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# Memories of Early Days

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Mrs. Melinda A. Weaver



*J. Lacher*

*Pam 57-1849*

**MEMORIES**  
**OF**  
**EARLY DAYS**  
**BY**

**Mrs. Melinda A. Weaver,**

Wife of John Weaver, one of the Earliest  
Settlers of the Town of Lisbon,  
Waukesha County, Wis

**1876**

The following narrative was first published  
in the WAUKESHA PLAINDEALER in 1876

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MAR 2 - 1944  
Estate of George D.  
and Robert Wild  
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## Memories of Early Days.

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Darlington, Wis., December 21, 1875

I was born in the town of Augusta, county of Oneida and state of New York, and had always lived there until I was twenty-four years old. My husband was born in England, and lived there until he was twenty-two. After our marriage he often had a touch of the Western fever, (as the phrase was in those days), but as it did not meet my mind exactly to leave the old place with all the comforts and conveniences, and high privileges that we enjoyed, neither could I make up my mind to leave my parents, brothers and sisters and many other relatives and friends, until the summer of 1836, when we had a flattering account of Wisconsin, and particularly of Milwaukee, sent to us by a brother-in-law of my husband who went to Milwaukee from our place in the spring, he seemed to think that had found the right place, just the place for young people to commence life in earnest, and make homes for themselves and families. That part of the territory that he had been to look at, and where he had made his claim, was situated about eighteen miles west of Milwaukee, was very pleasant, just rolling enough to be healthy, plenty of wood, some prairie and openings, so that it would be very easy to clear a farm, and large marshes where grass grew in abundance, that would supply both green feed and hay, to feed such animals as would be necessary for people to have on the land; in fact it seemed to him an earthly paradise, and he seemed to think it would be best for us, and all of our family that he was connected with to sell what we could not take with us conveniently, and come to this fair haven, this land of promise and rest. The western fever again began to be manifest in the mind of my husband and also of one of my brothers. My husband made up his mind almost immediately to settle his affairs and make ready as fast as possible to move, and to try the

"far west," as it was then called. I then began to think seriously on the subject, and we began to talk about it thoughtfully and seriously, and finally concluded that as we had no home of our own, as we lived on a hired farm, that perhaps we had better try to make us a home in a new country, and when our brother knew what we had made up our minds to do, told us he was in the same mind himself if he could only be satisfied that he should like the new country as well as his brother-in-law appeared to, but he had a large family and did not like to risk pulling up stakes and going so far, until he could have more than one person's opinion and advice on the subject, and was anxious that his own relatives should go first and if we liked it and thought we would stay, he would, if possible, come to us in the spring, but if we did not like it and thought it best to come back in the spring, which we could not do until the opening of navigation, that he would pay our expenses back, as he said it would be an advantage to him to do this rather than to go with his large family and then perhaps not be satisfied and think best to go back, and if we would go ahead he would do all he could to help us get ready, so that we might start early enough to get through before the closing of navigation, as we had to sail up the chain of lakes from Buffalo to Milwaukee, and we had a good deal to do to get ready for the journey. We only allowed ourselves one month to sell off what we had to sell, and to make ready for the start. My husband sold his crops on the ground, except wheat and barley which were harvested. There were potatoes, hops, and corn not harvested, besides a good, large and fine vegetable garden and some fruit. He also had a yoke of oxen and one horse and a number of cows, a flock of sheep, a number of swine and farming utensils, which all sold to good advantage. We sold some of our household furniture and some we saved to bring with us. My husband thought of doing as his brother-in-law did, that was to sell all our furniture to save the trouble and expense of moving it so far, but I could not consent to that, for I thought that what we did not take with us of housesold goods, that it was almost certain we should have to do without for several years, and

that it would be less trouble in the end and more convenient for us if we took some furniture, if it was but a few pieces, than to leave all behind, and not be able to replace it when we got to housekeeping again, which surely would have been the case, for we did not see the time for several years that we felt able to buy anything but the barest necessities of life for ourselves and children, and oftentimes had to make up our minds to go without many things that we could wish to have and felt the need of. Well, after all this preamble, and it might be thought unnecessary and not a very interesting introduction, perhaps, to say so much as to the narrator and him who participated together in all these events of our early life, but it is interesting for us to look back for nearly forty years and think and talk over our troubles and trials that we passed through at times, and the comforts and pleasures that we experienced at other times likewise mercies and blessings, which we acknowledge and feel thankful for, as coming from the hand of our Heavenly Father, whose loving kindness and condescending goodness we always felt it our duty and privilege to acknowledge, and after all this, as I have said, I feel like relating some of the particulars of our journey, which to me are very interesting, as I had never been over forty miles from my native town.

The first day of September, 1836, we left our parents, brothers and sisters and many other relatives, friends and neighbors, and bid good bye to our old home, and to all that was near and dear to us, and with our small children, a son and daughter, we started on our journey. Slow and tedious was the way of traveling in those days, compared with the faster and much more comfortable way of the present, when we have railroads on which we ride in comfortable carriages, drawn by the steam engine, or the iron horse, as it is often called and can get over as much ground in two days as in three weeks at that time, and when we started from our old home we had to go fourteen miles to a place called Lenox Basin, and then go on a canal boat to Buffalo. Two teams conveyed us, with our luggage to Lennox, where we waited two hours for a boat, and so anxious were we to be on the way that we went on board the first boat that came

along, and so slow did we travel or move along, that we were from Thursday noon until the next Tuesday morning at two o'clock going to Buffalo. The time seemed long for the Captain had told us that he expected to get here in three days. We had to go on the steamboat Monroe at eight o'clock that morning, a boat that only ran to and from Buffalo and Detroit, and just as our goods were being moved from one boat to the other, we were told that if we had Eastern bills we must exchange them for Western money, for Eastern money would not pass when we go farther west, so my husband left me to see that the goods were put on the boat all right, and be all ready with the children to go on board with him when he returned, and went to change his money with three other men who were on the boat at the same time. There was a bell to ring three times before the boat should start, and there was to be fifteen minutes between the first and second bell, and then fifteen again between the second and third, and then in five minutes the boat was to start, and as the second bell was ringing there were three young men came, and two of them took my children and the other led me on a long single plank, right over the deep water to the steamboat. I was worried about my husband for fear that the boat would be off before he came back, and I did not know how I should manage to get along with my little ones, but when the third and last bell began to ring, he came, but only just in time not to be left. He changed his money, but he might as well have saved himself the trouble, for when we got to Milwaukee the Eastern money was considered the best. We were fortunate, however, and did not lose on ours.

We were hoping to get to Detroit in time to start from there on a boat that was advertised to go out on Wednesday evening, and bound for Milwaukee, but were from eight o'clock Tuesday morning until two o'clock Thursday afternoon before landing, and the steamboat had gone the evening before, and we could neither see nor hear of any vessel that was going out for a week, so we went to a hotel expecting to have to wait a week, but there came up a heavy thunder storm just at night, the rain seemed to fairly pour, and the



water ran like a river down the streets, the wind was blowing fearfully. and about midnight there was a schooner driven into the harbor. It had come from Sackett's Harbor, up through the Welland Canal, and was bound for Chicago, laden with goods for that place and Milwaukee, but was to be sold there and not taken back that fall, and as we were anxious to go along, we made up our minds to go Chicago on this schooner, Alleghan she was called, and from there take some other vessel to Milwaukee. We went on board about noon on Friday, expecting to go immediately but after all we did not go out until Saturday at four o'clock. The wind being in the right direction and brisk, we expected to get of the point off Huron about nine o'clock. The Captain went to bed early so as to take his turn on the watch at midnight, and gave orders to the sailors to lay anchors, when we got to this point, until morning, but we got there sooner than we expected, and the first we knew we had run on a sand bar and stuck fast, and had to lay there still until morning. As soon as it was day light the men went to work to get the vessel off the sand bar so that she could sail again, as the weather was fair and the wind favorable to take us along on our way; but it was three o'clock in afternoon before the vessel was liberated, and we sailed only about an hour before the wind went down, and we had to lay there still until the next day at three o'clock when a steamboat came puffing along and took our schooner on one side and the brig Illinois on the other, and towed both vessels about six miles, around a point called the Fiddler's Elbow, where the wind was all right to take us along again. The Illinois was a large brig, and lay about a half mile from us in the same predicament that we were in, and could not sail for the want of wind. It was quite a novelty to some of us passengers that had never been on the lake before, to be helped along in that style, but very convenient when we had no other way of moving on the face of the deep, and were anxious to be on our way. When we had turned the point our two captains paid the captain of the steamboat forty dollars each for his services, and then he bade us good-bye, wheeled around and went in another direction, and left us,

being soon out of sight. The brig sailed faster than we did and was nearly lost to our view before dark. As for our little vessel, she sailed only about two hours when the wind again ceased and left us still again on the bosom of the lake, where we had to lay again for twenty-four hours before there was any wind to move us at all, and that was as much headway as we made all the way from Detroit to Milwaukee, and even more than we made some of the way, for we lay three days in one place by the side of the Manitou Islands and within a mile of the shore. There were five families of us, besides the captain, his mates, men, cook and assistant, and a dozen or more of young single people. The most of them went ashore in the course of the time that we lay here all but an old lady seventy years old, another lady who was sick, and myself and my two children. I did not care to go to the island in the jolly boat. We made such poor headway that we all became discouraged. The captain told us when we had only been two or three days from Detroit that as we had never seen Milwaukee, and would like to see it, and as he found that he had about a dozen passengers that were going there, that if the wind and weather was favorable, he would try and land us there and not take us to Chicago. We were all pleased with that idea but so slow did we move that we almost dispaired of getting to our journey's end before navigation would close for the season. When we first started from Detroit the captain told us that if we had good weather and favorable wind, and didn't get taken by pirates, he hoped to get us to Chicago in a week. We all thought he was joking about the pirates, but he said that it was no joke at all, for there had been a pirate vessel on the the lakes that summer, and that the vessel had been taken by authority and the men arrested and tried, but as nothing could be fairly proved against them they were set free, but had been closely watched, and he verily believed that they were pirates, but he hoped that he should be able to keep out of their way. One morning not long after this conversation, the captain was on deck just as it was light enough to see plainly, and he discovered a strange looking vessel laying quite still in a little nook, or bay, close up to a bank that lay about

a quarter of a mile to the left of us, and he called the attention of his mates and men to it. Very soon the passengers were all astir and gazing at it. The captain did not like the looks of it. He said that he had the list and description of every vessel that had gone before him for the last month, but had not the description of any such vessel as that. When we passed it there was no sail to be seen, nor smoke, nor the least sign of life. The captain kept watch of it, and so did the passengers. We had not got more than half mile past it, when all at once we saw smoke, and in a shorter space of time than it takes me to write it, sails went up, the vessel whirled around, headed toward us and sailed along in our track as if it were chasing us, and kept right along in that course until three o'clock in the afternoon, when very soon after we lost sight of her. The captain, however, kept close watch, and when he went to his meals one of his mates watched. Sometimes we sailed so fast as to leave her so far in the distance as to look like a mere speck on the water, and then again at times she gained upon us, and came so near that we could see her very plainly. About noon the captain ordered his men to clew and load all the guns belonging to the vessel, and have them ready for use in case that it might be necessary, and likewise requested the passengers who had guns with them to do the same. When they were loading the guns the captain saw that some of the ladies as well as some of the gentlemen showed signs of being timid and somewhat frightened, he laughed at their fears, and pretended that he did not feel in the least alarmed, and only gave those orders just to see what effect it would have on the men, and professed to be very sorry that he had alarmed the ladies. But I watched him and could see that he did not feel very easy; on the contrary, he seemed to be very much concerned, and instead of going to rest at his usual early hour to be ready for his turn on his night watch, as he did every night, he stayed upon deck and watched all night. But we never heard any more of the pirate vessel.

The time passed about as it usually had since the commencement of our journey, sometimes sailing along quite fast, but oftener laying still, until the twenty-fifth of the month. We had been laying still for nearly two days when on the twenty-fourth a fine breeze blew up and sent us on our way rejoicing—for a few hours only. About four o'clock in the afternoon it began to be foggy and in a few minutes the fog was so thick and heavy that we could see nothing but fog. This was rather discouraging, as something had happened to the captain's compass that day so that it was of no use to him. The wind was strong enough as yet to allow us to sail along finely, and the captain had thought that we might see Milwaukee the next morning, and for fear of getting out of his way he concluded not to go ahead any further until the fog cleared away, so they kept shifting the sails and sailing around all night, so as keep about in the same place, hoping that it would be clear in the morning. But when morning came it was still very foggy, but not quite so thick as it had been the night before. We could see only a few rods from the vessel. As soon as it was fairly day light the captain had his jolly boat lowered, and he took his gun and stepped into it, paddled off to explore, as he said, for he sounded with lead line, and thought that he was not far from land. The first mate objected to his going alone, or going at all, before the fog had cleared away. The captain only laughed at him and paddled off and the fog soon hid him from our sight. He was gone three hours, and the fog had cleared a little more than when he started. The mate had become alarmed, and had fired a gun three times before he got an answer, when soon after the captain appeared in sight and three men in the boat with him. The seventy-year old lady and myself were on deck looking over the side when he came, and looking and seeing that the old lady seemed very much surprised, he put on a very sober-looking face and said, "Well, mother, I have taken three pirates this morning, and we are going to have a hanging bee as soon as I have had my breakfast." The nervous old lady was quite alarmed at this, but soon got over it when the captain came on board and told us that when about a

mile from the vessel he had run into the mouth of a river, and when he had rowed about a mile up the stream, he came to a sawmill and a small settlement, who near the mill he saw three men with packs upon their backs, and were just about to start for Milwaukee on foot. He asked them the name of the place. They told him it was Sheboygan and that it was the Sheboygan river that he had run his boat into. He asked them if they had ever been on the lake to Milwaukee. They said they had, and he then wanted to know if they could pilot him to Milwaukee. They seemed to think they could, and he then invited them to come on board of his boat. The old lady was pleased to think that there would be no hanging bee after all. These men were surveyors. They said that it was about sixty miles to Milwaukee by land—they did not know the exact distance by water, but when the fog cleared away a short time after, they seemed to think that if we were favored with fair wind all day as we were then, that we might reach Milwaukee by evening, but about two hours later the wind went down again and so that we made no more headway for two days. On the 27th we were again favored with a fine breeze and about twelve o'clock, midnight, we were within a mile of Milwaukee.

We had very pleasant weather all the way from home except one day, and that was a rainy day. Except that one day we could be on deck nearly all day. Of course, when it was foggy it was not so pleasant, but it was warm. The sun shone bright and beautiful except those two days. We did not go to bed the night we got to Milwaukee, for the captain had told us that he expected that we should get there in the evening, and that he must land us as soon as he got where he could, if it was night, that is, if the wind was favorable for him to go right along. So, late as it was, we had to go ashore in a small row boat, which went three times from the schooner to the land to take the passengers and goods. We went the second time. Some of our goods went the first, and some the second time. It had grown cloudy and very dark by the time we had got seated in the boat, and we heard distant thunder. We found that the lake was getting rather rough. There was no harbor or

pier, and the sailors rowed as near as they could and then jumped on shore with a rope in hand and then pulled the boat close to the shore helping the rest of us to land, and there we were with the two little children on the beach of the lake—a long way from any house or building and so dark was it that we could scarcely see to walk on the beach and keep clear of the lake. But late as it was, we had seen a number of lights up in a little town, but we could see none of them now. We took our children, each of us one, in our arms, and walked half a mile right along close to the lake; the thunder growing louder and nearer, and the storm seemed fast approaching. We came to a small log house where lived three families. We saw a light at a window just before we got to it, but it was gone by the time we got there, and it was beginning to sprinkle. We rapped at the door and a man called out to know what was wanted. My husband answered that he had just been landed from a schooner, with his wife and two children, and would like to get shelter for for the rest of the night. A lady let us in, the only man at home being lame and could not get out of bed. He had been out chopping and had cut his foot very badly with his axe. They were kind enough to give us shelter, but had no bed for us, so my husband went back to where we landed and brought a loose bed that we had and got back before it rained very hard; but we had scarcely lain down with the children when the rain came down in earnest. The thunder was heavy and the lightning sharp, and altogether, with the roaring and dashing of the waves, (for we were close to the lake), there was not very much sleep for us, but we were thankful that we were on land, and that it was no worse. When daylight came the sun rose bright and clear, and it was very pleasant indeed. My husband went back to where our boxes, chest and barrels lay, for they had to lay where we landed, and bought our provision box so that we could get our breakfast, and then went out and found his brother-in-law who had just come down the river two miles, to his work. He came in a small boat. He took me and the children in his boat and rowed back home with us, my husband staying to take care of our luggage till the boat could

come back for him and bring our baggage home, which was done in the course of the day. They lived in a small log house, with only one room below and one above, and these very small. They had three little ones and there was a family staying with them—a man, wife and four children. They stayed about a week after we got there and then they moved, but we had to stay there as there was no other place,—not even one room that we could find to get into, and we could not get into the country as we expected to, until spring. Those who had gone and made their claims were not going until spring, and it would be too lonely for one family to be out there without any neighbors. It was lonely enough where we were, a mile and a half from the town, and not much of a town at that, and did not look as if it would ever be much of a place.

We expected to pay for our land that fall, but as it was not in the market, we could not; but as we found provisions and everything that we needed so much dearer than we had been used to paying, we found it necessary to use all of our ready money before we could raise anything on our land. Flour was \$8 a barrel when we first got there, and we were told that as soon as navigation closed it would be raised to \$15, and so we thought we would get our winter stock, but the merchants had already raised the price and we had to pay \$10 and \$12. We paid \$16 for a barrel of white fish and \$32 for a barrel of pork, \$6 a hundred for beef by taking the half of one animal; butter 25 cents, and not fit to eat, so we did not buy any for a while, but used a jar full that we brought from the east, and then went without any for two months. At the end of that time there was a man came from Illinois with a sleigh load of nice butter that he sold for two-and-sixpence as we used to count money then, but the merchants sold what they called good butter at the time for five shillings a pound; very poor brown sugar 18 cents, a pound; a little better kind, 20 cents; and loaf sugar 25 cents a pound. Tea, coffee and spices were also dear accordingly and went up in price when navigation closed, but not quite so much in proportion as some other things. Sure enough flour was \$15. a barrel when navigation closed, and there

came a time, about the middle of winter, that flour had to be brought by teams from Chicago, and those who had to buy then had to pay \$20 a barrel. We paid a dollar a bushel for potatoes, and 50 cents a bushel for turnips that were raised near where we lived. Clothing was very dear, but we had supplied ourselves so well that we did not need much for two years, and by that time it was a little more reasonable. My husband went to work at two dollars a day, the day after we landed, and worked until he had earned one hundred and twenty dollars, sometimes with carpenters and sometimes with masons. Then came dull times, no more building that winter except to finish off those that were commenced, consequently there was no work except for regular tradesmen. There were a good many men out of employment that would have been glad to have had work to do. Our men bought some oxen and got a chance to draw some wood for the steam boats. They had to pay twenty-two dollars a ton for hay, and they bought corn and oats to feed and to sow. They paid two dollars a bushel for oats and two and half for corn. Their job of hauling wood lasted about three weeks, and then they went through the woods where it was more open. Oak openings as they called it, with once in a while a small prairie, and began to build a log house. It was eighteen miles to their claim, so they would take provisions for a week and go and work a week, and then come home, get more and go again. It was very cold and they found it very slow business to get even a log house built. They had to saw all the boards they used by hand, and it took three men four weeks, including the time it took to go to and from the place, and break their way through the snow and cut trees and brush, so that they could get through with oxen and sleds. The third man was a neighbor who was going to live near us. When they had one house they thought we could live in, we moved—three families into the house and all lived together four weeks. One of our neighbors fixed up a claim shanty, as they called it, and moved his family into it on the same day that we moved, that being the fourth day of March, 1837. We were a mile and a half apart and could not see each others cabins.



Our men hired a man with a span of horses and a sleigh to take us with our children, and we had to go through fifteen miles of timber, and only one place in the timber that we could see out, and then only as we looked overhead.

There were no houses all through the woods, as we went to our new home in the opening beyond, except the Half-way House—as our men called it—and that was rather more than half of the way through the woods; but it was only a place where a man had cut down a few trees, and laid up a few logs as if for a house about twelve feet square, just to save his claim. There was no roof, not even rafters, but a few pieces of bark, and a little brush laid over at one corner. There was a doorway cut through, but no door. There were some pieces of flat stone laid up against the logs in one corner, and as our men went to and fro once a week for four weeks, while they were getting ready to move, they would give their oxen some grain, and as there was no one there to entertain them, they would entertain themselves in the best manner possible. They would enter this wayside inn, build a fire in the center, where stood those flat stones, and prepare their tea or coffee, which they always carried with them and their lunch of bread, cold meat, pie and cake and such things as we could cook and put up for them. When they had finished their meal and warmed themselves as well as they could, and their teams had rested and fed, they would drive along again on their lonely road, never meeting or overtaking anyone, for there was no one but themselves that traveled that road, until the day that we three families went, and then there were two men that went to look for land, and they stayed in our house nights and looked around for several days, until they suited themselves for land to make homes for themselves and families.

As soon as it was known that we had moved out in the country men kept coming, so that our little log house was always full. The four weeks that the three families of us lived all together in one house, our floor was strewn with men, (those who came to look for land and make claims), every night but one, and that night we felt rather lonely.

There was only one room that we could use, except to stow away some things out of our way for the upper floor was laid only half way over, and no stairs to go above. Some had to crowd themselves and families into one end of the room, (fourteen of us altogether), petitioned across, and between beds with quilts and blankets, so as to leave the rest of the room for our company. Some of them brought their provisions, and we prepared it for them, and some of them boarded with us, but they all had to lay on the floor, as we had no bedsteads besides those we used ourselves, and these were home-made and roughly made at that. But crowded as we were, we were only to glad too divide our small room and accomodate as well as it was possible in our poor way, for we wanted neighbors as well as they wanted homes; and if we were somewhat selfish, we had a desire to be kind and neighborly. There was such a body of snow on the ground that there was good sleighing nearly half the month of March, which made it it very convenient for our men to get hay and grain, and such things as they had to have, for they had to go to Milwaukee for everything that they needed, as there was nowhere else to go to get anything; but wood and water we had plenty at home. They made hay and stacked it in the previous summer, when they went to make their claims, hoping to have an abundance in the spring if they needed it. Knowing that the Indians were in the habit of setting fire to burn prairies, marsh and openings, to make clear their hunting grounds from grass and herbage, they thought best to set fire themselves and burn around their stacks at some suitable time, for the purpose of trying to save them when the Indians should set fire to the prairies, but they had the misfortune to lose all their hay, seven large stacks, by the shifting of the wind which drove the fire back, and sparks of fire lighting on the stacks set the hay on fire, and they could not save any of it. So they had to buy hay in Milwaukee and draw it home, seventeen miles, to the place that has been known for many years as the town of Lisbon, in the county of Waukesha. The last time that they went to town while the sleighing lasted was the last week in March, and not as good going as it had been, for the snow

was wasting fast; but as they were wanting more corn, they thought they must fetch it before the snow was gone. As they were very busy with other work, our neighbor who lived in the house with us, took a yoke of oxen and a sled and went to town alone after the corn. He was not much used to driving a team, and my husband told him that he would go as far as the Menomonee river the next day to meet him and help him if he needed help, and fearing that it might not be safe to cross with a load, he started the next morning in good time so as to be sure to meet him at the river; but when he got there he could see nothing of the team, so he walked along three or four miles farther before he met him. Then he took the ox whip himself and hurried the team along as fast as possible, for he had seen cracks in the ice, when he crossed the river, and water above ice, half way to his boot tops, and when they got back there, the water was deeper and the cracks in the ice wider. Mr. Rolph, our neighbor who had been after the corn, did not know what to do; but my husband told him that they must carry the corn across on their shoulders a bag at a time, and they carried it across in that way, then took the sled and drew that across by hand, and unyoked the oxen and drove one over alone; then they went back for the other, and when they had driven him about half way over, the ice broke and the ox dropped into the river with nothing but his head remaining above the water. They caught hold of his horns and tried to pull him out, but could not, and the current of the water drew him under the ice. They then cut the ice away with an axe, hoping that he might rise so they could help him out. But he did not, and when they found that he was still going under they threw themselves down on the ice, in the water, and caught the ox by the tail and pulled him back, until he could get his head above the water. Then he could help himself some, and with their help he scrambled up on the ice and got over to the other side, with his mate. He came near being drowned, and the men trying to save his life came very near drowning themselves. Every thread of their clothing was as wet as water could make it.

There they were as much as nine miles from home, or from any house, and they were about tired out, and it was almost night. It was growing cold and beginning to freeze, but they loaded their corn again and drove on until they came within a mile and a half of the Fox river. By that time it was getting too dark to drive much farther, and their clothing was frozen, and there appeared to be no alternative, but they must stop there for the night and perhaps freeze to death before morning. They stood by the fire and kept from freezing; but after a while Mr. Rolph felt so tired and sleepy that he laid down to sleep. My husband did not dare to, for he thought that if he did that they would both freeze to death. So he kept stirring around and kept up a large fire, disturbed Mr. Rolph every few minutes, trying to wake him for fear that he would freeze to death. After awhile he succeeded in arousing him so that he got up to stir himself about and kept awake, and when daylight came they started for home. But when they had crossed the Fox river, and were going up the bank, their load of corn slipped from the sled and all went into the river, and they were obliged to wade in and carry it out a bag at a time, and load it again, making their garments as wet as they were the day before, and in that plight had to drive home. They arrived home about eight o'clock, tired cold, hungry and faint. When they had taken a warm bath and put on dry garments, and had taken some warm food, and had lain in bed a few hours, they felt better and went to work. They built a scaffold of their home-made boards and other lumber which they had sawed by hand, and spread the corn thereon to dry, taking it out in the morning and into the house at night, until it was dry. They concluded they had earned the corn, with their troubles, besides the two dollars and a half they had paid for it.

A few days after this, and on the first day of April, 1837, we moved into our own little log cabin with our little family, one mile away from our brother-in-law's, and neighbors that we had lived with nearly a month. There are many people in these days that would think that such a place as our cabin was at that time was a comfortless place indeed,

but we thought it a pleasure to be by ourselves once more, after living so crowded as we had done for six months, and of course, it was quite as pleasant for others to have their own house to themselves, especially where there were so many little children, where there were three families in one small house. Our cabin was small, with only one room below and one above, or rather only one room when we went into it, for it was not finished. There was no upper floor for the reason that we had boards only to lay the lower floor, and had to wait three weeks for that until our men could get time to saw them by hand over a pit, one man standing in the bottom of the pit, with a thick veil over his face to keep the sawdust from blinding him. It was a slow and very tiresome way of making lumber, but our neighbor, Mr. Rolph, and my husband, sawed all of the lumber in that way by hand that was used for the first six houses that were built in our neighborhood, all log houses, and of course they made a little do to finish them; but there was an upper and a lower floor to every one of those six houses, and certainly one door, and to some two, and casings for the doors and windows. Some had one window, some two, and others three, but generally not more than two, and frequently only one below and a very small one above, and when two men had to saw by hand all that was used, there was a good deal of hard work for a comparatively small pile of lumber. There was a place cut through one end of our house for a good sized fireplace, and a sort of chimney built from the ground up to above the roof, with split logs at the bottom for a few feet, and small split sticks on the upper part, laid cob-house fashion, and plastered thick with clay. It was built on the outside and closely joined to the logs of the house, so as to form jambs to the fire-place. Then there was a stone back laid up about five feet and laid in mud instead of in mortar. For the inside of the jambs we had a large flat stone for each side about four feet high, and wide enough to fill out the jambs and keep out the fire from the house logs. There was no hearth laid when we first went into the house, and for three weeks we had to step down one step to get to the fire. At the end of that time,

was the upper floor laid, and also a stone hearth, which made it more convenient as well as more comfortable, for it had seemed somewhat like living in a barn while there was no floor overhead; and the first four days we had no window neither was there a place cut for one through the lays, so we were not afraid of the wolves coming in to disturb us at night. It was on Saturday that we moved into our house, and on Monday my husband went back to the saw pit to work. I expected him home at night, but in the afternoon Mrs. Rolph came and told me that our men had all gone to Milwaukee and would not be home before the next day, which was town meeting day, and that was the reason why they went, but they thought that they would be home by three or four o'clock. She wanted me to go home with her and stay until the men came home. But I told her that I could not as I was very tired. I had been washing and did not feel able to walk and carry a child in my arms, and I must make up my mind to stay alone, lonesome as it was. There was nothing to look at out of doors but the ground, the trees and overhead the sky and clouds. There was no settlement nearer than eight miles, and only three log houses there. That was where Waukesha now is, and none nearer than Milwaukee east us, and no settlement within the bounds of knowledge, north or west of us, and knowing that our men were all gone, made it lonely indeed. I fastened my door early, before it was fairly dark, and went to bed, but did not sleep much. I heard the wolves howl nearly all night and was very thankful to see the morning light once more, and still more thankful to see my husband coming, when it was nearly dark at night, with a window sash in his hand and a glass to put into it. I thought that the largest day that I had ever seen, and the next day our neighbors came to help us to put in our window.

The four days we had lived in our cabin without any light except what came down the chimney and in at the door when it was open, had been very warm and pleasant, so that we could have the door open all day, and we got along very well, but it seemed much more pleasant and homelike even to have only one window, and that a small one; yet it looked

like living in a barn, while we had no floor overhead. But in a little over two weeks that inconvenience was remedied, and we had an upper room and a ladder, on which to go up to it, which was quite an improvement. The steps of our ladder were made of wood about four inches through, split in the middle and rounded at the ends and let into the side pieces, the flat side upwards. Although it was very plain and rather rough, with no casing, it had to serve our purpose for two years and a half and compared very well with other parts of the establishment. Our floors were laid with rough boards, just as they were when they came from the saw, never having been planed, except with the mop and broom. It was hard work to keep them clean at first, but before many weeks they were quite smooth and easy to clean, and looked quite comfortable and tidy, everything considered, and I began to be proud of our plain little home. I did not allow myself to feel discontented or homesick as long as we were all well, or so as to be up and around; but when we were sick I missed my relatives and former friends, and the more so because there was no one to be hired for either love or money for a number of years, as almost every new settler who came into the neighborhood came with a young family, if with any. If young persons did come into the place who would go and who could be spared from home, they would go to Milwaukee. We in the country were unable to hire any one, and if we needed assistance, there was none to be had, except in cases of extreme sickness, and then neighbors would take turns, and do the best they could for each other, but when they were well they, of course, had to do the best they could for themselves.

One morning when we had been living by ourselves about a week, there came a young man to the door, a stranger. He bade me good morning and asked if he could come in and rest, and when I welcomed him and asked him to take a chair, he asked me if I could give him some breakfast. I told him I could if he would accept of such fare as I had, for I had not much of a variety. He said he did not wish to give me any trouble and he would not be particular

what I gave him to eat, if I could give him a cup of hot tea or coffee for he was not feeling very well. I told him he could have his choice of hot drink, and he chose tea. While I was preparing it for him he told me he had been out all night and had to lodge in a tree to keep out of the way of wolves; he was out alone and looking for land; he had been on the prairie where those three families lived eight miles south of us, and having been told that there were some settlers that had just come in over north a few miles, he thought he would come yesterday afternoon and see if he could find them. He had a piece of timber to come through and he got lost. Night came on and as he could not see which way to go he thought it best to lie down and not try to go any farther until morning. He laid down at the foot of a tree that he thought he could climb easily, and had not lain there very long when he heard the howling of wolves, to all appearances not very far distant from him. Feeling no longer safe on the ground, he sprang as quickly as possible into the tree and had been there but a few minutes when along came a number of wolves close to the tree at the place where he had lain, and began to snuff and growl and scratch and tear up the ground with their claws. As they found nothing to satisfy themselves they began to hunt around and soon found there was something in the tree. As they could not climb they seemed to get very angry and set up a horrid concert of their music, tearing up the ground all around the tree, biting and tearing of the bark with their teeth. They kept up their howling and tearing almost incessantly till morning. Soon after daylight they became quiet and went away. He counted seven as they walked off. As soon as he dared he got down from the tree and went as fast as he could toward the opening which he saw from the tree top, and neither saw nor heard any more of the wolves.

The two men who came out with us from Milwaukee the day that we moved from there—Mr. Rosebrook and Mr. Palmer—built a log shanty with only a single roof, covered it with what they called shakes or house made shingles, and for the floor they had split logs, using boards only for the door. About the middle of April they moved their



wives and families into it and lived together until the fall. Old Mr. and Mrs. Palmer came with them. They were the parents of young Mr. Palmer and Mrs. Rosebrook. It seemed more like home to have more neighbors, although not so near as we were used to have them. We could then number seven families that had come and settled within a month and a half. Mr. Redford moved from Milwaukee with us, or on the same day that we did, with his wife and six children. The two oldest were young men at the time, and are now living with their families, the one in the town of Lisbon, the other in Menomonee, on their farms that lay on the line that divides these two towns, and near where their father first settled, viz: Messrs Henry and Thomas Redford's family, Mr Rolph's and our brother-in-law, Bonhams. Ours were the first four families that settled in the town of Lisbon, then the two Mr. Palmers and Mr. Rosebrook, and as we had written to our brother, Mr. James Weaver, and given him a description of our new and wild looking country, not advising him to come, but telling him that we had made up our minds to stay, he made up his mind to come to us, and arrived with his family about the middle of June. He built his house not far from ours, in sight, which made us feel more and more at home. With him came Mr. Edward Smith and Mr. George Elliott, who now lives in Lisbon near Sussex. They, too, brought their families. Mr. Elliott built his house one mile north of ours, and Mr. Smith built his half mile west of ours. I neglected to mention another old and respected friend and neighbor, Mr. Lucius Bottsford,, who came to Milwaukee in the spring before we came, and had his claim in our neighborhood, worked all summer in Milwaukee, went back to New York State in the fall after his wife, child and mother, expecting to get back with them before the close of navigation, but he only got as far as Fort Grateot, in Michigan, and had to stay there until navigation opened in the spring. In January his wife died. He came on in the month of April, leaving his mother and child until the weather should be warmer and more comfortable for the old lady to travel with his child. Mr. Bottsford left Lisbon twenty years ago and

went to Illinois, where he is now living. The same summer old Mr. Dougherty and old Mr. Peero came and made their claims about three miles west of us, and Mr. Dougherty built a log house and moved his family into it in a short time but Mr. Peero lived in Milwaukee two years and then he moved his family to be neighbors with us. The twelve families mentioned above were all there were for several months, but after a little they began to come one, two, three and sometimes four families at a time until the country around was filled with people, as it were, and we began to feel as if we were again in a land of civilization. It took a long time though for us to get the comforts and conveniences for ourselves and families that we had been used to having, and were anxious to have and were striving hard to obtain, but we all knew how every other family was situated, and our circumstances were so nearly alike that we knew how to feel for each other. Every one that came and had a little money, even a hundred or two, or even a thousand dollars, if they had much of a family to provide for, and lived as economically as they could, were obliged to use all of their money to live before their land came into market, and it came into market before they could raise enough to live on and save any money to pay for their land, and the only way that we could do when the land was bought in the market, (which was about three years after we settled on it,) was for each settler to make his appearance at the land office at a stated time and swear it out of market, as they were allowed the privilege of doing by making oath that they were improving and doing all they could on the land for the purpose of making comfortable homes for their families, and not for speculation. Then it was reserved for the time, and neither speculators or any one else could buy it. But when it should be again brought into market they were given to understand that it must be paid for or they would be liable to lose their improvements, and no one could afford that. It was indeed all that any of us could do to live and get along by practicing the most rigid economy and working hard until we could raise something on the land. We raised no crops at all the first year, not any of us in our neighborhood, except a little

garden sauce on small patches of ground that was dug with a spade, and that was not much— I just now call to mind that four of our men joined hands and prepared a piece of ground, when it was too late in the season for anything else to grow and mature, and sowed some turnip seed, and they grew, so that we had about a dozen bushels each, for four families, and not having any potatoes for the winter we expected that we should get tired of them, but we did not; they kept good, and the last were as good as the first. We had not much of a variety of living that winter 1837 or the next summer of 1838, but we had sufficient to keep us from starving or hunger of such as it was. We managed to have plenty of bread, although flour was still very dear, and meat, by buying in Milwaukee and using some game, such as rabbits and squirrels, prairie hens, ducks, and venison occasionally. Sometimes our men, or some of them, would go out and kill a deer and divide it with their neighbors, and sometimes we would buy some of the Indians, or swap, as they would say, bread or flour with them for venison. They would always beg bread or flour, and so we would sometimes change with them, and get along with them the best we could, but we had to take extra pains to clean the meat by soaking it in salt water and scraping it with a knife, and sometimes had to pare off some of it before we thought that we could relish it; but after all we would make it palatable in one way or another, and sometimes it would happen that we would be very glad to have the Indians bring along some meat although we had so much trouble with it in getting it fit for use.

As for fruit, it was but little that we used in those days, except wild plums and crab apples, and to make them palatable and fit for use. It took as much sugar, and a little more than we were really able to buy in those days that we called hard times. We bought dried fruit when it was within our reach—that is, when our small means would allow us to buy it, besides the more necessary articles of food. We had to study and learn economy, and we found it as economical to buy dried fruit, and sugar to sweeten it, as to use wild fruit that could get plenty of in the season without buying. Our men had been hoping to be able to raise some corn, oats,

buckwheat and potatoes, but alas! their hopes and expectations failed, and by the time that they were ready to commence breaking the ground their oxen were nearly all of them taken sick and were not able to work, until it was too late to plow and sow and expect a crop of anything from either sowing or plowing. Then it was that it began to look as if we must see hard times, for we should have everything to buy for another year. How, or in what way we should be able to buy what we should need, we did not know, for our money was nearly gone, but thanks to our all wise Creator and benefactor, in whose kind care and keeping we committed ourselves, and in whom we placed our confidence, and were never forsaken, but were always provided, for our neighbors were very kind as a general thing and willing to accommodate each other by lending. We all found it convenient and necessary to borrow at times, and if we had not been kind and neighborly to each other we should have fared harder than we did. We have had a barrel of flour brought in sometimes, and have lent it all out in one day, except what we used for baking. We never suffered on account of it, for if it did not all come back before we needed it, we could borrow of some one else. Sometimes when one had a barrel brought in, we have had to pay out the half of it, where we had borrowed, and just the same with other things.

While the oxen were unable to work that spring, (1837) my husband dug some ground with a spade to make a small garden, and hearing that a schooner loaded with potatoes had come to Milwaukee, he walked in, bought half a bushel, paid two dollars and a half for them, and brought them home on his back, eighteen miles. He went in one day and came home the next, and was about tired out. He said it seemed as if he had come to Wisconsin to be a pack horse, or to take the place of one. It would seem to some people in these times, as if they could scarcely believe that potatoes were sold at five dollars a bushel in Wisconsin. But it was so at that time, and the merchants could and did extort just such exorbitant prices for everything that came into their hands that they knew the settlers most needed. But no one would buy more than one bushel of potatoes at five dollars a bush.

el and some would buy only a peck at that rate. Those who did buy a few would calculate to save what they could raise from the few that they planted for seed the next year, if they should succeed in raising any. It was with potatoes the same as with grains of all kinds. By the time that farmers could raise grain and have any to sell, it would fetch scarcely enough to pay them for their time that they spent to get it ready for sale and taking it to market. In many cases it did not come anywhere near paying them, but they were obliged to put up with it, with the best grace that they could, for the merchants had their own way, paid their own price for produce, and that very low, governed by nothing but their own greedy dispositions and self will. If this seems to be a harsh expression, it is nevertheless true. It is an old saying, and a very true one, that the truth should not be spoken at all times, but there are times when we feel that it is necessary to speak the truth loudly and boldly, although it may be much more strange than fiction.

Well, I have wandered far away from the story of the half bushel of potatoes that my husband, John Weaver, or Uncle John, as he has been familiarly called by almost all acquainted with him, as well as by his relatives and connections, which are numerous. The potatoes were planted, except a meal or two, which we could not forego the pleasure of eating, having been without any vegetables for nearly three months, and they were quite a luxury at the time, dearly bought, and far fetched. I suppose that some people who read this simple narrative will laugh at the potato story, and some others that might with truth be told, but not if they had been just there and then, and situated as we few settlers were. That was a backward spring, and the potato seed (as well as a few other seeds that we planted and sowed) laid in the ground a long time. When they showed themselves above ground they were kindly cared for, thinking to save them all for seed for next year if they should mature. But my husband was taken sick and not able to work for several days, and had no appetite for anything that I could prepare for him. One day he said he wished the potatoes were forward enough to dig. He believed that he could rel-

them. I told him that I wished they were, and said no more but stole out slyly into the garden, and with the help of a knife, I opened a hill and found two potatoes about the size of a small butternut and several smaller ones, that were about the size of a hazel nut, and some the size of a pea. I took the two largest and mending the hill as well as I could, and then served two or three more hills in the same way; then went and watered the hills well that I had robbed. The next thing was to clean and cook these small potatoes for a sick man, and when cooked he ate them with a relish as I have never seen him enjoy before or since. When he had eaten them he said he believed they were just what he needed, for he felt better already. The next day he wanted more and I robbed other hills in the same way until I had gone over the small patch of small potatoes which did not take long, when it was visited every day, and by that time he was able to go to work again and had a good appetite. He said the potatoes had cured him and that he was partly paid for lugging them so far on his back and shoulders. I was afraid that I had spoiled the potatoes or injured them so that they would not grow any more, but concluded that they had done a good deal of service already, and perhaps when it was the most needed. But our potatoes did not fail, as did nearly all of our expectations. That summer there was rain enough to keep the ground moist, and they grew finely. We could not tell how many there were of them, how much they would measure or weigh, but they were very fine, good sized, as many in the hills as we should have expected. If we had only dug them once, we thought that they were too good to keep after all, and when they were better fit for use as we thought we used them occasionally, until they were gone and did not save them for seed as we intended, but risked the chance of getting seed before we should need it. After a while our turnips were ready, and toward spring, before they were gone we had a chance to buy potatoes enough for seed and plenty for use, as long as they would keep good and we had a fine crop from the seed.

We got through the winter of 1837 and '38 better than we expected, considering the disappointment and failure,

not being able to raise anything of any account except our poor little gardens that year, and that was little indeed. But one managed to get bread and meat, and a few groceries. Toward spring Mr. Elliott and my husband had a chance to take a job of cutting logs, and splitting them into rails. They had to go about nine miles into the timber toward Milwaukee, and take their provisions with them for a week, or from Monday morning till Saturday night. They would come home Saturday night and go back on Monday again with their week's provisions, week after week, until they had finished their job. We cooked their provisions at home, except their tea and coffee, which they had with two young men that lived in a cabin and cooked for themselves, and who very kindly gave them such accommodations as they had. They cut and split the rails for fifty cents a hundred, and had to take their pay at a provision store in Milwaukee, and had had to go or send by someone else to get it. Sometimes they would send by neighbors who had to go for themselves and brought some provisions according as they earned it, and must have it. But there were five weeks in succession during the time they were at their job, that the road was so bad that teams could scarcely get through to Milwaukee. When they did they could not bring much of a load. Our two men had to quit their work every Friday afternoon, soon enough to walk into Milwaukee. They would stay over night and start as early as they could get away in the morning, with as much flour and meat (with a few other necessary things) as they could carry, and back their load all the way home, eighteen miles to our place and a mile farther to Mr. Elliott's. It would be night and they would be about tired out, and while they were resting on Sunday, we had to cook their week's rations for them to take back with them when they went back to their work on Monday, and at the end of the week the same process had to be repeated—that long wearisome walk with their back loads of provisions to keep us from starving at home and themselves in a condition to work and earn more. What was worse and very mortifying to their feelings, one of those five times that they had to back their loads home, they went on Friday as usual,

and when they got there, there were no provisions for them. The man they worked for was gone from home, and there was nothing in store for them, but they were told by the clerk that they were expecting a vessel to come in that day but had not got in yet. It was loaded with provisions, and they thought that it would be in that night or early in the morning, so that they could have something to take home with them. But the morning came, and there was no vessel in sight, and they waited as long they thought it would do to wait, and have time to get home that night, as it was Saturday, and they expected that they should be nearly, if not quite out of the requisite for cooking at home, and they supposed that our neighbors were nearly if not quite as needful as we were. For that reason they did not like to go home without anything, and risk the chance of borrowing for fear of distressing the neighbors, knowing that they would lend as long as they had enough of anything to divide. They knew not what to do. They had not money to go to any other store, and they could not get an order, as the head man was not a home. The clerk did not like to take the responsibility upon himself of giving an order. While they were talking and considering as to what they should do, a friend came to them, and to him they told of their dilemma, and he advised them to go to the store of Messrs Brown & Miller, where there were plenty of provisions in store for any one that needed it and had no money to buy. But they thought that looked too much like begging, but he persuaded them and said that it was no disgrace to, and they would never be thought the less of for it. His advice was that they should dispense with all feelings of pride or that source, and he thought they might think it a privilege to have such a place to go, when it was impossible to get what was their due and not be ashamed of it either. So they took his advice and the friend went with them, stated their case to those gentlemen, and they told them to come forward and have what they wanted of such as they had in store, and as much as they could carry, and they would be welcome to it. They expressed their thankfulness, but told them that they did not come to beg, and would pay for what they got as



soon as they could. They said, "we will not take pay if you do bring it; our instructions are to give to those who need, and not to sell. When you are able, and see an opportunity to assist others, do so; that is all the pay that will ever be required of you. Now, would you like to have some garden seeds," they said, and they gave them as many as they thought they should need. of all kinds they had in their store. They came home in the evening very tired and ready for their supper, which I had ready and waiting for them. They were more cheerful than might have been expected, after all that had happened to them since they left home. On Monday morning, as tired as they were, they told me of their trial and disappointment, and the kindness they had received, in what way they had been supplied with the necessaries of life, and all the particulars. And furthermore, that they did not expect to find any bread in either of their houses, until we could bake something from the flour that they brought.. Then I had to tell them how and in what way I had been supplied. Three of our neighbors had joined teams, and had been to town, with only one wagon, and had bought some flour and meat and a few groceries and by that means I had been supplied, for they returned things that we had lent. Then our men said they would never feel discouraged again unless something worse should happen, for there had always been some way provided for us, and that they would place their trust and confidence in the Almighty and Supreme Being, the author and giver of every good and perfect gift, and try to feel truly thankful for every blessing received, and humbly hoped that they should never have reasons to feel themselves in such a straight again. I am happy to say that they never had occasion to fear again, that they might go home and find nothing to satisfy the cravings of nature. Although they had not ever found their houses quite empty and destitute of food, they feared at that time that they should when they could not get what was their due.

I suppose I might as well tell how Messrs Brown & Miller came by the stores they gave out. They were provided by a contribution of money from those who were call-

ed the head men of Milwaukee at the time; influential men. Those who had contributed hundreds of dollars at the time of elections and town meetings, to buy wine and other strong drink, to give away on those days, and afterwards if it was not all used or thrown away on those days, was to be thus used. I should say just here, and now, as I said then, that it had better been all thrown away on that day, as some of it was, when men (so called) would allow themselves to draw a hand sled, or a little hand wagon around the streets, with a hogshead of wine on it, with one head taken out and a large dipper to dip it out and drink from, which caused rioting drunkenness, quarrelling, fighting, exposure and sickness, by some of them laying out and taking cold when they were intoxicated, and could not get home before they fell, when no one happened to see them and lead them home—a sorrowful sight for parents or children. There were some of the higher grade gentlemen, as they were called, those who thought a good deal of themselves, and were well thought of and highly respected by some that let themselves down as low as the lowest, on those occasions of drinking and carousing at election times, which was not considered a very good example for them to set, for them that they called the lower class, and who were looking to them for example.

As I did not intend to give a lecture just here and now, I will say that a better thought took possession of the minds of the monied men and they contributed as usual, but for a different purpose, and it was generally conceded a better one—that of supplying the needy with food—for which we had reasons to be thankful, as well as some others. We felt thankful for others as well as for ourselves.

And when our men had finished their job rail splitting they stayed at home for a while, and my husband went to work to do some fencing, and try again to get some seed into the ground, and if possible raise something to help feed the family the next winter, and not to have quite everything to buy. He, as well as some other neighbors, broke some ground the fall before. After their oxen had recovered from their sickness, although some of them had died, so that they were not so well off for teams as they expected to be, and no

one in the neighborhood had a team of horses, or even one horse; neither would horses have of much use to them, if they had, certainly not to work the land. It would have been more convenient, and rather more comfortable, too, if a man could have had a horse to ride when he had to go out to hunt for his team in the morning, and to go through grass and herbage waist high, as they used to say sometimes when they would come home as wet as if they had waded through a pond of water; that was waist deep, and sometimes when they had to go through bushes, as well as grass and herbage, they would be wet through from head to foot. When there had been a heavy dew or rain, after three hours search, and sometimes a half of a day before they could get their teams home and get to work, but it was not their good fortune to have horses yet for a while, for when they did get able to buy horses it was the same with them as with the cattle. The most of them that were brought in from other states sickened and died, for a number of years. But when they could raise them in their own state they were more successful in saving them. There was so much sickness and so many deaths among the cattle in the spring and summer of 1837, that the neighbors were but poorly supplied with teams to do their work. There were a number of men who owned a yoke of oxen each, but with some one yoke was owned by two men. Three yoke of oxen were owned by two men and it always took four yoke to break the ground on prairie land or oak openings, so that they had to join hands and teams, and help each other the best they could, on what ground they had broken the fall before, and what little they could break in the spring. Our men planted corn, potatoes and beans, and sowed oats and buckwheat, but no wheat that season, because they could not break ground enough and fit it for sowing spring wheat. But we had quite good gardens and everything that we had on the ground came forward and was much better than we expected. When fall came and our few crops had matured, when my husband had made his garden and sowed and planted what ground he could get prepared, he and Mr. Elliott went to Prairieville, as the small settlement on the

prairie eight miles from us was then called. The year before there were three houses there, and a few more settlers had come since. They were about to build a mill there that summer, and our men went to work digging the mill race, burning lime, doing mason work, and such other work as they could do. And in the meantime, Mrs. Elliott and her two little boys that were with her at home, the one eleven and the other nine years old, went to work with some iron implements that were made for the purpose with handles of wood, and broke and dug the ground by hand, on which they raised the potatoes for their use that year, and a fine little piece of corn to help to bread the family and not to have to buy so much as they had done. They had no team, and Mr. Elliott went from home to work, when he could get anything to do and was able to work. But he was not a very healthy man. Mrs. Elliott was healthier than he was. She had seven in her family to do for, when her husband was away, and no daughter at home old enough to help her. Their oldest daughter was with me to take care of the garden and to do such other work as she was able to do. Mrs. Elliott did her work for her family, housework, sewing, etc., and with the help of those two little boys, broke by hand the first three acres of ground that they had broken in the town of Lisbon, county of Waukesha, and state of Wisconsin. A part of it was done in the spring of 1838, and the remainder was done the next spring. It was hard work for the mother, very hard, but not so hard for the boys. They did not mind it; but for fear that it might be too hard for them, she would, after doing her morning work, with the little assistance that they could give her, go out with them, and measure off a portion of ground, and tell them that was their forenoon work, and when they had finished that they could rest a while, and then go to play for a while if they felt disposed to do so. If she saw that they were working too hard, she would have them stop and rest before they finished the work she had laid out for them. At the same time she would measure a portion for herself, larger than theirs, and when she had finished she had to go in and get dinner for the family and herself. She would be so tired that she would have

to lay down and rest before she could get it, but the boys always had a play spell. After their rest, and they enjoyed it heartily, she was satisfied that they were not being hurt by work, then after dinner the same, and so day after day, except Sunday, until they got through with the season. It is with feelings of love and respect that I make such particular mention of this family. We had been acquainted with them for several years in the state of New York, always on terms of intimacy and good will towards each other. My husband and his relatives had been acquainted with them in England and always respected them and knew that they were honest, industrious and God-fearing people. They always seemed to wish and try to do by others as they would like to be done by. Now they had followed us to Wisconsin, where it was new and wild, sharing the same fate with us, facing the hard times, working hard to make comfortable homes for ourselves and families, and breaking the ice—as we used to say, preparing the way for other people who should come afterward and always ready with their kindness and advice to us. They were more than doubly dear to us as friends, like a father, and we always looked up to them as such. They had their full share (if not more) of hardships, severe trials, sickness and death in their family. All such troubles as are incidental to human life in this world, and bore up under it all with christian fortitude and patience. They brought the good fight of works as well as of truth, and came off victorious. They lived to see and to enjoy the fruit of their hard labor. God was pleased, as they said, to grant them such a good degree of prosperity. That in the comparative short space of time, all things considered, they had made for themselves a comfortable home and were surrounded with the comforts of life. They lived in the town of Lisbon about fourteen years. Then they sold their farm and went to Illinois where they spent the remainder of their days with comfort and a plenty of this world's goods, and always ready and willing to assist the needy, and to speak words of comfort to the afflicted. They raised a family of seven, to man and womanhood, which are now living and settled, some of them in each of four different

states, Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois and Missouri. But the aged and much loved parents have gone to their rest, some years since, as we hope and trust to a better world than this, where we hope to meet them when the storms of this life are over and past with us as with them.

I see that my thoughts have wandered years away from the time and circumstances that I commenced to write about in this letter. What I have written concerning this one particular family seems of right to belong to the narrative, inasmuch as we were such intimate friends at that particularly interesting time in our lives and experience. It seems most natural for my thoughts to revert to them, to their hardships and trials, which compared very well with our own and the rest of our neighbors at the same time, although we knew of no other woman who had the courage to break three acres or even a garden patch, with a hand implement, and with the small amount of help that Mrs. Elliot had, or under any other circumstances. My husband was away from home most of the time during the summer of 1838, except from Saturday night until Sunday night or Monday morning of each week, and his evenings, or the avails of what he earned was the means by which we were provided with all that we consumed in our family; likewise the flour to bread his brother's family. Our family numbered six, and his brother's twelve. As one of them could manage the affairs of both, after the sowing and planting was done (with the help of our boy and his two boys), our brother stayed at home and attended to both places, instead of going to work with our men as he intended, and expected to be obliged to, as the rest of the men, for each man in our sparsely settled neighborhood was at that time in about the same predicament, and felt the necessity of earning something if possible, to help them to get through the summer comfortably, hoping to be better provided for in the future, so as to be able to spend more of their time in improving their own home. Those who had children old enough were very anxious to have a school to send them to, but knew not how to get one started. But by enquiring they heard of a young lady living in Milwaukee who would teach if she had

an opportunity. So they immediately set about trying to secure the service of this young lady, and if they could engage her the next thing would be to build a school room. She would like to teach, but her wages must be four dollars a week and her board, and they must find her a boarding place near school, for she could not go around to board with each family that sent children to school, as was customary in the eastern states. She thought that there would be too much walking to suit her, consequently she was not hired to teach. To build a schoolhouse and pay four dollars a week for teaching and four more for the teacher's board, was more than they dared engage or promise to do under the circumstances, as much as they felt the need of having a school. They were very unwilling to give up the idea of having a school, and soon after they had given up the idea of having the young lady teach, they came and tried to persuade me to teach. I immediately plead incompetency, but the more I plead, the more they tried to coax and persuade. I had to do the work for my family, six in number, and did not feel myself equal to the task or capable of teaching, as I had never taught school. By dint of persuasion, I at last consented, and taught the school in our own little cabin for two dollars a week and boarded myself, and did all my own housework for my family. I had only twenty scholars, but that was quite enough for my small room. I had to be up and around early in the morning, and to get my work done so as to bring in benches from out doors, as I had to carry them out every day when I dismissed school. I had to make long days and fill every moment of my time, and was always very tired by four o'clock, when I dismissed my school, and often had to rest before I could carry out my benches, and clean my room and prepare the evening meal for my family.

I undertook to do all my work, washing, ironing and sewing, besides my every day work, taking care of my three children, (the youngest then a year and a half old), and teaching three hours each half day, according to custom, and not take a day except each alternate Saturday. I soon found that I could not manage both my school and my work with-

out taking one day out of each week, so I concluded to take Monday of each week, do my washing and as much other necessary work as I could do in a day, and teach the remaining five days of the week, and make preparations in the best possible manner for the day of rest, which we usually spent at home. We had no church to go to, nor any minister to preach to us and as yet we had not had any religious meetings in our neighborhood. We read good books and could spend our time very pleasantly and profitably, with reading and teaching our children. Not having a very strong constitution, my duties were rather severe on me during the week, for both body and mind, yet I enjoyed doing duty, although it was very wearisome for me, because I was anxious to play my part well in doing what I hoped would be to the advantage of others as well as ourselves. My scholars learned exceedingly well, all but one, and that was a boy that was ten years old at that time, and he could not learn with all the pains that could be taken with him, and yet he tried hard himself. His parents kept him in school until he was twenty two years old, and then he could neither read, write, or spell. It seemed strange that he could not learn to read and spell, for he was bright and intelligent in other respects. Could work as well as the next one, and was always pleasant and ready and willing to do a favor or kindness for any one. This was all the trouble I had with scholars that was worth naming. I was very sorry for the boy because he tried so hard, and was so anxious to learn and could not.

I suppose that many young mothers and housekeepers of the present time would marvel at the idea of a woman undertaking to do her own work for a family of six, and at the same time teach a school of twenty scholars in the same room, which was only twelve by fourteen feet in size. But as necessity was then, and had been, and perhaps always will be the mother of many inventions, we found that by patience and perseverance it could be done, at least for a few months. At the end of four months I found it necessary to give up my school, so as to take time to do my fall work and prepare my family for the coming winter. We had no more school for a year except on Sundays. We opened again



after a short time the door of our little cabin for a Sunday school, in which little children were taught to read and spell, and older ones that could read learned testament lessons, and repeated to teachers who gave them instructions according to their ability. With the addition of prayers and singing, the exercises from two to three hours passed very pleasantly, and as we then thought, profitably to ourselves and our children.

As soon as our corn was glazed and partially hardened, that fall of 1838 so that we could finish drying it by laying it in the sun in the day time, and in the house at night, we picked off a little at a time and dried it in that way, and had some ground every day for two months, by hand, in a coffee mill, except Sunday. It was such slow work to grind by hand that we could not get any more ahead than would do for Sunday, and with the meal thus prepared, we made our bread (or Johnny cake to serve us instead of bread) for two or three weeks; then the buckwheat was ripened, so that some of that could be threshed, and then we dried some of that in the same way as we did the corn, and had it ground in the same way, and had to sift it instead of having it bolted and with it we made something that we called buckwheat cakes. Although not as fine and nice as we had been accustomed to using it yet made a very good change under the circumstances. We did not expect to have to do the grinding of our flour and meal by hand as long as two months, when we commenced the arduous task. There was a mill in process of building at the place now known as Wauwatosa, and the proprietor of it had given out word that he expected to commence to grind by such a time that he named and the task of grinding by hand was commenced, with the expectation of not having it to do more than two weeks. But as the mill was not completed and ready to commence operations by the expected time, and although the task of grinding by hand was very tedious, we concluded to persevere and not give up until the mill should be in working order, which was two months instead of two weeks. The cause was a sufficient motive for patience and perseverance, and the reasons for which we adopted this plan was obvious. Our indignation

had become so thoroughly aroused, in consequence of being obliged to pay such exorbitant prices for our bread material as well as everything else that we had to buy of Milwaukee dealers, that we were not willing to humor them any more than we were really obliged to, but would curtail the expense of this one commodity, now that we began to feel a little more independent, particularly on the bread stuff question. Independent! That was a large word to use at that time, when we were too short of money to buy anything that we could do without, and nothing as yet to exchange for that valuable product except our work. We could not get much for that, for money was scarce and wages low. But the organ of hope was large, and we were hoping to have a little something to dispose of when our little crops could be harvested and taken care of; Mr. Geo. Elliot, of Lisbon, Waukesha county, can testify to the above. Concerning the grinding by hand for two months, nearly all of the material which we used for bread and cakes, for he was our little faithful home miller for his father's family, and Mr. Smith's young boys done the grinding for his family. One of them is still living and well remembers the time and circumstance; and well he remembers too, how sadly he was grieved and nearly heart-broken when in the time of a severe thunder storm and high wind, that first season of corn raising. When it was from two to three feet high it was beaten nearly and some of it quite to the ground. He and his brother had worked so hard to get it forward and in such fine order, while their father was away from home at work, to earn money to supply the wants of the family at home. He was thoroughly disheartened, and did not know how to bear the disappointment, for he really thought that the corn was ruined. But when he was assured by those who had seen the like before, that the corn would get up in its place again in a short time, he cheered up and felt better about it. Sure enough in a few days it was all right again. There were several of us neighbors that shared in the work and trial of grinding their own bread stuff by hand, I do not remember just how many, but there were six of us, that did do it for two months, and after that we could always get such work done, and all

that we needed, by going a good ways to mill, (fourteen miles was about the distance) for a number of years, except feed for animals, and that we got done nearer after a short time.

When the grain was harvested that season, in our neighborhood, they had no barns to store it in, nor floors to thresh it on, nor machines to thresh it with. Machines were not considered indispensable in those days, as at this day and age of the world. Neither were they thought to be of so much consequence then as in later days, because they were not much in use; and the few threshing machines that were in use in other states at that time were very inferior to those of the present day. Our men threshed their first crop on the bare ground. They cleaned a piece of ground and made it as clean and bare as they could, and as near to their stacks as possible, because their stacks and log stables were all the protection they had when they were obliged to thresh. Of course, they had to do the threshing with flails by hand, and if a storm came on they had to cover their work as well as they could with hay or straw, and leave it until it should be fair weather again. And when they wanted to clean the grain after threshing, in the place of a fanning mill, and for the want of one, they found it necessary to wait for the wind to blow sufficiently strong to blow out the dust and rubbish from the grain.

There was not a fanning mill within the bounds of knowledge, or, at least, within the bounds of our knowledge at that time; nor even a hand fan, the like of which we had seen used in our younger years. In the absence of suitable utensils for this kind of work, a man would stand on a high bench and pour the grain slowly to the ground from a tin pan, while another man or boy, or perhaps the wife, would stand on the ground and hand it up to him. The process had to be repeated two or three times, and sometimes more before it would be clean enough for market, or to use for ourselves. It was rather a tiresome way of doing, or at least we should think so now, but we did not allow ourselves to mind it much at the time, when we considered that it was to be the means of bringing us some of the comforts, which

we had necessarily obliged to dispensed with for many months.

We, the women of our little settlement, were not scrupulous against going out to assist in securing and taking care of what we had raised. Neither did we allow false pride, or false delicacy of thought or feeling to come between us and duty, but took both pride and pleasure in doing whatever it was possible for us to do out doors as well as in whenever we could leave the house and could see the necessity of it. That was often the case, for there was not much help to be had at that time for out door any more than for indoor work, except by changing work with neighbors, which was frequently done. But it was not at all times and under all circumstances that a neighbor could leave his own work, but generally they were as accommodating to each other as circumstances would allow. As we women were not afraid of soiling our hands or our hearts by laboring, we were ready to go out to assist when necessity required it, and we were able to do it.

In harvest time we could and did carry sheaves together and shock them, and sometimes help load and stack, and pick up potatoes, husk corn, feed swine, and when we had any to feed, and cook the food for them, such as pumpkins and turnips and potatoes, which we boiled in wooden kettles. It was made square, and with stout sheet iron bottoms, and were set over stone fire-place which were built outside for the purpose.

Perhaps some one who never saw a wooden kettle, and it may be never heard of one of that kind before, would like to know how it was made. The name wooden kettle sounded strange to us when we first heard it, and we wondered how such an article could be constructed as to be used over a fire for cooking, even if it be only food for animals. But we found there was a possibility of not only for animals, but that it could be cleaned, and kept in good order, so that occasionally our own food could be cooked therein, which showed, as we had often heard, that "necessity was the mother of invention". Our wooden kettle was eighteen inches wide and about three feet long. The wood part of it was made

of plank and nailed together in the form of a box with large nails. This was bottomed with sheet iron wide and long enough to turn over on the ends and sides, so that fire should not touch the wood. Then it was set over a stone fire-place, which was built sufficiently long and wide to allow the box to be bedded all around with stone and mortar to protect the wood. A capacious fire-place underneath with a chimney at the extremity, and a wooden cover to the kettle completed the outfit. Because it was a rude, rustic-looking article, it was the object and occasion of much laughter and merriment. The wooden kettle, nevertheless, was found to be so useful and convenient under the circumstances in which we were placed in those early days that it came to be an indispensable article until such time as we could afford to buy a cauldron, which was about three years. Then the wooden one was about worn out, and we gladly exchanged it for a heavy, substantial cauldron. I have often thought of late that if a specimen of those home-made kettles should be sent to the Centennial, it might excite as much curiosity as many things that will be sent there.

After we had the Sunday School established in our house, we began to hold religious meetings, and although we had no minister to preach to us, we met once in two weeks, sometimes in the house of one neighbor and sometimes at another, for a few months. Then we got out of our small cabin into a larger and rather more comfortable one, and as we happened to have a more commodious room, the meetings were held there until the district school house was built, which was more than two years after, except on some particular occasions, perhaps four or five times in a year, it would be held in a neighbor's house about two miles from us, to accommodate some who lived a longer distance from our place.

One of our neighbors, a well disposed and religious man, took the lead in our religious services, except occasionally some minister would chance to come into our neighborhood, or pass through the settlement, stopping over night. As soon as it was known that there was a minister in the place who would stay long enough for the people to

get word of it, it mattered not whether he was a Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregationalist or Episcopalian, every one who could possibly leave home—even if they had to appear in their every day clothing, which was frequently the case—would lay aside their pride and come together and unite in the services and listen to the sermon, whether it was Sunday or week day, and all, or nearly all, seemed to enjoy it as a rare treat. When we had no minister our religious services were conducted in the same manner as when we had one—by prayers, Bible reading, singing, and the reading of a sermon. We always had two sermons on Sunday, the first commencing at half past ten and the second at half-past one, and sometimes two o'clock, and the Sunday School between those two services, and a prayer meeting at five o'clock.

Thus our time was taken up on Sunday. It was all that I could do to get my necessary work done, myself and family in readiness to attend worship, and have seats placed before some of the people would begin to come in. And then every Wednesday evening at five o'clock we had a pray-meeting, except in the shortest days, when they met at seven.

It has been said, written and put in print that the first sermon that was preached in Lisbon was by a Mr. Frink in 1838, but that was a pure mistake, as well as the dates of some few other particulars that were noticed in that article. But the writer of it was not to blame, (not living in the new territory in those very early days,) neither was this author to blame, for of course he was told as nearly as could be recollected. Mr. Lucius Bottsford and Miss Lucinda Denny was the first couple that was married in Lisbon, The ceremony was performed by Elder Griffin at the residence of Mr. Jonathan Dougherty, Sr. on the 3rd of June, 1839, after the preaching of the first sermon that was preached in the town of Lisbon. Thus it was that Elder Griffin. (Bapist) preached the first sermon in our new settlement, instead of Mr. Frink. In the month of August following, there was another sermon preached in the same house by the Rev. Mr. Audway, Congrégationlist. Then in the following winter,

about middle of January, 1840, came the Rev. Mr. Frink, (Methodist,) and preached his first sermon, or the first sermon that he preached in our place, in our house. He came on a very cold morning and asked me if my house was the place where friends and neighbors usually met on the Sabbath for worship, and when I answered in the affirmative and told him that we also had a meeting every Wednesday evening, he introduced himself as Mr. Frink, a Methodist minister, and asked me if could have the privilege of preaching here Wednesday evening, when I told him that our cabin was at his service for that purpose. He asked me if I thought that it would meet the minds of the people generally. I replied that I thought it would, and told him that in all probability there would be a general gathering to hear him and with pleasure, as it was seldom that we had an opportunity of listening to a sermon. The appointment was made and announced, the news spreading through our little settlement in a short time—only from Monday till Wednesday—so that when the evening came our cabin was filled with people that had come with their oxen and sleds, some of them from five miles distant in different directions. It was good sleighing (or sleding, as they called), but it was very cold and they had to sit down in the straw or marsh hay, which was plentifully laid down in the sled box, and then wrap in blankets and quilts, or whatever wrapping they happened to have that answered their purpose to keep them from freezing. They had no fine fleet horses and gay looking pleasure sleighs out in country places in those days, but had to be contented and had to be satisfied to be drawn on the same sled and by the same horned-horses, (oxen I meant and should have said), that drew their wood, hay, grain, etc. There was no ringing of the musical sleigh-bells, such as we had been in the habit of hearing to cheer and enliven them on their long, slow, cold ride; yet they were very cheerful and sang hymns as they rode along, making the air and the woods ring with the music of their voices and they seemed as anxious and eager to hear what the minister had to say to them as hungry people would be to go to a feast. They seemed to be satisfied and well pleased with the evening's meeting. Mr.

Frink came and preached once in two weeks, on Sundays, for about two months. In the mean time came the Rev. Mr. Hull, (Episcopalian), from Milwaukee, and he also held services and preached in our house once in three weeks for a while in the evening of a week day. Occasionally Elder Griffin would come and preach to us. We always had a full house. It seemed to make no difference of what denomination the preacher was, all united in the service, although there were some of each of four denominations, until such time as each of them could have a minister of their own order, and then, of course, each sect would naturally enough have the others to join and follow their own order.

In the month of March came Elder Wheelock, (or as he was commonly called, Father Wheelock), a Methodist preacher. He came two or three evenings for a time, and then he was engaged and hired to come and preach once in two weeks, on Sunday, for a year. He was the first minister hired in Lisbon. He was more than sixty years of age, and he used to walk fourteen miles every other Saturday, getting to our house in the afternoon, perform his duties on Sunday, and walk home on Monday. Sometimes, however, he might get a ride a part of the way, but not frequently, for he did not own a horse, neither was there one in our immediate neighborhood at that time. His salary was the small sum of eighty dollars—small enough, certainly. To some people at the present time it would not seem worth mentioning and that the people were thought less and penurious, not to allow him a larger sum for coming so far to serve them. Considering that he only received the same amount from the people with whom he labored every other Sunday in turn, it would seem next to nothing in comparison with the salaries that ministers get at the present time and those who are able expect to pay them. Yet that small sum was all they were able to pay. **The Reverend Father was satisfied, for he knew just how we were all situated and that we had but just begun to live, as it were, only affording ourselves the common necessities of life, he was content to live with his people that he labored with and to live as they had to, and did not seem to have any desire to live above**



them. There was an effort made to organize a Methodist church and society during his stay with us, but without success, there being at the time so very few in number of that order in the settlement. Consequently there was no Methodist society formed in the town of Lisbon until a number of years afterward; but in the month of June, 1841, there was a Congregational church and society organized and the Rev. Mr. Curtis came from Prairie Village and assisted in the organization, he being the minister in that place at that time. So the Congregational was the first organized church in the town of Lisbon. That same summer of 1841 the stone school-house was built in School District No. 1, the first school-house that was built in Lisbon. It was a small structure when first built, but in later years it was remodeled and made more commodious. Mr. Phineas Bissel was the first teacher in the new school-house, and was succeeded by Miss Minerva Bissel. Previous to this there had been several terms of school taught by Miss Anna Daugherty in the same small cabin, in which the first school was taught by your correspondent, the cabin having been fitted up for a school room, after we had moved into a more commodious one in close proximity to it which was about the same thing or nearly so, as having it in our own house. But we put up with it with as good grace as we possibly could, for the sake of having a school for our own and our neighbor's children.

As soon as the school-house was finished it was considered best and most convenient to have our Sunday-school preaching and all other religious services held in that, at least for the time. Just at that time there came a Congregational minister who was sent by the Missionary Board. He happened to arrive just in time to **attend and conduct** the first religious services in the school-house, and as the Congregational people had organized the **first church and religious society** in the place about two months previous to this time were wanting a minister and anxiously waited for an opportunity to secure one, and being very well pleased with him, they concluded to hire him for a year, and he finally stayed in the place three years. The Missionary Board

allowed him three hundred dollars each year, which together with what the people could afford to give, in those early days and as yet rather hard times, was only just barely sufficient to support him with a wife and family. However, they were as comfortably provided for as the rest of us were at the time, so that they could live with us but not above us if they would, for which they seemed to have no desire, but put up with the hardships and inconveniences of a new country life with the best possible grace. This was the Rev. Mr. Spencer Baker. After staying with us three years he left and went to Illinois. Since the Rev. Mr. Hull had made his advent in the neighborhood, the Episcopalians had separated themselves from the dissenting part of the community and held their services in their own houses. After a few months, however, they claimed the right to and accordingly had the use of the school-house every alternate Sunday as their place of public worship until such time as they could build a church, which was the first church built in the town of Lisbon. This was in the year 1844 as nearly as I recollect. The school-house in District No. 1 was built in the year 1841, when it became expedient for two different sects or denominations to use it for their religious services on each alternate Sunday. So accordingly on every Sunday each denomination went back to their former place of worship, the Congregationalists to our cabin and the Episcopalians to their own houses. Until the first church was built the Congregationalists made use of the school-house for a number of years before they were able to build, the few Methodists that were in the place at the time uniting with them, and when they did build a house of worship it was used by both denominations, each employing a minister of their own order, and each claiming the house half of ~~the~~ the time, although they both met for worship in the same house each Sunday. Each minister had another place and people to serve. After a few years the two denominations became one and took the name Bible Christians which name still holds good with them.

There were many changes about that time. A number families left the place and others came to fill their plac-

es, and there were nearly as many different opinions, in some respects as there were different people to express them, particularly on church matters and religious subjects. The Congregationalists as a church and society became extinct, and quite naturally the few remaining members united with another family, a christian people, and allowed themselves to be called by a new name. What's in a name? If only the right feeling and spirit pervade, the name, merely, is not of much consequence. Strife and controversy were not unusual in the early days. A sort of religious warfare (or more properly, irreligious) was raging to a greater or less extent for a number of years, which was a heavy trial to some of us before the clouds passed and the storm passed, and the people of different sentiments could be reconciled to each other in respect to religious matters. The Episcopalians and the dissenters could not understand each other, and all at the same time appeared to be trying to do their duty and to do right as near as they could. People understand each other better at the present day, and can, as a general thing, bear with each other's failings and shortcomings better.

We had never seen nor known that there was or could be such a difference of opinion or feeling among christian professors as we found there appeared to be with the different denominations after they had separated themselves from each other. We all read one Bible, and all believed, or professed to believe, in one Almighty and Supreme Being, and were all traveling, as we supposed, to one eternal home and haven of rest. We could not understand why people should differ so much in their religious views when most of them could agree so well usually, and on almost every other subject. But we were young then and inexperienced—had not seen much of the world, only a very small portion of it, and of the people who lived in it, in comparison with what we have since seen. We have since come to the conclusion that different people take their views from different standpoints and perhaps it is well that it should be so, at least in some respects, and we have long since ceased to marvel at such things as seemed so marvelous at that time. After a while

people could understand themselves, as well as each other better.

Well, those times are past and gone, and we still live as spared monuments of God's mercy. It was, perhaps, well for us in many respects that we lived in those days, shared with our neighbors and friends the trials and hardships of new country life, as well as the joys and pleasures, for there certainly was enjoyment and pleasure even then. It was as much of a pleasure to visit our friends and neighbors who were not related to us, and to receive visits from them, as it was to visit and receive visits from our own relatives when we had lived near and among them. Now that we had separated ourselves by hundreds of miles from our own relatives, it was but natural to have feelings of love and respect for others who were friendly and kind to us. In the earliest part of our new country experience we did not invite large parties for the want of sufficient room and other conveniences to make it pleasant and comfortable for a large party of friends. But whenever neighbors could make it convenient to visit each other, they were cordially welcomed, treated kindly, and made as comfortable as circumstances would permit. Such traits were characteristic of the people of our settlement. There was no dazzling splendor displayed in those early days, neither in the way of furniture, dress, ornaments or viands of the table. No one tried to outdo another. They could not if they would, and they did not show any such inclination. We recollect being invited to go and spend the day with an old gentleman and lady, in the year 1837. We went, my husband and myself, and we walked. It was in the winter and very slippery and cold. It was two miles from home, and my husband carried a child about four months old, while I had enough to do to carry myself. We arrived at the old peoples' log shanty in due time, and we had a very pleasant and very interesting visit with them, and with their son and his wife.

When it drew near dinner time the old lady said to her son, "Come, Lias, go to the other room, will you, and fetch in the large table, for the one we use every day is not

large enough when we have company." We were somewhat curious to know where this other room could be, as there appeared to be only one room to the shanty. By observation we noticed that the other room lay all out of doors, and the table was a home-made one, constructed for the purpose of joining to another in case of necessity. After dinner the old lady called on Lias again to take the table away into the spare room, so that she could get around better to do her work. We had a good deal of sport over the home-made table and the spare room out of door.

Well, although we walked two miles to spend the day with those old people and their children, and their house had so very little room in it, yet we had a pleasant social, and very interesting visit. And although the fare was homely and served in plain style, it was wholesome and in good order, and an air of neatness prevailed the whole of the establishment. In after years, when we met, we always had to talk over this first visit in the wilds of Wisconsin. We walked home that evening, and next morning found that the wolves had followed us nearly home, as we could see by their tracks in the snow. That was often the case when people were out in the evening; but they did not always come near enough to be seen or heard.

In the fall of 1837 our oldest boy, then four years old, and Wisconsin, a little girl about nine years old, were out a few rods from our house, which stood on a bank or a rise of ground a few rods above the lower end of a marsh which was about one-half mile long. The children had been playing just below the bank for a short time, when all of a sudden they came running up to the house screaming with fright. I left my work and went out as fast as I could to see what had frightened them, when they both began telling me at once. "Oh!" said they, there is a large beast down there, and it came and stared at us with great big eyes". "But where is it?" said I, "and where did you see it?" "Oh!" said they with one accord, "I don't know where it is now, but it was right down there by the bushes when it came at us," at same time pointing towards a small cluster of willows that stood near the edge of the marsh. Everything seemed quiet

in that direction. I could see nothing, but I suspected that it was a wolf that had frightened them. I told them not to be afraid they should not be hurt. I then asked them if it was not a deer. "Oh, I don't know," said they, "for I never saw a deer; but it was cross and ugly looking." "Well," said I, "I cannot see anything, and perhaps, after all, it is only a large calf that I saw feeding out there a while ago." "Oh, no," said the little girl, rather indignantly, "it was not a calf nor anything like it, and I would not be at all afraid of a calf. I'll tell you," said she, "aunty, the creature breathed real hard, or else it growled, and it had long hairs all around its mouth and nose like a cat."

Then I asked her how near it was to her when she saw it. "Why," said she, "I heard a strange noise, and, turning quick, there it was, with its nose close to my shoulder, and staring with great big eyes at me. Then we both screamed and run for the house, and it seemed as if we never would get there, and I just thought every step we took that the ugly thing would catch one of us."

I concluded it must be a wolf, and while we yet stood there close by the house, ready to dodge in and fasten the door on short notice, the children trembling with fear and myself on the watch to see, if I could, the animal that had frightened them so, when suddenly the marsh grass began to wave, and out walked old Mr Wolf a few rods from where they first saw him. He walked very orderly, and seemingly consequential, gazing at us as he went.

Where the wolf came out from the tall marsh grass, into plain sight, it was a few rods further off from the house than where it went in, according to the children's account of the place of where they saw it, and so close upon them still it was but a few rods, and we could see him plainly enough. Had there been a good marksman there with a loaded rifle, he could have shot the old fellow, for he was sufficiently near. He certainly seemed to be a very old settler, and looked very bold and saucy at us, as he walked slowly and orderly, partly up the bank. a short distance from the marsh, and then laid down and looked at us. He was a much larger specimen of the wolf tribe than I had ev-

er seen or heard descriptions of. I had heard the largest kind that had been seen anywhere around there, described as the big grey wolf, all over grey, but this one was dark grey and white spotted. with large spots. Oh how I did wish that there was a loaded gun in the house, although I felt very nervous and frightened, under the circumstances as I was alone with the children. My indignation had become thoroughly aroused to think his wolfship had ventured so near, and had threatened those innocent children almost right before my eyes, that I thought I had the courage to shoot at him, though I should not expect to kill, or even to hit him, but thinking that perhaps it might frighten him so that he would not be likely to come so near again. After laying and looking very saucily at us for some time, he got up and walked slowly away, but he would take but a few steps at a time and then look back over his shoulders at us as if to see if we were following him, or if he would be likely to get the meal that he had come so near getting, if he should come back and try again. It seemed as if I could read his thoughts by his actions, and the children as they stood by me watching the animal, as he sauntered, apparently, so reluctantly away, kept asking me every few minutes if I thought the ugly thing would come back after them, and all the time kept watching me, as if to see if I was afraid that he would come back. To quiet their fears I told them that God would take care of them and send the wolf so far away that he would not return. We all seemed as if riveted to the spot, and could not leave our watch until he had gone about half a mile, and was fairly out of our sight, and not even then could I go into the house and get to work, but felt myself completely overpowered, and ready to faint, with the thoughts of what had happened. But I soon rallied, and looking around on my little ones, and their cousin, I found my heart overflowing with feelings of gratitude and thankfulness to the wise Creator, that everything concerning the affair had been so nicely ordered, and overruled, that neither one nor both had fallen a prey to the ferocious beast\*. When my husband came home in the evening, the children had to tell the pitiful tale, and how near that cross and ugly beast,

(as they called it), came to them, and showed his teeth and looked sharp at them with his saucy eyes. They then told him that the animal wanted to eat them, for they heard him snap his teeth. He listened to them and heard their version of the affair, but it seemed as if he could not at first give it credence. But when I told him what I myself had seen and knew of the affair, and that I thought the children had told their story correctly, he then thought that they had had a very narrow escape, and said he must get his gun home, which was lent at the time, and load it, and have it ready to shoot the next one that should venture so near. I was ready to second that motion, and told him that I should try it myself, if I was at home, and in order, and he should be absent. The gun was brought home, and kept in order, and in readiness, to at least frighten the next wolf that should come near the house in broad daylight. But no such unwelcome visitor made his appearance again in broad daylight for a space of two months. On a very cold, wintry day, when my husband with all the rest of the men of the neighborhood were off on the road toward Milwaukee, preparing to log-way the swamps, and bridge the streams, so that it should be better going on the road when the winter should break up, or should there come a very wet time, for at such times the road would be almost, and sometimes quite impassable in some places, so they took the opportunity when they could best spare the time, to commence preparation for improving the road, and making it better and safer to travel on. For a time it was dangerous to drive to Milwaukee, because of the many deep mud holes, and bad places that could not be avoided. So they would breakfast early, and be ready to start off to their daily task, as soon, and generally a little before it was daylight, with a cold lunch in their pocket for their noontime repast, and be gone until sundown. Then they would return, tired, cold and hungry, and ready for a warm supper. This we always calculated to have ready for them. And, although, our meals were necessarily plain and not much of a variety, the journey of several miles out and back every day for a while, except Sunday, and the keen cold air and the hard work, all combined, gave the aged ap-



petite, and our meals were as thankfully received, and as well and heartily enjoyed, as if we had the largest variety imaginable. I was about to mention the circumstances of another wolf that made his appearance near the house in the day time. It was one of those days when I was alone with the children, and had been very busy sewing all day, and intent on finishing the garment that I had on hand, when all of sudden, I discovered that the sun was getting low, and it was time that I should begin to prepare the evening meal. I therefore laid by my sewing, replenished my fire, and took my water pail in haste to go about twenty-five rods to the stream for water, and when I was about three rods from the door, I saw a wolf coming up the path only a few rods from me, as if coming to meet me. The wolf, at the same time saw me and we both halted suddenly and stared each other in the face for some minutes, unwilling, seemingly, to turn from each other, and retrace our steps. But presently I bethought myself, that I had a pail and tin dipper in my hand. Then with the tin dipper I beat vehemently against the pail and then he turned and started off a few steps, then he slacked his pace and looked back at me again, and as I had no other means of frightening him, I kept on beating the pail with the dipper. After a little while he left the path and went off in another direction, and it was not until he was fairly out of sight that I ventured to go for the water. Unfortunately, there was no loaded gun in the house at the time, but the next morning my husband brought his gun home again, because I requested him to. I thought the wolves were getting saucy, and if the gun was kept in readiness, and the wolves persist in coming so near the house in broad daylight, and if he was home, he might shoot them, and if I was at home alone, I would shoot at them and and frighten them if no more. But he thought that I would not have the courage if they should come near enough for me to reach them with the muzzle of the gun. But he put up a mark about eight rods from the house, and wanted me to take the gun and see if I could take sight and aim so as to hit the mark, which was a piece of board about nine inches square, with a white spot in the center. I declined doing it.

in his presence, telling him that if I was alone and had no one to depend upon for assistance in case of another trial of that kind, that I thought my courage would be sufficient. But he laughed at me and said he could see what my courage was when put to the test. I could not bear to be jeered about it, and took the gun from him, and standing in the door of our little cabin, drew it up at arms length, aimed at the white spot, discharged the gun and five buckshot struck the board, two of them hit the white spot and down went the board.

Well, instead of getting jeered any more, I was praised a little, for my husband said to me after he had picked up the board which had been set up as a mark, "well done, I don't know but you could kill a wolf ten rods off and happened to be broadside toward him. At any rate," he said, "I will endeavor to keep the shooting iron in readiness, so that if you ever have another opportunity of the kind, there shall be no reason why Mr. Wolf should not fall and never annoy you any more.

But just such an opportunity never came again, so that my skill at wolf-shooting was not put to the test after all. But there was scarcely a night we could not hear the wild concert of their howling as it rang on the night air through the woods and opening—sometimes a long distance off, and sometimes very near. Very often we would be awakened suddenly from a sound sleep with their wierd yelling, scratching and tearing up the ground close to the house. We were not afraid that they would break through our log cabin, but their howls were nearly deafening. Such were the only serenades we had for years, and when they came so near and it was moonlight, we would draw back the curtain from the window carefully and look out. Presently, when they had serenaded us to their satisfaction, they would walk off, leaving us to ruminate and enjoy the silence as best we could. Sometimes there would be three, and again four or five of them, and on one occasion we counted seven, that filed along one after another by moonlight. Had it been daylight there might have been a chance to stop some of them, but as it was there was no chance.

A little later, after we had begun to keep and were trying to raise domestic animals, such as sheep and swine, we were very much annoyed by these wild and ferocious beasts of the forest. It was impossible to raise any young or to keep the full grown ones, only as they were kept shut up at night and the very best of care taken of them in the daytime. With all our care and vigilance many of our young animals were devoured by wolves. But after a while when a good many had been killed and the rest driven back, as was supposed, we and our neighbors ceased shutting up our animals so close at night. Almost all of us had a fine, though small flock of sheep, which we were proud of. One night when we were not expecting such an event, there came a pack of wolves and visited nearly every flock, killing or mangling the greater part of them. Some were eaten, some partly eaten, some terribly mangled but not dead, and some were killed that were not much torn. But it was a sorry spectacle that the morning light revealed to the owners of the little flocks they had taken so much pain with. It was rather discouraging after paying a very big price for the sheep which were driven many miles from another state, and on their arrival were so poor and weak as to be scarcely able to walk. With good care and plenty of good food, however, most of them rallied, and gained strength and flesh and became hearty. But a few of them were too feeble to endure the winter and died before spring opened.

Stock-raisers of the present day would not look at such as we had to commence with at that early day, but we had to buy such as we could find at the time, or none at all. As disheartening as it was to lose all but two out of twelve, while others lost as many, it was of no use to give up in despair. We took good care of what we had left and in process of time succeeded in retrieving our loss.

We all felt sorry for the loss of our sheep, but that was nothing in comparison with our feelings when our children were so frightened, and to all appearances, were very near being devoured by the ferocious wolf. The fright, consternation and grief that we experienced at that time has never been forgotten.

At times, and not unfrequently, we look back through the intervening years, and seem to live the time over again, in which we had to endure severe trials, hardships and loss, sickness and sorrow; times when we mourned with those who mourned, and when others took part with us and shared our griefs and troubles. But we can also look back upon seasons of pleasure and happiness, as truly and as really genuine as possible for mortals to enjoy in this sphere of existence. What if we did have to go to our humble and unpretentious place of worship, or to visit our friends in a garb of plain print, with not more than seven or eight yards in a lady's dress, with no trimmings or ornaments to make a display. The real and true lady was not known in those days by her expensive dress or lavish display of jewelry, but by her gentle deportment, kind and feeling heart towards others when in trouble and need, always honorable and charitable in the full sense of the term. These were qualities that were pure gems in a lady's crown in those times. Likewise the true man was known by the same traits of character. Whether he appeared in his working dress or was dressed in broadcloth, he was looked upon as the gentleman just the same if his behavior and disposition was such as would become a real gentlemen. So we have seen that this dress was not indicative of the gentlemen or of the real lady.

What, then, if we did wear plain garments and heavy shoes, which were more suitable than fine shoes and fine and elaborately trimmed dresses could have been. The country being new and the roads rough, nothing short of the most substantial goods for wearing apparel was of any account. We often had to walk, if we went out from home, the only alternative was a wagon in summer and sled in winter, the same being drawn by horned horses, and if we had not an experienced driver we were liable to be run away with, particularly if our oxen were young and lively. What contrast in the styles and process of riding in those days compared with that of the present time. Shall we call our old style of riding pleasure riding? Well, it was nothing more nor less. Although we might load into a lumber box, over heavy and

clumsy looking runners, while our seat was coarse hay or straw, and our extra wrappings were blankets or quilts, instead of beautiful robes and pleasure sleighs of the present time. But our new country style was passably good and enjoyable. We did not put on airs and make great pretensions to something that we could not do. That would have been absurd, for we all knew and understood each others circumstances and ability, and could not, if we would, outdo each other. If we could not treat our friends just as we would wish, we could at least give them a cheerful and warm-hearted reception, and make them welcome to whatever we had to set before them. It was indeed a pleasure to meet with friends and neighbors and converse with them concerning our affairs and circumstances, tell each other our plans, prospects and our anticipations for the future. We never felt more happy than when we could do acts of kindness for each other, for it was then that we felt the need of each others friendship, sympathy and counsel; and it was then, of all times in our experience, that we felt that we had the greatest reason to be grateful for such kindness, and for the interest taken in our welfare. If we did endure hardships, trials and privations (which we certainly did), we were always looking forward and expecting a better time. And we very much doubt if we, or any of our neighbors that shared with us the trials and hardships of our new country life, ever enjoyed more real happiness and pleasure, everything considered, even in what we have called better times, than we did in those very early days.

Burlington, Wis., July 3, 1876

As, I sit alone in my room this 3d of July evening, 1876 while my family are peacefully resting in the quiet embrace of the Goddess of Sleep, and everything in the house seems hushed to almost deathlike stillness, so that for a short time I only hear the surging and splashing and warring of the waters of the Pecatonica river, as it rushes furiously on through a portion of our town, swollen by recent rains. At intervals I hear the shouts of boys as they sport with their fire-crackers, and their merry glee rings abroad on the ev-

ening air, the firing of guns, and the sweetest and most soul stirring, of all, the beautiful and glorious music discoursed by the silver cornet band of our village, through the medium of the sweet-toned instruments, all as a token of the joyful memory of the coming Independence jubilee on the morrow. And as I listen to all of this, my mind is filled with memories of earlier years—the times and seasons that are past and gone—those very early days when Wisconsin was a territory and young, and when we had no harbinger or forerunner to usher in the glorious Independence day but our lively and busy memories. If we could not publicly celebrate the day, we did not forget it, nor forget why we should memorize it. The only way that we observed and kept the day for a few successive years, was by going and spending half a day, or a day, as was most convenient, with some one of our neighbors, or received and entertained a visit with someone or more of them, at our little home. And very social, pleasant and interesting seasons did we pass, thinking and talking of the times when we had participated with our own kindred and former friends in the festivities of such times and like occasions, wondering if they were thinking of us, in our far away homes, and speculating as to the way and manner in which they might be celebrating or enjoying themselves at the time, and looking forward in anticipation of a time when circumstances, we hoped, might allow us to celebrate our national Independence day publicly, if we should choose so to do, in a becoming manner, which time slowly and gradually rolled around when we could rally in sufficient numbers to celebrate the day, though in a humble manner, compared with such gatherings at the present day and age, of the world. Shall I, may I, describe our first Fourth of July meeting in our settlement, which, by the way, I think was quite as enjoyable, everything considered, as any social gathering that we ever had, with no gorgeous display, but with cheerful hearts and dispositions to try to make each other happy and comfortable? We met on the premises of our brother, William Weaver, where men and boys had built bowers and booths, covered with bushes and boughs of trees to shelter us and our children from the heat of the sun, for

as everybody in the place was expected to go, of course the children must go too, from the age of eighteen down to the babe in the cradle, so that every family was well represented. As it was not convenient for any one person or family to prepare a dinner for the whole neighborhood, we met in the capacity of pic-nickers, and each wife and mother provided the requisites for her own family and about as many more, so that there should be sufficient for those who had no wife or mother to prepare for them, or had not the wherewith to prepare, as all were invited. Some of our provisions were cooked at home and some on the grounds where we met. There was an arch, or out-of-door fire-place and over it a boiling caldron all ready when we arrived on the ground at nine o'clock, to put in anything that we might wish to cook, as we intended to have a warm dinner we boiled meat and vegetables and several meat puddings, (English people will understand what is meant by a meat pudding), and different kinds of pudding that were prepared at home and tied in cloths, all ready for boiling, according as the proper time came to drop in each different article of food to cook in the caldron. We carried our baked provisions ready prepared, such as bread and biscuit, pies and cakes; and cold baked meat of different kinds, such as pigs and chickens, cold boiled ham, butter, pickles, etc. We were our own cooks and waiters, and in due time our dinner was served in a style that was for the time, occasion and our circumstances, although not sumptuous, yet satisfactory and heartily enjoyed by all, both old and young. Our dinner, with tea, coffee and cold water, was served on a table made of rough boards laid on the backs of wooden horses or high benches. Our table-cloth was of pure white cotton instead of linen. Well, I will tell the truth, and say our table was covered with sheets, but I don't think that there was much notice taken of the table-cloth any more than if it had been the finest pure white linen.

But the dinner, the happy faces, and cheerful hearts, of the partakers, as they came around in order as if to a family board, at that day and age of our settlement, was as interesting a sight and truly enjoyable, particularly to those

who had not enjoyed any such social meetings for five or six years on the Fourth of July, or any other holiday. Our aged, highly esteemed, and much loved father Weaver, then over seventy years of age, at the head of the rustic table, invoked the blessing of heaven and returned thanks to the Father for the benefits and enjoyment of our frugal repast, and most heartily did he rejoice with us on this our first Fourth of July meeting, wishing us many happy returns of the social enjoyment of the day. Although he did not live to enjoy many more such seasons with us, that particular one always seemed fresh in our memory on each returning Fourth of July, and we love to think of him as he appeared then, enjoying the innocent sports of the children as well as those of the older ones. We had no public speaker to address us on that day, but we were all free to speak or to act as our own feelings might dictate. We had no cannon but only a common shot-gun to fire for the salute, and no silver cornet band to enliven the scene and cheer the hearts—and indeed we expected no music but simply and purely vocal music, and that came from the hilarious mirth of the children at their sports and merry-makings, and possibly more or less crying of babies, as there was to be a general muster on that day of old and young, youth and middle-aged. After we came together we learned that three of our young men had each of them brought an instrument of music, just to please the children, they said. One had a violin, another a clarinet and another a flute. The children were pleased, of course, for it was not often that they had an opportunity to listen to any music, except the sweet sounds of their mothers' voices singing to them children's hymns or the soft, soothing lullaby. Some of our men and boys for amusement and to while away a portion of the time, engaged in innocent games of cricket and base ball and when the mothers and daughters had done their necessary work after dinner, and had rested a while and enjoyed a social chat, singing was proposed, and to fill our share of the bill for the amusement and pleasure of the day, we sang a number of familiar and choice hymns, and a few other and favorite pieces, accompanied by the pleasant, agreeable music by our little



band of only three musicians. And thus we spent our gala-day, with the interspersion, occasionally, of a tune or two of martial music by our band and the firing of the old musket instead of a cannon. Towards the close of the day we separated, and went to our homes and home duties, with a feeling of pleasure and a sort of satisfaction that we had regarded and paid our tribute of respect to the glorious Independence day and its cause in the best possible manner that we could, considering the circumstances. But as time passed and each successive year rolled around, and we could realize that we had made some little improvement since the last, and in process of time, we were favored so as to be able to have a public speaker to address us on some interesting subject on such occasions, and more popular music, and have our dinner prepared for us by some one of our neighbors, and pay for it, and give a little more of our attention to dress and style, which, by the way, had not come direct from Paris, via Lodon and New York, but originated nearer home. Our style at that time, of course would not compare very favorably with that of to-day; but it was our own, not borrowed nor bought, and though simple and plain, we were satisfied and contented until the time came for improvement. And as I was about to say with regard to all of our improvements from time to time, and what we called better times in many respects, I do not think that there ever was a meeting of friends that was better enjoyed than the first neighborhood gathering when we met as one family and shared with each other in all things pertaining to the comforts and pleasures of the day.

I have wandered quite away from what I intended at this writing, but I beg to be forgiven, and hope to do better at the next. For fear of wearying your patience and that of your readers, with my scribblings, I intended to have brought them to a close before this time, but owing to poor health and the care of my family, with the intense and almost intolerable heat of summer, I find myself in a fever.