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Huey, Thomas, Mrs.

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Mrs. Thomas Huey

Address delivered October, 1924

My Life In Dunn County.

(Introduction)

1863

I did not come into Dunn County riding after any fine dapple gray horses, but instead I came riding after an ox team sixty one years ago this last summer. A mere child I came with my parents Katherine and Thomas Davidson and family from our old home in Waukesha County near Milwaukee to five miles out from Menomonie on the Hudson road. Old Mr. Cockeram whom you all no doubt remember, had been writing to my father about how cheap land could be acquired up here and that it was a good place for a poor man to get a start, so father decided to come up here and buy some land. Mr. Cockeram had been our neighbor in southern Wisconsin and had come to Dunn County previously to our coming. We took the train at Milwaukee coming part way. Then we got off and took a boat as the train did not run any further. I think this place was Prairie du Chien.. After coming a short distance this boat was stuck on a sand bar and another boat passing which was carrying soldiers as this was Civil war days took the passengers from our boat on and brought them to Reeds Landing. There we stayed all night at the Bullard House. The next day we took a small boat called the Monitor which brought us to Durand. There we were met by some friends -the Nimos who had also been our neighbors in southern Wisconsin. They were the parents of Alex Nimmo formerly of this city. They met us with an ox team and took us out to their home four miles out from Durand on Spring Creek. The next day my father walked all the way to Mr. Cockeram's on the Hudson road returning with him and his ox team and took us all and our luggage to the Cockeram home which was a long tedious trip. There were no fine bridges those days, but it was just down one hill and up another. We arrived at Mr. Cockeram's away after dark. I remember Mrs. Cockeram as a dear kind woman and she had supper waiting. I remember she had some honey for supper which they told us had been gotten out of a

A-7
 tree in the woods which we thought very wonderful then. Mr. Cockeram's people then lived in a log house which consisted of just one room. (There were two home made beds across one end. Mrs. Cockeram and her children had one of the beds and my mother and her children had the other one and we slept cross-wise as there were then five children in our family. I remember how Mr. Cockeram took several sticks of wood and folded his coat and laid it on the wood on the floor for a pillow and of him saying to my father "Davidson fix you a bed." As it was harvest time my father and Mr. Cockeram went out harvesting on Sherman prairie. The grain then of course was all cradled by hand. That fall my father bought the land that is now known as the Jacob Brevade place on the Hudson road. He acquired this land for three and one half dollars per acre. Just one small field of this land was cleared and there were no buildings of course, so there was a bachelor by the name of Ergourd who lived in a cabin down on Gilbert's creek which they called Bachelor's hall and he went to the army and we got his cabin to move into. My father had brought a set of carpenter's tools from Milwaukee so he got some lumber and made what furniture we had which consisted of two bedsteads, table and benches. We had brought our bedding and dishes with us. Mother cooked on a fire place and made the finest bread in a tin oven. I can remember my father carrying a sack of flour home from Menomonie on his back five miles.

m
 My oldest sister was very sick that year and father had to walk to Menomonie after a Dr. The only Dr. in Menomonie then was a Dr. Langdell. I think he afterwards located in Eau Claire. Father had a deer lick arranged that year where he often killed two deer in one night, We dried some of the venison for summer use. Wild game of all kinds was in abundance so we always had plenty of meat. There were also plenty of berries and we picked those and dried them instead of canning them as they now do. Tea, coffee, and sugar were used very little. We usually had some on hand for emergencies such as sickness, but our coffee was mostly made from Barley and we made lots of maple syrup and sugar. Clothing was very high too. I remember of having one dalico dress at fifty cents a yard. My father and

mother however both had a good many good clothes they had had before their marriage in the East and these they kept making over for we children for mother's dresses had six widths in them then. The next summer John Wilkinson went to the army. The early settlers will remember him as a great musician and that he sold organs. Mrs. Wilkinson went home to stay with her people and father secured their house to move into which was near the land he had bought. and he started to build on our land. That year we had two fine pigs which father had carried home in a sack on his back from Sherman prairie. They grew into fine hogs and we butchered one and a bear came one day and killed the other right back of the house while father was in Menomonie after lumber. My mother boarded some men that year who worked in a bowl factory down on Gilbert's creek. The factory was afterward built over into a shingle mill. Some perhaps will remember Joseph Brehm. He came also that year to start a home up here near our land. We had known him in southern Wisconsin and so he and his oldest son stayed with us while preparing a home for the family to come. Hospitality reigned in every home those days and there was always room for one more. Peter Grim and family also came that year and they stayed awhile with us while they were getting their home ready having bought the Argourd place. That fall we moved into our new home on our own land. The house was a hewed log house inside and out which was considered extra good for those days. A Mr. Whiteford came that year from southern Wisconsin also and stayed at our home for awhile -later buying a piece of land up on the table land. Father continued clearing our land and I have seen him burn great piles of fine maple logs which would be valuable to-day. He sold considerable cord wood to Mr. John H. Knapp (Henry Knapp's father) and he sent teams out to hawl it. He raised some wheat that year on the field that was cleared ^{Begin} when we went there and this he threshed with a flail. We lived there two years before there was a school house built and our first teacher in the new school house was Ruth Hopkins who afterward became Mrs. Miner Dunn who lived in this city for a number of years. The first school Superintendent to visit our school

was Carl Lucas. I well remember his visitation and of him telling the children interesting stories. John Kelly or perhaps he is better known to you as Judge Kelly and also his brother Tom attended school with us there. Nellie Drowley also was one of the pupils and later taught the school and then after that became Judge Kelly's wife. One day there was a circus in Menomonie and the Wilkinsons who had no children took me with them. They had the only horse in the neighborhood as Mr. Wilkinson sold trout around Menomonie. They gave me a good time buying me lemonade which was quite a treat for them. The circus had driven through from Hudson passing our house at night. I remember what a terrible noise the animals made. On the way home we passed a crowd of our neighbors who had walked into the circus. Among them were John Kelly and Nellie Drowley. John had taken Nellie to the circus and she had worn some new cloth gaiters which were worn a great deal then. It seems they had tired her feet and had been removed and as we passed John was carrying the gaiters and Nellie was walking bare footed. Young ladies wern't driven around in automobiles those days.

Belgium
John Oddie and his wife came through about that time from southern Wisconsin in a covered wagon and stopped to visit us and then went on and located in the Boyceville section. We continued to live there for a time and then father thinking it too hard to clear up a farm among that heavy timber decided to trade farms with a Mr. Merchant over near Rock Falls in Pepin County. We moved in the early spring while we could still move on sleighs and crossed the ice at Rumsey's Landing. The same teams which brought Mr. Merchant's goods over moved us back.

Pepin
Several years later I came to Dunnville to work in the Knapp Stout and Company's boarding house. There was a family by the name of Burby running the boarding house at that time. Charlie Moore whom some may remember was then General Manager of the company's entire business. Mr. Moore was later elected

sheriff of Dunn county and Henry Knapp came to take his place. Dunnville was a busy place those days. The company bought wood and all kinds of farm produce . There was a large ware house there at that time where the boat landed which was first called the Pete Wilson and later built over and renamed "The Phil Schackel" after the captain.* This boat brought all the goods up the river that was used in all the Company's stores and was hawled from there by four horse mule teams to their various stores. I have seen ten or twelve such teams come tearing down the hill and line up by the ware house to be loaded. Dr. Lyman clerked on the boat one season while I was there just before he went to study medicine. We only received mail two times a week. The United States mail was carried by an old Mr. Orr to and from Menomonie going by way of Louisville and serving the little post office there. The company kept a big four horse covered stage which made daily trips to and from Menomonie which carried their private mail and any passengers which would arrive on the boat or any that would come down from Menomonie to take the boat. Mr. J. H. Stout was then manager of the river work below Dunnville and kept a regular room at the hotel which was the first room to the left at the head of the stairs which was always kept in readiness for him and was known as Stout's room. He was not always there as the boat did not get in every day, depending on the stage of the water. Mr. T. B. Wilson kept a driving team and looked after the river work from Menomonie to Dunnville. He also kept a reserved room in the hotel further down the hall.

We all worked hard but there was lots of life to Dunnville those days and we had jolly times. A great many people from Menomonie came down there in the winter for sleigh ride parties and had dances in the large dining room. I recall seeing Mr. Jeff George for the first time there at one of these dances. In the winter there were always a good many stoppers or transients coming through and we would have the ice crew to board who put up the ice for the company. Mr. John Ticknor of this city was then teaching the Dunnville school and boarded at the hotel while I was there.

I recall many old familiar faces through-out the county who

See post card

worked on the river at that time. Many have passed on. Among them was Pat Mc Mahn and William Cassidy.

I continued to work at the hotel at Dunnville for five years. I might say that there were no modern conveniences then to lighten the work as there now is. For instance -I mixed all my bread for all that crowd there in a wooden wash tub.

While working at Dunnville I met Thomas Huey who was in the employ of the company. We were married at Eau Claire in July of 1879 and came on over to Menomonie stopping a few days at the old "Menomonie House" while buying our house keeping goods which were bought at the company's old ware house. Then we went to Downsville and boarded a few days at the company's boarding House while getting the house then known as the Hennemyer house in readiness to move into which we had rented. Edd Parkhurst was then running the boarding house. While at the hotel Harry Suter and James Williamson made me a potato masher and rolling pin at the mill which I still have. The mill was then running on tower and Downsville was then lively.

Later, in the spring of '82 we started a little hotel in this Hennemyer House. It was the spring the Milwaukee Rail Road was built through and I boarded the men who surveyed the Rail Road and also the head men who supervised the building, and also the first operator at Downsville. His name was Denison.

While living in the Hennemyer House my two oldest children were born.

In the spring of '83 the big wash out which many will remember occurred at Downville when the dam went out. The company's store, sleeping shanty, and several other buildings were washed away. It was then necessary for them to take the Hennemyer House which they owned to put their goods in which had been saved in the washout and they bought all of our goods which we wished to dispose of and sent us to Dunnville to board at the hotel as Mr. Huey was still in the employ of the company and was needed on the river, being Pilot on the rafts in the summer season and driving team in the woods winters, working for the Knapp Stout and Company for over thirty years. The Cramptons were then running the boarding house at Dunnville while we boarded there.

That summer after the washout in '83 while we were boarding at Dunnville the company laid out some lots on what was then known as the old Creaser farm at Downsville and we bought the first two lots sold thereby getting a corner location. Mr. Huey let the contract for the building of our house at once and it was completed and ready for us to move into on the ^{tw}twentyeth of October - forty one years ago this month. I remember so well how happy I was that day when we arrived at our own new home, and that I made biscuits for supper in the stove I am still using. It had grown so tiresome boarding with two children and hiring laundry done.

Mrs. Well Cronk of this city -then Miss Eliza Teare was teaching at Downsville that year and her sister Mary was teaching the Creaser school which is the Kyle district now and the two girls boarded with me in my new home forty-one years ago this winter. A little later Miss Myrtle Mc Gilton of this county taught there and lived in our home.

My two youngest children were born in this present home and we have continued to live there ever since - Mr. Huey passing away in 1915.

~~stop~~
I believe this is all I can tell you of interest about my life in Dunn County and I hope I havn't tired you too much. I thank you.
