had already raised a war fund of \$232.69.

Preceding the war, a military company was organized in Fitchburg under the leadership of William C. Young of Dogtown Corners. This group called themselves the "Rough and Ready Guards" and was composed of men from several towns who met once a week at Lake View to drill. When the Civil War broke out, Captain Young and most of his men joined the 8th regiment of the Union Army as a group on August 3, 1861.

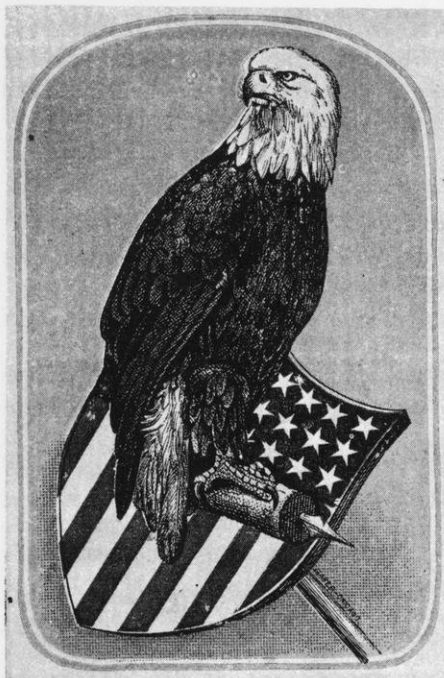
#### FITCHBURG OFFICERS IN WISCONSIN REGIMENTS<sup>6</sup>

William C. Young, Major — 8th reg, entered Aug. 3 '61 mo Sept.  
 Marvin H. Helms, 1st Lt., Co. E, 8th reg. entered Aug. 3 '61, mo. Dec. 12 '64  
 James L. Gilbert, 1st Lt., Co. E, 8th reg. entered Aug. 3 '61, res. June 23 '62  
 Geo. Murphy, 2nd Lt., Co. E, 8th reg. entered Aug. 18 '61 mo. Sept. 15 '65  
 James M. Lee, Captain, Co. E, 46th reg, entered Feb. 17 '65 declined the commission  
 Lafayette M. Rice, Captain, Co. K, 42nd reg. entered Sept. 12 '64 mo. June 20 '65  
 Philip Fox, Asst. Surgeon, 2nd reg. entered Dec. 3 '63 mo. July 2 '64

The 8th Regiment carried the live eagle "Old Abe" screaming over the battle fields through the war and came to be known as "The Eagle Regiment". Their famous mascot escaped Confederate bullets to die in a fire in the Capitol 16 years after the war.

Another group, perhaps branch members of the "Rough and Ready Guards", organized at Oak Hall, also under the leadership of Captain Young. Out of the Oak Hall group, a musical band formed. Mary (Sholts) Anderson writes in a history of Oak Hall that during the war, the band was almost completely wiped out. Mrs. Anderson explains: *"This band had a wagon to ride in. On the day of the calamity, one member gave his place in the wagon to a sick soldier who was not able to ride his horse. The wagon was blown up in an encounter with the enemy and all in it were killed."*

<sup>6</sup>C. W. Butterfield, *History of Dane County* (Chicago: Chicago Western Historical Company, 1880)



(picture courtesy of P. Fox)

The *New* Picture of the Eagle.

(From a Photograph taken in March, 1865.)

Album Portrait of "Old Abe," the Live Eagle, which was carried through a three years' campaign, and many battles, by the 8th Wisconsin Regiment.

These pictures are sold for the benefit of the Great Sanitary Fair in Chicago, which opens May 30, 1865. Price 15 cents each. Ten for one dollar. Nine dollars per hundred. Sent free of postage.

We are also preparing, for sale for the benefit of the Fair, a complete and authentic history of the Eagle, which will be ready for delivery a week or two before the Fair opens.

AGENTS—ALFRED L. SEWELL,

C. re of DUNLOP, SEWELL & SPALDING, Chicago, Ill.

After his 1863 graduation from Bellevue Medical College in New York, Dr. Philip Fox enlisted as assistant surgeon of the Second Wisconsin regiment. He gave medical service, meeting the needs of wounded, ill or dying soldiers on the ambulance trains.

In July, 1864, President Lincoln called for 300,000 additional troops from the north. At a special town meeting, Fitchburg voted to raise \$200 for each recruit. Town Clerk, A. L. Mann, wrote in his records: "*By an official letter from the Provost Marshall, it is ascertained that the quota for said town is thirty-two (32) men — this makes the bounty \$6,400.*" At the same meeting, the Board gave the Chairman power to appoint a committee to draft men and to secure finances for Fitchburg troops. Chairman Keenan appointed John Mutchler, Hugh Cathcart and B. F. Nott to this committee. Treasurer, John McWilliams personally subscribed and paid \$125 to carry on the war.

In December, 1864, Lincoln again called for 300,000 more troops. Fitchburg responded by raising tax dollars of \$5,500 for volunteers to fill the president's quota.

More young men were felled by bad water, bad food and amateur surgery than bullets.





No. <u>58</u>	No. ....	Date, .....	1865
Date, <u>April 16</u>	Brigade, .....	Division, .....	Corps, .....
Name, <u>Anna E. Reynolds</u>	Pass .....	of Comp. ....	Regt. ....
Rank <u>Cap</u> Comp <u>My</u> Regt. <u>2 Wis</u>	for admission to the Ambulance Train.		
Brig. <u>1st</u> Div. <u>1st</u> Corps <u>1st</u>	Surgeon .....		
Disease, <u>Love Sick</u>	Regt. ....		
<u>Philip Fox</u>	Philip & Solomon, Printers, Washington, D. C.		

(picture courtesy of P. Fox)

Young Dr. Philip Fox and his fiance Anna Reynolds were separated by the war uncertain whether they would ever meet again. Sometimes Dr. Fox filled out less serious admissions to the ambulance train for fatigue, bad feet, diarrhea, and love sickness.

Head Quarters Army of the Potomac,

MEDICAL DIRECTOR'S OFFICE.

September 1st, 1863.

In ALL CASES in which men are sent to the rear to be admitted into the Ambulance train, a Pass will be given to each man sent.

This Book will be preserved with care, and when the Passes are exhausted, the book containing the checks will be transmitted through the Medical Director of the Corps in which it has been used, to the Medical Director of this Army.

JONA LETTERMAN,

Medical Director.

(picture courtesy of P. Fox)

Dr. Fox's book of Ambulance passes.

Med Dept 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade 4<sup>th</sup> Div 5<sup>th</sup> A.C.  
 April 21<sup>st</sup> 1864

Doctor

You will please inspect and report upon the  
 Sanitary Condition of the Camps of the several Commands  
 in this Brigade this P.M.

Very Respectfully Yours &c

Apt. Surg. Philip Fox  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Wb. Art.

J. H. Beech Surg 24<sup>th</sup> Mich. Vols  
 Surg-in-Chief 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade 4<sup>th</sup> Div.  
 5<sup>th</sup> A.C. A of the P

P.S. If it should storm from 2 to 4 P.M. this duty may be  
 deferred until a fair day

Beech

(picture courtesy of P. Fox)

Dr. Fox was required to make sanitary inspections, this one for J. H. Beech, Surgeon 24th Michigan Volunteers, Surgeon in Chief 1st Brigade 4th Division; Potomac.

FITCHBURG CIVIL WAR DEAD<sup>7</sup>

- Baumann, Andrew, 11th Co. B., killed April 8, 1865, Blakely, Ala.
- Blackledge, Clarkson, 8th Co., 3, killed October 3, 1862, Corinth, Miss.
- Byrne, William, 23rd Co. I, died Jan. 17, 1863, Memphis, Tenn.
- Gilbert, Thomas J., Sgt., 8th Co. E, killed March 27, 1865, Spanish Fort, Ala.
- Jenkins, Amos F., 23rd Co. I, died July 10, 1863, St. Louis, Mo.
- Kinsman, Jerome, 23rd Co., D, drowned March 7, 1863, Lake Providence, Louisiana
- Nyhart, Willia, H., 8th Co. E, died June 18, 1862, Farrington, Mo.
- Nye, Warren W., 11th Co. B., died March 3, 1865, New Orleans, La.
- Powers, William, 45th, died February 20, 1865, Madison, Wisconsin.
- Pritchard, Emory, 23rd Co. I, died Feb. 11, 1863, Youngs Point, La.
- Salisbury, Nelson H., Corp. 23rd Co. D, died May 11, 1863, Cairo, Ill.
- Story, William, 8th Co. E, died of wounds November 12, 1862, Keokuk, Ia.
- Sweep, Charles R. 23rd Co. I, died Feb. 20, 1863, Youngs Point, La.
- Vanatta, Levi, 23rd Co. A, died of wounds March 6, 1863, St. Louis, Mo.
- Watson, Peter, 8th Co. E, drowned April 15, 1862, Tiptonville, Tenn.

Total Fitchburg enlistments: 97 Total dead: 16

<sup>7</sup>Elisha W. Keeps, *History of Dane County* (Madison: Wester Historical Society, 1906)

The era was one of change for the woman left behind. They gathered in sewing circles to make mittens and socks for their men but they also put their shoulders to the plow to keep the family farm. Labor saving machinery was invented like the reaper, seed drill, mower and the sewing machine to lighten the load. Women began to think about suffrage and even went so far as to enroll at the University in Madison and become school teachers.

By 1864, the pesty chinch bug reached Dane County and destroyed the wheat crops. Coupled with the declining yields of wheat on the depleted soil the wheat culture deteriorated in Wisconsin and moved westward into Minnesota, Iowa and the Dakotas.

The period following the wheat years was a time of experimentation and cooperation with the University of Wisconsin in agriculture. A mass meeting was held in Madison early in 1864 for the purpose of interesting farmers in growing sorghum for commercial use. By 1860 dairying was being considered, but stock raising was the order of the day. The stage was of little use. Fitchburg needed miles of market reaching railway track to make good.



(picture courtesy of P. Fox)

Fannie Keenan Averill (black dress in center) and some of her lady friends.



# RAILROAD ERA

## RAILROAD TRANSPORTATION

With the advent of the railroad, stagecoaches became a less popular form of transportation. Railroad travel was more reliable, economical and efficient than stagecoach travel.

The railroad depots at Syene and Fitchburg Village became a more practical place to locate than the bypassed, stage-inspired settlements of Oak Hall, Lake View and Dogtown.

Railroad transportation included advantages for Fitchburg farmers that stagecoaches could not provide. Farmers gained entrance to wheat, dairy and livestock markets via the railroad. Increased access to markets resulted in economic growth of both farms and trade centers. In addition, railroads provided good passenger transportation. People traveled faster to their destination, with more regularity, and under easier conditions than in stagecoach days.

However, there were also disadvantages to the railroads. Conniving agents convinced farmers to mortgage their property to aid railroads. Some mortgages foreclosed and farmers lost money in extended litigation. The number of farm mortgages lost to railroad aid in Dane County was eight-five, amounting to a total of \$122,950.<sup>1</sup> Further, consolidated railroad companies gained monopolies, enabling them to charge high prices for transportation of freight and passengers.

Progressive Wisconsin governor and senator, Bob LaFollette, worked hard in the early 1900's to put through laws for railroad regulations and labor legislation which included better working conditions for railroad employees. To recuperate from the rigors of the political arena, the nationally respected reformer took short vacations in Fitchburg at the home of Dr. Philip Fox, his private physician. Fighting Bob was so fond of Dr. Fox that he named his son Philip, who was also to become governor, for him.

Two railroads, the Chicago & North Western and the Illinois Central established lines through Fitchburg in the later 1800's.

### CHICAGO & NORTH WESTERN RAILROAD SYENE SETTLEMENT — SWAN CREEK

The Chicago & North Western Railroad's main predecessor, the Galena and Chicago Union Railroad, received its charter from the Illinois Legislature in 1836. The present Chicago & North Western

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<sup>1</sup>Elisha W. Keyes, *History of Dane County* (Madison: Western Historical Association, 1906) p. 242

## RAILROAD ERA

Railroad is the outcome of consolidations, purchases and unions of railroads under various corporate names.

In 1852 the Beloit and Madison Railroad Company was incorporated and was authorized by the Wisconsin Legislature to build a railroad from Beloit to Madison. The Beloit and Madison Railroad failed and was then leased to the Galena Company in 1862. By 1864 the Galena Company finished a line going from Beloit to Madison. This line passed through the eastern side of Fitchburg in Sections 2, 11, 14, 23, 26 and 35. A depot was established in Section 11 at Syene. The Monfort division from Blue Mounds to Madison was completed around 1881, passing through Sections 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 in Fitchburg.

While the railroad was in its development stages through Wisconsin, Dr. William H. Fox was appointed as commissioner by the railroad to receive subscriptions for capital stock. Dr. Fox also secured his own stop, Fox's Crossing, for shipment of livestock to market.

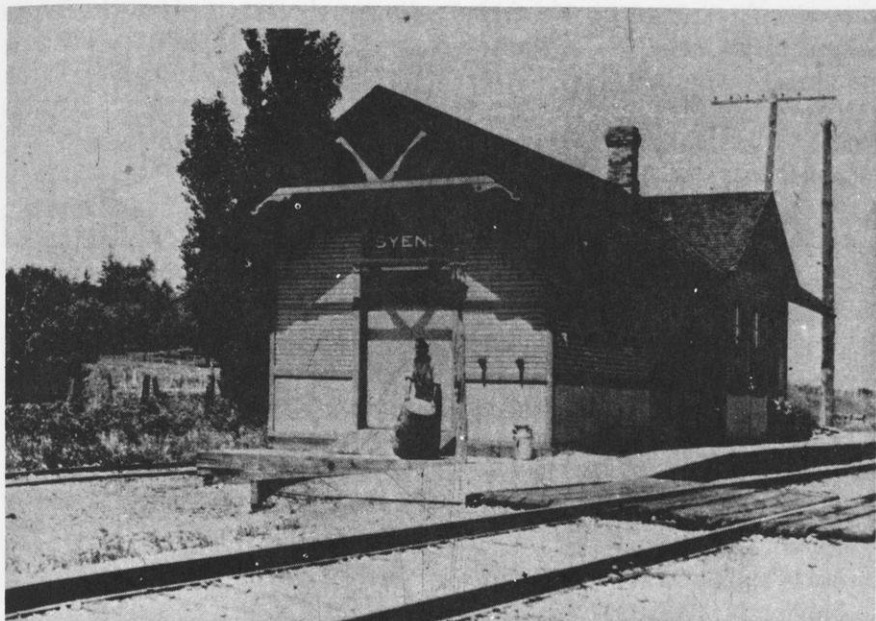
A tragedy occurred in 1900 near Fox's Crossing. The *Oregon Observer* explains,

"William Jones was killed when his buggy was struck by a train at the Catholic Church crossing. The sheds shut the view for some distance. The engineer blew the whistle and said 'Mr. Jones looked around the side curtains of his buggy which were on and the top up.'"

At the Syene Station, a trade center developed around the depot which operated from 1864 to 1926. No one from the neighborhood had to go farther than Syene Road to find a depot, post office, grocery store, creamery, stockyard and blacksmith shop. Farther down the road was the McCoy Dairy and ice cream bar factory.

The grocery store was operated by Mr. and Mrs. John Odegard until it was bought by Mr. and Mrs. Vern Sykes. Sykes not only operated the store but raised a garden for truck farming. Mrs. Sykes also managed the post office and sold train tickets at the depot.

The Chicago and North Western Railroad operated the stockyard at Syene Station. Donald Gill remembers a harrowing experience his father, George, and the hired man encountered while driving hogs to the Syene shipping yards. A pelting rain forced them to herd the hogs into a tobacco shed. They soon abandoned the shed and Gill explains a near tragedy, "*They had just gotten about 100 feet or so when a tornado came up and lifted the shed right up in the air and dropped it right down. If they had stayed in there, they'd both have been killed. The same storm moved the barn on our farm about six or seven inches off the foundation.*" This probably occurred during the tornado of May 23, 1878. This tornado caused extensive damage in its sweep over central Iowa, northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin.



(picture courtesy of M. Jones.)

Syene Depot operated on the Chicago & North Western train route from 1864-1926.



The Stoneman family lived near the Syene Depot. They are from left to right: Edna (Cross), Janet, Harold, Donald, Dorothy, and William.

## RAILROAD ERA

Important in the social and religious development of the Syene community was the Swan Creek Methodist Church. Among memorable pastors were Fallows, Dinsdale and Eaton. Mr. Eaton arranged to have a noted Wisconsin author, Hamlin Garland, give his first in a series of lectures at the Swan Creek church. Garland briefly recounts this episode in his autobiography, *A Son of the Middle Border*

In 1905 Mary O'Sheridan praised the influence of the church: "*The little church has always been a power for right living and good fellowship, and it is the wish of all that to its present fifty-six years of prosperity another fifty-six and more may be added.*" The church did not attain fifty-six years, however, because church services discontinued about 1928.

Swan Creek school was located close to the church. Margaret Lalor's family attended the school and she remembers, "*In early times the people went to the old school house for recreation, and there was a good many spelldowns, singing schools, speaking schools and box socials.*"

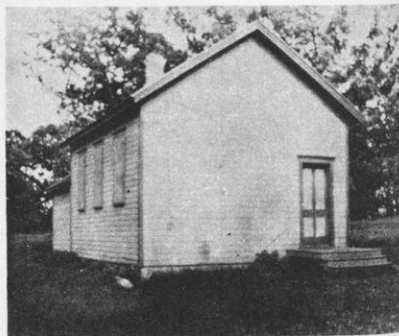
A Syene Ladies Aide was organized at the Swan Creek Church on November 24, 1896. The first officers were: Miss Caroline Whitson, President; Miss Martha Tipple, Secretary and Miss Florence McCoy, Treasurer. People came to meetings from Madison, Oregon, Syene and Wingra Park. In 1905 Mary Grant O'Sheridan reported in the *Wisconsin State Journal* that the Aide held fairs and oyster suppers to help pay the minister's salary and furnish the church.

Sewing for the needy was a favorite hobby of the Ladies Aide. O'Sheridan explains, "*all sorts of wearing apparel is constructed in hopes that there may be no incongruities of architecture between the*



(picture courtesy of G. Stoneman.)

Swan Creek Church



Swan Creek School



*garment and the needy one to whom it will be given or, in other words, leaving its fit to fate."*

Another sewing organization of the Syene area was the Swan Creek Sewing Circle, formed in 1915. Gladys (Jones) Stoneman credits Hazel Lalor as the original charter member. During both world wars, members of the circle made bandages for the Red Cross and still engage in such activities as sewing quilts for members and clothes for children at Central Colony. Still active, the Swan Creek Sewing Circle celebrated its sixtieth anniversary in 1975.

Activities more to a gentleman's liking involved a rifle rivalry between Syene and Oregon. A challenge from the Syene Rifle team appears in the October 28, 1886 issue of the Oregon Observer: "*To Oregon Rifle Team: We hereby challenge you to a shooting contest to take place on Syene grounds, the losing team to furnish banquet supper at Park Hotel. Distance not to exceed 500 yards and each man to be allowed ten shots; contest to take place within two weeks. Syene Rifle Team.*" (William Gill, Henry Williamson, Sidney Terwilliger).

Excerpts from a poem by J. H. Lalor describes the shooting match.

On the nineteenth day of February  
eighteen hundred and eighty-seven  
The air was very bright and warm;  
the sun shone from the heavens.

The Syene Rifle team arose  
and hastened on their way.  
For the Oregon team had challenged them  
for a shooting match that day.

Away they rode 'neath sunlit skies  
with many a laugh and joke;  
'We'll win the game today,' they said,  
'And have a rousing smoke' ...

On further details of the game,  
'tis useless to dilate,  
For the Syene boys came out ahead,  
by a score of twenty-eight.

The Chicago and North Western Railroad spawned the railroad settlement of Syene and resulting clubs and organizations of Syene and nearby Swan Creek.



(picture courtesy of Oregon Observer.)

**Swan Creek Sewing Circle organized in 1915 celebrates 60th anniversary in 1975. Standing, left to right, are: Carole Kinney, Marge Blaney, Lucille Uphoff, Francis Gundlach, Marie Nobbs, Rachel Haight, Lucille Gundlach, Beatrice Larson, Freida Lease, Beth Rouley, Mary Kinney, Margaret Mertz, Gladys Stoneman and Janet Keenan. Seated are: Dorothy Lyons, Laura Mandt, Hattie Henshue, Gladys Beale, Evelyn Evert, Francis Meicher, Donna Meier, Florence Kellor, and Edna Cross.**

## CHICAGO &amp; NORTH WESTERN STOPS

at

## SYENE

Northbound to Madison      Southbound to Chicago

7:00 AM      6:00 PM

## ILLINOIS CENTRAL STOPS

at

## FITCHBURG VILLAGE AND BEANVILLE

Northbound to Madison      Southbound to Freeport

10:00 AM      9:00 AM

6:30 PM      3:30 PM

ILLINOIS CENTRAL RAILROADFITCHBURG VILLAGE — STONER PRAIRIE DEPOT  
(BEANVILLE)

In 1887, a second railroad passed through Fitchburg: the Illinois Central Railroad. It brought the thriving trade center of Fitchburg Village and a milk stop at Beanville.

Two historical Illinois men were instrumental in the establishment of the Illinois Central. Congressmen Abraham Lincoln and Senator Stephen Douglas urged the passage of a bill granting federal land in Illinois to the railroad. The bill was passed by the Senate after considerable debate, and in 1850 signed into law by President Millard Fillmore.

After railroad construction in Illinois, trains soon expanded into the neighboring states of Iowa, Indiana and Wisconsin. In 1887, the railroad, under the name of the Chicago, Madison and Northern

## RAILROAD ERA

Railroad, purchased land in Fitchburg from the farms of Purcell, Byrne, Adams, Harrington, Vroman, Joseph and James O'Brien, Gillet and Mutchler.

A large tract of land was purchased from the Patrick Byrne farm. To compensate for this loss, the railroad provided an underground cattle pass for suitable entrances to all of Byrne's fields. When Fitchburg took over the ownership and maintenance of Wendt Road in 1944, the Town accepted responsibility for all guarantees granted to the Patrick Byrne farm.

In 1887, during the decade of peak United States railroad construction years, track was extended from Freeport to Madison, passing through Fitchburg. Catherine Byrne remembers that her mother, Jane (Barry) Byrne, provided meals for the railroad builders. These men slept in shanties supplied by the Illinois Central.

Full train service began shortly after February 1, 1888, when the Illinois Central's first passenger train came through Fitchburg. Passenger trains supplied mail and baggage service while freight trains hauled farmers' livestock to Chicago stockyards and transported milk to the Pet Milk Condensary at Belleville.

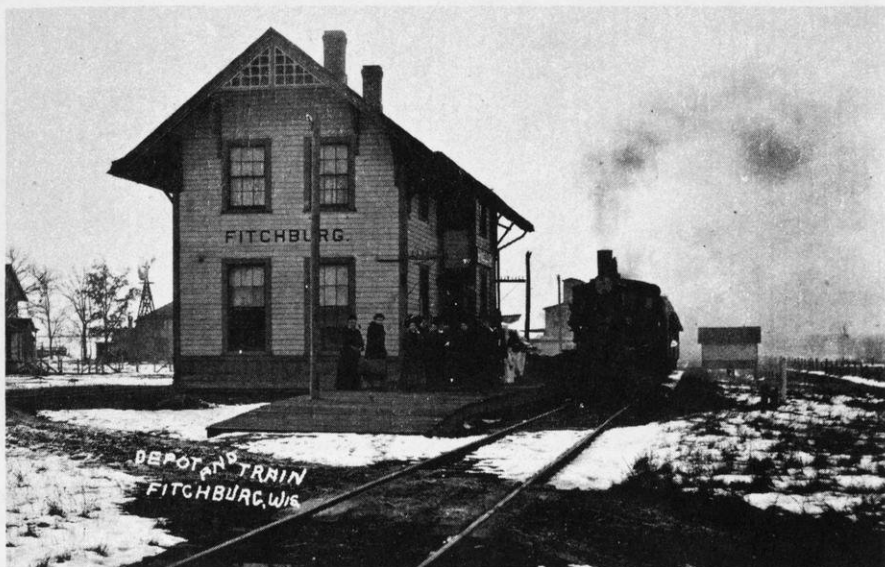
The railroad settlement of Fitchburg Village evolved from the depot. The small village was a bustling beehive of business in the early 1900's. Larger than the Syene settlement, Fitchburg Village contained



(picture courtesy of C. Byrne.)

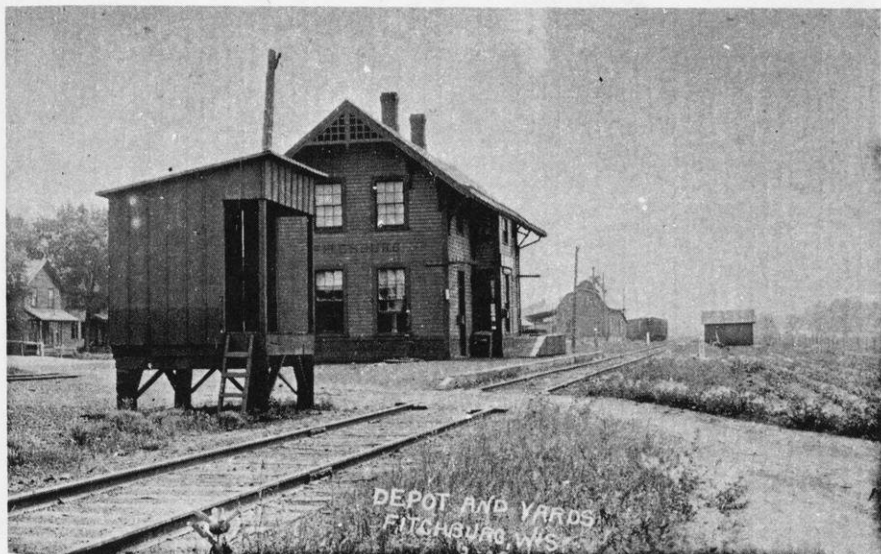
Patrick Byrne negotiated with the Illinois Central Railroad for compensation of land loss.

a grocery store, feed mill, lumber and coal yard, implement dealership, stockyards, blacksmith shop, garage and church. A cheese factory faced the village at the end of Wendt Road.



(picture courtesy of A. Adams.)

**Fitchburg Depot and train along Illinois Central tracks about 1910-12.**



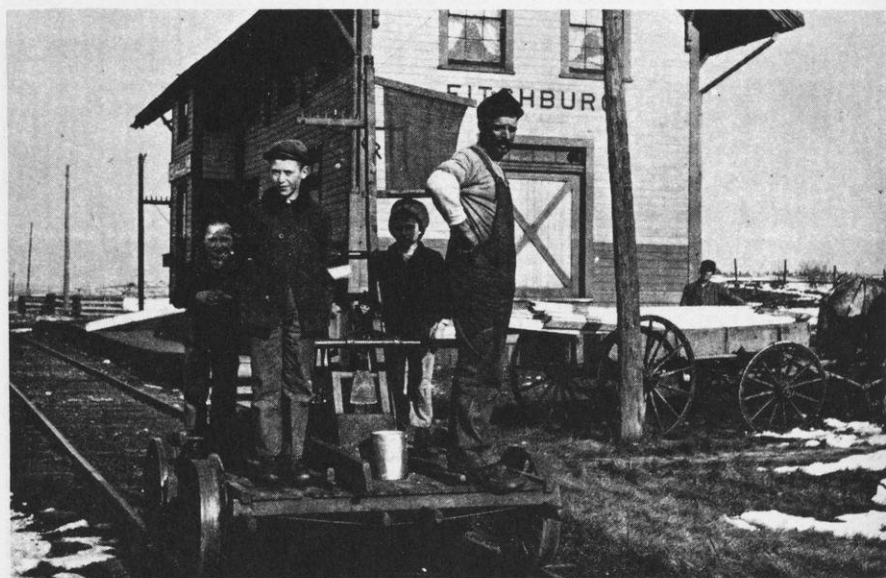
(picture courtesy of R. Purcell.)

**Fitchburg Depot, milk stop and stockyards.**



(picture courtesy of C. Byrne.)

Fitchburg Village street scene as Fitchburg was from 1900-18. The left side shows the commercial section with stockyards, lumber mill, and depot.



(picture courtesy of State Historical Society of Wisconsin.)

Children around the village loved the pump car.



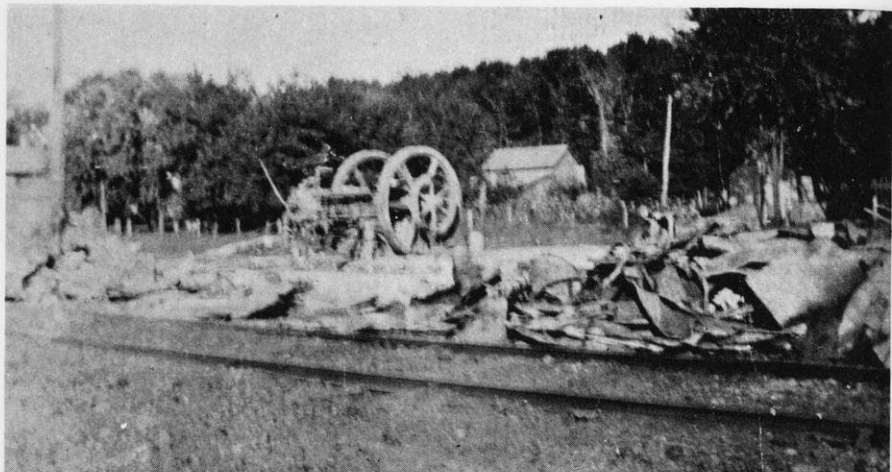
(picture courtesy of R. Purcell.)

Roy Clapp, Will Purcell, and Art Purcell stand in front of the grocery store.



(picture courtesy of A. Adams.)

Lappley Brothers' lumberyard and feed mill about 1910-1912.



(picture courtesy of A. Adams.)

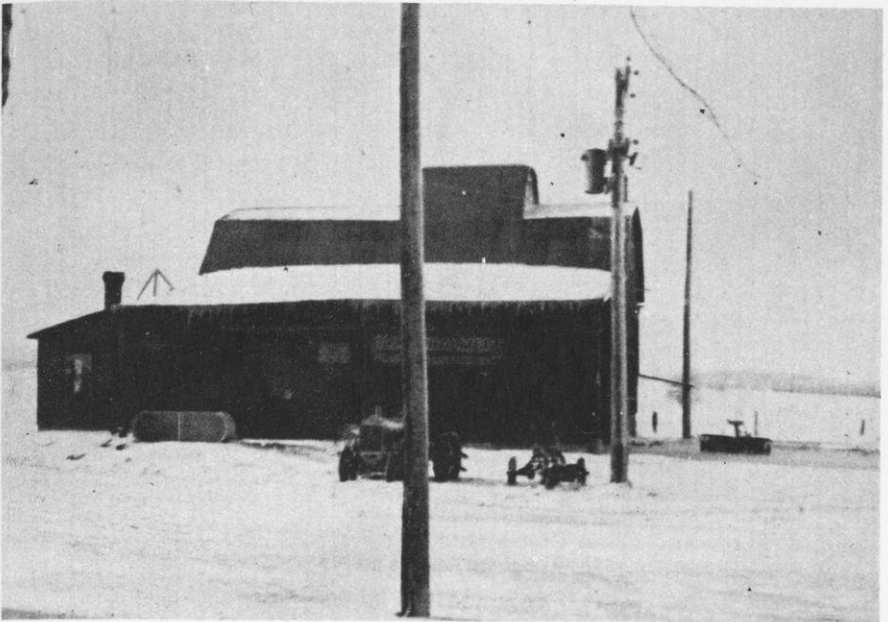
**The Lappley feed mill burned to the ground in a 1914 fire.**



(picture courtesy of R. Purcell.)

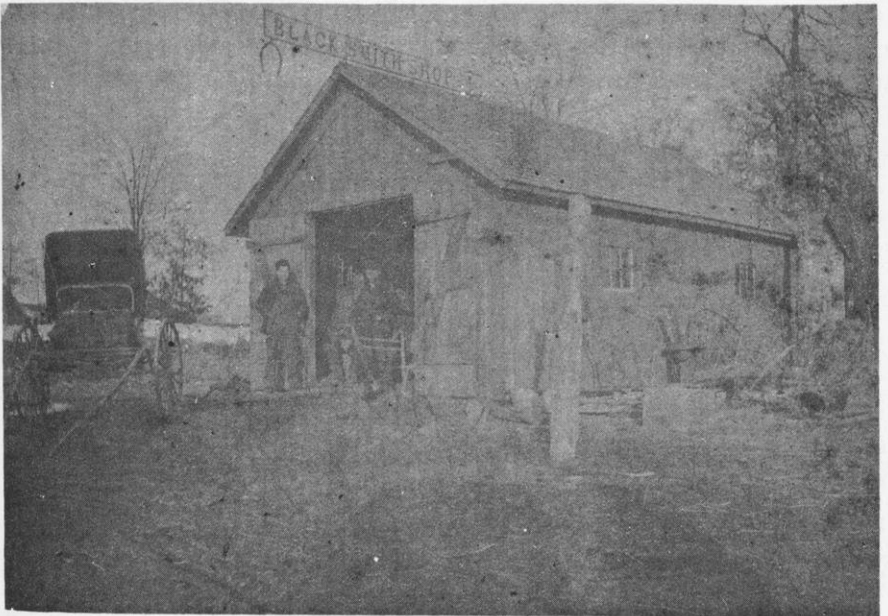
**The rebuilt Lappley Brothers' lumberyard and feed mill.**





(picture courtesy of G. Vroman.)

Side view of Lappley Feed Mill.



(picture courtesy of A. Adams.)

Fitchburg Blacksmith shop prior to 1900.



Rose McWatty and Ellen Clapp standing at the Patrick Byrne farm near Fitchburg Village. The David Byrne family settled in 1854 and built this house in 1877.

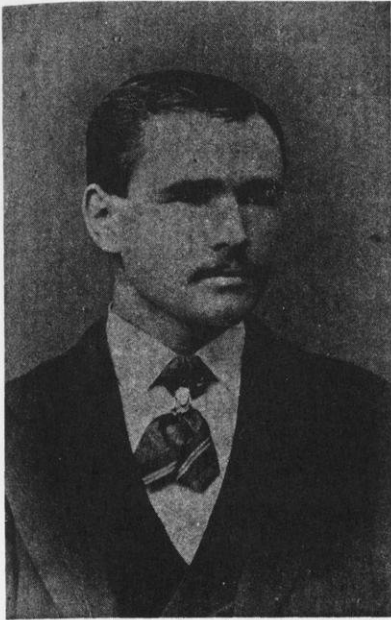
The railroad provided jobs for some villagers. For several years, Fred Penn was the Illinois Central Section foreman and kept the tracks in good operating condition. Station agents at the depot sold passenger tickets, handled freight, and also provided telegraphic service. Some agents were: Mr. Smiley, Francis Lamboley, and Mrs. Roselle Jones.

The business establishment remaining in trade for the longest period of time was the general grocery store. In 1890, Thomas Purcell built a two-story building and established a grocery business which he operated until 1898. The Purcell grocery became famous for the sale of Peruna, a soft drink of the time rumored to contain liquor and sold as a cure-all tonic.

A rival gathering place was the Fizz House, started by Henry Meister in 1898. Meister dispensed soft drinks. His residence also came to be a favorite meeting place of neighbors and villagers.

In 1898, Purcell sold the grocery store to business partners, Borchardt and Henrichs who moved the building to a more accessible location across from the depot.

The Herman Wendt's bought the store in 1910. Mrs. Dora Wendt took over full-time when her husband died in 1924. She sold the store and left Fitchburg for three years between 1929 and 1932. During these years a new owner, Mr. Dehnert, took over the store but found it impossible to maintain payments on the property during the



(picture courtesy of N. Purcell.)

Thomas Purcell built and operated the grocery store at Fitchburg and also served as post master.

depression. Mrs. Wendt returned and re-established her store in 1932 where she remained until her retirement in 1964.

The post office was housed in Mrs. Wendt's store for several years. The original post office in Fitchburg, located in William Lappley's business office, moved to Mrs. Wendt's after a 1926 fire in Lappley's office. In 1952, by United States postal decree, the office closed and mail service from Oregon rural route took over Fitchburg Villagers' mail.

Mrs. Wendt's store was more than a place to buy groceries or receive mail. It was a social gathering place where local farmers congregated to talk about farming. It was customary for women to stay home while men met at the store and chatted every night. Catherine Byrne says her Uncle Jim, a bachelor, rarely missed a night of visiting at the local grocery store. There were occasionally boxing and wrestling matches and dancing in the basement which Ervin Lappley thought was all good-natured fun.

A highlight of Mrs. Wendt's store was her salt and pepper shaker collection. Everyone donated sets until she had about 300 which she dusted faithfully each week. Mrs. Genevieve (Lacy) Purcell remembers *"She always told us she loved every one of them except a pair of feet. She always said if she didn't think she'd hurt the person's feelings that gave them to her, she'd throw them out."*



(picture courtesy of G. Fischer.)

**Mrs. Wendt on her last day as post mistress in 1952, presenting mail to Mr. and Mrs. Carl Larson.**



(picture courtesy of G. Purcell.)

**A Fitchburg Village party for Mrs. Wendt's retirement. From left to right are: Mrs. Walter Hoffman, Mrs. Lobeck, Mary Adams, Ken Hall, Genevieve Purcell, Arnel Adams, Ruth Hall, Dora Wendt, Sylvia Doerfer, Carl Larson, Mrs. Zwiefel, Vernice Baxter, and Maude Weiss.**

Mrs. Purcell further reminisces: *"Fitchburg has never been the same since Mrs. Wendt left. It was always a central place of interest where everybody could go and express their feelings and desires. There was somebody there who would listen."*

Also in the village, the Lappley Brothers conducted a combination of businesses established in 1899. They ran a feed mill, lumber and coal yard and implement dealership. William Lappley acted as general manager while John Lappley led a carpenter crew that served the construction needs of the area.

Ervin Lappley remembers helping in his Uncle John's construction business: *"Most of us kids who could handle a paint brush would lay the barn boards on sawhorses and paint them. That would be one coat and then the second coat of paint was added when they got the building up. We got 25 barrels of that dry red ocher and mixed that with linseed oil and we'd paint the boards. That was the boy's job."*

One day when the Lappley cousins were painting boards, they got themselves into mischief. Ervin Lappley remembers: *"We decided to paint this white collie dog red. So we painted him red except his head. We never thought about drying him out. As soon as we were done, he ran home and busted right through the screen door into the house. There was red paint on everything. The lady was really mad. We painted her white dog red, dripping red. The dog was never any good after that. So we threw him in the car with this carload of pigs and shipped him to Chicago. He brought us three dollars."*

For a short time, Ervin's brother, Albert, ran an unusual silk treatment shop in the village. He used a special rubberizing method that waterproofed silk which was used for shower curtains and hospital sheets. Later, Albert's business was bought by a large Chicago operation.

About 1927 Ervin Lappley took over the Lappley enterprises and later moved his coal and implement dealership to the larger village of Oregon. The Lappley enterprises are still a going concern in Oregon.

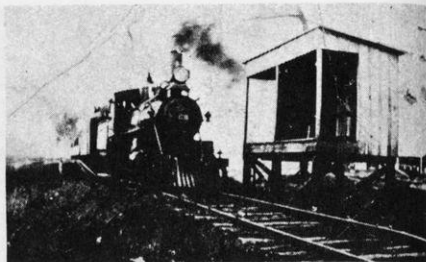
The blacksmith shop changed ownership several times as did the garage. The cheese factory was operated as a farmers' cooperative.

Near the south end of the village was a Lutheran Mission Church established in 1898 by Rev. E. F. Sherbel. In about 1925 it was discontinued and sold to a homeowner, Wesley Wilson.

The Illinois Central Railroad established the Stoner Prairie Depot at the Rufus Gillet farm. This never developed into a railroad settlement but as a milk stop it provided a gathering place for local people.

## RAILROAD ERA

Beanville milk stop along the Illinois Central Railroad. The depot operated from 1877-1938.

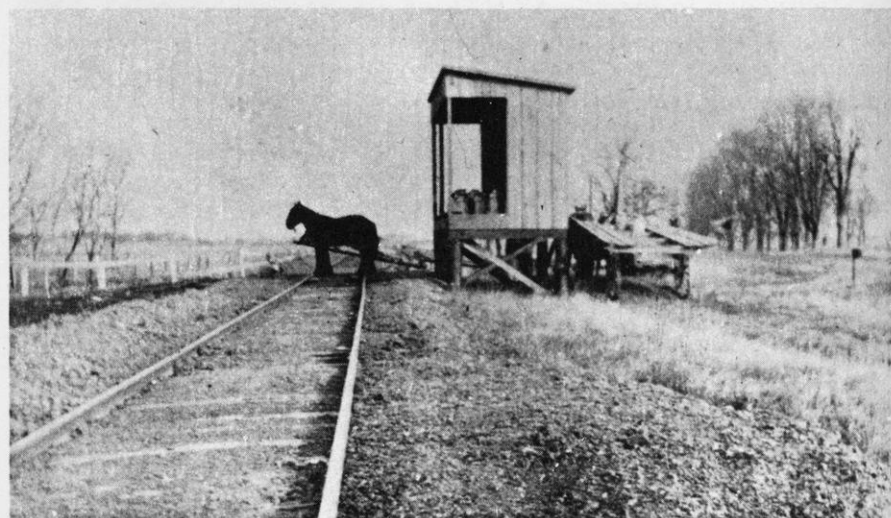


(picture courtesy of L. Lacy.)

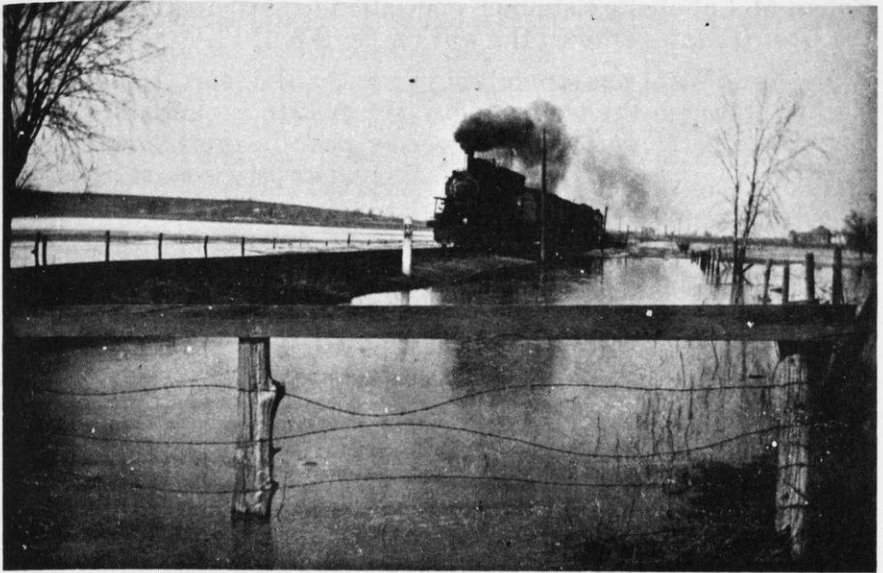


(picture courtesy of G. Vroman.)

**Mary Vroman (Mrs. Hiram) waiting for the train.**



(picture courtesy of G. O'Brien.)



(picture courtesy of L. O'Brien.)

Train approaching Beanville about 1937. Site of present Leo O'Brien farm.

Stoner farmers still chuckle about the local naming of "Beanville". Rufus Gillet was a progressive farmer who grew soybeans, only to get a friendly ribbing from the others for his choice of crop. One Halloween night in 1916, some prankster neighboring farmers got together and painted "Beanville" across the milk station where it remained for several years.

Children also enjoyed the excitement of a neighborhood depot. Leo O'Brien who lived nearby remembers using a lantern to flag down the train in winter time for boarding passengers. *"That was a big thing for a kid,"* he explains. *"I waved my lantern back and forth and when the engineer saw me, he gave a couple of little toots with his whistle."*

About 1925, passenger trains were discontinued. For a short time the railroad company operated a gasoline powered car for passenger service. In Fitchburg Village this was known as the "Red Devil" and the Beanville station as the "Tunerville Trolley." The Fitchburg Village closed about 1926 while the Beanville depot was discontinued in 1938. Not long after, the settlements declined.

### WORLD WAR I

The issue of the United States entry into the war created divided feelings among Wisconsin's people. Despite German nationalism and

## RAILROAD ERA

Robert M. LaFollette's staunch opposition to participation in the war, the United States entered the war on April 6, 1917.

World War I was strongly supported in Fitchburg. Lillian Snover Keenan, through the *Oregon Observer* in 1918 explains Fitchburg's participation, *"From a long period of peaceful prosperity we were awakened to the stern realities of war and as people must be ready to meet any emergency."*

The "Woman Committee" was founded in Fitchburg and worked under the Dane County Council for Defense. The first officers were Genevieve Byrne, Chairman; Kate Fahey, Secretary; Mary Lacy, Treasurer. The committee was composed of Clara Griffin, Tessie White, Margaret Kivlin, Josie Gorman, Mabel Richardson, Flora Keenan, Mary Lacy, Isabel Scott, Mary Purcell, Mrs. Pat Barry and Mrs. M. Leslie.

Leo Lacy explains his exemption from the World War I draft, *"Before my time came to go, we had a fire and burned out all the*



Leo Lacy



buildings except the house. The neighbors got together and went to the draft board and got me excused from going."

The Lacys rebuilt the barn during the war only to lose it to fire again in 1919. Leo says, "I pretty near went with the last fire. We milked the cows and put the milk in the cans like we did them days, and came to the south end of the barn. The horse was in the barn. My Dad was there and he said, 'Let's wait a few minutes 'til it quits raining.' I said, 'Not me' and I started to run and they followed me. We didn't go only about sixty or seventy feet from the barn when it (lightning) killed a team of horses where we stood. The roof of the barn fell in within five minutes."

During the war, a flu epidemic claimed many Wisconsin lives. Monsignor Edward Kinney recollects, "In our home, everybody had the flu except myself. The doctor found I didn't have it and took me to Madison only to find one of my cousins there with smallpox." Gordon Vroman's mother, Ida (Brown) Vroman, died during this epidemic as did Lyman and Bill McKee's mother, Fannie (Richardson) McKee and Jim Clayton's parents.

Phil Barry said that during World War I it was almost impossible to buy wheat bread, "One of the biggest treats we had was when a neighbor grew some wheat and took it to the mill and had it ground. Then we had some wheat flour and made some old fashioned bread. The only flour you could buy was about half barley and it wasn't hardly fit to eat."

After the disasters, sickness and deprivation experienced during the war years, Fitchburg people were ready to celebrate the ceasefire on Armistice Day, November 11, 1918. Gerald O'Brien's father, Emmet, had a 1916 Buick touring car that he would put the top down for special occasions such as Armistice Day. Gerald recalls, "It was a beautiful day out so we rode to Madison. The big point of interest was at Camp Randall which was all park at that time. University students were putting on drills and parades. Everyone had flags. The thing that stands out in my mind was that I was a little boy and I got my shoes full of sand."

After Armistice Day, Leo Lacy tells of his brother Arthur's joyful homecoming, "It was pretty near a month before we finally got a letter from him that he was okay. He called from Chicago and said that he'd be home — I'll be at Syene on that 5:00 train."

## FITCHBURG MEN IN WORLD WAR I

Frank Adams	John Keenan
Duane Bowman	Vincent Kivlin
Wallace Bowman	Arthur Lacy
John Brekke*	Rudolph Mandt
John Brown	Wilson Mutchler
Paul Brown	Archie Penfield
Joseph Caine	Eugene Penfield
Harry Coggins	Arthur Pledger
John Collins	Sidney Pollard
Chris Faulkner	Rudolph Rudh
Elmer Gallagher	Edward Skelly*
William Gorman	Otto Stoemer
Raymond Hermann	George White

\*Died

Footnote — Oregon Observer, Nov. 1918

SCHOOLS

Fitchburg's schools during the railroad years were typical of most in Wisconsin. They were one room schools with one teacher who taught all eight grades. The room contained a minimum of equipment: desks for pupils and teacher, a blackboard for lessons and one for the display of schoolwork. There were separate cloakrooms for boys and girls. Outside was a well stocked woodshed, near the school building, and further away were separate outhouses.

Schools were heated in the winter with a wood burning stove. Every morning the teacher or an appointed pupil built the fire. Leo O'Brien, who attended Stoner School from 1920-27 says, "*I went to school on cold mornings when the teacher had trouble getting the fire going and you could see your breath in the room. The water in our drinking fountain would have a coat of ice over it. We would all gather with our jackets, caps and mittens on back around the stove.*" Wilfred Kinney, who attended Fitchburg Center School from 1917-24 describes, "*You could heat your face and freeze your back.*" Ester (Meuhlmeier) McManus remembers her students biting into frozen lunches that were kept in the unheated cloakrooms at Prairie View School.

Many people who attended Fitchburg's district schools agree they got a fundamental education. The school day began by singing songs such as America the Beautiful, Battle Hymn of the Republic, Way Down Upon the Swanee River, etc. After this inspiration the earnest young scholars began their studies.

School records show the traditional subjects studied: arithmetic, reading, grammar, history, civics, language, geography, physiology, agriculture, writing and spelling.

University history professor, William Dunn, who attended Camp Badger School from 1923-31 assesses the value of the rural school, *"I'd like to pay a tribute to the good work that those old one room schools did. Teachers were rather young girls themselves, they didn't have college degrees. Yet their teaching made us skillful readers within two or three years. We got our fundamentals pretty well in that simple situation. The county supervisor was in charge of the rural schools and this had a lifting effect on the educational quality."*

Along with their studies, each pupil was responsible for a job in maintenance of the school. Mrs. Genevieve (Lacy) Purcell, who taught at Maple Corners from 1919-22 tells us, *"The pupils had their chores to do. In the morning some of the older boys took the pail and went to the neighbors and got water. Usually that would suffice until noon and then they'd go again and get another pail."* A well rounded education included cleaning erasers, washing blackboards, dusting fixtures, cleaning the toilets and sweeping the schoolroom. An annual workday was Arbor Day when everyone brought a rake and cleaned the school yard.

Recess was always a welcome break from studying and working. When Nora (Grady) Purcell taught at Syene School, she took her pupils hiking. They picked wildflowers along East Lacy Road. In colder weather they trudged up Joe Sweeney's hill for sledding and according to Ed Lynaugh, *"We proceeded slowly down the hill with all haste."* Often, they played crack-the-whip on sleds, hooking them together with a tobaggan on the end. The tobaggan was reserved for their teacher and they tried to dump her off on the wild ride down the hill.

An extended recess occurred at the annual Spring Play Day. School children practiced the competitive events for weeks. The anxiously awaited events were the three legged race, sack race, potato race, broad jump, wheelbarrow race, high jump, running races. And there was always a baseball game between the "better fellers". Kay (Fahey) Harty remembers *"Play Day was fun because we'd have a roster of what activities were going to be held and we'd get our best kids"*

## RAILROAD ERA

together for the things they were the most talented in." Pupils who didn't compete practiced cheers to encourage the competitors.

Not everyone was comfortable in the rural schools all the time, though. Leo Lacy states, "*When I started school at Fish Hatchery School in 1905, I was left-handed. I got more lickin's than there was population in the school district. They tried to switch me over to write right handed. I got so I hated the teacher, I hated the kids, I hated school. I'd as soon stayed home than go to school because as soon as I got inside the door, I'd get a lickin'.*"

While Leo Lacy remembers hard times as a pupil, Dorothy (Legg) Lappley remembers hard times as a teacher at Maple Corners in 1927, "*The first day I wore glasses because the year before that I heard they threw a teacher out the window, so that's why I wore glasses.*" Fortunately Miss Legg found that she loved teaching her pupils.

Dedicated teachers overcame difficult obstacles to attend school. Syene's Miss Turner, even when she was sixty years old, walked from Madison on the railroad track to school. Miss Legg, from Maple Corners, walked down the back road with mud up to the tops of her boots to get to school.

Children enjoyed neighborhood hospitality on their walk home. Vincent Dunn remembers as he and his brother, William, walked home from Camp Badger, Bridget Maher called them in for a piece of cake. "*We always used to ask her how deep the pond was (on the Maher farm). She was probably afraid we were going to go in there and she'd say, 'Oh, it's deep as a fencepost,' so that immediately changed our minds from walking in.*"

A teacher occasionally came under scrutiny from parents. Ester (Muehlmeier) McManus who taught at Prairie View School during the 1920's followed the fashion of the times by ratting her hair and fixing it in buns over her ears. The Merrick boy one day reached up under her hair to see if she had any ears. Miss Muehlmeier was so startled that she reprimanded the boy by slapping his palm with a ruler. The boy's father complained only to find school board member, Jim Stone, a good friend of the teacher's, unimpressed.

School life revolved around the rural schools. The annual Christmas program, spring program and commencement exercises were rarely missed by anyone who lived in the neighborhood. William Dunn remembers an amusing incident at a competition held one night at Camp Badger school, "*A number of us got up and gave these pieces. While the judges were downstairs making a decision, we had a lull. Our teacher, Mrs. Hammersley said, 'Does anyone know anything for the audience while we're waiting?' and I said, 'I do.' Ma, Katherine (Maher)*

*Dunn, said she just about sank through the floor wondering what I'd come up with, but lo and behold, I had memorized a little piece from the paper and it was humorous. I got up there and recited it correctly and fully, and it brought down the house. I can barely recall one or two lines — 'Does the calf of your leg eat the corn of your toe' and a 'bald headed man's head was like heaven because there was no parting there.' People in the audience said, 'If only the judges could have heard this.'"*

Kate Fahey recalls socializing at card parties which were held to raise money for school support. "We used to have card parties as benefits for the school. We'd want to buy some books, playthings and balls for the children. We'd have a party and invite everyone in the neighborhood. We'd serve them lunch and they'd give us a quarter. Maybe we'd have several of these parties to get something bigger. The school was the hub of the community."



(picture courtesy of P. Fox.)

Prairie View School — District #8 (October, 1915)

Front (left to right): Noel Merrick, Gordon Kivlin, Norbert Francis, Gwen Merrick, Bill Caine, Lester West, Merlin Francis, Artie Caine, Arthur West, Stan Kivlin, Phil Fox.

Back (left to right): Lillie Peterson (teacher), Lucille Kivlin, Mavel West, Ellen Caine, Della McWatty, Elizabeth Collins, Charlene McWatty.



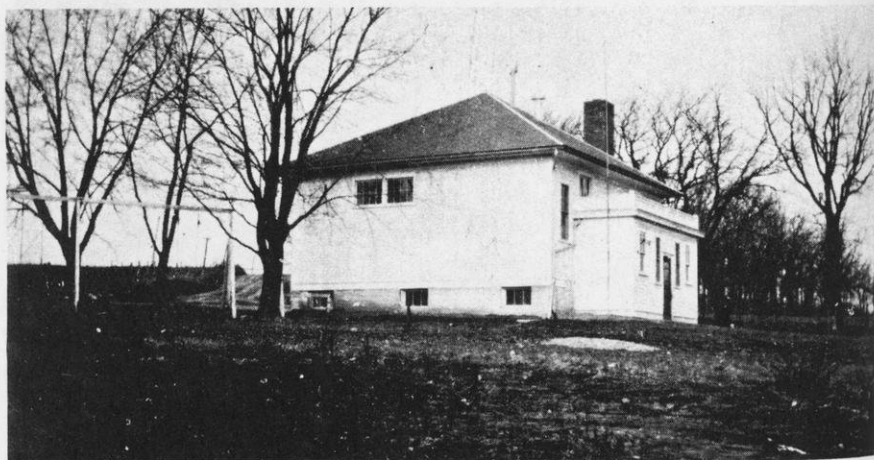
(picture courtesy of A. Adams.)

**Maple Corners School — District #12**

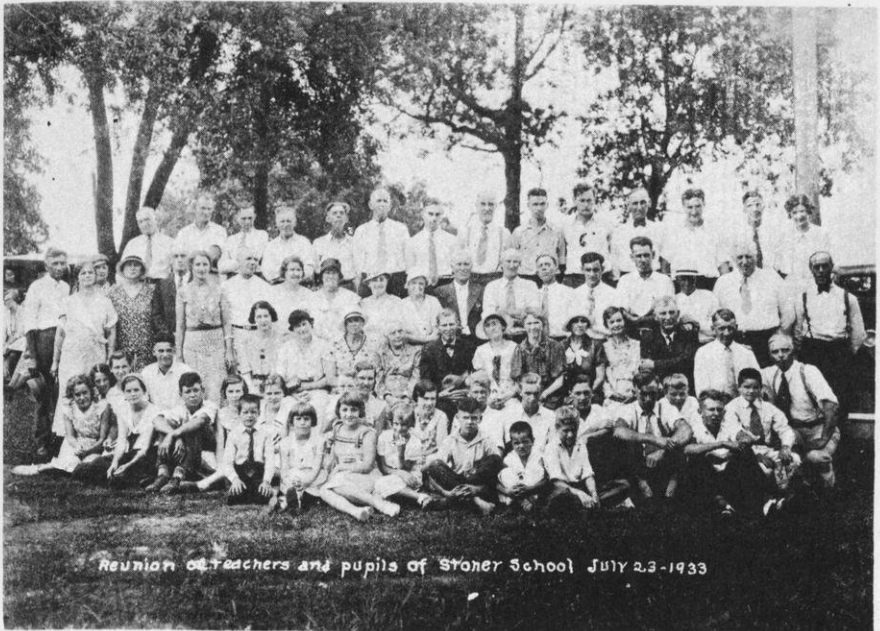
**Front (left to right): Fred Hageman, Francis Penn, Albert Lappley, Linda Lappley, Vera Lappley, Ernest Matthis, Lurene Lappley, Mabel Penn, \_\_\_\_\_ Kluever.**

**Second (left to right): \_\_\_\_\_ Goth, \_\_\_\_\_ Kluever, Pat Purcell, Olive Lappley, Melva Lappley, Miss Jessie Fuhrman (teacher), Arnel Adams, Minnie Hagemen, Raphael Purcell.**

**Back (left to right): Herbert Lappley, Harry Penn, John Hageman, \_\_\_\_\_ Goth, Bill Hageman, George Hageman, Della Kluever, Helen Brown, Joe Brown, Margaret Wiese, Clifford Penn.**



**Stoner School building — District #7**



(picture courtesy of G. Vroman.)

### Stoner School Reunion — District #7 (July 23, 1933)

Back: Unknown, George Richardson, Elmer Vroman, Art Grady, Fred Gillette, Charlie Adams, Sheldon Adams, Mr. Gleason, Joe Richardson, Leo O'Brien, Elmer Wiese, Gerald O'Brien, Eugene Richardson, Mary Richardson.

Row 2: Rufus Gillette, Helen Gillette, Elsie Wiese, Eva Wiese, Unknown, Marie Rieder, Unknown, Mabel Richardson, Lettie Blizzard, Unknown, Helen Grady, Unknown, Ed Richardson, Art Vroman, Unknown, Wilson Mutchler, William Grady, Darwin Mutchler, George Ferguson.

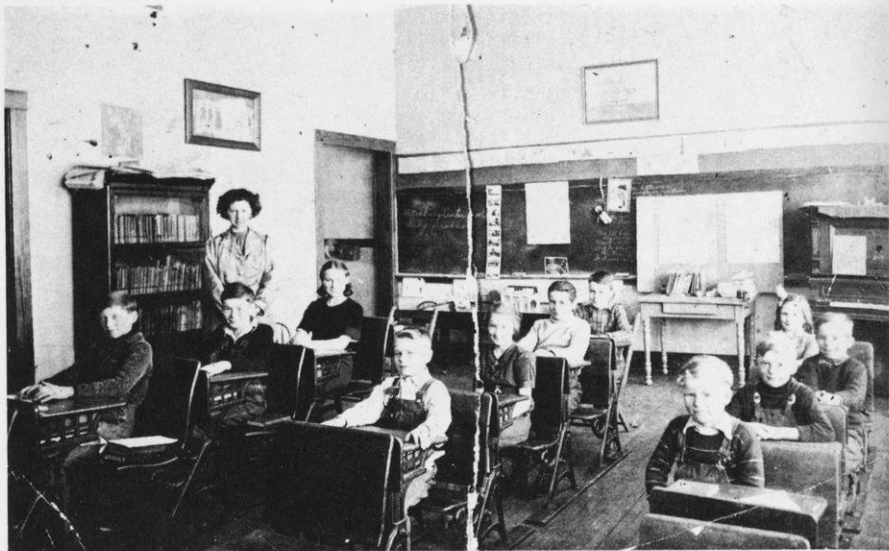
Row 3: Eleanor Lacy, Genevieve Byrne, Alice Pierce, Mrs. Gillette, Hirman Vroman, Minnie Tiger, Unknown, Mrs. Ben Haight, Helen Gillette, William Whalen, Phil Mutchler, Sherm Gillette.

Row 4: Margaret Mutchler, Barbara Rockwell, Margaret Richardson, Frances Richardson, Jim Richardson, Dale Gillette, Eleanor Grady, Jean Vroman, Irene Ferguson with Collath boy, Dorothy Grady, Orrill Ferguson, Ed Grady, Gordon Vroman, Don Grady, Clarence Rockwell, August Koster, Leo Richardson.

Row 5: Ralph Richardson, Shirley Mutchler, Dorothy Whalen, Katherine Grady, Jim Richardson, Bill Richardson, Bill Grady, Jr.

Most Fitchburg schools also had very active mothers' clubs. Kate Fahey helped organize one at Fitchburg Center. She said, "Before Christmas we always worked on a project for the teacher, maybe tie a quilt for her or make jam. We did something in someone's house for the teacher. Teachers who came often stayed a long time and we thought a lot of them. She was very much revered by all the families." Although the school is closed, Fitchburg Center's Mother's Club still meets socially as do the Camp Badger and Maple Corner groups.

## RAILROAD ERA



Fitchburg Center School — District #\_\_\_ (1937)

(picture courtesy of M. Fahey.)

Teacher — Ruby Jacobson

First row (front to back): Norbert Christianson, Jack Caine, Ada Coggins.

Second row: Mary Gorman, Bobby Fox, Bill Fahey.

Third row: Lawrence Caine, Eugene Christianson, Unknown, Mary Fahey.



(picture courtesy of B. Sweeney.)

Oak Hall School — District #4 Teacher: Mrs. Frank Anderson

First row (front to back): Laverne Butler, Gerald Wiese, Jack McManus.

Second row: Wally Hoffman, Bernard Wiese, Bernard Sweeney, George Rowe, Art Rowe.

Third row: Jerry Rowe, Leroy Butler, Ruby Hoffman, Florence Barry, Grace Barry.

Fourth row: Phil Sweeney, Donald Butler, Bob Barry, Howard Wiese, Butch Hoffman.





Syene School — District #1 (1932) (picture courtesy of E. Cross.)

First row: Mary Jane Sweeney, Genevieve (Dolly) Sweeney, Angie Crapp, Eugene Mattingly, Estelle Mattingly, Evelyn Brewer, Helen Lynaugh, Jack Skelly, Stanley McGaw.

Second row: Richard Sweeney, Garland Mattingly, Dorothy Stoneman, Ruth Skelly, Vincent Sweeney, Bill Stoneman, Donald Sweeney, Verley Sweeney.

Third row: Robert Johnson, Edward Lynaugh, Donald Stoneman, Raymond Sweeney, Harold Stoneman, Kenneth McGaw, Elsie Wall Blaney (teacher), Marion Gundlack, Mary Brewer.



Syene Ball Players, 1922-23.

Front (left to right): Herbert Blaney, Joy Osmundsen.

Second row (left to right): Glenn Osmundsen, Unknown, Bill Lynaugh, Donald Stoneman, Don McGaw.

Back row (left to right): Genevieve Jones, Alice Lynaugh, Enid Blaney. Syene students were rumored to be the rowdiest in Dane County. However, Syene produced more than its share of invaluable town employees, such as Ed Lynaugh-Clerk, Don McGaw-Road Foreman, and Bill Stoneman-Assessor.



(picture courtesy of K. Fahey.)

**Fitchburg Center's Mother Club**

**Left to right standing: Kate (Keeley) Fahey, Josie Gorman, Hazel (Heins) Caine.**

**Left to right sitting: Lucille (Whalen) Fahey, Miss Schiedegger.**



#### Reunion of Teachers

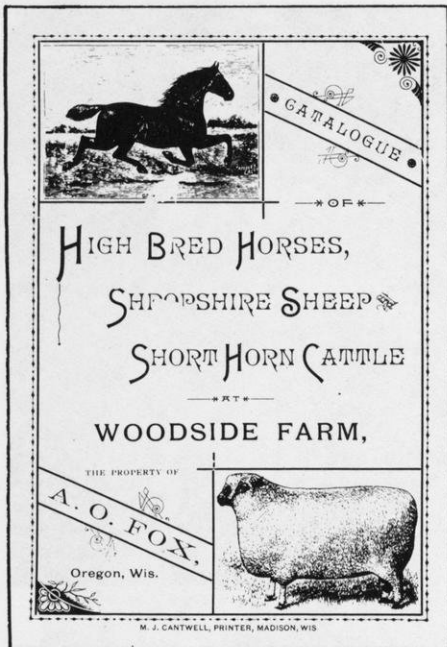
Left to right: Margaret Lacy, Nel Martin, Marie Rieder, Mary Anderson, Mrs. Purcell.

### AGRICULTURE

Following the wheat years, the period was a time of experimentation in agriculture. By 1870, stock raising became a general practice with sheep in particular providing meat for the farmer's family plus a regular income from sheep's wool. Fitchburg had famous purebred sheep raisers.

A. O. Fox became the largest breeder of purebred, pedigreed, mutton sheep in the United States, winning ribbons at the World's Fair. He amassed a track of almost 1,000 acres by buying up spoiled wheat producing farms which the cinch bug had ruined. Note was often made in the *Oregon Observer* of the admirable breeding stock A. O. Fox had shipped through the railroad depot at Oregon.

Joe Kivlin also raised prize stock. From England Kivlin and Fox imported Shropshires, Dorsets and Cheviots and Kivlin also bred shorthorn cattle, Poland China and Chester White hogs and Belgian horses. At the St. Louis Exposition Kivlin took second premium on a Shropshire ram.



(picture courtesy of P. Fox.)

The cover of a catalog of A. O. Fox's stock. Includes explanations of various kinds of stock, the manner in which they were bred, the prices, terms, etc.

The *Observer* of 1898 tells that 85 students from the University of Wisconsin College of Agriculture visited the farms of A. O. Fox, "They wanted to see some good stock and they saw it."

By 1906 tobacco was the favorite crop of Dane County farmers. Ohio people introduced the tobacco culture as well as sheep raising. In far southeastern townships of Dane County, one quarter of the total tobacco crop of the State was grown and its success was due to the sandy loam soil.

The *Wisconsin Tobacco Reporter* of October 21, 1885 tells of its introduction to Dane County at Fitchburg.

"It was in March, 1853, that Ralph Pomeroy came to Madison from the Miami Valley, Ohio where Pomeroy had previously grown tobacco. In the company with J. R. Hiestand, they rented ten acres of land from Hiram Hiestand, five miles southwest of Madison on Syene Prairie, at \$5 per acre. The field was planted with the old Connecticut seedless variety. The crop was a fine one — a very large growth estimated to yield at least a ton per acre. To cure the crop they built a two tier pole shed, in the ten Ohio Style, and borrowed rail fence enough to hang it on with twine, instead of lath as at present ... the tobacco was stripped and sold to

Dewey and Chapin of Janesville at 3½ cents per pound ... This was undoubtedly the first tobacco ever marketed in the State"<sup>2</sup>

Elizabeth McCoy presently lives on the Hiestand tobacco farm. She tells of a farm in Edgerton that grew tobacco before the Hiestand undertaking but it froze making the tobacco grown in Fitchburg the first successful planting.

Miss McCoy describes the original home on the farm as typical of homes in Virginia where tobacco was grown. A cupola on top of the house provided a place where overseers could watch men working in tobacco fields.



Present home of Elizabeth McCoy, world renowned biochemist. Former site of the Altrusa Fair. Farm and grounds have been deeded to Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation.

Dane County was a pioneer county in extensive raising of tobacco. It not only produced more tobacco than any of the other counties in the early 1900's but held the United States record for largest producing county of tobacco.

By the 1890's, farming centered around the dairy cow. As the *Oregon Observer* records in 1898,

"The cow rules the land. It is no wonder. She is prominent in state politics."

Initially, milk was mainly used by pioneer dairymen for the production of butter and cheese. Both were fairly simple processes, given the required skill and machinery and kept very well if properly packed. Creameries and cheese factories sprang up across Wisconsin for the purpose of marketing dairy products. Fitchburg contained creameries or cheese factories at Oak Hall, Fitchburg Village, Syene and Dogtown.

Even though railroads were important for the transportation of milk to creameries and cheese factories and dairies, it was also hauled

<sup>2</sup>Elisha W. Keyes, *History of Dane County*, (Madison, Western Historical Association, 1906) Chapter XIV.



**Tom Jones on his milk route to Kennedy Dairy.**

(picture courtesy of E. Cross.)

**Tom Jones with his collie dog, Laddie.**



(picture courtesy of G. Stoneman.)

by a horse and wagon. Genevieve (Jones) Jackson recounts the difficulties her English immigrant father encountered on his milk route from Syene. *“Approximately a year and a half after coming to the new world, Tom Jones bought his dairy route, hauling the milk from farms in the area to a Madison creamery. There were many hardships to endure during his hauling tenure such as spring thaws causing washouts and soggy, muddy roads; severe winter snows, frostbite and icy terrain, heavy rains and electrical storms. In spite of the trying conditions, he always managed a cheerful outlook, returning home*

*midday to tend to this farm work and curry his well-trained horses. Tom's milk route remained in the family throughout his life, passed on to his son, Edwin, who operated it by truck."*

Tom Jones' daughter, Gladys Stoneman, milked cows night and morning. She remembers one cow in particular, "*There was one cow I used to milk because I could get more milk out of it than anyone else.*"

James Clayton, orphaned by the 1918 flu epidemic is justly proud of his father's dairy operation. At one time Alvin Clayton held the United States record for the second lowest bacterial level in milk production in the nation. He peddled milk in a pony cart in the University area until his early death. Clayton's milk was so pure it was chosen to feed infants in the new Madison Stoeber Maternity Hospital.





# AUTOMOBILE AGE

## THE AUTOMOBILE

During the period between the two World Wars, highway transportation of goods by motor trucks and of people in automobiles and buses seriously threatened railway business. Henry Ford and his mass production plant in Detroit turned the automobile from an extravagant toy of the rich to a necessity for everyone.

The wheels turned faster, bringing a more mobile life style to most Americans. Gordon Vroman remembers that Fitchburg of the 1920's had few paved or even gravel roads — yet on a Saturday evening, the Model T Fords would go through and *“you could see the dust for miles; the dust was about ten inches to a foot deep. They were all headed for the weekly Saturday night barn dance at Henry Weise’s.”*

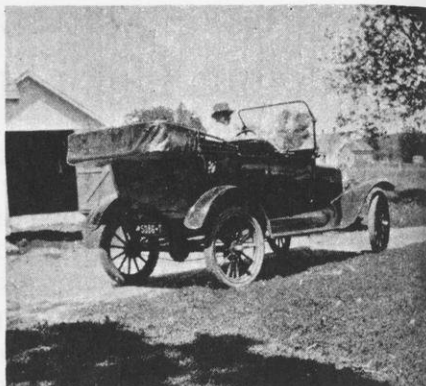
A first car was enjoyed by more and more Fitchburg farmers with their increased income of the twenties. In 1919, farm income in Wisconsin reached a total of \$549,000,000.<sup>1</sup> There was more money to spend on new-fangled machinery and new found but illegal pleasures.



Cars from Fitchburg traveled as far as Wyoming where this flat tire occurred on a car owned by the Fox's.

<sup>1</sup>Robert Nesbit, *Wisconsin: A History* (Madison, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1973) p. 459

**Webb McManus in his 1920's touring car.**



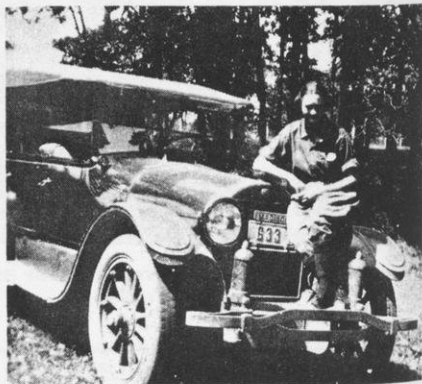
(picture courtesy of E. McManus.)



(picture courtesy of B. Sweeney.)

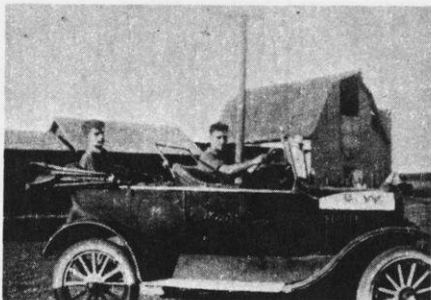
**Bill Sweeney with his Oregon state sweetheart and his 1923 Dodge  
(What more could any man wish for?)**

**Anna Fox and her 1921 Cadillac  
with Bilfex bumper and  
Westinghouse shock absorbers.**



(picture courtesy of P. Fox.)

**Vernon and Vincent Dunn in their 1920's Model T Ford.**

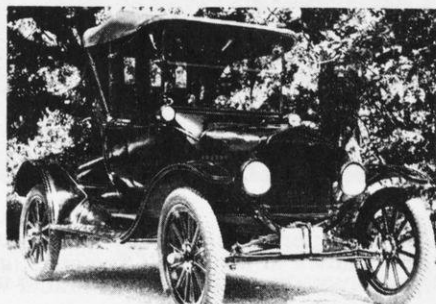


*(picture courtesy of M. O'Brien.)*

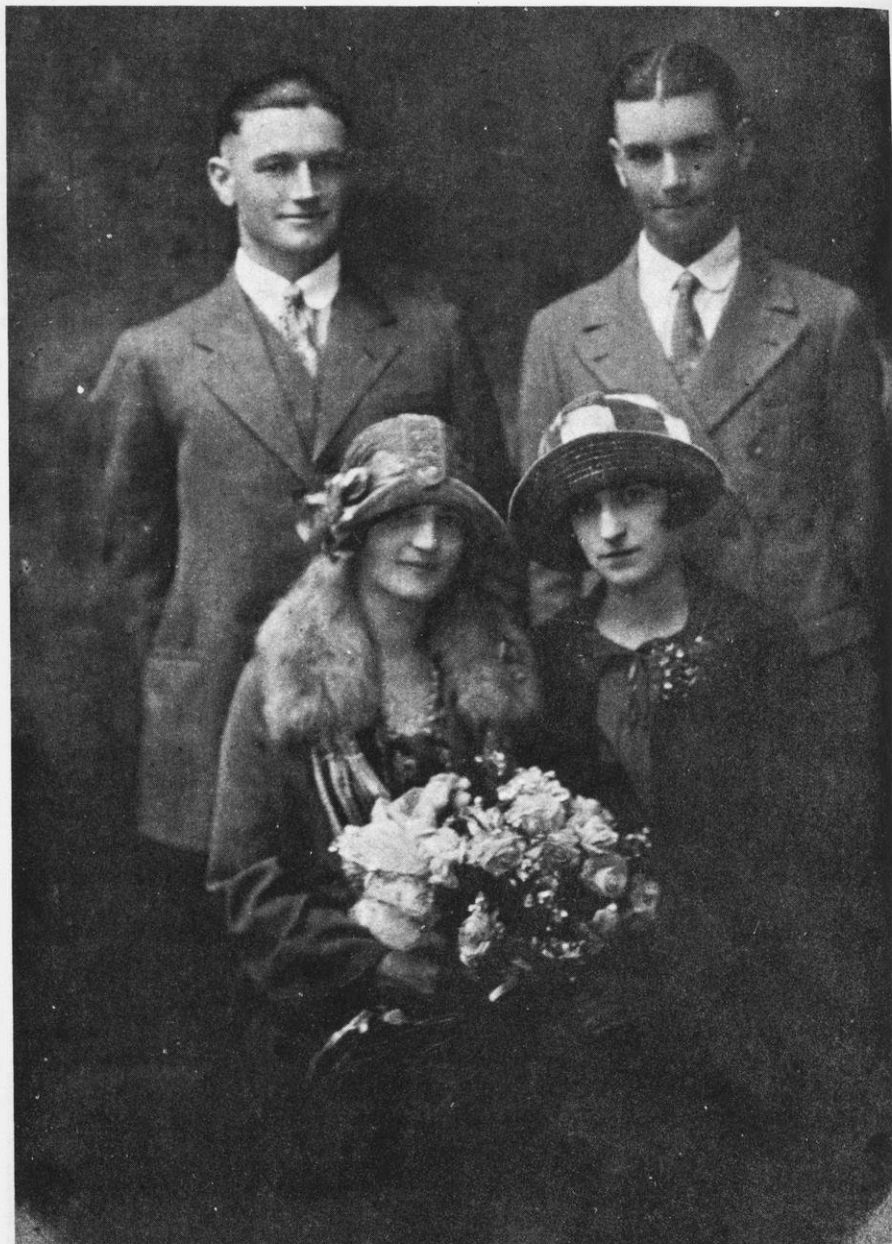


*(picture courtesy of B. Sweeney.)*

**Ron Kneebone's Model T Ford in 1976.**



*(picture courtesy of Fitchburg Star)*



(picture courtesy of B. Sweeney.)

A classic portrayal of 1920's fashions. The Sweeney wedding on August 19, 1925 shows in back, Bill Sweeney (groom) and Paul Sweeney (best man), in front, Leila West (bride), and Mabel West (maiden of honor).

PROHIBITION AND BOOTLEGGING

*"There were places you could buy home-brew, places you could buy wine and places you could buy hard stuff, moonshine. You didn't have to go far to do it. They were local farmers who did it on the side. In fact, their bootleg business was a lot more profitable than their farming. They kept Fitchburg in good spirits,"* relates Phil Barry.

People seeking illegal brew were screened by bootleggers who were particular about who bought their "Irish Disturbance" as it was called in Fitchburg. Barry goes on to further explain, *"Most of them had big keyholes on the door and you would knock and if you looked all right then they would let you in. This was in people's homes, usually in the basement. The wine was real good and the home brew was good too. Anything was good after drinking some of that near beer."*

Income increased, prices inflated, taxes rose, people laughed, danced and sang until — the fall of October 1929.

THE STOCK MARKET CRASH AND DEPRESSION YEARS

The Crash had little immediate effect on Fitchburg residents. Wilfred Kinney says, *"It didn't hurt me a bit, not personally. None of us had any money to put into the stock market those days. In fact, we were just hanging on."* Like many farmers, Wilfred Kinney found the family farm was not financially self-sufficient and outside work had to be found to supplement the family income. Kinney was lucky to find work at a gas station in Madison.

The Depression of the 1930's was the longest and most severe crisis the American economy had faced. Times were hard in Fitchburg but at least farm products kept food on the table. *"The farmer never starved; he always had something to eat,"* recalls Phil Barry, *"But he received deflated prices. A lot of people can remember selling hogs for three cents a pound and milk for less than a dollar a hundred weight, taking 15 cents a bushel for oats and a quarter for a bushel of corn."*

Leo Lacy remembers the closing of the banks in 1932, *"I was working near the road and somebody came along and told me. I said I could care less. I only had \$5.00 and I had that in my pocket."*

The Depression affected Blaney Farms, Inc. as Edwin Blaney describes, *"I was just starting my business. We had one hired man and the going wage was \$38.00 a month. My half of the milk money wasn't enough to pay him."*

## AUTOMOBILE AGE

The decreased income caused a change in life style. Phil Barry says that farmers *"stayed home at night and didn't spend their money; there was nothing to spend."* Yet Gordon Vroman found that *"we had just as much fun on 50¢ as people today have on \$10.00."*

Assistance came from the federal government. When President Franklin Roosevelt was elected in 1932, he began relief programs, the Public Works Administration (PWA) and Works Progress Administration (WPA). These programs were designed to provide jobs for the unemployed.

In Fitchburg, Chairman Thomas Fahey administered Roosevelt's programs. As his daughter Ellen (Fahey) Green states, *"It was quite a job for him to see who was deserving of help and I remember so many young men, especially, came to see if they couldn't get help."* Leo O'Brien remembers a WPA project in Fitchburg. *"On Mutchler Road there was a project started to widen the road. Men came in and they were hired by the government to move dirt on to the shoulder of the road to widen it."* Leo's brother, Edward, recalls working on this project and receiving good wages for the times. He worked under road foreman, Ed Richardson, who kept Fitchburg's roads in good condition for several years. Many of the farmers used their horses and wagons to move dirt to build a large pond at Nevin Hatchery. This was another WPA project which helped restore Fitchburg's economy.

While the economy was slowly recovering, milk strikes were taking place. The Wisconsin Milk Pool, a group from the Fox Valley, called two strikes in 1933. Phil Barry was closely associated since he drove a milk truck to Bowman Dairy Farm. He claims, *"Most of these strikers were imported from other counties because there weren't too many people that you knew on the picket lines."* However, enough local people participated so that it made a lot of hard feelings among neighbors for years afterwards — neighbor against neighbor.

*"During one of the strikes we pulled a little trick on the pickets,"* chuckles Barry. *"We found a detour across the field, passed the road by Pat Lynaugh's and went through the marsh to the back way into Bowman's. They caught us on the way home, pulled in front of the truck and threw most of the cans in the ditch. They warned me that if I started out the next morning, it would be the last time the truck would be able to go on the highway. Fortunately, that night the strike was settled and nothing happened."*

Misfortunes continued to plague Fitchburg in the 1930's. During the winter of 1936, a bad ice storm hit the area. The Seymour Johnsons boarded the Syene school teacher at their home and when she failed to



## AUTOMOBILE AGE

come home at her usual time of 4:00, Mr. Johnson sent the hired man out to look for her. He didn't return either. Johnson started his own search in the thick fog and ice and found the teacher and hired man clutching to the fence searching their way home.

The summer of 1936 brought a drought. Phil Barry recalls, "*It was real dry; we had six or seven days of 105 degrees. The horses couldn't stand the heat and wouldn't do any work — people either. We were cultivating our corn with horses and we wouldn't do any work in the daytime until 5 or 6 in the evening. We would cultivate until 10 or 11 p.m. when it was a little cooler.*"

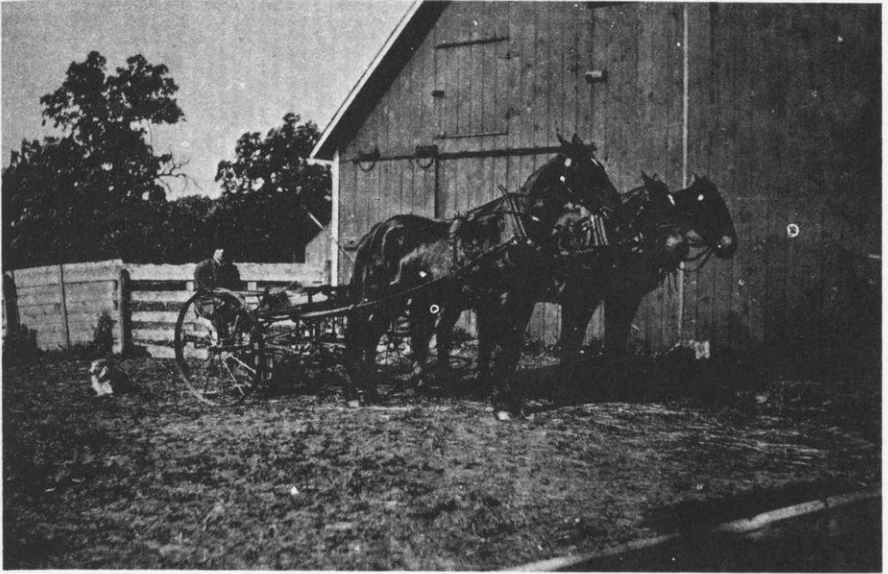
## AGRICULTURE

It is significant to note that horses were still used in 1936 since the transition in farming from animal power to machine power was a gradual process. As Phil Barry explains, "*I remember the first tractor we owned was in 1931, and we were still doing about half our work with horses — we had about 16 head. When we got the tractor it seemed to be a big step forward. Every year after that for the next six or seven years, the number of horses dwindled. Most farms for the first years kept a team of horses for chore work in the winter time.*"

Although mechanized farming decreased the workload, many opportunities for neighborhood socializing were lost. Phil Barry explains, "*Farmers used to help each other and the women fed all these men. This changed when the combines took over the binder and the threshing machine, and the baler took over the hayloader and the field chopper took over the silo fillers, and the tractors took over the teams and wagons. Horses went and machinery took over. Now it's everybody for themselves.*"

Leo O'Brien describes the development of mechanization in dairy farming, "*With the coming of electricity in 1928, promoted by Tom Fahey (Town Chairman from 1925 to 1936) milking machines were introduced. We did not have one until 1944, but there were a few in use before that time. Of course, with the coming of the milking machine, more cows could be handled per man and the milk can cooler was a step above the cold water baths. Then came the can cooler because it didn't take as much labor to handle the cans. We now have a cooler in the milk house that is a vacuum. Our milk is emptied into a receptacle in the milking parlor and the vacuum draws into this bulk cooler and through a refrigeration system where it is cooled and stored. It is picked up every other day by a big bulk truck. That is the way milk is handled now compared to how it was done when I was a young lad.*"

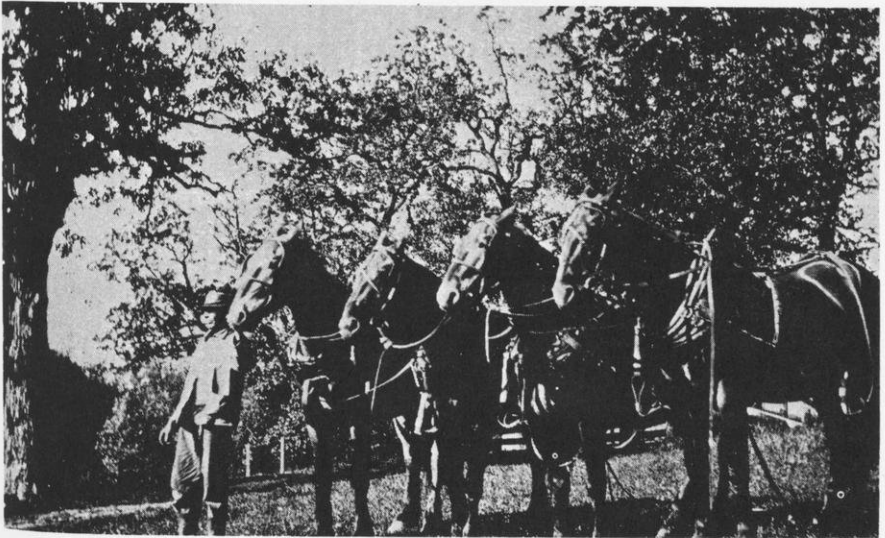




(picture courtesy of R. Haight.)

**Joe Haight in 1913 with his team of horses.**

### **HORSES ON THE FARM**



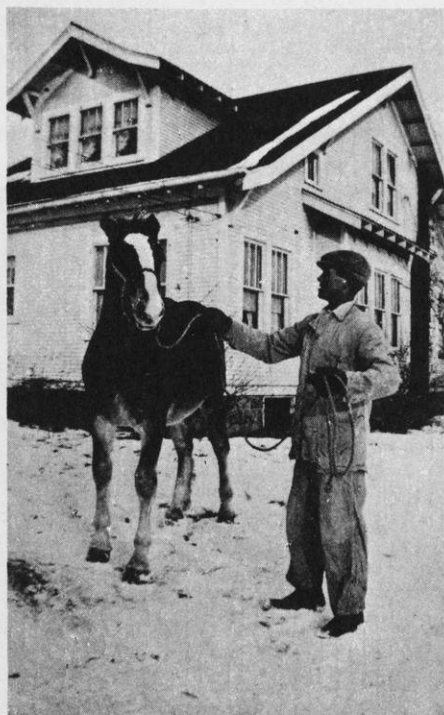
(picture courtesy of G. Vroman.)

**Hiram Vroman and his team of horses.**



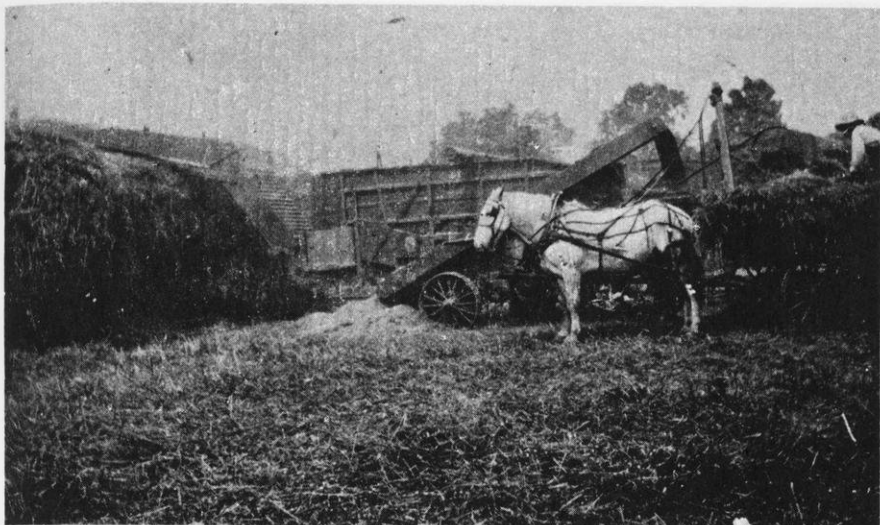
(picture courtesy of G. Stoneman.)

**Tom Jones in 1913 with his team of horses.**



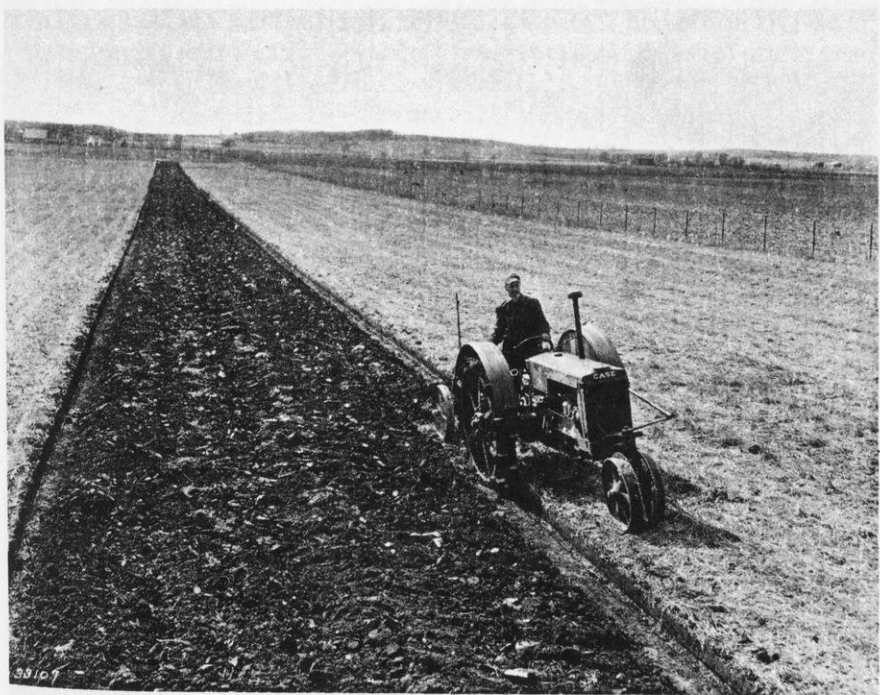
(picture courtesy of E. McManus.)

**Webb McManus and a favorite horse.**

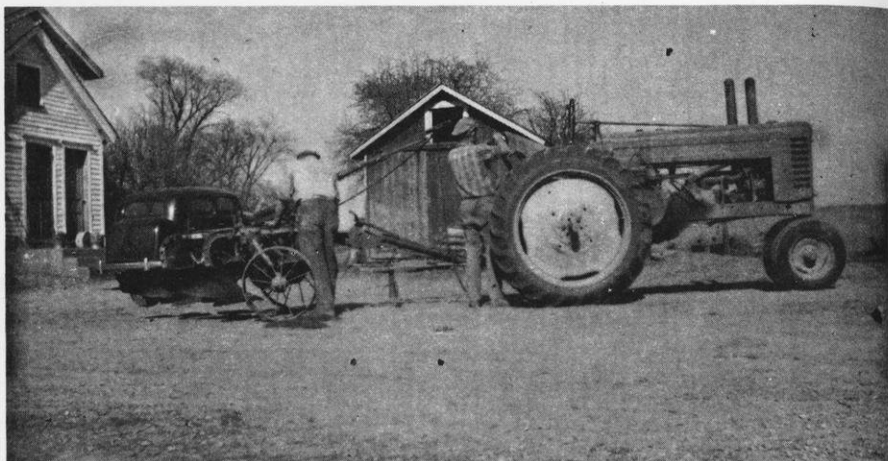


(picture courtesy of E. McManus.)

**Threshing on the Webb McManus farm.**



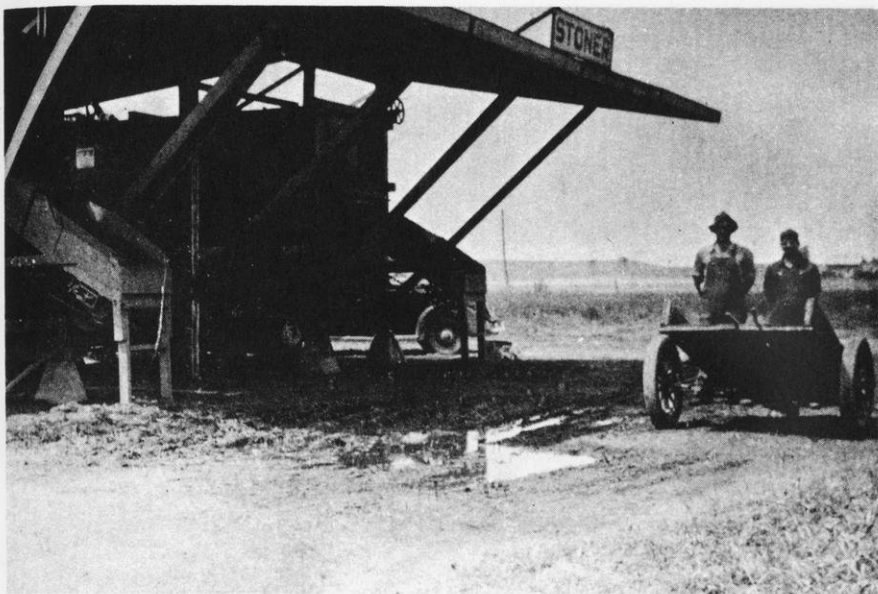
**Leo Lacy plowing straight rows with his Case tractor.**



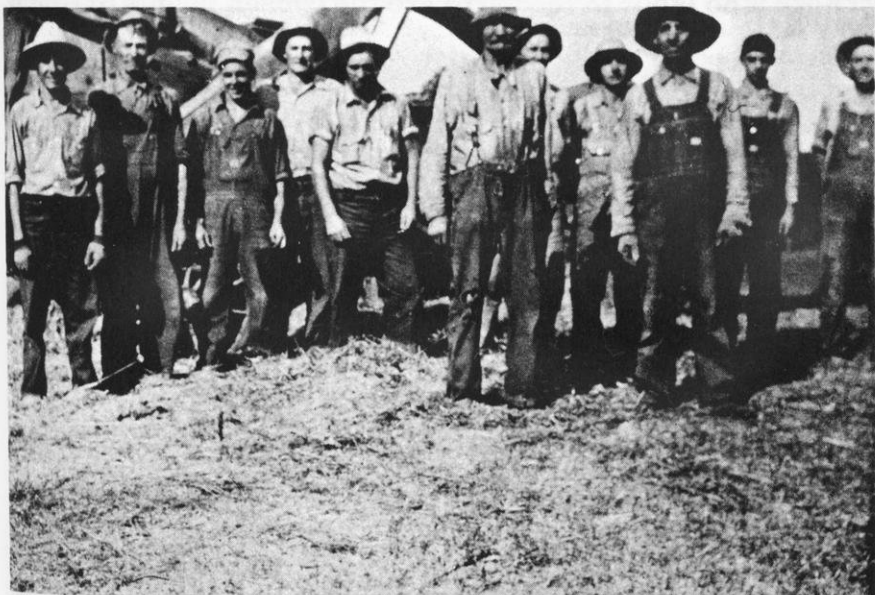
**Bill Sweeney and his tractor.**

Although dairy farming has been the major agricultural endeavor in Fitchburg since 1900, pea growing became a vogue, especially during the early 1940's. Brother William Dunn explains, *"The Oconomowoc Canning Company promoted the cultivation of peas and a lot of the local farmers took it up. A pea-vining machine was installed at the corner of Lacy Road and Seminole Highway on the Emmet O'Brien property. The plant consisted of a viner which separated the peas from the vines collected. The peas were collected in boxes; trucks came and picked up the boxes and hauled them to the cannery. The vines were stacked and they fermented something like silage and became cattle feed which was divided up among the farmers. You came during the winter as you needed it and got your share of it. While the fodder was fermenting, it created an unholy odor and gave off rivers of bad smelling juices and was a somewhat obnoxious presence in the neighborhood. We worked long hours at that pea harvest. The peas had to be harvested while they were prime, while they were fresh and ripe, just at the right stage. We started sometimes before dawn, 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning and ran until midnight, fantastically long hours and we didn't get paid overtime."*

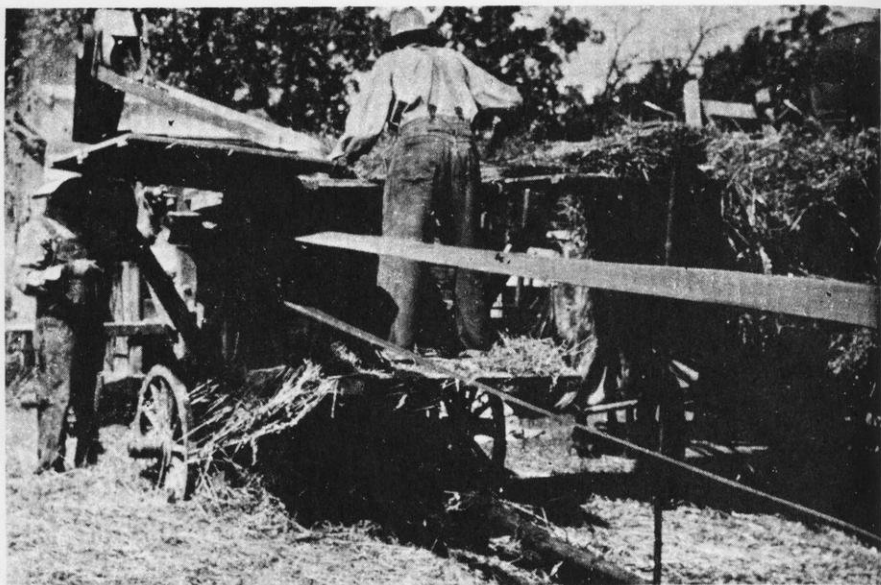
Vincent Dunn remembers using Henry Dinkler's antique threshing machine even in the 1930's and 1940's and it was considered quite unique, *"A man stood on the stand and a bundle was placed on a table. He would cut the string with a knife and hand feed it into the machine. The straw came up on a carrier which was sort of an elevator and the oats would pour out into a basket. There were two baskets and while one was being filled, the other was dumped into a bag which another person was holding."*



Pea viner foremen, Leo O'Brien and Leo Lacy, at the Stoner pea vining station in the early 1940's.



Threshing crew in the early 1940's. (picture courtesy of G. Vroman.)  
Left to right: William Dunn, Martin Swenson, Gerald Dunn, Leo O'Brien, Don Grady, Henry Dinkler, Ed O'Brien, Vin Dunn, John Dunn, Vernon Dunn, LaVerne Best.

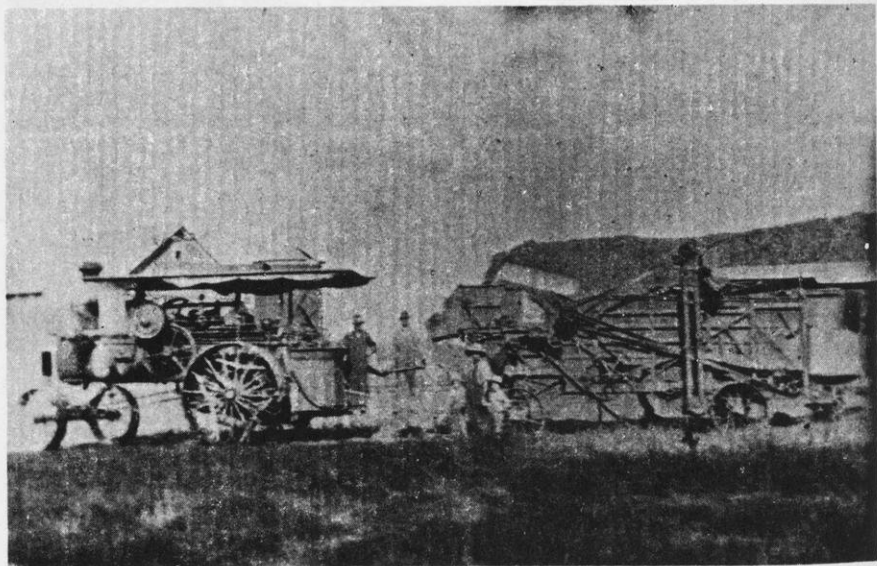


(picture courtesy of G. Vroman.)

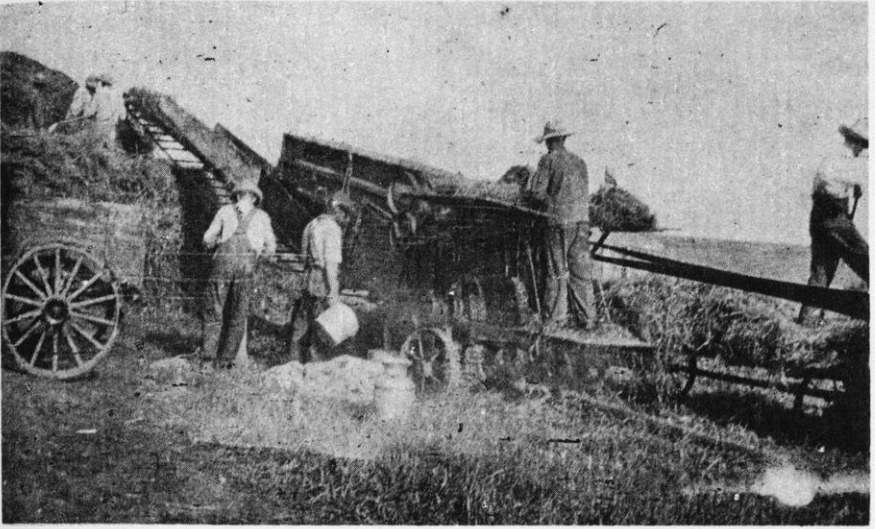
Henry Dinkler cutting bands on the threshing machine; John Dunn in the background.

**“Those who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God if ever he had a Chosen People.”**

**Thomas Jefferson**



**Threshing with Floyd Miller's threshing machine at the Emmet O'Brien farm about 1915. In back, Floyd Miller and Emmet O'Brien. In front, Gerald O'Brien, hired hand, and Ed O'Brien.**



(picture courtesy of R. Haight.)

Threshing on the Joe Haight farm, 1913.

### VISITORS TO FITCHBURG

In the period between the two world wars, the automobile brought city people to Fitchburg selling their wares. Ellen (Fahey) Green remembers "door to door" salesmen, *"We used to have the Watkins man and the Rawley man who sold vanilla, soap, fly spray and ointment. There was also the Fuller Brush man and the bread man."*

The Faheys were visited by gypsies also who camped in Skelley's (Bowman's) woods along Irish Lane. Ellen Green explains, *"They'd come up and ask for a pullet and people gave it to them because they felt sorry for them."* Ellen's mother, Kate, further describes, *"We wanted to be kind to them because we knew they didn't have any home. The children were excited but also a little bit afraid of the gypsies. They had a wagon and camped out but they didn't stay long, only overnight."*

The Claytons were occasional guests of the gypsies who camped at the Clayton woods above the Nine Springs mound. When the gypsy king died in the '30's, Jim Clayton was invited to join the three day mourning festivities never to forget the fascinating band of free spirits. The vividly painted wagons and blankets spread with fruit and fish provided a colorful backdrop for the music and dancing of the counter culture's celebration of life. *"Their women were exceptionally beautiful with long black hair, full length skirts and scarves and jewelry."*

WORLD WAR II

When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, Congress, at President Roosevelt's request, voted for war with Japan. Roosevelt described the day of the Pearl Harbor attack as "a day which shall live in infamy."<sup>2</sup>

There is no official record of those who served in World War II. The following names have been submitted to the Bicentennial Committee:

Arnel Adams	Ken McGraw
Lloyd Doerfer	Gerald O'Brien
Vernon Dunn	Paul O'Brien
Robert Keenan	Leroy Purcell
Robert Keller	Gordon Richardson
John Koster	Leo Richardson
Edward Lynaugh	Walter Richardson
Helen Lynaugh	George Rowe
William Lynaugh	David Schuster
James Maloney	James Garry Shiel
Robert Maloney	Robert Smith
Thomas Maloney	Donald Sweeney
Harold Mandt	Ray Sweeney
Lawrence Mandt	Richard Sweeney
Francis McCann	Gordon Whalen

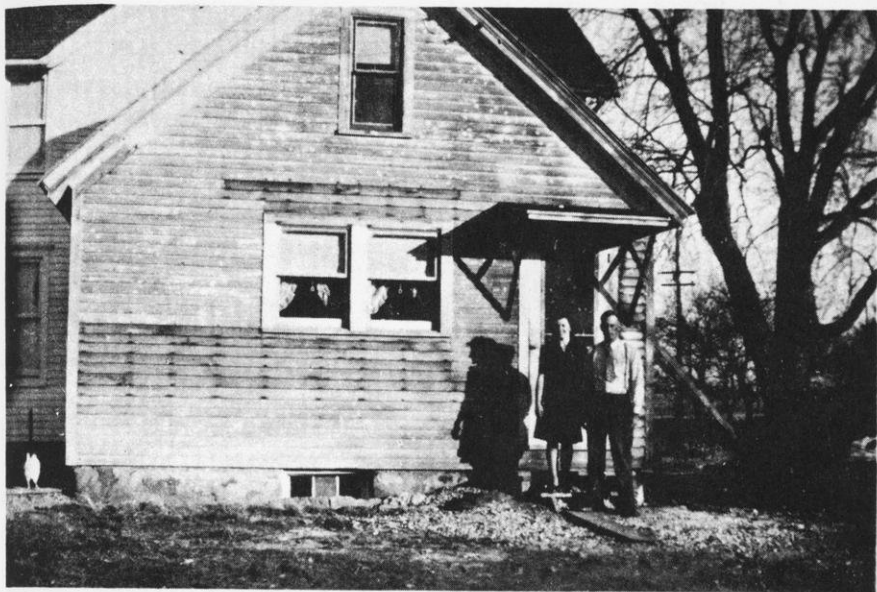
Because needs of the armed forces came first, many civilian goods were rationed. Leo and Mary (Dunn) O'Brien married in 1944 during World War II and recall difficulties they encountered in remodeling the Rufus Gillet house for their home. O'Brien says, "*We had to get a federal authorization from the Ration Board in Madison. A carpenter came to look over the house to decide what materials he wanted to use and then we took his estimate to the Ration Board to get the federal authorization. Many things made of metal, such as sinks, faucets and bathtubs couldn't be obtained at all.*"

The war was not supported by everyone. Mary Jo Uphoff describes the establishment of a Fellowship Farm in Fitchburg during

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<sup>2</sup>The Democratic Experience, (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman, and Co., 1963) p. 425.





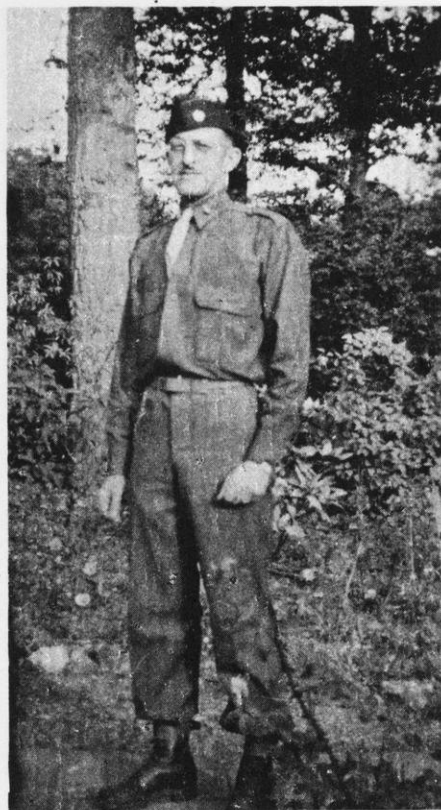
Mary and Leo O'Brien in front of partly remodeled Rufus Gillett House, 1944.

the 1940's, "*The Madison Chapter of the Fellowship of Reconciliation (an international, non-demoninational peace organization founded during World War I) began discussing the acquisition of a farm. This was to serve as a folk school and community center, and in the immediate period, as a place of shelter for European refugees, conscientious objectors' families, and others temporarily in distress. The Ralph Murphy farm near Lake View, on the northern end of Highway MM, was purchased.*"

In addition to running a full time farm operation, the Uphoffs broadcasted a weekly radio program for the Dane County Socialist Party and published a monthly newspaper, *The Wisconsin Commonwealth*. In 1944 Walter Uphoff was the Socialist candidate for United States Senator, and in 1946 and 1948 socialist candidate for governor. Uphoff was known as a friend of the farmers' for assisting in the organization of cooperatives around the state.

### CONSOLIDATION OF RURAL SCHOOLS

In the 1940's and 1950's, a large push for the consolidation of rural schools was led by the State Department of Public Instruction. Studies of education, approved by the Wisconsin Legislature, were conducted on both the county and state level. The major subjects



**Lieutenant Colonel Arnel Adams in World War II.**

covered in the 1948 state study were: overall integration of the educational system, transportation, finance, increasing school population and vocational education. From this study, county school committees were established in 1951 for the specific task of studying the reorganization of districts to provide a comprehensive school program from kindergarten through twelfth grade.

Amidst all these studies, no research was done on the actual educating process in the rural schools. In Fitchburg, Catherine (O'Brien) Schneider remembers Stoner School from 1954 to 1962.

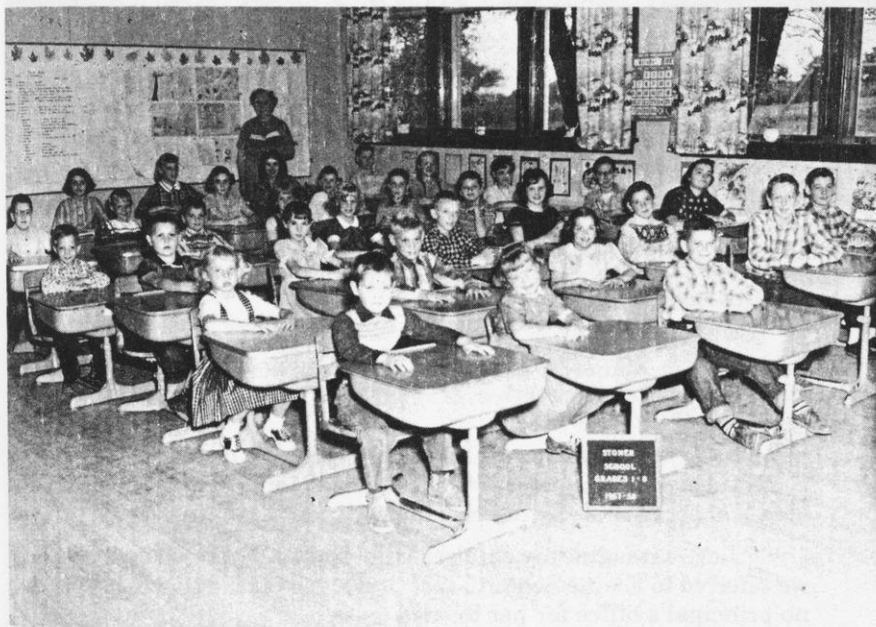
"The teacher was not the only educator. Sometimes seventh and eighth graders were given the responsibility of instructing the primary grades while the teacher instructed intermediate grades. Our music teacher, Mrs. Steve, visited once a week. Then we had hobby times when girls made cross-stitch aprons and boys built wooden birdhouses. We listened to programs from the University of Wisconsin radio station, WHA, and read our "Weekly Reader"."

William Wineke, a reporter for the Wisconsin State Journal, writes of his memories of Maple Corners School,

"It was my school from 1948 to 1956. I learned to read there; I learned to write there. My first newspaper job was at Maple Corners School; I was editor of the Maple Corners Reminder. I guess as a school Maple Corners wasn't so much. At best, it enrolled thirty pupils. Not all of its teachers — they came one at a time — had college degrees.

The toilets were outside, the library was tiny, the heat was sporadic. So, it's probably a good thing Maple Corners School was closed. And, yet, I wonder if my own children will learn as much in their new schools with divided classes and laboratories and art and music teachers as I learned at Maple Corners.

Their school plays will be in a modern auditorium, but they may never learn how to hang a blue curtain to separate the 'stage' from the 'audience'. Their music teachers are quite dependable, I'm told, so Julia



**Stoner School in 1957. Teacher Catherine Gorman.**  
 Students first row (front to back): Tom Dunn, Genevieve Grady, Tom O'Brien, George Vroman, Dennis Schneider.  
 Second row: Cindy Onsrud, Roger Monthey, Jane O'Brien, John Dunn, Wanda Vroman, Mary Dunn.  
 Third row: Robert Fluckiger, Catherine O'Brien, Don Grady, Joanne Monthey, Amber Grady, Ellen O'Brien, Mary Lou Monthey.  
 Fourth row: Jim O'Brien, Dan Dunn, Kathleen Jordan, Jessie Koster, Pat O'Brien, Johnny Jordan, Kay Dunn.  
 Fifth row: Bill Dunn, Betty Dunn, Joe Grady, Nancy Fluckiger, Debby Mitchell, Larry Vroman.



**Fitchburg Center School — 1947**

**Music teacher: Fannie Steve.**

**Sitting (left to right): Nancy Fletcher, Jerry Fletcher, Ruth Lobeck, Don Amherdt, Bill Lobeck, Eleanor Kinney.**

**Second row: Otto Amherdt, Schnabel, Roger Jensen, Billy Kinney, Lila Lobeck.**

**Third row: Louise Amherdt, Unknown, Betty Amherdt, Unknown, Martha Hall, Miss Schiedegger (teacher).**

**Fourth row: Unknown, Schnabel.**

Landmark will never pinch-hit on ten minutes notice to play for the Christmas pageant. Indeed, Christmas pageants aren't allowed in the Madison schools where my children attend.

I can't imagine my children calling their teacher "Teach", the way we referred to Elaine Schmitt. Not that she liked it either, but there was no principal's office for her to send us to.

There are probably better schools, no doubt about it. But hundreds of us from the Fitchburg area attended and graduated from Maple Corners. Most of us have turned out pretty honest and pretty happy. I hope I can say the same for my children in twenty years."

In 1959 the Wisconsin Legislature mandated all territory to be part of a high school district by 1962, thus closing many of the rural schools. In spite of some opposition from local people, Fitchburg's district schools were consolidated into Madison, Oregon and Verona.

Wilfred Kinney remembers the consolidation controversy, *"I went to some of those meetings and somebody got up and talked for consolidating. He said 'I was educated in a one room school' and I often wondered how he could be so smart and be educated in a one room school and still be against it."*

Kay (Fahey) Harty, current principal of Madison Midvale School, attended by children from central Fitchburg, remembers the consolidation of Fitchburg Center School in 1962, *"There was no hearing. Everybody lost their school. There was nothing you could do about it. It was dictated."*

Genevieve (Lacy) Purcell laments the loss of the Maple Corners School, *"I must say we miss our little schoolhouse. When we had it and the country store, we got to know each other and we got to know the youngsters because we were interested in their welfare. We went to clean the schoolhouse and helped with whatever there was to be done and now we don't have any of that anymore."*



# FITCHBURG TODAY

## IN-MIGRATION

Today, across the United States, people are fleeing from crowded central cities to the more spacious, peaceful outlying areas. Because of Fitchburg's proximity to Madison, an in-migration of people from the city are flocking to Fitchburg, bringing urbanizing trends with them. People are looking for a permanent place to settle a family with a house and a two-car garage. The majority of people commute to Madison for employment. Several apartment complexes offer an alternative to homeownership.

Fitchburg has more large apartment complexes than are usually found in a township with the majority of them located in the north end of the town. Most of these apartments came after the City of Madison lifted the two year zoning freeze which had slowed down the development in the Town to about one-third of what it was expected to be during those years.

William McKee, Town Chairman during the initial years of this development, explains the reasoning behind the extensive building of apartments, *"It was one of the inevitable things. The only question was would Fitchburg stay Fitchburg, or would it go the way of all the other towns around Madison. They did nothing to move into the 20th century. It (development) just moved out to the edge of the city and when developers needed to build something else, they got another block and they'd extend the sewer and water out there, and then they'd annex it to the City. These towns just evaporated. So if Fitchburg was going to remain Fitchburg, they had to do something — provide the services that people need if they're going to live in large numbers close together."*



Ben Meek formerly owned the ten acres where Valley View apartments are today.

(picture courtesy of *Fitchburg Star*)

## FITCHBURG TODAY

The many apartments contributed greatly to the rapid increase in town population and property valuation from 1970-76. During this time, the population more than doubled, from 4,704 in 1970 to 10,259 in 1976. Bill Stoneman, the Town assessor, states that total property values surpassed each of the cities of Middleton, Monona and Sun Prairie. In 1975 Fitchburg had the second highest property valuation of any municipality in Dane County.

There are 1500 residential houses in Fitchburg, most of which are in the 33 platted subdivisions. Country Heights and Hillside Heights were among the first developments in the Town. These areas maintain a "country" atmosphere with private wells and septic systems and natural settings undisturbed by curb and gutter. Generally, these lots are in excess of one acre as are those in the later developed Country Vineyard.

Wildwood is the largest subdivision with 187 lots. Tower Hill Park, Jamestown and Belmar each have over 100 lots. These large developments, as well as Western Hills, Westchester and Moschkau, all have sewer and water.

Most of these subdivisions were planned by developers who purchased farms for the purpose of platting. Tower Hill Park, Briarwood and Tarpleywick Hills are the only major ones developed by farmers who lived on the land for several years.

Brothers, William and Lyman McKee, in 1964, developed Tower Hill Park through MacVentures, Ltd. Tower Hill Park received its name from Lyman McKee. One day, as they tossed around various names, Lyman suggested Tower Hill for the adjacent WIBA towers.

Father and son, Phil and Mike Barry, developed Briarwood in 1966 and named it for the overgrown woods and briar patches.

Another family, the Seymour Johnsons, developed Tarpleywick Hills in 1967. Johnson bought the farm in 1923 from Professor Taylor, founder of the University of Wisconsin Agricultural Economics Department. Taylor named it "Tarpley" after a friend and "wick" meaning "place" in old English. Later, Seymour's son, Robert, added "Hills".

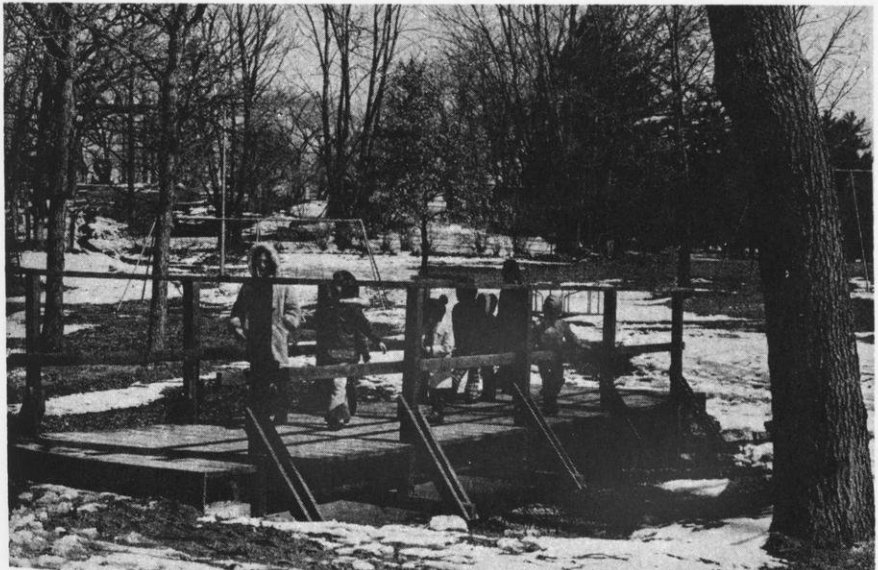
Farmers and urban dwellers all benefit from the progressive road program advanced by John Fluckiger, town chairman from 1938 to 1964. He was instrumental in developing a county road aid program to help share in the cost of black topping. Fitchburg was the first township in Dane County to have all their roads black topped to full width and for many years has had the reputation for the "best town roads" anywhere. His leadership is still highly respected by all who knew him.



As the subdivisions grew, Fitchburg established Ordinance 71-29 in 1972 requiring a subdivider to dedicate "sufficient area to meet the proportionate park, recreation and general open space needs generated by the development of the subdivision."

### PARKS

1. Rimrock Park — .4 acres. Site is presently undeveloped.
2. Clayton Park — .5 acres. Contains playground equipment.
3. Greenfield Park — 11.5 acres. Transferred to the Town by Frank Kowing in 1952 and development started in 1962. Contains shelter, picnic tables, barbeque grills, basketball court, volleyball court, horseshoe court, baseball diamonds, and restrooms. Also has playground equipment such as sandbox, slide, swing sets, jungle gym and merry-go-round.
4. Dunn's Marsh — 7.5 acres. Wildlife Preserve. Presently undeveloped marsh land connected to larger parcel owned by City of Madison. Serves as resting area for many species of birds and animals. No future development foreseen.
5. Belmar Hills — 3.5 acres. Development begun in 1971. Contains playground equipment.



(picture courtesy of *Fitchburg Star*)

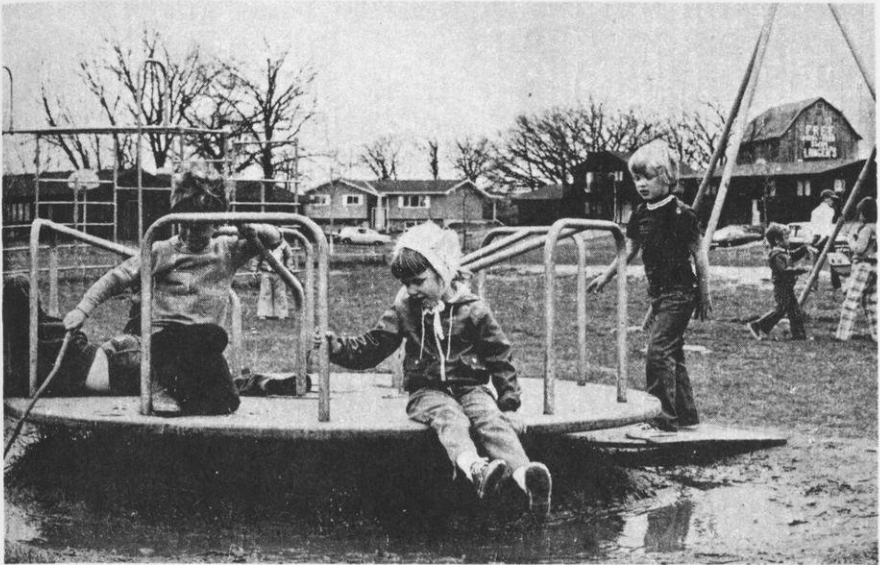
Children crossing the Greenfield Park Bridge. The Jaycees helped build this bridge.



(picture courtesy of *Fitchburg Star*)

#### Dunn's Marsh

6. Johnson Park — 7 acres. Dedicated by Seymour Johnson in 1967. Development began in 1971. Contains playground equipment and has 5 acres of virgin woods.
7. Tower Hill Park — 6 acres. The McKee brothers provided part of this park in 1968. The remainder was purchased by Town. Development began in 1970. Has playground equipment, shelter, restrooms and baseball diamonds.
8. Hillside Heights Park — 4 acres. Developers Sweeney, Devine and Heinrichs ceded land to Town in 1966 from the Richard Maves farm. Contains small pond and playground equipment.
9. Wildwood Park — 5 acres. Glenn Osmundsen farm bought by Sweeney, Devine and Heinrichs. Park remitted to Town in 1971.
10. Western Hills — 4.5 acres. Tony Haen farm bought by Art Grandlich, developer, who set aside park for Town in 1972.
11. McGaw Park — 63.7 acres. Purchased by Town from Sam McGaw estate.
12. Dawley Park — 40 acres. Natural wooded land. Major portion of land originally owned by early settlers, the Dinklers, who lived in Fitchburg from 1848 to 1942. Dedicated by Mrs. Gene R. Dawley in 1973.



(picture courtesy of *Fitchburg Star*)

Children playing on **Wildwood Park** equipment.

13. **Camp Badger** — 5 acres. Originally one of Fitchburg's district schools. Also used as shooting range by State Militia from 1910-16. Purchased from Verona Area Public Schools in 1974 and established as park and place for community events.



(picture courtesy of *Fitchburg Star*)

**Dawley Park**



(picture courtesy of *Fitchburg Star*)

**Camp Badger Community Center**

- 14. Gorman Wayside — 3 acres. Land where monument stands donated by Gorman family. Remainder bought by Town.
- 15. Country Vineyard — 6 acres. Ed Guetzke farm bought by developer, Edgar Markwardt. Park land ceded in 1974. Presently undeveloped.
- 16. Jamestown — 10.2 acres. Residence Facilities bought farm from Walter Batker. Being jointly developed with City of Madison.



**Memorial Monument to Fitchburg's War Dead**

(picture courtesy of *Fitchburg Star*)

GORMAN WAYSIDE

Amidst tall oaks on a quiet little knoll stands a vivid memorial to the Fitchburg men who gave their lives in the armed forces of America.

After the death of Robert Schley, only son of Niles and Hazel Schley, in the Viet Nam war, the members of the Fitchburg Club wanted to honor his memory and chose a memorial for all of Fitchburg's fallen heroes. Chief Harry Whitehorse was commissioned to work on a sculpture which took three years to complete.

The soldier, his bare head bowed, dressed only in fatigues and boots, is kneeling on one knee, bracing himself with his rifle. It shows his weariness from the strain of battle, his sorrow and grief for lost friends and the futility of war.

BUSINESS

As Fitchburg develops, old and new businesses thrive. In 1976 there are 184 businesses.

Ancestors of Phil and Michael Barry were not only pioneers in Fitchburg, but also in the Wisconsin horse industry. They produced five generations of horsemen beginning in 1870 and thus have the marked distinction of being the oldest operating business in the Town. Garrett Barry, (son of pioneer, Michael), and his son, George, specialized in breeding and training Percheron and Belgian work horses and also registered some of the first saddle horses in the American Saddle Horse Breeders Association, founded in 1891.

With the mechanization of farming, the tractor replaced workhorses. The University of Wisconsin then provided the next Barry horsemen, Phil and Mike, with a research use for their horses and from this they have built up a good saddlebred herd, many of them champions.

Bowman Farm Dairy was established in 1914. As the story goes, one day as Duane Bowman was ready to ride his bicycle from the farm to Madison High School, his father, C. Harlan Bowman, said, "*Son, stop off at the Board of Health on your way, get a license and see if we can't peddle some of this extra milk.*" After the establishment of the Bowman dairy, it grew from 26 acres of owned land to 700 acres of property, 435 acres owned and 265 rented and with 440 cattle. This operation ran successfully for sixty-four years. It was sold to Decker, Inc. who still use the Bowman Farm Dairy name.

Schmidt Nursery was established in 1921. It is combined with a "Winter Garden," a grocery store.

Blaney Seed Farms started in 1932. Edwin Blaney describes the beginnings: *"Professor Andrew Wright was in the Certification Department (from the school of Agriculture at the University of Wisconsin) and he said to me, 'If you want to grow seed corn, you should grow hybrid corn this coming spring. We are going to release the first seed. You might not sell it all, but keep it for two or three years and sell it each year.' We didn't have much seed from one acre, and it sold mostly to county agents and surrounding areas."* Blaney's business gradually expanded to an operation of over six thousand acres. His son, Richard, is now the manager of the largest business in Fitchburg in terms of people employed and property value.

Sprague-Dawley, Inc. started in Fitchburg in 1938 and raises rats for experimental purposes. It operated as a private business venture until it was sold to Mogul Corporation in 1968.

A nationally known research laboratory on Fish Hatchery Road is Fitchburg Research Park headed by Dr. Johan Bjorksten. He established his plant in 1948 and added the Vitamore Corporation in 1975. Bjorksten recently publicized important findings at a news conference of the American Chemical Society at San Francisco. Through research, he found that two molecules become "hooked" during the aging process and that certain enzymes can dissolve this 'hook-up' thereby reversing the aging process and enabling an average life expectancy to be 800 years.

There are several other large companies such as Central Soya, a feed manufacturer; CERTCO, a grocery distribution plant; General Beer & General Beverage, a beer and liquor warehouse and Rein, Schultz & Dahl, an asphalt hot mix plant. In the same general location of County Trunk P.D. and Verona Road are Placon Plastic Corporation, Lumberman's, Inc., Roscoe's Tavern (now named Monkey Shines), Wingra Stone & Redi Mix, E. Z. Gregory, Inc., Harder Paper Company, Oak Industries, Inc., Nicolet Instrument, Badger Automatic Distributors and Bowman Plaza.

There are three grocery stores, one filling station, one barber shop, three restaurants, one veterinary clinic, two dentists, two laundromats, one dry cleaner, four upholsterers, three garden nurseries, five kennels, several truckers, two lawn services, one motel, two antique dealers and several small businesses operated from homes.

The Town also has Bavaria Sausages, Jo Dot Ceramics, Pre-Hung Doors, Inc., Paul's Power Center and Schwinn Cyclery, Bryant Clamp Factory, Hammersley Stone, Hammersley Construction and Fitchburg Construction.

There are three financial institutions — Affiliated Bank of Jamestown, United Bank of Madison and First Federal Savings and Loan.

The *Fitchburg Star*, the community weekly newspaper, was started in January, 1975, by Henry W. Schroeder and Butler C. Delaney, co-publishers of the *Verona Press* and the *Oregon Observer* and has continued to provide weekly coverage of town government meetings, social events, features of interest in the community and general news. The paper filled a need for accurate, thorough coverage of Fitchburg events, and reporter Linda Thomson has become a familiar figure at Town functions.

Two unique schools are both on Fish Hatchery Road. Woodland Montessori School offers a new approach to learning for children ages 2½ to twelve. Orchard Hill provides a home for the mentally retarded along with special education.

This recent urbanizing trend of housing developments and new businesses brings mixed reactions among Fitchburg's people.



(picture courtesy of *Fitchburg Star*)

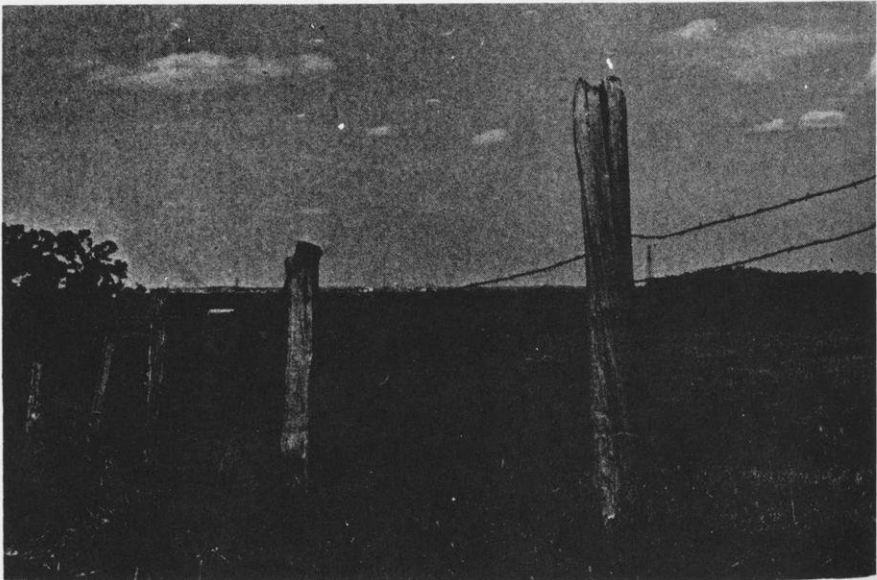
Henry Schroeder, left, editor and publisher of *Verona Press* and *Fitchburg Star*. Butler Delaney, right, editor and publisher of *Oregon Observer*. They are co-owners of Southwest Suburban Publications, Inc.

Businessman Duane Bowman notes the advantages of the Town's proximity to Madison: *"This particular area, in my humble opinion, has many advantages to people who want to locate near the City of Madison. We have found over the years that it is the most accessible location to the City, central, east and west. This is perhaps why the apartment complexes have grown, convenient shopping centers have come into the area, and why many homes are being bought and sold. These are things, in my opinion, which have enhanced Fitchburg."*

However, farmer and co-manager of Barry Stables, Phil Barry, expresses another opinion: *"Fitchburg today has no resemblance to the Fitchburg that used to be. The northern half of the Town is nothing but a bunch of apartments. People who just moved into the Town are trying to run it. The old time farm people haven't got one thing to say about what's going on with the farms anymore. It used to be the farmers that ran the town."*

### FARMING

Although Fitchburg residents have differing opinions about the urbanization of the Town, there is no doubt that fertile farmland is being bought and used for commercial and residential development.



(picture courtesy of Bicentennial Committee)

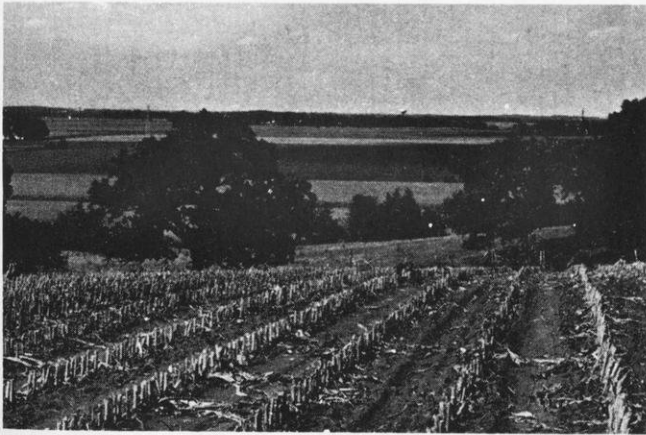
Through the country fence posts, Madison looms in the distance.



Fitchburg's Fertile  
Farmland



(picture courtesy of Bicentennial Committee)



(picture courtesy of Bicentennial Committee)



(picture courtesy of Bicentennial Committee)

## FITCHBURG TODAY

Fitchburg's proximity to Madison raises land values and many farmers find it nearly impossible to pay the high taxes. Farmers eventually sell their land for attractive prices from real estate developers.

According to the records of Wisconsin Statistical Reporting Service, since 1959, the Town of Fitchburg declined steadily in numbers of farmers and dairy cattle. Fitchburg had 107 active farmers in 1959 compared with 58 in 1975; dairy cows numbered 2,937 in 1959 while there were 1,701 in 1975. To illustrate the trend of agriculture in Fitchburg, statistics are shown below:

	1959	1966	1975
Farm Population	579	577	278
Farms	107	114	58
Farms with dairy	85*	59	32
Acres**	20,524	20,910	17,615
Corn	6,058	6,167	9,959
Oats	2,793	1,384	795
Wheat	52	15	47
Soybeans	42	44	284
Alfalfa	3,780	4,994	2,597
Canning Peas	54	516	38
Sweet Corn	13	69	79
Milk Cows	2,937	2,611	1,701
Brood Sows	630	496	323
Sheep	319	342	288

\*estimated

\*\*This includes all acreage operated by farmers whose headquarters are in Fitchburg and include lands which they operate outside of the Town.

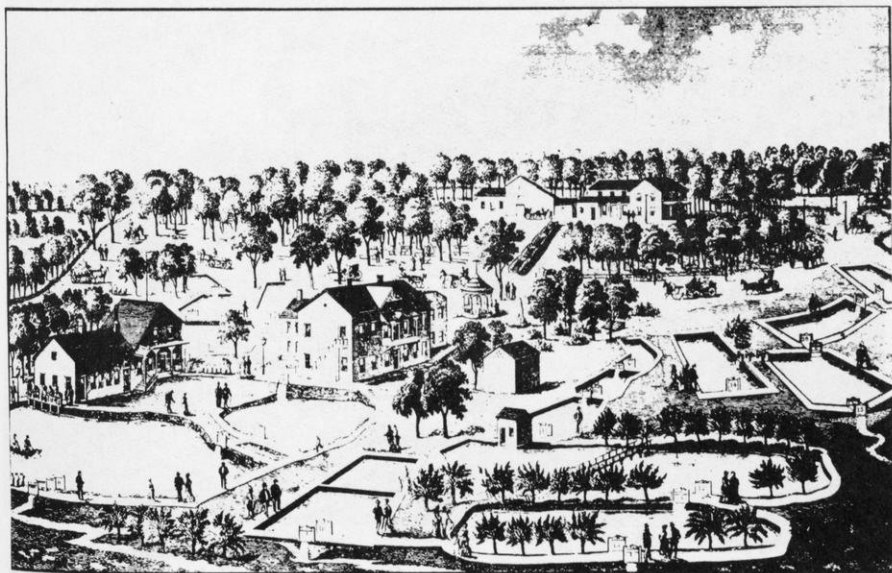
## STATE INSTITUTIONS

Fitchburg has an unusually large amount of state owned property. The University of Wisconsin purchased land in Fitchburg in 1940 from Nellie Grady. Nellie was the daughter of an early settler, Frank Matthew Grady, who settled in 1865. The University uses this land as part of the Arboretum. The Grady Tract contains Grady Prairie with oak openings and the Grady pines, red, white and jack.

In 1876 the State of Wisconsin purchased the pioneer Comstock farm along the Nine Springs in Fitchburg for establishment as a fish hatchery paying \$35 an acre for the original forty. James Nevin was named the first superintendent in 1882 and was instrumental in developing it and other fish hatcheries across the State. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources maintains this three hundred acre tract in Fitchburg.

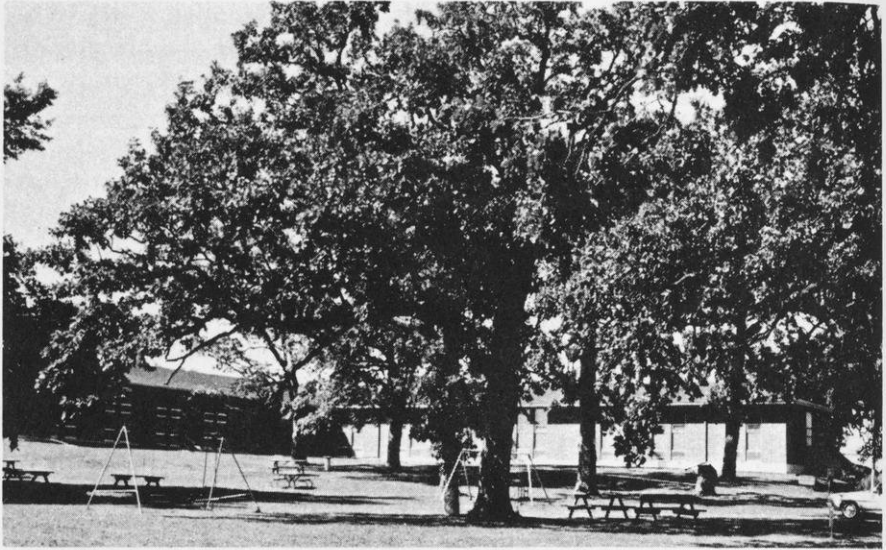
The State Board of Control, in 1928, received permission from Governor Zimmerman to purchase a farm facility for prison residents. This was the Theodore Bosben farm (the former A. O. Fox Woodside farm). The purpose of the farm, according to Gerald Navis, superintendent, is to provide a meaningful work base for the residents and food for six area state institutions. The farm contains 600 acres with 210 milk cows, 450 hogs and 2400 chickens.

The warden of the entire Wisconsin camp system, James Mathews, is stationed at the Oregon Prison Farm. In 1953 he became the first warden of the minimum security correctional camp system. Both Mathews and Navis are firm believers in the therapeutic benefits of farm work, recreation and socializing among the residents. They incorporate these activities as integral parts of the prison programs in their effort to help residents adapt to the society they will face upon their release.



(picture courtesy of State Historical Society of Wisconsin)

### The State Fish Hatchery



(picture courtesy of Bicentennial Committee)

### The State Prison Farm

In 1928, 405 acres of the A. O. Fox farm was purchased by the Wisconsin Board of Control as the site for the Industrial School for Girls. This site contains hilly, wooded sections and small pond which provided outdoor activities for the girls. The school was closed in 1976



(picture courtesy of Bicentennial Committee)

Oakwood Correctional Camp, formerly Oregon Girl's School. 13 buildings presently stand empty.

by order of Governor Patrick Lucey after extensive controversy. Currently, Oakwood Correctional Camp, houses transferred prison inmates nearing their release.

### PUBLIC SAFETY

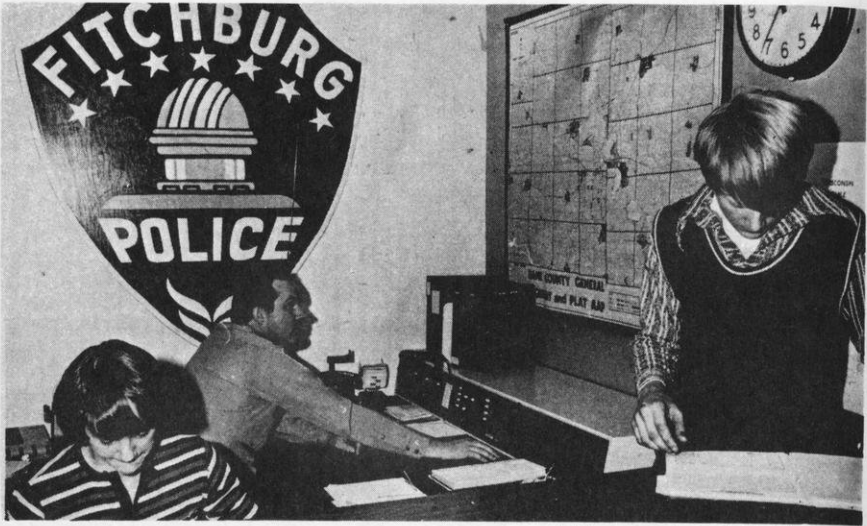
Police Chief, Terry Askey, was hired in 1971 to organize a full time.POLICE DEPARTMENT. Until this time, one man worked on an on-call basis. The Department has a detective, a sergeant and six patrolmen as well as an Animal Control Officer. The police station is located on West Lacy Road in the Safety Building. A new communication system was installed with federal funding for the equipment and installation. They also have a Time Systems Control Center Teletype machine and are among the 220 facilities in the State hooked up to the system. The Department operates three squads, two station wagons as ambulances/patrol vehicles and one unmarked squad.

On February 24, 1976, Fitchburg had its first bank robbery at the Affiliated Bank of Jamestown. After a nine minute high speed chase along dangerously slippery roads, the criminals were forced off the road and apprehended by Fitchburg Police Chief Askey.

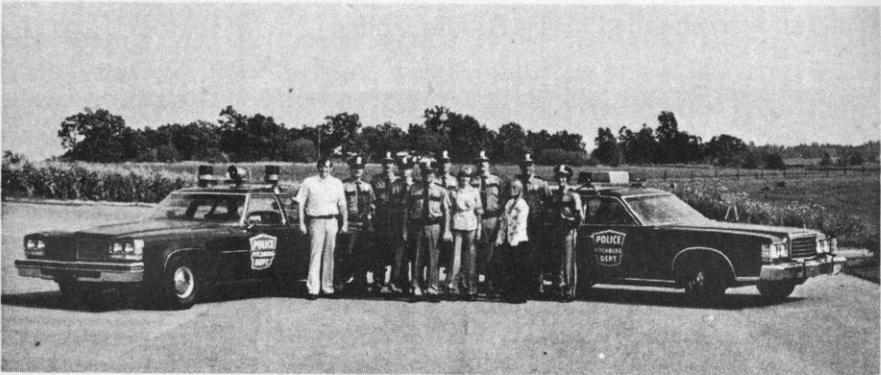


(picture courtesy of Police Department)

**Police Department Safety Building**



(picture courtesy of *Fitchburg Star*)  
Linda Hagar operates the TIME teletype system while Police Chief Terry Askey sits at the controls of the new communications system. Police dispatcher, David Burkeland, reads information to Hagar.



(picture courtesy of Police Department)  
**Fitchburg Police Department — 1976**  
Detective Bill Roberts, Mike Klien, Tom Clauder, Dave Burkeland, Chief Terry Askey, Larry Marquardt, Sue Diener, Louis Eifert, Barbara Blair, Norman Danielson, and Linda Hagar. (Missing Sgt. Gordon Walling)

Fitchburg formed a FIRE DEPARTMENT in 1969 in conjunction with the Towns of Madison, Oregon and Verona. In May, 1971, an ordinance was passed by the Town Board of Fitchburg to form its own Fire Department and appointed Herman Pfund as the Fire Chief. Also appointed at that time were Stan McGaw and Matt White as assistant chiefs.

The Fire Department operates with all volunteers, the Chief, an assistant chief, five captains, five lieutenants and twenty-six firemen.



(picture courtesy of *Fitchburg Star*)

Fred Carlson and Matt White work hard at a house fire in January 1976.



(picture courtesy of Fire Department)

Fire Department Building



**Fitchburg Fire Department** (picture courtesy of *Fitchburg Star*)  
 Front row from left to right: Jerry Richardson, Don Ryan, Pat Fitzpatrick, Chief Herman Pfund, Gordon Priegel, Tom Harrison, Bob Doeringsfeld, Dave Esch, John Zimmerman, Dave Scheel.  
 Second row: Robert Lawler, Bill Dunn, Steve Sweeney, Jack Koepl, Joe Imilkowski, Dick Hugo, Matt White, Larry Noyce, Rick Gullick, Dennis Keller, Jim O'Brien, Gordy Berggren, Russ Gross, David Burkeland, Marvin Milleville, Jack Hoffman, Fred Carlson, Joseph Jerome, John Burdick.  
 Third row: Todd DeMars, Dick Lee, Norbert Meier, Lloyd Blaney, Don Manion, Gary Haberling, Walt Kaega, Bill Stoneman.

The Department is organized into five companies: Co. 1 — Pumper Unit, Co. 2 — Pumper Unit, Co. 3 — Tanker Unit, Co. 4 — Grass Unit and Co. 5 — Reserve Unit.

ORGANIZATIONS

A 4-H CLUB during the 1950's and 1960's was the Stoner Rockets led by Otis Onsrud. In 1961 another group formed a club led by Betty Radtke and the name, Fitchburg Fireflies, was suggested by Mary Kinney.

Cindy Johnson explains that Muriel Stoneman is the current Fireflies leader of over forty boys and girls. The following families are represented: Anderson, Blaney, Fahey, Forsberg, Gervasi, Greene, Holland, Jablonic, Johnson, Janssen, Jones, Kinney, Lawler, Meiss, McGibbon, McKeown, McKinley, Nichols, Noyce, Onsrud, Rhode, Richardson, Ryan, Ryder, Schultz, Skrum, Stoneman, Sutfin, Symdon, Walch and Wooldrige.





The Fitchburg Fireflies Officers:  
 Back row left to right: Phyllis McGibbon, Kelly Meiss.  
 Front row left to right: Beth Ryder, Cindy Johnson, Eddie Kinney.



(picture courtesy of *Fitchburg Star*)

Fitchburg Fireflies pose after cleaning up Fitchburg.  
 Back row left to right: Tracy LaReau, Joan Jansson, Tiffany Anderson,  
 Michelle Walsh, Betty Anderson, Rhonda Knipfer.  
 Kneeling: Doug Muench, Mike Steckling, Jenifer Anderson, Doug Jansson.

## FITCHBURG TODAY

Another 4-H Club in the Town is the Nine Springs Off-Springs which started in September, 1975. Most of the beginning members had belonged to the Happy Hustlers by Lake Waubesa.

"We like to keep it a family thing", says their leader, Mr. Laverne Forest. Currently, there are ten members from seven families mainly from the northeast side of Fitchburg. They include the Petersons, Wirths, Koeppls, Bings, Nelsons, Forests and Kanel. The Ron Kneebones are assistants.

Some of their undertakings for 1976 were making a Fitchburg Bicentennial calendar with pictures they later used as a basis for a bicentennial play which they presented several times.

Mary Dunn describes an adult organization in the Town, the FITCHBURG CLUB. *"The Fitchburg Club was incorporated in November, 1967 after some interested residents formed a permanent club for the purpose of creating, developing, promoting and supporting cultural, civic and social activities in the Town. The names of the seven directors at the time of its origin were: Lawrence Rowley, President; Bernard Killian, Vice President; Mrs. J. Vincent Dunn, Secretary; Mrs.*



(picture courtesy of Fitchburg Star)

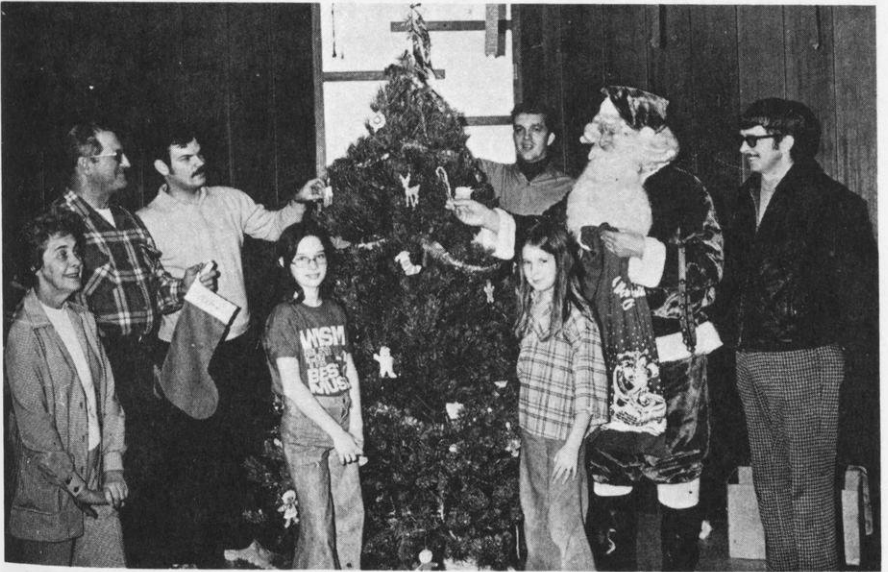
Nine Springs Off-Springs cast for the Bicentennial skits of Fitchburg.  
Back row left to right: Kathy Bing, Kirby Nelson, Jackie Koepl, Holly Nelson, Angie Peterson.  
Front: Janice Werth, Tim Peterson, Jill Werth, Kelly Koepl, Patrick Koepl.



(picture courtesy of *Fitchburg Star*)

The Nine Springs and Waubesa 4-H groups look over the 1976 Calendar they created.

Left to right: Pat Koepl, Judy Koepl, Mike Kanel, Carry Forest, Janet Kiche, Kelly Koepl, Eleanor Krehl, and Debbie Krause.



(picture courtesy of *Fitchburg Star*)

Fitchburg Club members, aided by the Jaycees, sponsored a Christmas party in 1975. Decorating the tree are Hazel Schley, Niles Schley, Pete Taylor, Sherri Sherman, Pete Rusch, Jayne Schrank and Jack Sherman. Santa is Jim Lippert.



(picture courtesy of *Fitchburg Star*)

Two leprechauns, Vin and Mary Dunn, enjoy the annual St. Patrick's Day dance sponsored by the Fitchburg Club.

*Jessie Nelson, Treasurer, and Thomas Gorman, Ernie Novaro and Leo Richardson. The activities are numerous: sponsoring baby sitter clinics, soft ball leagues, junior bowling teams, dances and the promotion of the July celebration. The Fitchburg Club Newsletter ran from 1967 to 1971."*

An active Fitchburg JAYCEES Club was organized in 1969. Its original officers were: Richard Charles, President; Rhody Close, Vice President; Joey Schrank, State Director; John Connolly, Secretary-



(picture courtesy of *Fitchburg Star*)

Jaycee paper drive.

Left to right: an unknown donor and girl, Henry Geitz, Renate Geitz, A. C. Hildebrandt, and Dean Rugotska.



(picture courtesy of *Fitchburg Star*)

Ken Reigle and Donn Tolley paint "Welcome to Fitchburg" signs.

Treasurer; Tom Gray, Director and Jim Stellhorn, Director. Jerry Healy, a Tower Hill Park resident, was instrumental in developing what has become a leading chapter among the some 250 current Jaycee chapters in the State.



(picture courtesy of *Fitchburg Star*)

Winter Holiday



(picture courtesy of *Fitchburg Star*)

**Sand box fill. Joe Duesler, Pete Rusch, Pete Taylor, and Mike Calmes.**



(picture courtesy of *Fitchburg Star*)

**Easter party sponsored by the Jaycees.**



(picture courtesy of *Fitchburg Star*)

**Hunter Safety program sponsored by the Jaycees.**

The primary concern of the 1969 Jaycees was to begin the development of a Fitchburg area parks system. Initial responsibility for parks programs belonged to Dick Charles, John Jackson, Marv Patrick, Steve Tadevich, Jerry Healy and Dick Hugo. Their major projects were the development of a comprehensive parks system, social programs for community activity and community service.

The JAYCETTES were organized April 19, 1971 with eighteen members. Patty Schrank was the first president. Since that time the Jaycettes have been active in community projects — sponsoring the Red Cross bloodmobile, awarding students scholarships and donating funds toward park equipment. Their annual Christmas party is a progressive dinner party for 50.

The FIREMEN'S WIVES organized in 1972 as a social organization. Judy Fitzpatrick, 1976 president, notes that Alice McGaw was instrumental in instituting this group. The first officers were: Judy Noyce, President; Lois Esch, Vice President and Marilyn Priegel, Secretary-Treasurer. Activities include garage sales, Christmas parties for the children of the firemen, Christmas cookie exchange and an annual banquet. In 1976 the wives offered a first aid course for members of the community, sewed a patch for the Dane County Bicentennial quilt and sold concessions, as in past years, at the July Fitchburg celebration.

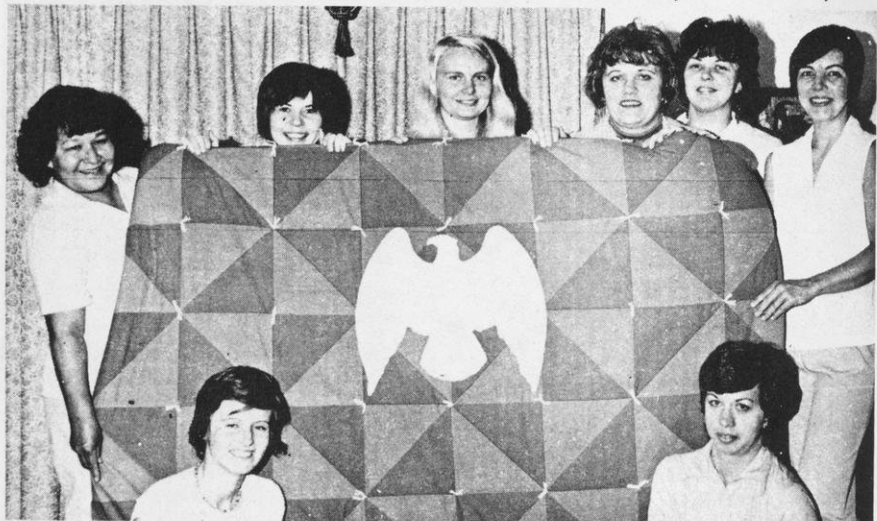


Jaycettes for 1976-77 — The Fitchburg Jaycettes, and the Jaycees, installed new officers and provided exceptionally dedicated members with special recognition awards at their anniversary dinner. The Jaycettes here are: Barbara Herreid, Treasurer; Kathy Martin, Secretary; Linda Rusch, State Director; Margaret-Ann Reigle, Vice President; Mary Rugotska, President; and Rose Tolley, past President.



The Jaycettes sponsor the Babysitting Clinic. (picture courtesy of *Fitchburg Star*)  
 Front row left to right: Mark Ludlum, Jane Schrank, Shari Doering, Sheri Sherman, Michelle Walsh, Debby Cissell, Susan Bowman.  
 2nd row: Cary Forest, Paul Fahey, Russell Ludlum, Jodi Noyce, Robin Maloney, Mary Sue Hunt, Traci Lawler, Diane Merry, Heather Holland.  
 Back row: David Janssen, Sue Larson, Linda Westphal, Virginia Koster, Nancy Swab, Valerie Hugo, Kathy Onsgard, Jacki Janssen, and Bonnie Pulver.

Hostess of the GOLDEN AGERS Club, Mary Dunn, relates the history of the organization, "The Club was formed in March, 1970 when a group of thirty residents met with the Board of Directors of The



(picture courtesy of *Fitchburg Star*)

Firemen's wives display their Bicentennial quilt. Left to right: Dorothy Ryan, Sue Harrison, Leann Nichols, Marilyn Priegle, Garnett Richardson, Lois Esch. Seated are Judy Fitzpatrick and Judy Noyce.



*Fitchburg Club for a social afternoon. It went so well that they continued to meet with expenses shared by both groups. Since December of 1971, the Golden Agers became independent and self-supporting and run the club themselves."*

They meet the second Tuesday of each month at the Town Hall for an afternoon of cards followed by a luncheon or potluck. Ed Flemming is the oldest member — 98 years old.



**Julia Fluckiger and Paul Fisher**

*(picture courtesy of Fitchburg Star)*



**John Batker, Reuben Paulson, and Mrs. Paulson.**

*(picture courtesy of Fitchburg Star)*

**Mrs. Walter Batker, Mrs. George Evert, Mrs. Leo Lacy, Virgil Franz.**



*(picture courtesy of Fitchburg Star)*

**George Evert, Kate Fahey**



*(picture courtesy of Fitchburg Star)*

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

As the Town urbanizes, the local government changes. William McKee was Town Chairman during the important transitional years in Fitchburg (1965-1975). He describes the Board's position during these years.



(picture courtesy of J. Fluckiger)

**Fitchburg Elected Officials — 1939**

Assessor — John Kivlin, Supervisor — George Barry, Chairman, John Fluckiger — Supervisor — Ralph Hammersley, Clerk — Joe Caine.



**Fitchburg Elected Officials — 1975**

from bottom of table: Supervisor — Tim Krause, Treasurer — Frank Baxter, Supervisor — Leslie Katzman, Assessor — Bill Stoneman, Chairman — Doug Morrissette, Supervisor — John Koepl, Supervisor — Jack Jallings.



(picture courtesy of *Fitchburg Star*)

Outgoing town chairman William McKee surrounded by four of the five members on the first five person board. Jack Jallings, Doug Morrissette, McKee, John Koepl, Leo Lacy. Missing was Don McGaw.

*"In the early 1950's it became apparent that the Town government needed to provide leadership for the transition from an agricultural area to an urban one. I believe the first step in that direction was in 1954 with the purchase of a truck for free rubbish removal.*

*Other towns with developments failed to provide urban services and eventually it became necessary for the central city to annex their property. This resulted in a severe loss to the Towns of Madison, Blooming Grove, Burke, Westport and Middleton.*

*As it became necessary to provide other services, we started streetline marking, road markings, and center divisions which no other towns were providing. We installed streetlights, named streets and put up signs.*

*Soon we found we were growing at such a rate that it was necessary to provide sewer and water. This had been provided by corporations that built some apartments in the northwest corner of the Town. They obtained a government grant for financing sewer and water services.*

*In 1963, it became apparent that we needed some office or central facility for the township. The old town hall building was used mainly for elections. A new town hall and much needed garage space was built in 1964 and at that time it didn't seem possible that the 40 x 80 building would ever be in full use.*



(picture courtesy of *Fitchburg Star*)

A "sign" of the times. Al Lobeck tears down the old town hall sign. Fitchburg built its new town hall in 1964.

*The second sewer and water connection entered the Town about May, 1964 through the McKee property, with the bulk of the expense paid by the McKee family.*

*With the influx of new citizens, it became necessary to have some fire and police protection beyond the Justice of the Peace and Constable. Al Joyner was hired as a part time policeman using his own car in patrolling the Town. A few years later we purchased a car.*

*In 1966, Belmar, a large residential plat with sewer and water, brought considerable numbers of additional residents. Because this*

*plat was located on sandy ground and the streets ran up and down the hills, there was a great deal of erosion. Board members McKee, McGaw and Lacy made the decision that future subdivisions must have sewer and water services and concrete curb and gutters.*

*The 1970 Legislature made some changes in the laws permitting towns over a certain population to have a larger town board on the basis of more work to be done. In 1973 Fitchburg voted to elect a five man board to handle this extra work. In general, the idea was great but I'm not too sure it has worked out exactly as planned.*

*Whenever the Town went to Dane County Planning or the City of Madison, which has jurisdiction for approval of plats within three miles of their borders, there would be little consideration given to the ideas of the Fitchburg Town Board. The reason for this was 'you don't have any planning'. So a Planning Commission was appointed in the early 1970's on the basis of one person representing each area of the Town — northeast, northwest, central, southeast and southwest. They met on a regular basis to decide on planning and to discuss plats, etc.*

*A Town ordinance states that new plats must provide land for parks and open space. The Park Commission was created to advise the Board as to what a locality wants in their park and what facilities they would like.*

*The Planning Commission provided a master plan for Fitchburg and an engineer was hired on an advisory basis to provide the Planning and Park Commissions with information they needed to accomplish their job.*

*The strengths and weaknesses of town government are the same as strengths and weaknesses of any government. It depends upon whether these elected officials are willing to accept the responsibility to which they are elected, to make decisions they were elected to make, stand by their decisions and implement them. It is not the purpose of any government, or its elected officials, to shift responsibility which they have assumed to people who are appointed, who are not responsible to the elector and who usually represent special interests."*

*The Fitchburg Town Board is aided in its service to the Town by three appointed commissions: Planning, Parks and Utility Commissions.*

*Original members of the Planning Commission appointed in 1969 were: Lee Holthaus, Chairman; Karl Bing, Secretary; Robert Purcell; Stan Gefke; Clayton Wolfe; William McKee, Town Board Representative and Al D'Onofrio, Town Engineer.*

According to former Planning Commission member, Ronald Kneebone, "The original members hired a planning firm to develop a 'Comprehensive Development Plan' for the Town of Fitchburg. The completed plan was presented to the Planning Commission in April, 1970 by the consultant, Midwest Planning and Research, Inc. The plan was very general in scope; it did, however, provide information on good planning principles and served as a test for the Commission.

Early in 1973, the Fitchburg Planning Commission and the Dane County Regional Planning Commission embarked on an eight month study of the future development of the Town. The project's purpose was to identify those objectives and policies that would provide the basis for making mutually supportable land use decisions at the local and regional level. The results of this study then became the basis for the Town of Fitchburg Development Plan which was adopted in 1974. To implement this plan, the Planning Commission enacted a subdivision ordinance regulating division and subdivision of the land in the Town. These two documents provided a sound basis for the Planning Commission to make decisions consistent with the development goals for Fitchburg and have given Fitchburg a reputation for planning leadership in Dane County."



**Planning Commission**

The Fitchburg Plan Commission tours Blaney Farms .

Left to right: Town Board Chairman Doug Morrissette, Leslie Katzman, Richard Blaney, Chairman Mike Maloney, Ron Kneebone, Dave Dean.

The *Park Commission* was established in 1970. Original members were: Michael Maloney, Chairman, Rhode Close, James Klahr, Gordon Priegel, Kenneth Reigle, William Rhode and Thomas Schmidt.

According to Gordon Priegel, the commission originated for the purpose of organizing and developing parks on land set aside for park purposes. Their duties consist of asking for state and federal funding for park equipment and planning for the development of the parks. Priegel explains that formerly local neighborhoods and the Jaycees bought equipment, shrubs and trees, installing these at neighborhood work sessions. He says it still operates that way to a certain extent while maintenance of parks is provided by Town employees under the supervision of Park Coordinator, Sue Oshman.



**Park Commission**

(picture courtesy of *Fitchburg Star*)

Left to right: Orrie Lokken, (Lynda Lewis, Board Member liaison), Tom Schmidt, Chairman Mike Maloney, Park Coordinator Sue Oshman, Ken Riegle. Missing are Betty Anderson and Glenna Shanahan.

The *Utility Commission* was created by an ordinance adopted by the Town Board early in 1976. Although it had a capable utility superintendent and assistants handling the day by day operations, the Board felt it also needed the aid of a Utility Commission.

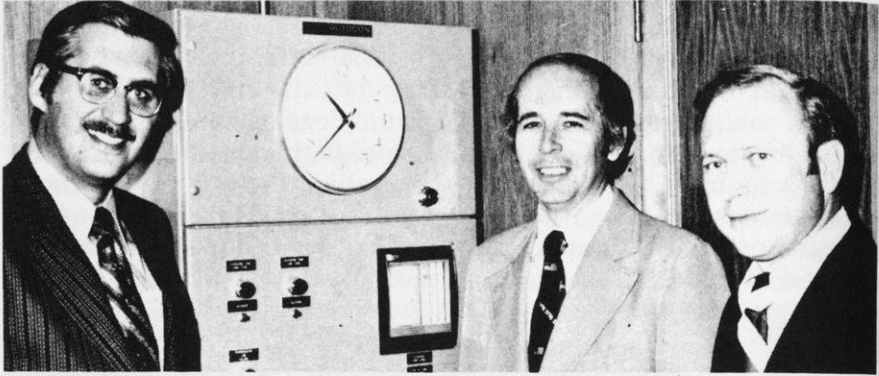
The functions of the commission include the management, supervision and control of the buildings, grounds, waterworks, sewage systems, refuse collection and all related matter for the utility district.

One of the first items demanding attention by the Commission was the need for an additional well to keep pace with the ever increasing requirements of the water utility.

The original three members appointed by the Board were John Darling, Robert Doeringsfeld and Bob Hillner. As expressed by

## FITCHBURG TODAY

Darling, the first chairman, his group intends to assist the Town Board in serving the long range best interests of the majority of those dwelling in Fitchburg, but without detracting from the responsiveness of our Town government to the needs of its individual citizens.



### Utility Commission

Member Robert Doringsfeld, President John Darling, Secretary Robert Hillner.

Douglas Morrissette, 1976 Town Chairman, explains his philosophy of town government and the inter-relationships of local town officials, "*Town government has a unique place in not only the development but continuation of the 'home rule' concept for local people. Basically, the town chairman has the responsibility for conducting town meetings. In all other respects, he is only a voting member like the other board supervisors. He does not have veto powers nor other such discretionary powers as mayors or village presidents.*"

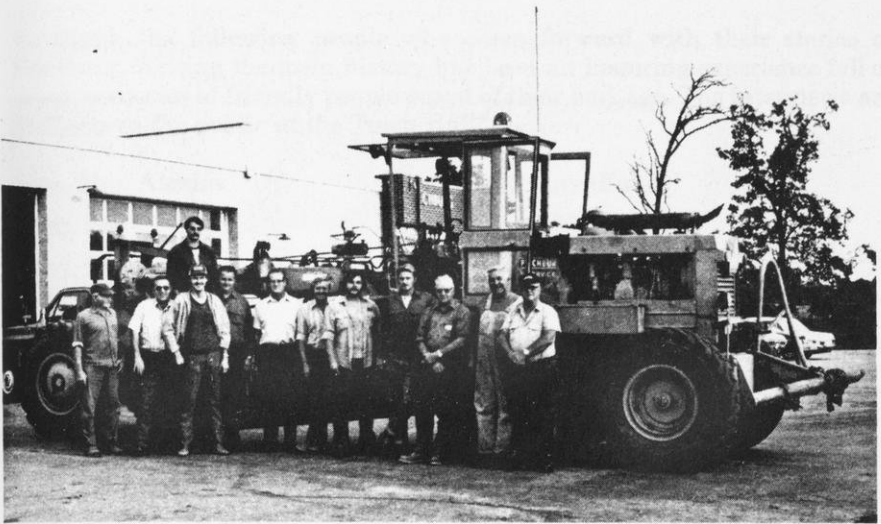


### Town Employees

(picture courtesy of Bicentennial Committee)

Office employees back left to right: Secretary — Hazel Schley, Clerk — Ed Lynaugh, Park Coordinator — Sue Oshman, Assessor — Bill Stoneman. Sitting left to right: Deputy Clerk — Nedra Culp, Secretary — Bernice Presby.





(picture courtesy of Bicentennial Committee)

**Road and Utility Crews**

Bill Sweeney, Curt Sorenson, William (Moose) Durkin, Ed Dunn, Dave Jones, Alvin Benion, Randy Owens, Randy Rodgers, John Jones, Water Utility Superintendent, Wilfred Kinney, Hubert Warren, Road Superintendent, Don McGaw.

Mr. Morrisette sums up the position of Fitchburg's Town Board in 1976, *"Old in years, rich in history, young in philosophy, Fitchburg looks to the future with anticipation and optimism. Out of the past, we in Fitchburg have come a long way since the initial urban dwellers first appeared on the scene. While all has not been serene, more and more we see a sharing of experiences and background between the rural and urban dwellers. If we respect each other and try not to impose our ideals on other people, we will continue to progress without conflict."*



(picture courtesy of Fitchburg Star)

**1976 Fitchburg Town Board**

Jack Jallings, Chairman Doug Morrisette, Gordon Priegel, Leo Lacy, Lynda Lewis.

And now let us think of the Old  
Ones. It is they who are our true  
teachers. Those who have kept the  
wisdom accumulated over centuries  
will help in these troubled times.  
They speak our true language, and  
it is our instruction that when  
they speak, we should listen.

Indian Wisdom

## ORAL INTERVIEWS

We thank the following people who came forward with their stories of Fitchburg. Writing the town history has been an inspiring experience full of warm memories of friendly people proud of their heritage. The interviews are available to the public at the Town Hall.

Baas, Mrs. Alexius	Harty, Kay (Fahey)
Barry, Leo	Holmes, Mrs. Frank
Barry, Philip	Johnson, Seymour
Batker, Dorothy (West)	Kinney, Monsignor Edward
Blaney, Edwin	Kinney, Wilfred & Mary (Fleming)
Bowman, Duane	Lacy, Leo
Byrne, Catherine	Lappley, Ervin & Dorothy (Legg)
Dunn, Vincent	McCoy, Elizabeth
Dunn, Brother William	McKee, William Sr.
Fahey, Kate (Keeley)	O'Brien, Gerald
Fox, Philip & Anna	O'Brien, Leo
Fluckiger, Julia (Eichelkraut)	Purcell, Maurice & Genevieve (Lacy)
Gill, Donald	Stoneman, Gladys (Jones)
Green, Ellen (Fahey)	Uphoff, Walter & Mary Jo
Haight, Rachel (Steinhauer)	Vroman, Gordon

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank all the people listed for their time and effort in donating information, pictures, and records for use in our book.

Adams, Arnel	McGaw, Donald
Askey, Terry	McGowan, Jeannette (Spaanen)
Barth, Margaret (Noonan)	McKee, Lyman
Brown, Cletus	McManus, Esther (Muehlmeier)
Bertolino, James	Morrisette, Douglas
Byrne, Thomas	Nelson, Jessie
Cohee, Mel	Oshman, Sue
Clayton, James	Priegel, Gordon
Cross, Edna (Stoneman)	Purcell, Nora (Grady)
Eby, Robert	Rusch, Peter
Evert, George	Schneider, Catherine (O'Brien)
Fitzpatrick, Judy	Schmidt, Almira (Herman)
Gallagher, Catherine (Diederich)	Seales, Mrs. Frank
Grady, Catherine	Stone, Clarabelle (Sharp)
Jackson, Genevieve (Jones)	Sweeney, William
Johnson, Cynthia	Tolley, Rose
Jones, Marc	Vitcenda, Florenna (Hanson, Wendt)
Keenan, Robert & Janet	Whalen, Maurice
Kneebone, Ronald	Whalen, Margaret (Gordon)
Kellor, Florence	Wineke, William
Lalor, Margaret	Wirth, Don
Lamers, Jerry	
Lynaugh, Ed	
Lyons, Claude & Dorothy (Manson)	

Extra special thanks to an understanding family: John, Benjamin, Matthew, and Emilie Darling.

Thanks to Fitchburg town employees: Clerk — Ed Lynaugh, Deputy Clerk — Nedra Culp, and secretaries — Bernice Presby and Hazel Schley.

## FITCHBURG CELEBRATES THE FOURTH OF JULY

"The Fourth Day of July, 1776, will be the most memorable Epoca, in the history of America. It ought to be solemnized with Pomp & Parade, with Shews, Games, Sports, Guns, Bells, Bonfires & Illuminations from one End of this Continent to the other from this Time forward forever more."

John Adams, 1776

Fitchburg settlers gathered at the Scotch settlement of Verona for a 4th of July celebration in 1845. "The program was for fun generally, and we had it. Rifle shooting for sheep, home-made Scotch whiskey and beer, playing baseball, dancing the "Highland Fling" on the Green with Billy Ray and his bagpipes for music. We had more real enjoyment than can be had at any celebration at the present day. But as the mixing of Scotch whiskey and beer did not agree with all, some went home with a brick in their hat."

William Vroman, 1877

"We had a number of relatives living in Madison. They found a great lot of enjoyment and pleasure in spending the holiday in the country. It was then the big panic, and the panic was usually at our home. When we were kids, the aunts would send us firecrackers for the 4th of July."

Catherine Byrne, circa 1900's

"On the 4th of July when the war was going on (World War II), at the Fish Hatchery they would have a celebration with political speakers and they would raffle off an American flag. That was the highlight of the day."

William McKee, Sr., circa 1917

"The 4th of July was spent with the Syene bunch — a picnic sometimes at Waubesa Beach or sometimes it was held down here in Stoneman's woods.

Wilfred Kinney, circa 1918

"On the 4th of July, we'd be done haying and that was a big celebration, and we'd go up on the hill and have a picnic and eat ice cream. We made ice cream with the hand-cranking machine."

Gladys Stoneman, circa 1920's

"Two or three families would get together and have a picnic and light a few firecrackers and drink a little homebrew."

Phil Barry, circa 1920's

"The 4th of July I remember the best — I saved any money I got for firecrackers. Boy, we had a lot of banging, don't think we didn't! I sure had a lot of fun shooting them."

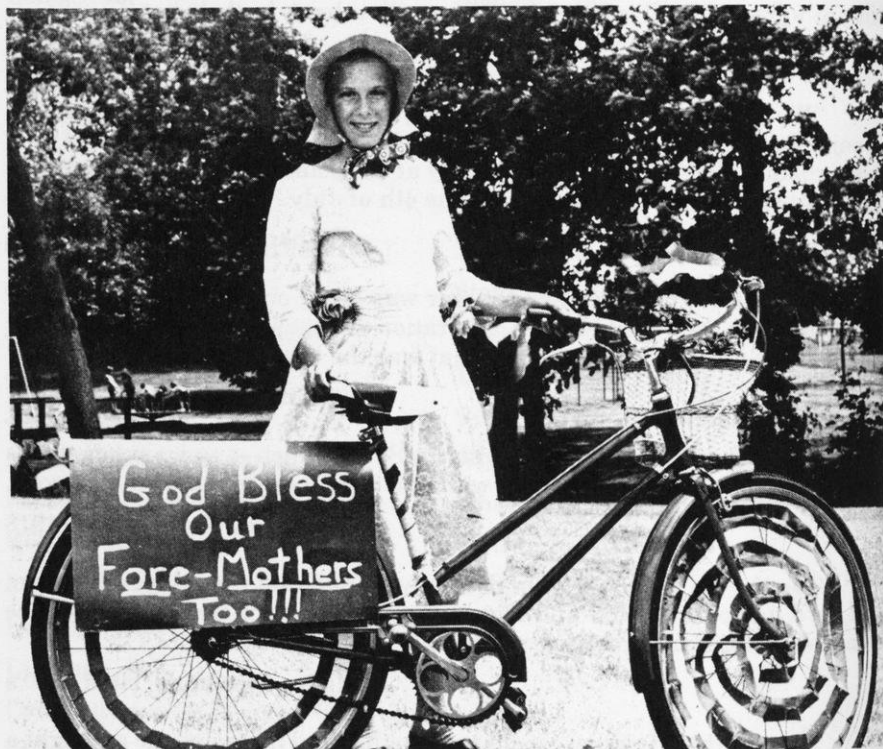
Gordon Vroman, circa 1925

“On the 4th of July we always went up on the Whalen Road Hill to see the fireworks. You could see Stoughton and Oregon and Vilas Park and Westmoreland fireworks. You could see all of them at one time.”

Ellen Green, circa 1950's

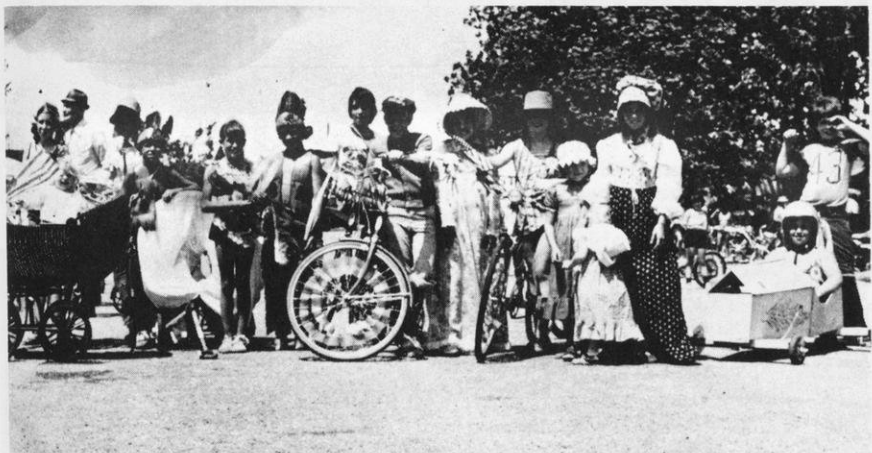
“Fitchburg's fireworks in 1976 were the biggest and the best in all of the United States of America.”

Charles O'Brien, 1976



The Fitchburg Bicentennial Independence Day Celebration involved many local organizations. The Bicentennial Committee sponsored old fashioned games and skits, rides, races, a square dance and bicycle parade. Kim Tolley was one of the eager contestants.

Proud winners of the Childrens Bicycle Parade and race assemble.





Wally Croft and his family assemble the fireworks for Fitchburg's Annual Celebration sponsored by the Fitchburg Club. Temperatures of 107° didn't interfere with the numerous activities enjoyed by town residents at the very successful Bicentennial Independence Day Celebration.



(picture courtesy of *Fitchburg Star*)

Members of the Fitchburg Fireflies 4-H Club won the best decorated prize for their participation in the Children's Chariot Race at the Independence Day Celebration.

From left to right: Lisa Richardson, Edward Kinney, Brian Blaney, Jim Blaney, Andy Kinney, Tom Kinney, Ann Marie Nichols.



## TOWN OF FITCHBURG

### TOWN CHAIRMEN

Joseph Vroman	1847-49	Mark Cullen	1891-92
Lewis S. Auger	1849-51	Philip Barry	1892-93
John Keenan	1851-55	Hirman Vroman	1893-94
Unknown	1855-59	Philip Barry	1894-95
J. E. Mann	1859-60	J. H. Gorry	1895-96
John Keenan	1860-67	H. J. Sutherland	1896-98
W. D. Bird	1867-71	Mark Cullen	1898-01
James Travis	1871-72	Philip Barry	1901-09
Philip Barry	1872-74	Hirman Vroman	1909-12
James Travis	1874-75	J. H. Gorry	1912-13
John McWilliams	1875-76	Eugene Barry	1913-21
Dan Van Hoesen	1876-77	William Whalen	1921-25
Hirman Vroman	1877-78	Thomas Fahey	1925-36
William C. Kiser	1878-81	Arthur Purcell	1936-38
W. D. Bird	1881-82	John Fluckiger	1938-65
Partrick Barry	1882-83	William McKee	1965-75
W. D. Bird	1883-84	Douglas Morrissette	1975-
Philip Barry	1884-85		
Hiram Vroman	1885-86		
Philip Barry	1886-90		
Hirman Vroman	1890-91		

**CENTURY FARM HOME  
AWARDS IN FITCHBURG\***

Adams, Arnel

Year settled 1847, Year of Award 1948

Barry, Phillip and Michael

Year settled 1870, Year of Award 1971

Fox, Philip et. al

Year settled 1842, Year of Award 1973

Haight, Rachel

Year settled 1867, Year of Award 1973

Kinney, Edward

Year settled 1848, Year of Award 1948

Purcell, Nora

Year settled 1867, Year of Award 1973

Vroman, Arthur, Hiram, and Elmer

Year settled 1839, Year of Award 1948

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\*From the State Fair Park Board (1974)

## JOE WALLACE POEMS

### FITCHBURG.\*

My dear old town of Fitchburg,  
My heart still warms to thee,  
Like the sailor in his dreams of home  
Tossed on the rolling sea.

'Tis quarter of a century since I trod  
Thy hills so bright and fair,  
And now of all my dear old friends,  
How few are living there.

By fancy's flash, I read the names  
Of friends and kindred all,  
In the old churchyard whose mossy stones  
Lie just above Oak Hall.

The old school house is standing yet,  
But where those laughing eyes,  
Whose merriment the teacher checked  
With stern looks of surprise?

Oh, Time! What lines of grief and care  
On youthful cheek and brow,  
So changed the few whom death has left  
I scarce would know them now.  
John Sweeney's pond lies quiet in the glen,  
The Nine-Springs they flow welcoming  
The sick to health again,  
And every drink renews one's youth  
As figured by my pen.

Westward stands Jim Whalen's hill  
Right up against the sky.  
Oh, high and grand that old hill stands,  
A guard, where the valleys lie.  
Down that weary winding road,  
Which followed by my home,  
How many times, a barefoot lad,  
When tired I did roam.

And that old crowd I used to know,  
Their faces now I see;  
A-running up and down that road,  
All in their childish glee.

---

\*Written as a tribute to my old town while I was residing New York City in 1908.—J. W. W.

Yes, there was "Doc" and Tom and Jed,  
And Jim and Johnnie, too,  
We did at times say "ancient rhymes"  
Make up a motley crew.

One left the hill for the Windy Town,  
And one to the far East came,  
Another, I'm told, on Puget Sound  
Has climbed the hill to fame;  
But why select a few of all  
The boys I used to know?  
I mean the boys who played with me  
Some thirty years ago.

The melon patch, upon the hill,  
Sometimes we did possess,  
And midnight raids on "Daddy Wright's"  
Caused him so much distress.  
That good old man has gone to rest,  
He fears no devil's frown;  
He never pointed that old gun,  
But something tumbled down.

The kind old blacksmith, at the forge,  
His hair still white as snow,  
Was the dearest friend I ever had,  
In the pleasant long ago.  
For his honor, truth, his jovial youth,  
The equal I never saw.  
He was true to friend, kind to foe  
And abided by the law.

Now when my bones on that hillside lie,  
Under a four-foot depth of snow,  
I'm sure I'll meet those good old boys,  
The boys I used to know.  
I've wandered East, I've wandered West,  
I've traveled Spring and Fall,  
But the dearest friends I ever had,  
Were right around Oak Hall.

## PUGILIST AND PREACHER.\*

On the I. C. railroad ten miles south,  
There lives a man with lots of mouth;  
His tongue at times runs very loose,  
And on his neighbors heaps abuse.

A gray haired veteran, thin and pale,  
Was the last victim he did assail  
With vile abuses loud and long,  
And something that was very wrong.

The poor old man was forced to go  
Homeward with his tale of woe;  
At the garden gate the boys he met,  
They swore out vengeance with a threat.

Resolved the pugilist should die,  
Or perish like old Eagle-eye;  
A few days then of thunder and rain  
The pugilist went to take the train.

At the depot door the preacher he met,  
The rest of my story you can't forget.  
An hour's hard fighting bathed in gore,  
Together they rolled on the depot floor.

But the bonded preacher, brave and true,  
At last had met his Waterloo.  
The pugilist trimmed him up in shape,  
And homeward he went like a crippled ape.

We understand again he will try,  
To give the pugilist a black eye;  
But our advice is to stay away,  
And leave the bulldog safe at bay.

Fitchburg has had its fighting day,  
We hope it will never again hold sway.  
We take new terms for a lease,  
And write for our motto the words of p-e-a-c-e.

---

\*This poem was written July 1, 1897, after a hard fight the Fitchburg station of the I. C. railway, and the two participants are well known there. I have described the pugilist and preacher.—J. W. W.

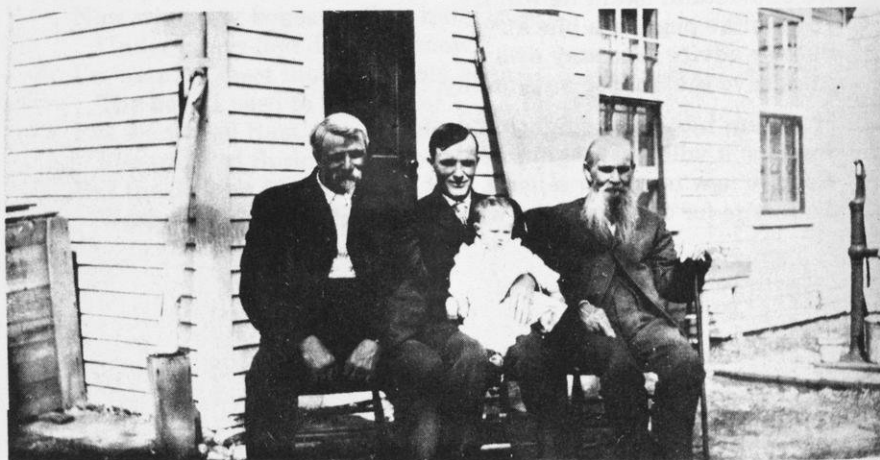
## FAMILY AND FRIENDS



(picture courtesy of K. Fahey)

### The John Fahey Family

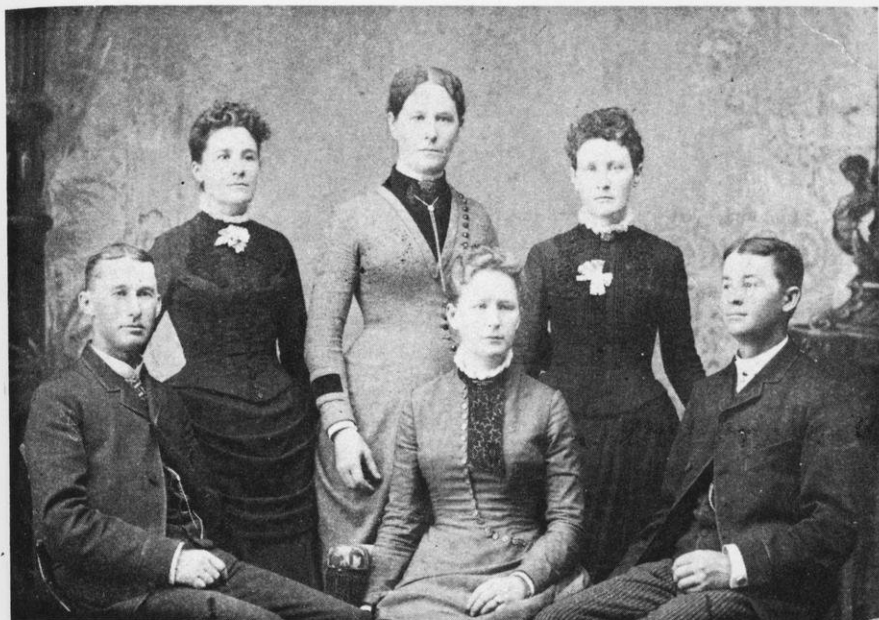
Children back from left to right: Mary, Elizabeth, James — Front Mother Julia (Monks), Joseph, Thomas, Julia and Father John. Julia Monks Fahey received a silver service from President Hayes for a command performance of her horseback riding at the State Fair. About 1900.



(picture courtesy of R. Haight)

### Four Generations of Hights

James, Ben, Althen, and Nicholas. 1908 Easter Sunday.



(picture courtesy of L. Lacy)

**The Moses Lacy Family**

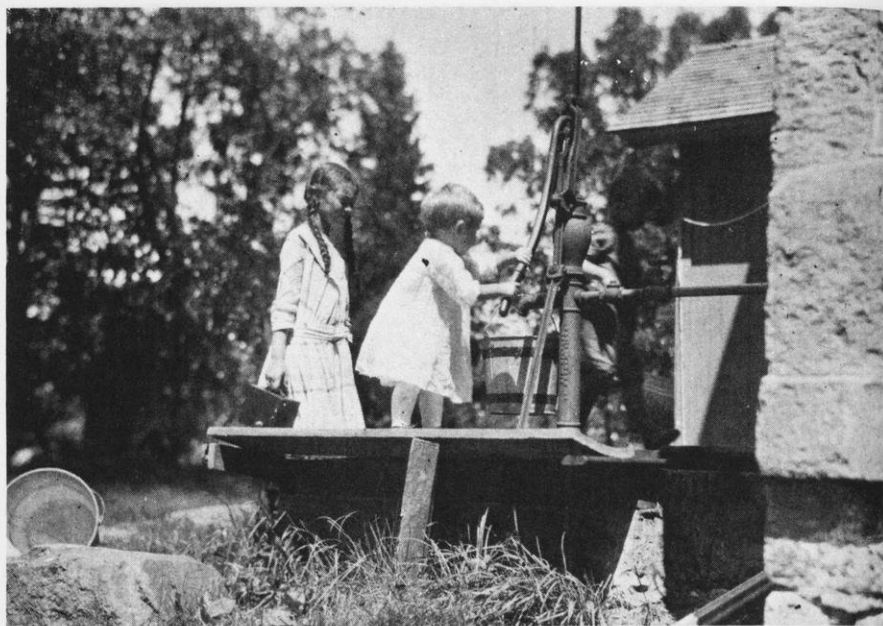
Girls from left to right: Maggie, Libby, Mary. Front: Uncle William Aunt Ellen, Moses Lacy.



(picture courtesy of G. Purcell)

**Fun in Lacy's yard**

From left to right: 2 visitors, Genevieve, Visitor, Viola, Leo, Art, and dog Ted.



(picture courtesy of P. Fox)

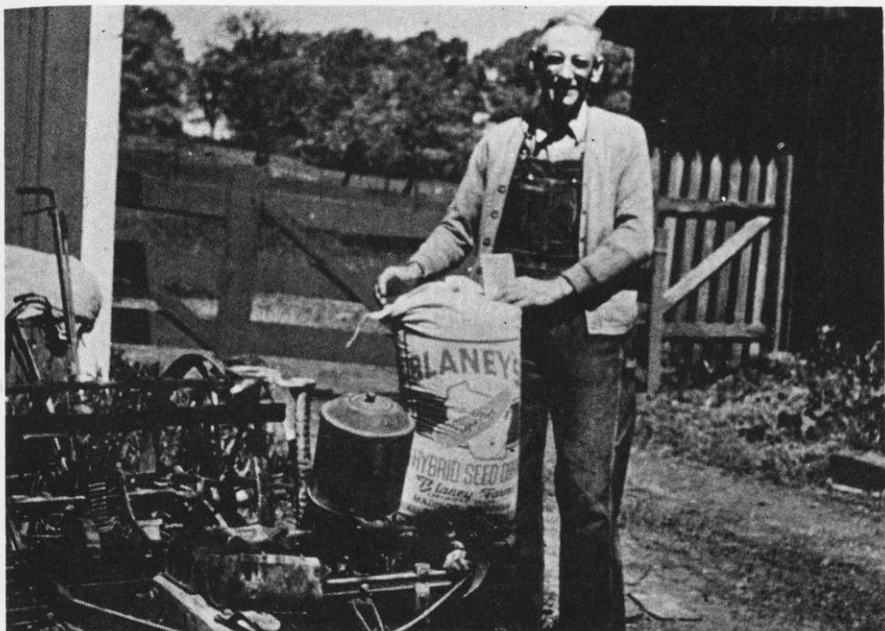
**Anna, Katy, and Phil Fox at their cistern on the Fox Farm.**



(picture courtesy of G. O'Brien)

**Friends Cassie (Synon) O'Brien and Kitty (Corcoran) Grady sitting on a country fence.**





T. R. (Ted) Stoneman, shown here in the mid 1930's, settled in the Fitchburg area in 1910.

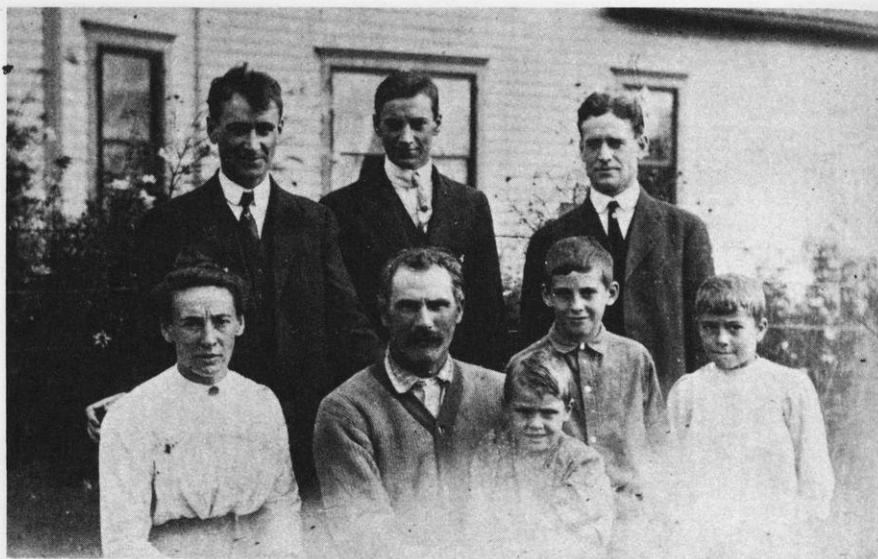


Esther Muhlmeier McManus on the right, an Oakhall school teacher, plays London Bridge with her sister and friends.



William Blaney and granddaughter, Carol.

**FAMILY AND FRIENDS**



**William Blaney Family**  
Front row left to right: Louisa, William, Bert, Edwin and Roy.



**Relatives of Bill Sweeney —**  
Fitchburg's American Gothic



**Sweeney Children**  
Front left to right: Cousin Rosie  
Moore and Anne .  
Back: Bill and Edward

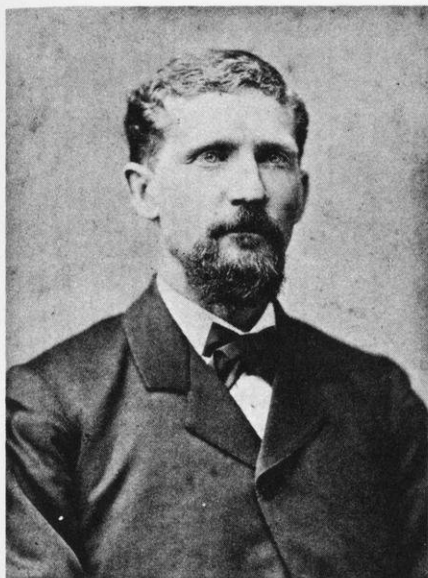
10		Expenses		
1876		Brought forward		8 <sup>cts</sup> \$ 186 90
Jan	5	Sp Fool		2 00
"	6	Chewing Tobacco <sup>25</sup> Leaf Tobacco <sup>25</sup>		50
"	"	Dance		1 50
"	11	Dance		50
"	14	Cradle A. Murphy		25
"	17	Tobacco and cigars		15
"	26	Tobacco <sup>20</sup> Buttons <sup>10</sup> Beer <sup>5</sup> Cambrie <sup>15</sup>		50
Feb	7	Hair-oil		80
"	8	Tobacco <sup>10</sup> Cigars <sup>10</sup> Corn <sup>100</sup>		1 20
"	10	Beer		10
"	11	Mending Boots		40
"	14	Tobacco		65
"	19	Coat, pants & Vest		14 00
"	"	Collar <sup>25</sup> Suspenders <sup>35</sup>		
"	"	Tobacco <sup>20</sup> Beer <sup>15</sup>		35
"	"	Spring Suit		5 00
"	"	Cutting hair		25
"	28	Lunch cigars, Tobacco, pipe and Clothes brush		90
March	2	Leaf Tobacco		25
"	3	Ink, lunch & cigars		30
"	4	Went to town - warm		
"	5	Sunday - rain		29 10 216 00
"	6	Put bats in barn & cleaned doats - rain		
"	7	Chopped wood, etc		
"	8			
"	9	Chased in A.M. chopped wood in P.M. - warm		

(picture courtesy of C. Bryne)

Expenses of a Fitchburg Farmer - Patrick Bryne in the 1870's

- May 23 Heavy Storm - Hail Stones large as goose  
 eggs - also a Tornado destroy my houses,  
 barns, fences and crops - some live last  
 " 24 Helped to repair fences in back of  
 tornado  
 " 25 Planted pumpkins  
 " 26 Sunday - slight rain  
 " 27 Planted Potatoes  
 " 28  
 " 29 Rain most all day - cleaned oats  
 " 30 Went to church  
 " 31 Cult. corn  
 June 1 Rain in A.M. - very heavy rain at night  
 " 2 Sunday  
 " 3 Worked on road - pleasant  
 " 4 " " " "  
 " 5 " " " "  
 " 6 " " " - rain in P.M.  
 " 7 Heavy meat to Eli's - muddy  
 " 8 Went to town - muddy  
 " 9 Sunday - went to church  
 " 10 Worked on road in A.M. - cultivated  
 corn in P.M.  
 " 11 Cult. corn in A.M. - Whitewashed in P.M.  
 " 12 Cult. corn  
 " 13 " "  
 " 14 " "  
 " 15 " " very fine work  
 " 16 Sunday - went to church - very warm

(picture courtesy of C. Bryne)



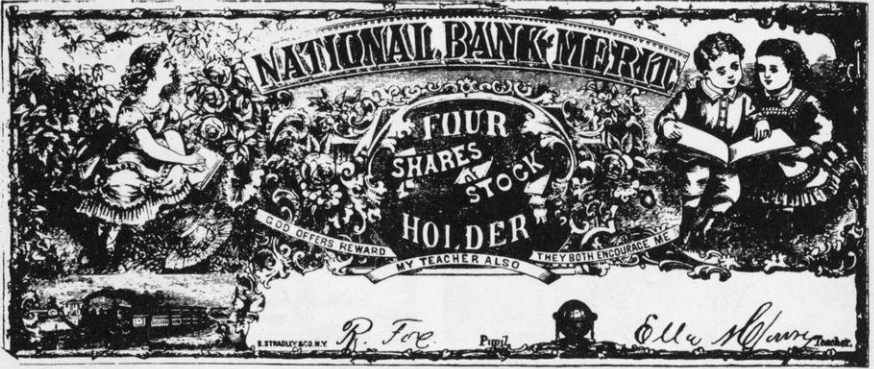
(picture courtesy G. M. Byrne)

In January 1884 Jane Barry and Patrick Byrne were married.



(picture courtesy of C. Byrne)

20 years later the Brynes pose in front of their fine home with their seven children — Margaret, Charles, Anne, Catherine, Genevieve, Bernise, Mary Frances.



(picture courtesy of P. Fox)

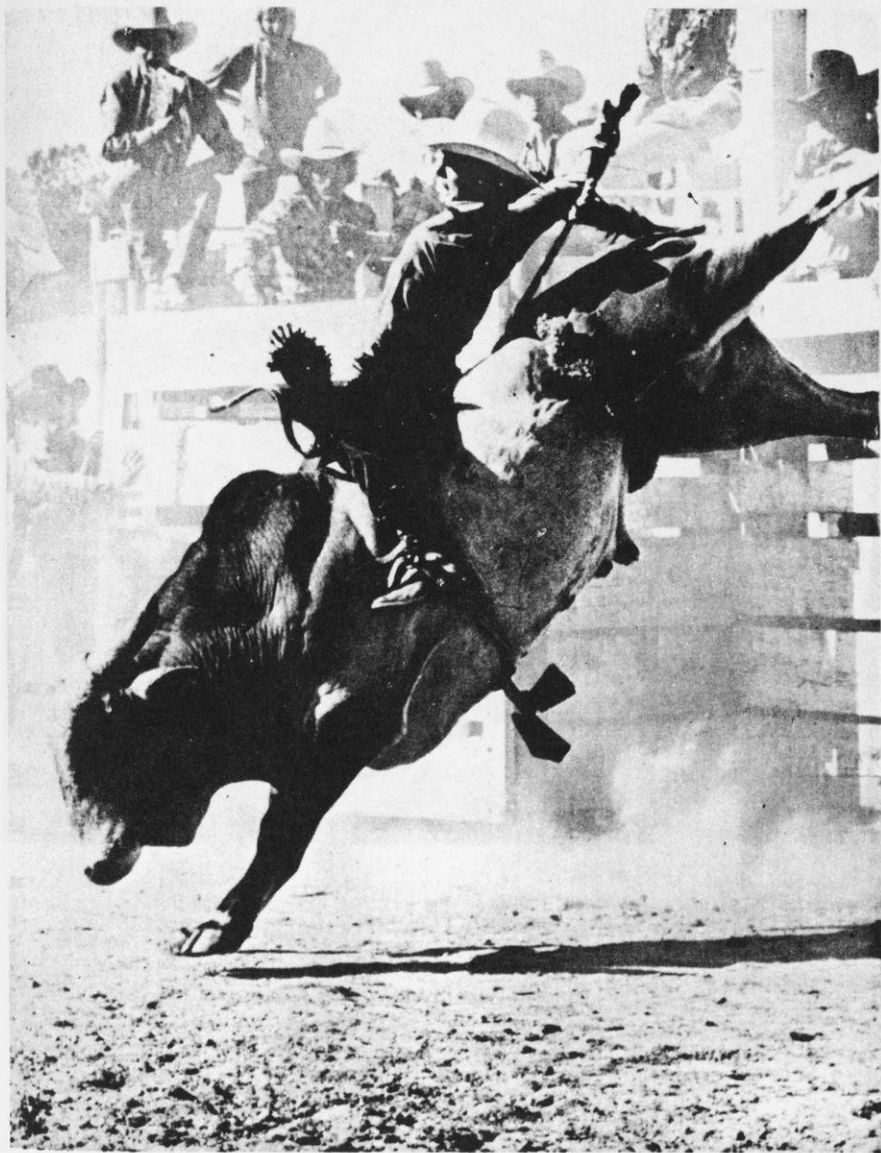
Certificates for good work were passed out at Prairie View School in the 1880's.



<p>COMMITTEES. * * RETIRING OFFICERS. T. F. MONKS. JAS. BYRNE. M. KINNEY. W. J. O'KEEFE. H. H. GILL. WILL COX * * INVITATION. J. M. GETTS. THOS. O'DEA. RUSSEL JONES. ED. M'KEE. JOE WALLACE. A. McDOUGAL. * * FINANCIAL. ARTHUR SYKES. WILL WHALEN. J. B. MONKS. GEO. GRADY. H. LOCHNER. J. H. CASTLE. * * ENTERTAINMENT. J. H. GORRY. JOHN WHALEN.</p>	<p><i>yourself and Looy.</i>  are respectfully invited to attend a  <b>Club Party,</b>  <i>in the Fitchburg Town Hall,</i>  <i>Friday Eve,</i>  <i>June 10th, 1892.</i>  <small>Local Music will be furnished. Tickets 50 Cents.</small></p>
--	--

Town social functions moved from Oakhall into the new town hall by 1892.

## HOLMES RODEO



A love of horses prompted the Holmes brothers to establish an annual rodeo show. Mrs. Frank Holmes explains the excitement of the rodeo,

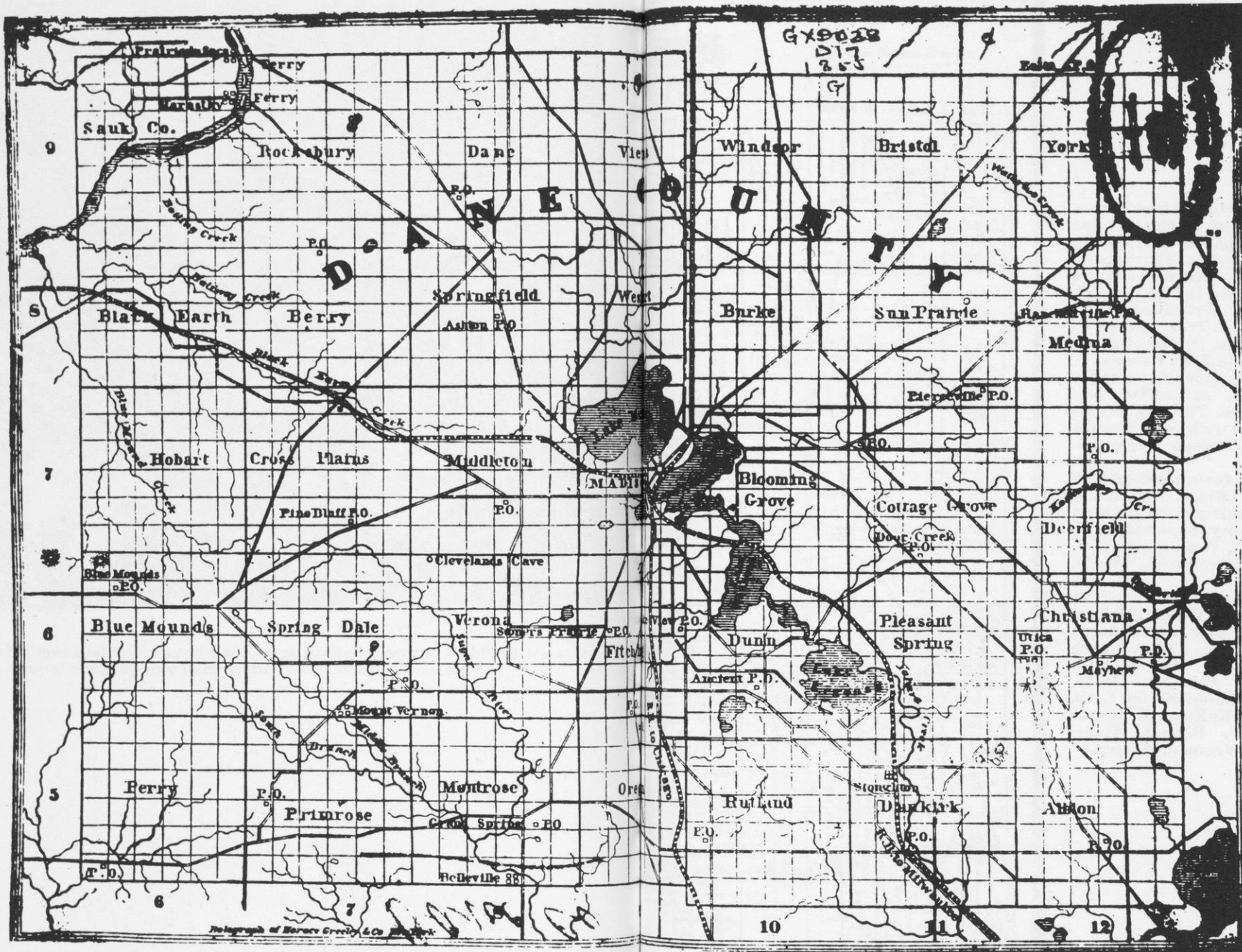
"There was a lot of excitement — like the bull who jumped a seven foot fence and headed down the railroad tracks. Another time, a girl was hanging on the entry gate and one of the bulls charged into the arena, threw its rider and headed toward the gate. He knocked it down with the girl underneath. Fortunately, she wasn't hurt. Profits from the rodeo went to the Empty Stocking Club and Roundy's Fun Club and Camp."



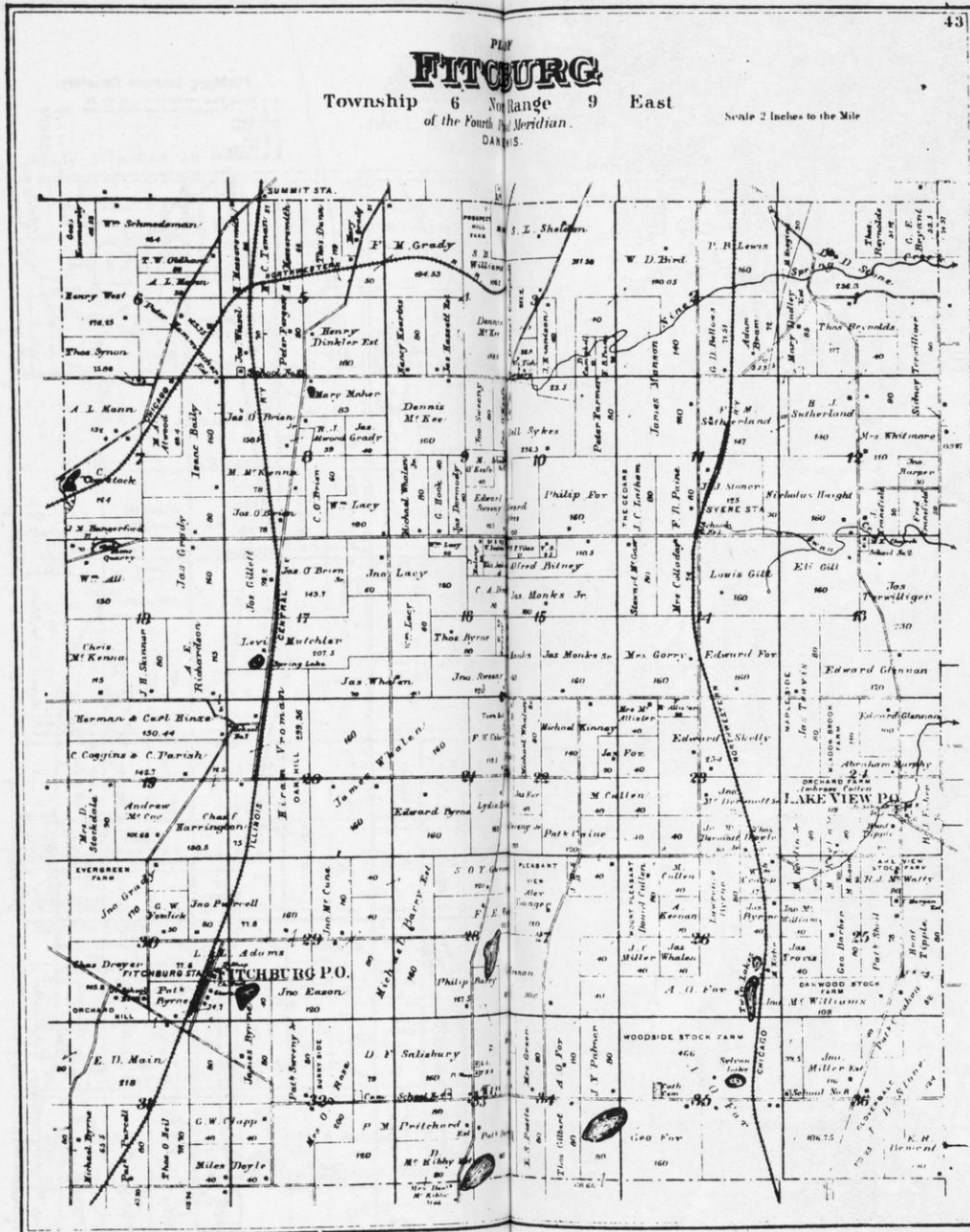
The Holmes Rodeo always drew a large excited crowd to its Fitchburg arena. The annual event is now held at the Dane County Coliseum.



**MAPS**

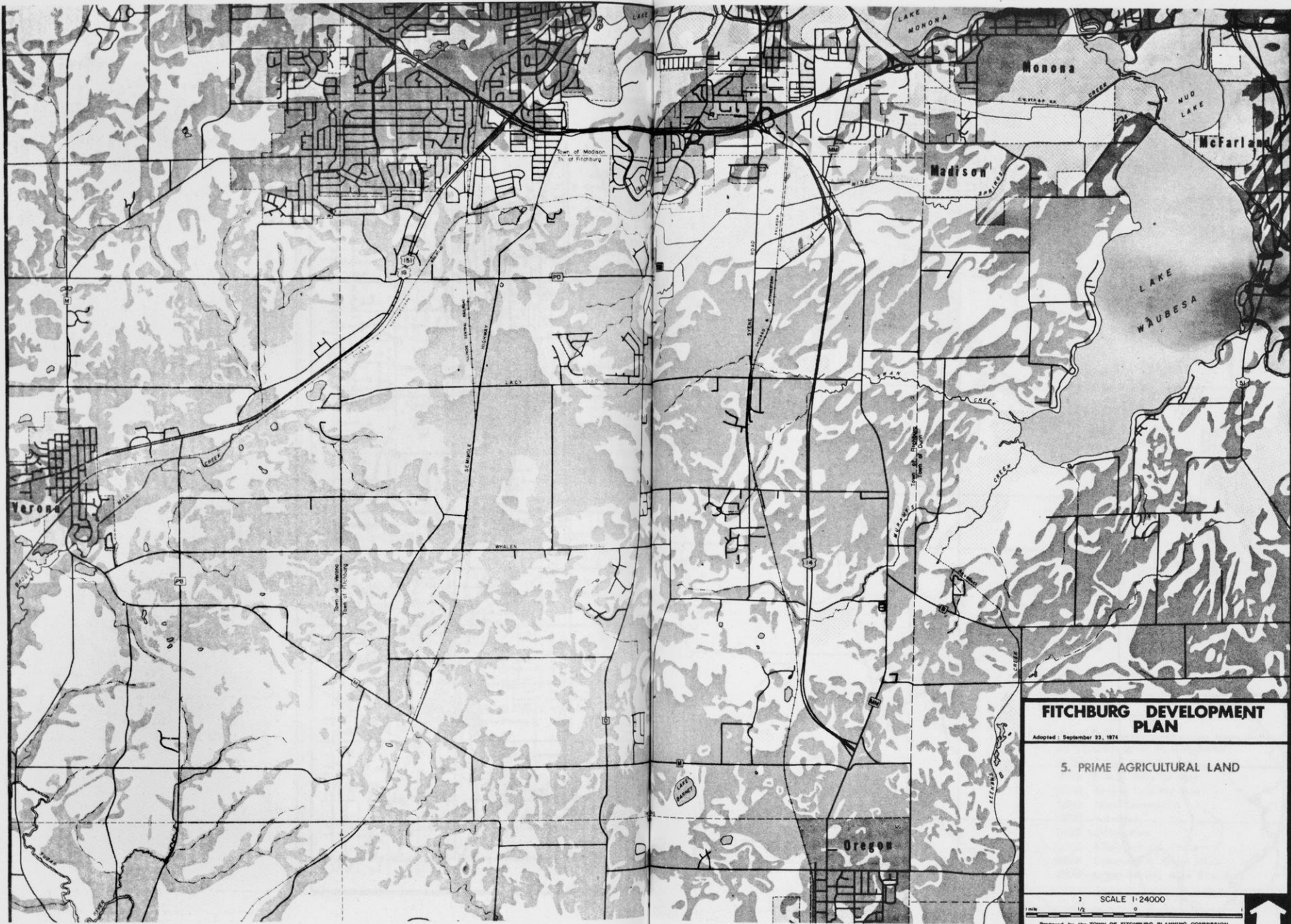






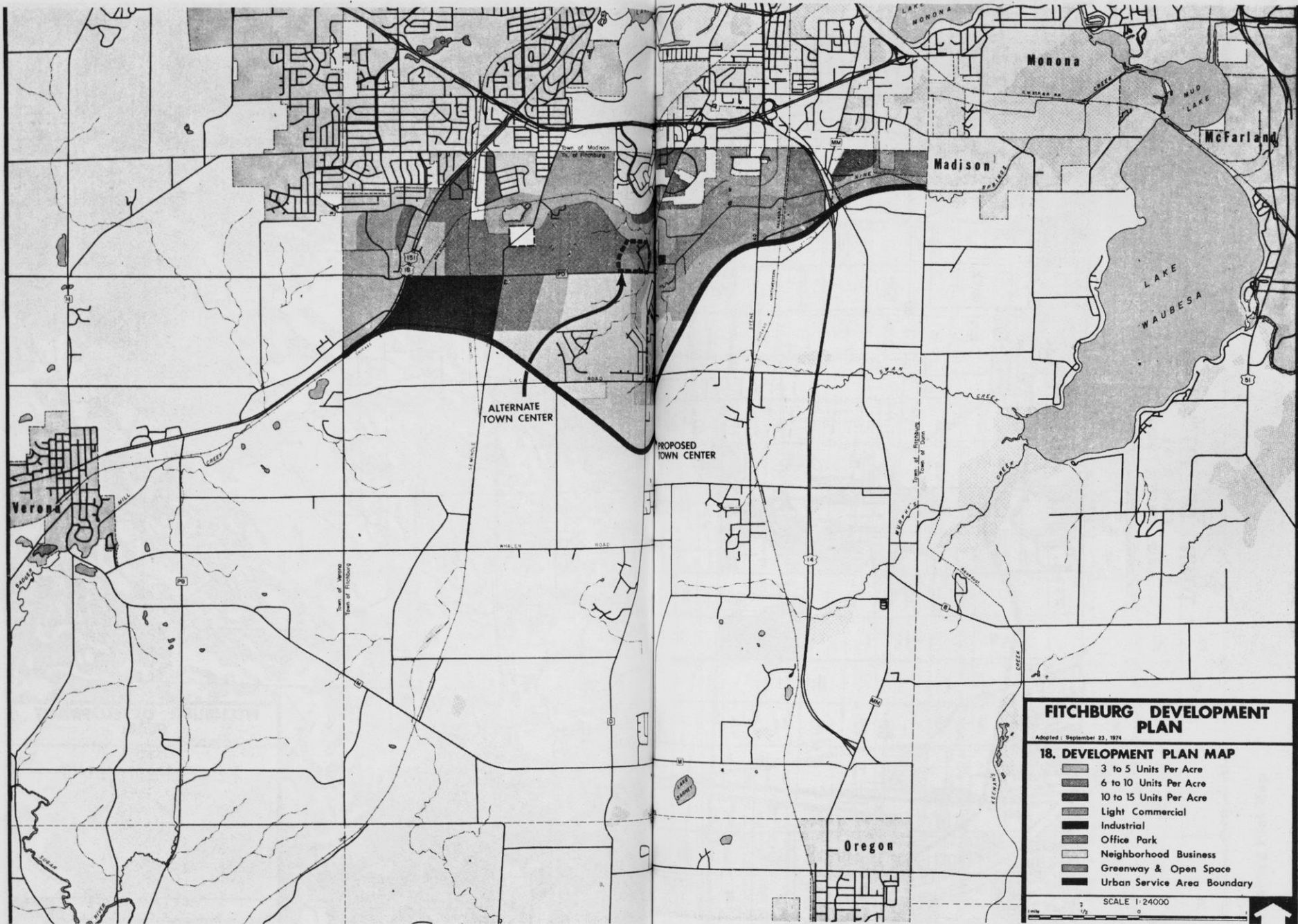
1890 - Fitchburg Plat Map

(picture courtesy of P. Fox)



1974 — Prime agricultural land in Fitchburg.

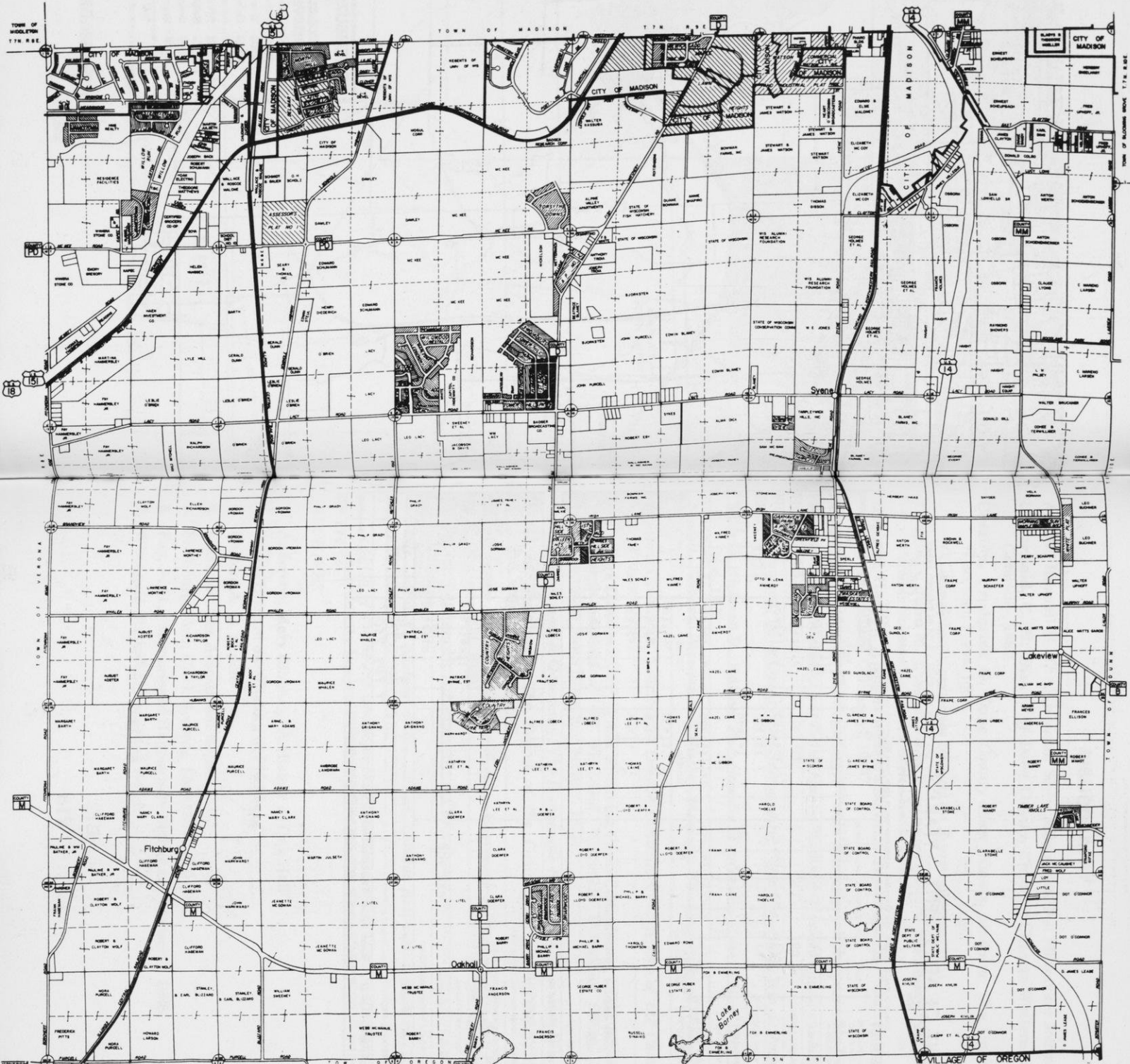
(picture courtesy of Town of Fitchburg)



1974 — Fitchburg urban service area.

(picture courtesy of Town of Fitchburg)

TOWN OF FITCHBURG  
T. 6 N. R. 9 E.  
DANE COUNTY, WISCONSIN



1976 - Fitchburg Plat Map

(picture courtesy of Town of Fitchburg)

# STATEMENT OF ASSESSMENT — YEAR 1975

WHEN COMPLETING THIS DOCUMENT  
DO NOT WRITE OVER X'S OR IN SHADED AREAS

13 030 FOR TOWN OF FITCHBURG PLANE COUNTY  
CO. MUN. FOR T.V.C. OF NAME OF MUNICIPALITY NAME OF COUNTY COUNTY

TOTALS OF PARCEL COUNTS (Real & Personal), ACRES AND VALUES FROM FINAL FIGURES AS SET BY THE BOARD OF REVIEW

Line No.	REAL ESTATE (See Line 27 and 28 Other Real Estate)	PARCEL COUNT		NO OF ACRES ONLY WHOLE NUMBERS Col. C	VALUE OF LAND		VALUE OF IMPROVEMENTS		TOTAL VALUE OF LAND AND IMPROVEMENTS Col. F
		LAND Col. A	IMPROVEMENTS Col. B		Col. D	Col. E			
1	RESIDENTIAL-CLASS A	1,470	1,104		9,329,400	27,382,900		36,703,300	
2	MERCANTILE-CLASS B	201	119		8,733,700	34,847,300		43,581,000	
3	MANUFACTURING-CLASS C	20	12	2	734,300	2,613,000		3,347,300	
4	AGRICULTURAL-CLASS D	270	145	16,755	9,798,400	4,615,600		14,412,000	
5	SWAMP & WASTE-CLASS E	12		250	13,300			13,300	
6	FOREST LANDS-CLASS F <sub>1</sub>	3		90	14,900			16,900	
7	FOREST LANDS-CLASS F <sub>2</sub>								
8	TOTALS ALL COLS.	2,174	1,470	17,099	28,614,900	69,458,800		98,073,700	
9	PERSONAL PROPERTY	NUMBER OF PERSONAL PROPERTY ACCOUNTS		316	NUMBER		VALUE		
10	CATTLE				3,572	744,160			
11	SHEEP				149	2,390			
12	SWINE				745	52,170			
13	ALL OTHER LIVESTOCK NOT EXEMPT					46,640			
14	MERCHANT'S STOCK					3,994,950			
15	MANUFACTURER'S STOCK					1,090,720			
16	SUB TOTAL (Lines 10 through 15)								6,710,920
17	LEAF TOBACCO (Not Merchant's or Manufacturing Stock)				lbs.				
18	LOGS, TIMBER & LUMBER (Not Manufacturing Stock)								
19	BOATS AND OTHER WATERCRAFT NOT EXEMPT								
20	PUBLIC UTILITIES	ONLY PROPERTY LOCALLY ASSESSED IDENTIFY SUCH PROPERTY ON BACK							
21	MACHINERY, TOOLS AND PATTERNS					1,491,510			
22	FURNITURE, FIXTURES AND EQUIPMENT		1029 100			1,029,540			
23	ALL OTHER PERSONAL PROPERTY NOT EXEMPT					678,720			
24	SUB TOTAL (Lines 17 through 23)								3,198,830
25	TOTAL PERSONAL PROPERTY (Lines 16 and 24)								9,909,750
26	AGGREGATE ASSESSED VALUE OF ALL PROPERTY SUBJECT TO THE GENERAL PROPERTY TAX (Total of Lines 8 and 25) MUST AGREE WITH TOTAL VALUE OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS LISTED BELOW — SEE LINE 38								107,983,450

107 983 450



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## ARCHIVES

1. Anderson, Mary (Sholts), "A History of Oak Hall".
2. Barry, Howard J., "History of Fitchburg".
3. Barton, A. O. Papers
4. Fitchburg Tax Assessment Rolls,
5. Fitchburg Town Clerk Records, 1847-1854, 1860-1976.
6. Fox, A. O., "Memories of Happenings Among the Pioneers", 1936.
7. Wisconsin Statistical Reporting Service.

## MAPS

1. Fitchburg — 1861
2. Fitchburg — 1873
3. Fitchburg — 1890
4. Fitchburg — 1899
5. Fitchburg — 1931
6. Fitchburg — 1974
7. Fitchburg — 1976
8. Dane County — 1855

## SCHOOL RECORDS

1. Camp Badger
2. Fish Hatchery
3. Oak Hall
4. Stoner
5. Swan Creek

## NEWSPAPERS

1. *Capitol Times*
2. *Fitchburg Star*
3. *Oregon Observer*
4. *Wisconsin State Journal*

## ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS

In reviewing this book for reprinting several discrepancies surfaced.

Page 84: All the dates 1964 should read 1864.

Page 99: The men pictured are Roy Clapp, Art Purcell and Herman Wendt.

Pages 115, 116, 117, and 118: It was found that several editions of the original book existed. The people pictured on these four pages were incorrect in some of the versions. The legends under the pictures in this version are correct as far as we can tell.

Page 160: Oakwood Correctional Camp was established when the Oregon Industrial School for Girls was closed. In 1977 the facility was renamed "Oakhill Correctional Institution".

Page 195: The Moses Lacy family pictured are the children of Moses and Maria Lacy. The man named as Moses is in reality his son John H. Lacy.

Page 198: The unnamed gentlemen in the back row are: Charlie Brahm, Freddie Brahm and Harry Brahm. They were brothers to Louisa Blaney. The name of the youngest child should be spelled Burt.

Page 189: The list of Town Chairman should be corrected to read:

John Keenan 1851-1853

John Keenan 1860-1863

S. W. Field 1854-1855

J. B. Hart 1864

Sewell Nye 1856

John Keenan 1865-1867

John Keenan 1857-1858

William Whalen 1921-1924

John E. Mann 1859

Edward McKee 1924-1925

Douglas Morrissette's term of Town Chairman continued to 1981. Ed LaFrombois was Town Chairman from 1981 until 1983 when Fitchburg became a city. He was interim Mayor until an election was held to fill the position. The Mayors since that time are:

Ed LaFrombois 1983-1985

G. Jeanie Sieling 1985-1988

Charles Uphoff 1988 (Interim Mayor)

Tom Capp 1988-1991

Frances Huntley-Cooper 1991-1993

Doug Morrissette 1993 to present

Several names were misspelled in the original book. We have tried to locate all of them and index them under their proper spellings. If we have missed any we apologize.

Fitchburg Historical Society 1998



# INDEX

References to two or more people who have identical or very similar names may (unintentionally) appear together in the index.

Cases where names were spelled or written two or more different ways are indicated by listing all such spelling variations, separated by slashes (/).

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