Pioneer life in Kenosha County. 1876

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A Sketch

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H. M. Simmons

(Read at the Centennial at Kenosha,
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Kenosha cannot count a hundred years, but let us respect the occasion, and give our sketch at least a semi-Centennial introduction.

Fifty years ago what is now Wisconsin had only two white settlements worthy of note. Green Bay, French to that time, was beginning to receive settlers from the States, and the first frame house in Wisconsin had just been built there for Judge Doty. Prairie du Chien was still a French village, though also the seat of Fort Crawford, and an Indian agency. A few miners were coming into the south-west corner of the state to prospect for lead, which had just been discovered at Hazel Green, and elsewhere. The remainder of Wisconsin was held by Indians, with here and there a trader or trapper. At Milwaukee were a Pottowatomie village and Solomon Juneau's trading post. At Chicago, Cols. Kinzie's and Beaubien's were the only families outside of Fort Dearborn.

Our county was a blank on the map. Schoolcraft had recently (August 27, 1820, he dates in his "Travels") encamped and spent the night within its limits, thirty-five miles south of "the Milwacky river", and fifty miles north of Chicago, as he reckons, but the only thing he notes is a certain olive-colored "liquid mineral resembling asphaltum", which he found along the shore. The region was then included in the great County of Brown, which stretched from State Line to Mackinaw, had its seat at Green Bay, and with all Wisconsin belonged to Michigan Territory. Such was the situation fifty years ago.

There was little change for the next six years. But in 1832 the Black Hawk war revealed to the country the riches of the territory. In 1833 the Indians ceded their title to south-eastern Wisconsin, and pioneers began at once to look this way.

1834.

In 1834 explorers were traversing this region. They already talked about Pike river, translating the Indian name "Kenosha". They followed the Indian trails. The most noted of these trails led from Chicago to Milwaukee, keeping the lake shore to Grose Point (near the present Evanston), then turning inland and crossing our county near the line of the present Milwaukee & St.Paul railroad. This was

called the "Jambeau trail", from a French trader, Jacques Jambeau, who had his cabin on it at Skunk Grove, west of Racine. It was trodden, I am told, to an average depth of nearly a foot, and made a welcome path for many an early pioneer. Another trail branched from this a little south of State Line, and crossing the Des Plaines river took the direction toward Burlington.

In November, 1834, Capt. Gilbert Knapp, with two attendants, coming from Chicago along the Jambeau trail, passed down to the mouth of Root river, and there built a cabin near where Miner & McClurg's planing mill now stands in Racine. There his two men spent the winter. This seems to have been the first American settlement between Milwaukee and Grose Point, and the only one in that year. Kenosha county at least claims no settlers in 1834.

1835 - First Settlers - Somers.

But early in 1835 they began to appear. Mr. Hugh Longwell, now living in the town of Somers, tells me that in March, 1835, he and six other men came in wagons from Michigan and followed the trail to Jambeau's. There Solomon Juneau was visiting at the time; and, to paint the manners more clearly, let it be confessed that Juneau, with frontier courtesy, first loudly remanded the travelers to the infernal regions, and then straightway invited them to the hospitality of the cabin and the demijohn. Thence they went to Root river, where they found Capt. Knapp. At his recommendation they then crossed over to the head of Pike river to locate, and there found Jacob Montgomery and his sons already occupying a log cabin. This cabin, almost exactly where Mr. Fred Ozanne's house now stands, seems to have been the first in our county, and built at least early in March, 1835. Mr. Montgomery remained there eight years or more, somewhat famous among pioneers as a hunter, and then moved West to disappear from our history. So, the honor of the first settlement in Kenosha county belongs to Jacob Montgomery and the town of Somers.

Mr. Longwell located where he still lives, and, having built his cabin, went for his family. Before he returned with them, Benjamin Felch and and his son, Alison, had also come and located where the family still resides. Alison Felch and Hugh Longwell remain to-day the oldest residents of the county.

The others who came with Mr. Longwell settled near - Garret Shuart, Barnet Shuart, Mr. Griffin and Mr. Hague - but they only remained a few years. Indeed, many of those early settlers were genuine pioneers, feeling crowded when they could see the smoke from another cabin, and ever pushing Westward only to stop from necessity in California.

Pleasant Prairie.

The next settlers we find in Pleasant Prairie. I received only last night a letter from Abner Barlow, a pioneer preacher, now living at Stoughton, Wis. He writes that on June 1 or 2, 1835, he and three others left Chicago for a trip northward. They came along the lake shore to Waukegan, which consisted then of "one shanty and a coffee mill nailed to a stump". They then struck inland and followed the trail north, finding the Montgomery's and Welch's as we have seen them. Thence they passed down to the mouth of Pike river, and, crossing over to the island, made a fire and ate dinner there. This was June 3 or 4, and no settlers had yet made a mark here. Thence striking south-west, they found Horace Woodbridge and his family already occupying a cabin a little beyond Fitch A. Higgins' present residence. This substantiates what I had already heard, that Horace Woodbridge was the first settler in Pleasant Prairie. On the return to Chicago, Mr. Barlow met Mr. Boughton and Henry Miller, then on the way to settle on Miller Creek, early in June, 1835.

Pleasant Prairie received another accession of settlers July 7th, when Alvin G. French, Wm. Barlow, Daniel and Orrin Stevens came along the trail from Chicago and located not far from the present. Milwaukee road. Some of them, after building, returned to Illinois for the winter. But Mr. French remained, and keeping bachelor hall with Mr. Barlow, spent the summer and fall cutting hay, and going about with five yoke of oxen and breaking-plow to turn little patches for the settlers to work their claims. Somewhat later in the season came John Williams, R.B.Barnes, Thomas Howland and son, Newton Bacon and Alonzo Burroughs.

The City.

But in the meantime a more important settlement had begun. Early in 1835 there had been organized in Hannibal, N.Y., the Western Emigration Company, a joint stock association for making a settlement in the West. Four hundred shares, of $10 each, had been issued and sold, and a committee sent West to explore and locate. The committee, after visiting Milwaukee had gone to Root river, and negotiated with Capt. Knapp for part of the ground on which Racine now stands. The committee, except C.W.Turner, then returned to report, and John Bullen, Jr., was sent west as sole agent for the company. But the intended purchase at Root river failed for some reason, and Mr. Bullen and Mr. Turner proceeded to explore further.

They came to the mouth of Pike river Sunday, June 14, 1835. Mr. Bullen (now living in Elba, Minn.) writes me that they encamped near the lake shore in what is now the second ward, and the next day proceeded to mark off their claims on the trees. They were not, indeed, the first comers. Abner Barlow, as we saw, had been here to dine earlier in the month. E.B.Pierce informs me that his father and brother, Jonathan and Washington Pierce, had passed through early in June, and washed their feet in the mouth of Pike river. But even in the elasticity of squatter law, dining and foot-washing did not establish a claim. So, Mr. Bullen and Turner properly made one for the company, June 15.

A few years later, we find Hudson Bacon and Jonathan Pierce have arrived. Sunday, June 21, came the first wagon, and in it Mr. and Mrs. Gardner Wilson and Cephas Wood. Mrs. Wilson was the first woman within the city limits, is still living in Hannibal, N.Y., and writes me that they were nineteen days driving to Chicago. No shanty was here on her arrival, and she used the wagon for a sleeping apartment two weeks, while the others slept under it and on the lake beach. With an old-fashioned tin oven, and a kettle hung on a pole, she set up her kitchen in the open road, and, royally serving a dozen hungry men, remained for five weeks the only woman here. Immediately after came Nelson Gaillff, who now lives in Racine county, who writes me that he drove the second wagon into the place. Orrin Jerome and the Caldwell family seem to have come about the same time.

First Houses.

I cannot reconcile the conflicting statements about the first house. But it seems that early in July four were built, all north of Pike creek. Near the present bend in north Main street, was set up a mere pole and bark shanty, occupied by Hudson Bacon for a few weeks till he built a better house near by. Right on the lake shore opposite the north end of the island, on that square which has with becoming veneration been left vacant ever since (until occupied by the late transient saw-mill there), Mr. Wilson built his house. Further north on the shore, in front of Col. Howe's present place, Mr. Bullen built another. While further up on the river bluff, northwest of Mr. Brande.s present residence, C. W. Turner put up his. A little later in July, the first house south of the creek was built by Mr. Bullen for the company, near the rear of Mr. Simmons' insulator factory. Such were the beginnings of our city.

The other parties we have named located in the adjacent country. Jonathan Pierce, in Somers, where he built a little north of Capt. Manning's present house; Washington Pierce just beyond; Cephas Weed on section 25, building his house a little to the south of the Pennoyer green-house; the Caldwells further northeast. Nelson Gatliff, after remaining here for a time, made his claim up in Pike woods; and Orrin Jerome located on the creek named after him, and built near the present slaughter house.

Early Wars.

In July, 1835, other comers began to dispute the claims of the Western Emigration Company. About the middle of the month, Sam. Resigue and John Noble came from Chicago, and, finding the island vacant, built a shanty there. This was considered by the company as a hostile invasion; and Col. Frank, in his history, tells the story, that on July 25th, in Resigue's absence, Mr. Noble saw six men armed with axes crossing to the island as if to annihilate him. But instead, they quietly proceeded to fence him in with about an acre of ground. The fence afterward mysteriously disappeared rail by rail, and the squatters were again lords of the island. Soon after Resigue built a log house there, and opened it as a tavern, near the present light-house. This was the first tavern in the county, and had a large reputation in those times. But the claim to the island was still in dispute, which was not settled till the following year.

In July, 1835, also rose the Woodbridge quarrel. Soon after Mr. Bullen had commenced the house on the south side to hold the claim for the company Timothy Woodbridge put up a kind of shanty just west of it, near where Simmons' lumber office now is, to "jump" the claim, as the settler phrased it. The Woodbridges, who were a large family (some of them rather noted "jumpers"), claimed, indeed, most of the land lying south and west of the creek for some distance. But during the season an agreement was made with them; they retired from the field, and we soon find Timothy peacefully located in Pleasant Prairie.

More Settlers.

Thus far the settlers had all come on foot or by wagon. But August 15th, a schooner coasted cautiously along in search of Pike river, and sent some passengers ashore, most noticeable among whom were Jason Lathrop, and his two children. A poem of

his, written after the arrival, "With a very dim light and the quill of an owl, "describes the four weeks' voyage from Oswego, and tells how the oak openings on the shore of Pike river spread so fair before the eyes of the voyagers, that a sailor cried out: "An orchard ahead". Mr. Lothrop was a Baptist minister, but adapted himself to pioneer wants by opening a boarding house in that little shanty south of the creek, where we soon find him writing a letter "with fifteen sleeping around him" The same vessel brought Dr.B.B.Cary, the first physician in the county, who, however, later in the season moved to Root river. In the same vessel, August 15th, came Austin Kellogg and family, who located a mile north on the bank of the river, and built the log house which still stands as a relic of 1835.

There were other notable arrivals the same week. August 17th, Alvin French, mowing marsh hay on his claim, stopped to greet a young stranger, who came walking from Chicago. It was Nathan R. Allen on his way to Pike river, where he has steadfastly remained, and is now the oldest resident of the town. August 20th, came Thomas D. Persons,who, fortunately for this historian, straightway began to keep an account book, little thinking it would be used forty years after to verify dates. Mr.Persons and Jonathan Pierce were the welcome carpenters of those days; and one is surprised to see the rapidity with which houses were turned off, and the low prices got for them.

First Store.

Hitherto the houses had been built of logs. Some say a cargo of lumber arrived in July, though I find this disputed. But a cargo certainly came about the last of August, and N.R.Allen informs me it was pitched loosely into the lake in a northeaster, and he had men stationed up and down the beach who caught it as it floated ashore, "and saved every board". Now frame houses appeared. J.Lothrop writes that the first one was his, built not far from the present engine house. This is both confirmed and disputed. But at any rate, by the sure evidence of Mr.Persons' account book, there was raised September 7th, near the north-east corner of the insulator factory, a frame store,the first in the county. Here John Bullen and N.R. Allen soon commenced the commerce of Kenosha. This building, too, after various fortune, still stands not far from Mr.Harrison's planing shop.

Indians.

September was marked by a visit of Indians. Three hundred or more, passing in canoes, were

weather-bound on the island for three weeks. It caused the settlers some anxiety, and indeed, their demands for provisions and whisky were sometimes more violent then pleasant. But the worst thing I find recorded of them is marching one night in solemn procession to that shanty just vacated by H.Bacon, and taking thence his fractional barrel of flour; but Mr.Bacon pluckily recovered his flour; and a small contribution of provisions brought peace again.

For two or three years Indians were a familiar sight to the settlers. They had no permanent village in the county then, though the mounds in the town of Randall and elsewhere about the lakes, show that that was once a favorite resort; and the many arrow-heads formerly found on the island are supposed to indicate a manufacture of such implements there. But after the settlers came their visits were transient. Up to 1837 the Indians made annual visits to Chicago for their allowance. Mr.A.G. French tells me that sometimes three or four hundred together passed along the trail, the ponies laden with squaws and papooses, encamping at night in some grove, and happy if there were a field near by where they might feast off the growing potatoes and green pumpkins. Often a fleet of canoes passed along the lake. Once in a hard storm, I am told, a canoe was seen heading for the shore. The tender-hearted citizens of Pike River watched the poor Indian anxiously as he sought a safe retreat on the land. But their pity was wasted. For the poor Indian bounded up to Resigue's tavern, and, issuing again with light step and a keg of whisky, shot back over the billows to join his comrades. The Indians, too, had favorite spots in the county where they buried their dead, though sometimes they had a less pleasant way of depositing a departed friend in a tree. For several years they occasionally visited the county, fishing, hunting deer, and following the streams for muskrats. But I cannot learn that they were ever a terror to the settlers.

Autumn of 1835.

During the fall several new settlers came. Some time in September Chauncey Davis arrived. October 5th came David Crossit and family. Mr.Crossit soon opened the first blacksmith shop (not far from Z.G.Simmons' present tannery), where he and Amos Grattan had plenty to do shoeing oxen at three dollars the yoke. Mrs.Crossit was enthroned the rest of the fall as hostess in Mr.Lathrop's boarding house, where among the boarders we see Nathan R.Allan, Chauncey Davis and Jesse Sherwood. In November came L.W. and P.W.Dodge, walking all the way

from Detroit. David Doolittle soon appeared, and succeeded Dr.Cary in the Turner house up by the river;- Dr.Cary having moved on to Root River,where he was nearly killedone night by a rifle-ball from a jumper who had taken possession of his cabin in his absence. Nelson Allen also came in the fall and will "team it" to Chicago through the winter. John Bullen went east for the winter, but Walter Towslee, of stately and dignified bearing, occupied the house which Mr.Bullen had built at the mouth of Pike river.

Religious Meetings.

Here at Mr.Towslee's we find religious meetings regularly held this fall of 1835. Such meetings had begun quite early. The first is said to have met in that first house south of Pike creek, and of the twenty-eight persons present twenty-one had taken part,- so promising was Pike river piety. We get a glimpse of another October 3d, where the audience were not so talkative, but invited Mr.Lothrop to "improve the time". Some settlers came six miles to attend these meetings, which indeed Mr. Lothrop thinks were the only ones within thirty miles around,- Root River not being given to religion just then. Deacon Weed and others wanted the Baptists to organize a little; but objection was made that it would produce sectarian feeling, and so the meetings remained open to all. But in December we find the Methodists partially organized and listening to Abner Barlow, who came over from Pleasant Prairie to preach once a month. Soon after a Presbyterian missionary,- apparently Rev. Cyrus Nichols,- is found preaching occasionally. The Baptists, though still without organization, outnumbered the others, and some were urging Elder Woodin, of Hannibal, to come and "heave the Baptist banner", as one of them expressed it. The audience was increasing, though Elder Lothrop confesses "the place is not remarkable for religious attention". Most of the settlers had come to hold claims rather than build churches; and even the religious talk savored of this, so that an exhorter urged the necessity of making a "good claim in heaven".

Winter of '35-'36.

The first winter passed quietly. Some of the country settlers had left their claims to return in the spring. Some staid and wintered their cattle from the hay they had cut,- unless indeed, the stacks were burnt in the fire which had swept over the prairies in September. These were busy splitting rails to fence their claims. Alvin French prepared 8.500 with his single axe between November and March; and in the spring L.C.Holt and Sam.Howard laid 19,000 into four miles of worm fence. Here at Pike river, some were building; others at work

in various ways. The idle gathered at Bullen & Allen's store; and the less temperate congregated now and then at Resigue's tavern. About the holidays Mr.Lothrop and the Crossits left that old boarding house by the lake, where Amos Grattan succeeded them. Mr.Crossit moved into the new house, which he had built near his blacksmith shop, and, there too, they kept boarders, as most householders did then. Not very spacious rooms did the boarding-houses furnish. And one of the boarders in this, tells me that the sleeping chamber was so low that they had to put their heads out of a hole in the roof to get room to draw on their pantaloons, while at night the sleepless wight would sometimes entertain himself looking out this hole and hearing the wolves howl along Main street.

The weather was favorable, and save a week of severe cold in November, the winter was open and pleasant "like a New York October", one writes. Still the settlers were not without anxiety, and we do not learn of any holiday festivities. Provisions were getting scarce and dear,- flour $16.00 a barrell. There was game,- deer and chicken,- but these were not highly esteemed. Pork was what the pioneer stomach especially craved, and pork is quoted with surprise at seven cents a pound, and hardly to be had at that. Nay, before the holidays, I find it written that Orrin Jerome down on the creek, has killed his "lean hogs", and is selling them at ten cents the pound. Before the winter was past, provisions did, indeed, become short in the settlement; and the spring of '36 is still spoken of as the "hard times" when travellers had to be turned away without a breakfast, and many of the settlers went hungry.

A School.

But our Pike river settlers were none the less active. Jason Lothrop's energies took even a scholastic and literary turn. About the holidays he moved up into his house, near the present engine house, where we soon find him teaching the first school in the county, with twenty-seven scholars. Who these were and what they did we may not say;- but they probably studied those two dozen English Readers and Smith's Arithmetic and six Kirkham's Grammars, which I find Mr.Lothrop ordering from the east the fall before. But school-teaching was only a part of Mr.Lothrop's work. His diary gives us a glimpse of him splitting rails and making furniture for his house, writing letters and articles for eastern papers, reading much, even writing poetry and painting pictures,- nay, in the lonely nights out there on the prairie, this pioneer patiently

followed his Greek studies, and worked on the "Concordance" which he was preparing for the press.

Printing.

Mr.Lothrop also did some other noteworthy work this winter. Hitherto claim-holding had been an uncertain business. The pioneer made a small rail pen and carved his name on it; or he had a few furrows plowed, and built a shanty. Perhaps he staid to hold it, perhaps left it to hold itself. Often he would come back to find an intruder in the field and even in the cabin. Sometimes without absence he would awake some morning to find another shanty on his claim, and the jumper in serene possession. In such cases there was often a resort to force, and there were many a rude encounter, and many a shanty pulled down in this squatter warfare.

Hence the need of organization among the settlers to defend each other. There may have been such organization earlier,- but on February 13,1836, a meeting here organized the "Pike River Claimants' Union". Its constitution declared that to hold a claim a man must build a house large enough for a family, or plow a half-acre, or enclose a piece with at least one hundred rails. A settler doing this and entering his claim on a map would be allowed to hold a quarter section and as much more as the "Union" allowed, and be maintained in his rights by the organization. Twelve censors were appointed to decide disputes. The meeting sent delegates to a larger one at Root river, which organized the "Milwaukee Claimants' Union". Henceforth the settlers had law and an organization to enforce it.

Both meetings passed a curious resolution that the proceedings be printed. But where should it be done in the wilderness? Jason Lothrop was equal to the occasion. He had brought with him a few type and printing materials, costing altogether not above ten dollars; and with a box to hold the form, placed on a stump up their on his claim, he published the proceedings. Mr.L.C.Draper, secretary of the Historical Society, thinks this printing the second in Wisconsin. Copies of the old sheet are hard to find now, though one is preserved in the library of the Historical Society, at Madison. Mr. Lothrop did considerable work with his rude press. He even cast some type and printed some books, and then bound them himself and read them, he says. Once he printed 250 copies of a volume of 130 pages.

Spring of 1836.

Early in the spring the previous settlers returned to their claims, and others came to make new ones. Among them we find Daniel Stevens returning

to Pleasant Prairie, with descendants in two or three generations and in fabulous numbers. Also, Christopher Derbyshire, with family scarcely less. There in Daniel Stevens' house, out by the Milwaukee road, all these were sheltered for a time,- twenty-five in number, the legend says, with sometimes a dozen travellers lodged besides,- all in a log house with a single room below, and a garret above, which had to be entered horizontally.

About the last of April the first white native of the county saw the light, in the wretched floorless shanty of Garret Post, southeast of the present Hastings place. It was not a birth of good omen, for the death of Mrs.Post, the first death in the county, came a few days later, and the child soon followed its mother. They were buried on the knoll south of Col.Howe's present residence, which remained the little needed cemetery for two years.

May 10th, Mr.Bullen's new schooner, the Van Buren, arrived with welcome provisions for the settlers. It also brought seeds for the planters;and a few days thereafter Mr.Persons' memorandum shows him hopefully sowing onions up on the river bank.

A Fortunate Storm.

The summer of '36 was a rough one on the lake, like so many others "the roughest ever known",- the captains say. But one of its storms should still be remembered with gratitude by the citizens of Kenosha. Toward the last of May, Mr.E.R.Hugunin tells me, he left Chicago with a schooner on which were Mr. and Mrs. Charles Durkee, bound for Milwaukee to settle there. Storm after storm met the vessel, and at the end of a week it was only off Pike River. In the close quarters of the schooner, the sickness had become intolerable; and Mrs.Durkee, well nigh dead, and preferring to risk life rather than go further, was sent ashore with her husband over the fierce breakers. The happy relief of land and the attraction of Pike River decided Mr.Durkee to locate here instead of Milwaukee. His choice determined that of his relatives, Harvey Durkee and R.H.Deming, who followed later in the same season. So much does Kenosha owe to a north-easter. Verily "'tis an ill wind that blows nobody any good"

E.R.Hugunin also came in the same storm. About the same time Samuel Hale and Orlando Foster arrived on foot from Chicago. The spring of 1836, brought also Dr.David Walker and Dr.D.P.Stryker.

July 4, 1836.- General Review.

Ask any old settler what was the great event of 1836 at Pike River, and he at once replies. "The celebration on the 4th". It was not only Independence Day, but the inauguration day of Wisconsin Territory. Let us then picture to ourselves the condition of our county that famous morning, just forty years ago.

The western half of the county could not then, I suppose, claim a resident settler. Claims had indeed been made in Salem by Alfred Bullen and the Dodge brothers; and soon after we find Jason Lothrop surveying on Fox River, and making several maps of something he calls a "city" there. But the city never went beyond Mr.Lothrop's maps, and up to the end of 1836 I cannot learn that Salem had an actual settler. Paris may have had already on the ground Patrick Malarky and and a few others, though the date of their arrival is uncertain. In Bristol we should have found on certain trees the names of S.S.Fowler and W.R.Higgins, where they cut them late in the previous fall to make their claims. Other claims had, of course, been made, but the only resident settler of Bristol seems to have been Rollin Tuttle, who came that spring with his family, and built near G.T.Vincent's present house. But Mr.Tuttle was doing what he could for the settlement of the town, and we soon hear of a new boy in his house, the first birth in Bristol.

But the two shore towns could muster quite a population that July morning of 1836. Let us make a hasty tour through them. Going south from Pike River we find, down on the creek that was to preserve his name, Orrin Jerome; who we will hope has new pigs growing to more fatness than those of last winter. Further south on Miller Creek, we find Henry and Reuben Miller. Adjoining them is Mr. Boughton, rough in his manner and famous for his grim jokes, but kind-hearted, and a general favorite with the country people. With Mr.Boughton is associated his son-in-law, Capt.Robinson, who has built a ware-house at the mouth of the creek, where he unloads his vessel, and supplies the settlers for miles around. Here too, at the mouth of Miller Creek, might be seen growing this Independence morning, that famous field of potatoes which the old settlers still talk of, and which the legend says turned out in the fall eight hundred bushels to the acre - a full peck to every hill. Further south, at State Line, is Levi Hanks, who also had hoped for potatoes, but the load he brought for seed last fall had frozen through the winter, though

they were buried well. West of Mr.Hanks, on the State Line, is Newton Bacon, with his cooper shop. Adjoining him is Darius Nichols, while on the north are Peter Bacon and Alonzo Burroughs. Further west along the State Line we come to Harry Windsor's, where the passing pioneer may buy a glass of whisky, provided the jovial host has not drunk it all himself. Here is the famous Milwaukee road, which Judge Doty laid out the summer previous, and along which the mail is carried to Green Bay on horseback.

Passing northward through the county along this road we find many settlers. Soon after leaving Mr.Windsor's we might get a glimpse to the westward of L.C.Holt's shanty. A little further north we pass near Samuel Howard's, Jacob Miller's, and Abner Barlow's, who can mow the marshes or exhort the Methodists at demand. Further north we find J.L.Stevens, who came this spring, while away to the west, in Hickory Grove, is Caleb Pierce. A little further along the road we reach the center of the Pleasant Prairie settlement. Here are Christopher Derbyshire, the patriarch of all the Derbyshires, and his wife (who still survives and claims the honor of naming the town). Near by is Orrin Stevens, and not far away is Daniel Stevens, whose house that we saw so full in the spring is now grown into an established tavern. In the same vicinity are Sidney Derbyshire, and other Derbyshires; and R.B. and Norman Barnes, who came this spring. Going north, we soon reach the town line, and find there Timothy Woodbridge, whom we saw last summer disputing the claim at Pike River, but who has now made his last claim and is doomed to die this summer. Away to the west we should leave John Cady and the Talcotts. To the east we might see the farm of Alvin French, his 8,500 rails now built into a good worm fence. Beyond him, towards Pike River, are Horace Woodbridge (first settler of the town), Fitch A.Higgins and John C.Holmes; while south of the latter are Thomas Howland with his two sons, Lewis and Meredith, and still further south John Williams, who has just gained a daughter and lost a wife- the first birth and death in Pleasant Prairie.

Following the Milwaukee road across the line into Somers, we find just beyond Timothy Woodbridge his brothers, Enoch and Henry, in a house soon to be known as the Woodbridge tavern (on the present Maxwell place). Further north on the road we pass the place of Charles and Jared Fox; and a little beyond, Geo.Willis' large house, soon to become

famous as another tavern - for the pioneer is subject to hunger and some times to thirst, though Mr. Lothrop will give a temperance lecture in Pleasant Prairie this fall and get forty-five signers to the pledge. North of Willis' we pass David Doolittle's, Charles and Williams Smith's, and John Craig's, all of whom seem to have come this spring. Further we pass the cabin of Jacob Montgomery, the county's first settler; and beyond, where the road crosses Pike River, that of E. G. Whiting; while further on are Hugh Longwell, Benjamin and Alison Felch.

Coming down Pike River, we find Wm. Foster and Nelson Gatliff, who have built a sawmill on the stream; and the mill is in such demand that another is to be built this fall, and two others will follow soon after. Further down the river we find on on the east side Abram Pike, the cooper, and on the west, the Caldwells, and Austin Kellogg; further down, C. W. Turner's house, and a little south of the mouth, that early house of John Bullen's; while scattered over the prairie to the west are 'Squire Richard Miller (perhaps Col. Jordan), Mr. Eastman, Cephas Weed, Jonathan and Washington Pierce, and E. B. Pierce, who came on this spring. Last, but not least, on the town line, is John Hannan, who came last fall, and spaded two acres of ground, it is said.

All along we find fencing has made considerable progress; for Joshua Hathaway last winter surveyed the country and marked off the sections and quarters. The upland prairies are bright with flowers; and the lowlands wave with grass so tall that the legends say the mower sometimes worked in its shade half the day, and even a horse and rider were sometimes concealed in it. Cattle are getting plenty, bought from the herds that are driven through nearly every week. The prairie is intersected by four or five roads leading to Pike River-roads rather indefinite and winding about to avoid the marshes, which were so wet and permanent, it is said, suckers were sometimes caught where now is firm sod.

The City and Celebration.

The approach to Pike River that Independence morning just forty years ago gave little promise of a city. Timber covered the shore half a mile inland. Just to the west of this timber are ninety acres of prairie land plowed last fall, in a narrow strip one and a half miles long, and owned by Alfred Foster, J. Lothrop and N. R. Allen. Mr. Allen has a claim cabin north-west of the future railway

depot; Mr.Foster lives toward what afterward became "Bond's Wood", and J.Lothrop resides between. East of this land is owned by the Company. 'Tis still a forest in which everybody seems to have been lost (for a certain claim house therein has been located for me by the settlers all the way from the Grant House to Harvey Durkee's). A bottomless elder swamp stretches along not far from the future Main street, avoiding which the road winds down to the anticipated harbor. Here, on the south side of the creek, business is centering. Here, near the bank of the creek, we see Mr.Crossit's blacksmith shop (shut for the day, we hope) and boarding house, with its hole in the roof, out of which the heads came happily this morning while the best pants went on. Near by is Amos Grattan's new house. Down on the lake shore still stands the original log house, and north of it the store, where Nathan Allen still dispenses flour, sugar and tea, though Samuel Hale is just buying him out. North of the store,and close to the mouth of the creek (when there is a mouth), is the new warehouse of Wm.Bullen & Co., and near by it the lighter, also new, but a frail craft doomed to go to pieces this fall. The harbor has no mouth yet, except in freshets, and the road crosses to the Island along the dry beach. The Island is wide and more beautiful than we in its degenerate know it, and, on the high ground (since washed into the lake) stands the famous Resigue House. Miles G.Toby is keeping it, and counts among his boarders Mr. and Mrs.Charles Durkee and Samuel Hale. Near by is a small log house, where Mr.Toby's overflowing boarders lodge. Just beyond, in the shade of the fair oak-opening, the great celebration is held.

I will not attempt to portray the scene. A wagon "drawn by twenty-six yoke of oxen" brought the patriot settlers from Pleasant Prairie. The other settlements, I dare say, did their duty. I find it recorded that"some hundreds" were there. Edgar Hugunin was marshal of the day. Orlando Foster led the music. Jason Lothrop pronounced the address. M.G.Toby furnished the dinner. No reporter was there to catch the eloquent words. But I find in manuscript two toasts given by Mr. Lothrop, which, embodying as they do the spirit of the day, ought not to be left to oblivion. The first declared the unity needed then as now:

"Squatters;
In their good cause, wherever they may squat,
They stand as one, pre-emption law or not."

The other welcomed the Territory which the day inaugurated:
"Wisconsin;

Last risen star, not long the least,
Already greeted from the East."

Close of 1836.

During the remainder of 1836 many other settlers arrived, among whom we notice R.H.Deming, Harvey Durkee, A.D.Northway, and Geo.H.Kimball. Nor should we omit the name of Daniel Harkins, afterwards Justice of the Peace in Pleasant Prairie, but who came late in the fall of '36, poor and homeless and dug a hole in the sandy bank of the creek, where he wintered with his family. Many settlers came into the country also this fall, among whom we notice Chauncey Hannahs, with his sons, William, Thomas and Frederick, and his daughter afterward, Mrs. A.W.Doolittle. These located in the southern part of Pleasant Prairie, at Spring Brook; and among the services they rendered the settlement should be noticed the crank mill which they got that winter, and in which the neighboring settlers ground their corn.

Here at Pike River new activities appeared this fall. Charles Durkee and R.H.Deming built a store where Mr.Baldwin's coal office now stands, and not only traded, but lived in it; while Orlando Foster opened a shoe shop in the basement. Coggswell & Ayer opened another store a little to the south. One day a steamer stopped off shore the first time - the Detroit - and sent to land some passengers and freight. William Bullen this fall built on the Island, near the present Sykes house, a two-story residence, which the legends say was then the finest in Wisconsin. This was a signal for the renewal of the Resigue war, and the new house was in danger of being torn down for a time; so that I find in Thomas Persons' account book a a charge for watching it certain nights. But the dispute was at length settled, and peace finally established on the Island.

Domestic life also began to look more promising this fall; and Nelson Lay and Mariette Towslee celebrated the first wedding in the county. Many other bachelors would have gladly followed the example, but could not, for marriageable girls were few and dear.

October 25th, the first Territorial Legislature of Wisconsin met at Belmont, and Charles Durkee sat in the lower House for Pike River. In this

session, on the 3d of December, the great county of of Milwaukee was divided, and out of its southern part was formed Racine county, including, of course, our own. Pike River hoped for the county seat, but this was at last fixed at Racine - with the tacit understanding, however, that henceforth and forever the county judge and sheriff should be taken from Pike River. In accordance with this understanding William Bullen was soon appointed judge, and E.R. Hugunin sheriff. The latter filled his office with such approved valor that he held it for nearly eight years.

This fall of 1836 a weekly stage began to run from Chicago to Milwaukee on the Milwaukee road, and a few post offices were established along the route. One was in Pleasant Prairie in the Stevens and Derbyshire settlement; another was in Somers, at Willis' tavern, which about this time took the poetic name of Aurora. At Pike River, too, a post office was planted under the name of "Pike", and Waters Towslee was appointed postmaster. But the business was small and irregular. Anybody seems to have brought the mail from anywhere and left it anywhere. The truth is there was not much to bring, with postage at 25 cents. Harvey Durkee tells us he used often to bring it from Willis' in his hat that winter. Mr.Boughton, down on Miller Creek, who overflowed with jokes and disliked Pike River, said the new office was like the mill of the story: the mill site would have been one of the best of mill sites if there had only been some water there; and Pike would have been an excellent place for a post office had there been any mail to go there. Indeed, in those days there was much doubt where the coming city was to be, and Geo.Willis, three miles back from the lake, thought that, with the Milwaukee road and the new stage line in his favor, it would certainly center around his tavern.

Considerable bad feeling had indeed grown up between the country people and the Western Emigration Company. And perhaps no event of 1836 was more important than the dissolution of the company in December. Outsiders had always been jealous of it, and its own members seem to have derived little from it but trouble with others and among themselves, so that they were now quite ready to get back a fraction of their investment. So it happily dissolved; and the year 1836 closed with all the land south of the creek in private hands. George H.Kimball bought the S.E.quarter of Section 31, including most of the present First Ward of the city: Durkee and Deming bought the quarter section just south (S.E.1/4 Section 6), including most of

the present Third Ward; and Samuel Hale either then or soon after bought the strip along the lake shore, in fractional section 32.

I find no record of educational facilities at "Pike" in the winter of '36 and '37 - though it may be that Miss Laura Maltby had already opened her private school. The settlement had for the present lost the valuable services of Jason Lothrop, who had in the fall moved southward to his claim near the State Line. There, however, in his log house, besides his painting and literary work, he opened a school in November, and gathered the children of Spring Brook and vicinity to the number of twenty. Another school in Pleasant Prairie was opened the same winter in the house of Christopher Derbyshire, and taught by Alfred Walker. Somers reports no school until Mrs.Brazee's, a year later; but this is hardly probable in so enterprising a township, and David Doolittle thinks Harriet Caldwell taught one in the eastern part of the town in the summer of 1836.

1837. - Southport.

Early in 1837, the citizens, at a meeting in Resigue's tavern, resolved to change the name of the place from Pike River to Southport - it being the southern port of Wisconsin. To whose imagination the name was due I cannot learn - some say to William Bullen's - but the name plainly reflects the spirit of the time when the settlers were quite conscious of the new territory and its boundaries. Henceforth for thirteen years the name of Southport was kept, though the village was not organized until four years later.

Among the arrivals at Southport in 1837 we notice J.H.Kimball, J.M.Stryker, Deacon Bennett, E.M. Kinney, General Bullen, Fred Lovell, the Dana family, and apparently Jared Lake, Francis Quarles and Judge Newell.

Into Somers the same year came Alvin Strong, Deacon Spence, Jonas Rhodes, and the Kelloggs who settle and name Kellogg's Corners, and think that will be the metropolis of the county. This year or before came also George Leet, who settled where his family still live, and soon after opened another tavern on the Milwaukee road. This year E.B.Pierce built in Somers what he calls the first farmer's barn in the county.

In Paris before the end of the season we find Patrick Malarky, Fr.Weeks, James Clark, Mr.Stanley, Fr.McGinn, Rufus Marston, and others; also S.B. Myrick, who came from Paris, N.Y., and so gave that name to the town.

Bristol in 1837 received many new settlers to keep Rollin Tuttle company. Among these we notice

Mrs.Tourtelotte and family, Harmon Marsh, Levi Grant, Charles and Thomas Cutting, S.S.Fowler, Joel Walker, Will Etheridge, A.B.Jackson, Luman Upson and Elihu Philips. At a meeting at the house of A.B.Jackson in November, it was decided to name the town Bristol, from a place in New England, whence several of the settlers had come.

In the spring of 1837 John Dodge went from Southport and settled in Salem, near what was afterward known as the "Brass Ball". Also Alfred Bullen, General Bullen and others went over to Fox River, to build the city which had lain on Jason Lothrop's map for a year. A hopeful "hotel" was erected and other improvements made; but of any further movements in Salem or in Wheatland and Randall no reports have come to me.

Here at Southport in 1837 was much activity. The hotel business especially took a new start. Deacon Hollis Whitney built a log tavern near the site of L.Bain's present hardware store. This was the first building on Main street, and afterwards became famous as the "City Hotel". (Deacon Whitney, like a good deacon, held fast to the religious opinions of his day; and one of his Sunday school scholars, whom I recently met in Michigan, tells me how the deacon, showing him one day the fires in a brick-kiln, improved the occasion, and described how much hotter the fires in the next world were going to be.) Seth and A.W.Doolittle also built, in 1837, the Wisconsin House, on the south side of the creek, near Wallace Mygatt's present residence. Mr.Crossit built, near Head & Sutherland's hay barn, a house, which he this year occupied as a residence, with Philander Dodge keeping a tailor shop upstairs; but which afterward became the Kenosha Copee House. In the summer of 1837 the first house on Market street was built by Orlando Foster, just west of the present American Hotel. The settlement also pushed slowly to the south, and it seems to have been this year that Jared Lake, having purchased the tract now occupied by the south-western part of the city, built a log house in the corner offit, near where O.S.Head's house now stands. Nor should we forget to notice, in our view of 1837, a little house standing in the south-western part of the present park, occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Durkee; a frail and rough cabin, but, like many of those times, not merely finished in, but largely constructed of oak and black walnut.

But most notable of the buildings of 1837 was the famous "Block School House". It was the second structure on Main street, and stood a little south of the present "Simmons' Hall". Here in this little room, surrounded by its continuous bench, on which the pupils revolved to face outward or inward at command, Mrs.Dr.Allen (afterward Mrs.J.V.Quarles, Sr.) is soon found teaching school. But the house served not for school alone; there the sermons and debates were heard; there elections, caucuses and communion were held; and there was the general gathering-place for many a year.

The historian should by no means fail to chronicle the progress of the fine arts in a community. And we are glad to notice in 1837 the singing school which Nathan Dye taught, and the band of music which Orlando Foster organized.

In 1837 the movement for a harbor was begun, and Charles Durkee was sent to Washington in its support. Through his influence a special bill passed the Senate, allowing settlers to pre-empt and purchase village lots, the proceeds to be applied to the harbor. For a few days after they heard of it the settlers were busy fencing the allowed lots. But soon came news of the defeat of the bill in the House, and the work as suddenly stopped. Still the harbor question continued to agitate the public mind through those early years. So eager were the people of Southport to prove it a port that (I am told) they one day, taking advantage of a freshet that opened the mouth of the creek, succeeded, by help of high water and wind and a few yoke of oxen, in getting a schooner into the bay. They came near having to keep it there, too; but at length, by anchor and capstan, the captain succeeded in getting his vessel back into the lake again. So slow was the harbor in coming. And for many years the lighters, of which A.D.Northway built three at different times, remained the only means of landing freight. The old settlers still tell with kindling eye how, at the well known cry from Samuel Hale, whether at busy noon or dead of night, every citizen started to launch the lighter as if it were a religious duty.

The Territorial Legislature of 1837 sat at Burlington, and Charles Durkee went again as representative of Southport.

Toward the close of 1838 occured the death of Mrs.Charles Durkee. She was buried on the lovely knoll south of the town, which had been a favorite resort with her when alive; and thus began the beautiful cemetery which her husband afterward donated to Kenosha.

1838.

Prominent among the arrivals of 1838 are noticed the names of Wallace Mygatt and Volney French. This year we find Harvey Durkee building his first store (what is now known as the Mrs. Whitcomb house) and beginning his housekeeping in it. This and the Bennett store, building at the same time, were the first stores on the North side. The same year Mr. Dana built the large house now fronting the Park and next to the Congregational church, and planted the grape seed which has grown into the large vine climbing the oak at the door.

1838 is also marked by church organization. The Congregationalists organized in June; the Baptists in September, with Jason Lothrop as pastor; though neither built churches for several years to come. The Methodists had organized the year before.

Therefore Southport having its school house built and its churches started this historian considers it safe to end his chronicle.