



## **Our county, our story : Portage County, Wisconsin.**

Rosholt, Malcolm Leviatt, 1907-2005

Stevens Point, Wisconsin: Portage County Board of Supervisors, 1959

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# **Our County Our Story**

## **PORTAGE COUNTY WISCONSIN**

BY

*Malcolm Rosholt*

**Charles M. White  
Memorial Public Library**

**PORTAGE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
STEVENS POINT, WISCONSIN**

1959



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## FOREWORD

With the approach of the first frost in Portage County the leaves begin to fall from the white birch and the poplar trees. Shortly the basswood turns yellow and the elm tree takes on a reddish hue. The real glory of autumn begins in October when the maples, as if blushing in modesty, turn to gold and crimson, and the entire forest around is aflame with color set off against deeper shades of evergreens and newly-planted Christmas trees. To me this is the most beautiful season of the year. But it is not of her beauty only that I write, but of her colorful past, for Portage County is already rich in history and legend. And I share, in part, at least, the conviction of Margaret Fuller who wrote more than a century ago that "not one seed from the past" should be lost.

Some may wonder why I include the names listed in the first tax rolls. It is part of my purpose to anchor these names in our history because, if for no other reason, they were here first and there can never be another first.

The spellings of names and places follow the spellings in the documents as far as legibility permits. Some no doubt are incorrect in the original entry, but the majority were probably correct and since have changed, which makes the original entry a matter of historic significance.

The text is documented throughout with the exception of the township and village records or references to these records. A start was made toward page documentation but became impractical when it was discovered that many of these books have no page numbers. But easy reference may be made to these records in the office of the town or village clerk.

In any work of local nature, reference is often made

to present locations as they are related to the past. To avoid the constant use of the expression "on the present site of" I have used the word "modern" in its wider sense to mean any contemporary place or thing in being. I also refer to sites along the rivers as either on the *left* or *right* bank rather than to the directions from the river. To determine which is left and which is right, picture a fly fisherman in the middle of a stream. He always drops his line down stream which means that he faces down stream. Thus his left hand points to the left bank, his right hand to the right bank, no matter which way the river bends. The town of Linwood, for example, lies entirely on the *right* bank of the Wisconsin River.

References are made to the "Sherman account" and the "Helgeson account." The former consists of many note-book size diaries kept by S. A. Sherman, only a few of which have been edited, now in the archives of the States Historical Society. The "Helgeson account" is a book written in Norwegian by Thor Helgeson called "*Fra Indianernes Lande*" (From the Land of the Indians) which I have translated and made excerpts from.

The footnotes on the County Board of Supervisors and the County Commissioners Sessions also require a word of explanation. Several changes in the form of county government were made in the first three decades as between "commissioners" and "supervisors." As a result, the minutes of the proceedings of the County Commissioners Sessions and the Board of Supervisors both appear in Volume I and both run together. In fact, when the changes were made, the clerk was apt to forget himself in the first meeting and use the old designation under the new dispensation. But the page numbers run consistently.

I wish to express my appreciation for pictures appearing in the two sections of the book to the following: Mr. & Mrs. John Ksioszk, Mr. Howard Newby, Mrs. Emil Zimmer (deceased), Mrs. Alice Guyant, Mr. & Mrs. Jesse Grant, Mr. & Mrs. Dominic Bembenek, Mr. Leo Mallek, Mrs. George Isherwood, Mr. & Mrs. Cecil Coel, Mr. & Mrs. George W. Allen, Mr. & Mrs. Ernest Rogers,

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A special word of thanks is due Mrs. Win Rothman of Stevens Point for valuable corrections and suggestions in the preparation of the manuscript; to Miss Beulah Larson of the Stevens Point Public Library for help in indexing; to Nelis R. Kampenga, librarian at the Wisconsin State College, for help in bibliography and materials; and to Alex Wallace for delightful afternoons of poetry and stories along the banks of the Little Eau Pleine. Finally, I wish to thank the members of the Portage County Board of Supervisors, whose foresight and understanding made all this possible.

Malcolm Rosholt  
Rosholt, Wis.

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**Our County Our Story**

## THE EVOLUTION OF PORTAGE COUNTY

It seems hard to believe that a spot in Wisconsin less than two-hour's drive east of Portage County was one of the first to be explored and settled in North America. This is Green Bay where Jean Nicolet landed in 1634, some 14 years after the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock, and 27 years after the first colony of Europeans was established at Jamestown. Twenty years after Nicolet arrived, the first fur traders came to survey the area around Green Bay with a view to establishing trading posts and making friends with the Indians.

In the century that followed, the French, the Indians, and the beaver, a fur-bearing animal, all played leading roles in the history of Wisconsin. Under the French, what is known as Wisconsin became part of New France which extended all the way from Canada through the Ohio and Mississippi valleys to the Gulf of Mexico, with the northern anchor of empire at Quebec and the southern anchor at New Orleans. Thus the history of modern Wisconsin from 1634 to 1760 was directly allied to the French who were concerned with two enterprises, the fur trade and missionary work among the Indians. But even while the missionaries attempted to evangelize the Indians, their French compatriots were engaged in military adventures and stratagems designed to assure them of hegemony over Indian policy and monopoly over the Indian fur trade.

The Indian trapper and hunter was concerned with all peltry to barter with the French, but one of the most valued and yet most widely scattered fur-bearing animals in the future Wisconsin was the beaver. In 1867, when Jens Rasmussen settled on a quarter section later to become part of the village of Rosholt, he located on the high bank above the South Branch of the Little

Wolf, a few rods east of a pond created by a beaver dam where he later built a grist mill. Half a mile down the same stream was still another beaver dam. Peter Rasmussen, his nephew, digging a drainage ditch in the marsh many years later, came upon slender tree trunks and sticks pointed at both ends in the manner of the beavers. Thus in one spot of Portage County less than half a mile apart were two colonies of beavers busily maintaining a dam and house in each. There were millions of them and men waxed wealthy acting as field agents trading supplies and weapons for these furs.

Thus it is easy to imagine that small parties of Indians, up from Fort Winnebago (Portage city) or working out of Fort Howard (Green Bay) spent months on the creeks and swamps of Portage County trapping beaver which later were made into gem-studded robes for kings, or hats for the newly-rich growing up with the Industrial Revolution in Europe.

The French were fairly successful in dealing with the Indians and many of the traders took Indian women as wives, while their children learned the language of both people and served as interpreters and often as mediators between whites and Indians. In the French and Indian War, French officers commanded Indian troops in defense of Quebec in 1759; but the British, who also had managed to train Indian auxiliaries, were growing more powerful than the French in North America and managed to defeat the French and Indians. By 1763, New France had been surrendered to England, and future Wisconsin became for a time British territory governed from Mackinac and Quebec. Direct British rule ended by the Treaty of Paris in 1783 at the conclusion of the Revolutionary War when all British territory east of the Mississippi was ceded to the United States. Although Congress passed an ordinance in 1787 for government of the Northwest Territory, British influence in this area continued strong until 1815. Following the war of 1812, the United States established its own system of control in the Middle West and by an act of Congress restricted fur trading to United States citizens which meant that the British were no longer welcome. The

Astor-owned American Fur Company took over in Green Bay from the British after the war of 1812, and a few years later a man of French-Canadian and Indian ancestry, John Baptiste DuBay, was establishing a trading post for the American Fur Company in a township later to be known as Eau Pleine and finally as Dewey. The beaver hat was still in vogue and it helped to found a dynasty of banking people in Manhattan which also contributed to the fortunes of John DuBay.

In 1818 three counties were created out of Michigan Territory in what is today Wisconsin, Upper Michigan, and eastern Minnesota, called Brown County, Crawford, and Michillimackinac, and out of parts of these counties the Territory of Wisconsin was established by act of Congress in 1836. That same year the first Council and House of Representatives of the Wisconsin Territory, meeting in Belmont in the southern part, created "a separate county . . . to be called Portage" and established the seat of justice "at the town of Winnebago."<sup>1</sup>

This was merely the beginning as it consisted of only 24 townships around modern Portage city, four of which actually lay in a newly-created county called Dodge, a mistake which was corrected in 1838. This new, rather special but small county, was carved out of Brown County, probably in recognition of the fact that it was an important link between northeastern Wisconsin and the Mississippi Valley via the Fox and Wisconsin Rivers. In the next three years several minor changes were made in the boundaries of this comparatively small county; and, in 1841 an act to enlarge the boundaries of Portage County was passed which made it the third largest in the territory, extending east and west across eight townships (about 48 miles) and north from about modern Portage city all the way through the central part of the state to the modern Wisconsin-Michigan state line. These boundaries remained constant until 1846, when Columbia County (north of Madison) was carved out of greater Portage County. In the next several years, most of the other southern counties as they are known

<sup>1</sup> *Wisconsin Territorial Laws* (1836), Sec. 5, p. 62.

today were set off until finally in 1856 modern Portage County was constituted.

At the time of organization, county representatives were called commissioners, and the first meeting of greater Portage county commissioners was held April 20, 1842 when it was ordered that election precincts should be established at six points in the county. The two that concern us in the north were located at Andrew Dunn's mill on Mill Creek (Linwood) and a second at the house of George Stevens at Big Bull Falls (Wausau). The commissioners sessions do not describe the actual extent of the precincts, everyone voting, probably, at the most convenient election booth. A month or so after these six precincts were established, a seventh was created at Little Bull Falls (Mosinee) at the house of John L. Moore. This was followed in 1843 by an attempt to define the boundaries of the precincts, but overlooking the one created the year before at Little Bull.

In this first attempt to define the several precincts, a change of venue was made from Dunn's Mill to the house of Gilbert Conant whose home was referred to as in "Plover Portage" but was probably located near the saw mill on the right bank of the Wisconsin River in Sec. 7 (T. 24, R. 8). Known as the Second Precinct, it ran from Conant's house and all that part of the county north of Mill Creek to the north line of Township 26 (above modern Knowlton). The judges appointed for elections in this precinct were Hugh M. McFarlin, Gilbert Conant and Enoch G. Bean.

The First Precinct, known as Big Bull Falls, ran from the town line between Townships 26 & 27 north to the state line.

The precinct of Little Bull Falls, created in 1842 and passed over in the appointment of judges of election in 1843 appears to have been re-established in 1845 when John DuBay and others petitioned the county commissioners to establish a precinct in this district, which on Jan. 9 they agreed to do. This, however, nullified the precinct established earlier as Big Bull Falls.

Two years later in 1847, three supposedly new election

precincts were established, one was to be "at the house of Abraham Brawley on the Au Clair (Eau Claire River) and to consist of all that part of the county north of Junior Creek, east of range seven. . . ." (Junior Creek was an early name for the river later known as Bull Junior Creek and today as Bull Creek which flows out of the swamp in the southwest of Ringle township and enters the Wisconsin River above Mosinee.)

Another precinct established in 1847 was "at the house of J. B. DuBay in Towns 25 and 26 of Range 7 and 8. . . ." This presumably was DuBay's trading post located in Sec. 3 of modern Dewey. Two years earlier in 1845, as noted above, DuBay had petitioned, with others, for an election precinct to be located at Little Bull Falls which had been granted at the time; but this in turn was probably a duplication of still another order dated 1842 when an election precinct was established at Little Bull "at the house of John L. Moore. . . ."

The county commissioners were probably unacquainted with the territory in the north and, with poor maps to work from and hearsay evidence to guide them about people and places, were understandably confused. Moreover, it was not altogether important because men on the frontier of America had long since learned to use their own judgment first and accept the orders of the government after the fact.

A third precinct included in the 1847 order was "at the house of Matthias Mitchell in the Town of Stevens Point, being in Town 24 of Range seven and eight East. . . ." The inspectors of election were to be Mathias (note change of spelling within same document) Mitchell, George J. Goodhue, and William H. Johnson.

While this is one of the first times the "Town of Stevens Point" is mentioned in the county commissioners' proceedings, it manifestly did not refer to the township of Stevens Point, which had not yet been created, but to the village. The William H. Johnson mentioned in the above died in 1848 and is buried in Union Cem-

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, County Commissioners Sessions, Vol. I, pp. 95-96.

<sup>2</sup> *Loc. Cit.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 95-96.

etry, the oldest marked grave and headstone in Portage County of which there is contemporary evidence, although it is quite certain that this grave and probably the headstone were moved to Union Cemetery after 1848.

By 1849 several new counties had been set off from the Portage County of 1843, as mentioned earlier, covering that part of the county south of Ten Mile Creek (roughly the north line of Waushara County) to the Dane County line. What remained of the county extended from about Ten Mile Creek north to the state line, with the majority of townships still on the right bank of the Wisconsin River.

On Jan. 9, 1849 the first townships were created in what still remained of Portage County, namely, Plover, Middletown, and Bull Falls. Plover township took in most of modern Wood County north to one mile south of the north line of Town 23, and the town of Middletown continued north to the north line of Town 27, above modern Mosinee, and the third township, Bull Falls, extended from Town 27 north to the state line.

In 1850 the nucleus of modern Portage County was formed when Marathon County was set off which definitely cut off Portage County from the northern tiers of townships. What remained took in nearly twice as much territory on the west of the Wisconsin River as it did on the east, and what later came to be part of Wood County formed slightly more than half of Portage County. This was divided that same year into three townships, namely, Grand Rapids, Plover and Stevens Point.

On Feb. 27, 1851 the legislature approved an act to extend the eastern boundary of Portage County to include Range 10,<sup>1</sup> that is, modern Alban, New Hope, Amherst, Lanark and Belmont.

By the end of 1852 Portage County consisted of six townships. Part of what later came to be Wood County was called the town of Eagle Point and the town of Grand Rapids, while to the west and north, the town

<sup>1</sup> *Wisconsin Laws* (1851), p. 114.

of Stevens Point had been reduced considerably by the incorporation of the town of Eagle Point. In the east, the Town of Amherst had been incorporated which took in modern New Hope and Lanark. Plover was also modified somewhat, while a sixth township called Almond was also organized that year.

Finally on March 29, 1856 Wood County was created which took the western townships known as Eagle Point and Grand Rapids away from Portage County; although in the process an exchange was made with Wood to give it part of the town of Stevens Point on the west while part of Grand Rapids along Buena Vista Creek and south was ceded to Portage County to make up its present situation. There were still many changes to be made in the next several decades, but all within the limits of the county as it was constituted in 1856. The basic changes in township organization will be noted elsewhere.

At an election held in greater Portage County in 1844 to determine where the county seat was to be located, the southern tiers of townships naturally favored its retention at Fort Winnebago (Portage city) and the northern tiers favored Plover Portage. The latter won out allegedly through a stratagem employed by Thomas McDill. According to legend, McDill rounded up the lumberjacks from the north country around Little Bull and Big Bull which together with the voters around Plover and Mill Creek, were able to swing the election to Plover. This oft-repeated story lacks credibility. The county commissioners at their first meeting held in 1842 had ordered election precincts established at Little Bull Falls and at Big Bull. If these orders were carried out, there was no need to bring any lumberjacks down to Plover to vote. A more plausible explanation is offered by George W. Mitchell who is quoted as saying:

"As to the vote of locating county seat at Plover I will say it was taken at the spring election of 1844, at a time when the pinery was full of men from Beloit, Rockford, etc., who came up to run down the river every spring and we availed ourselves of their presence and they all voted for the location of the county seat at Plover; of course there was no opposition, if so it was not counted. I think



the name Plover was not named as the county seat, but a certain 80 acres of a section, town and range. Had it been contested it would have been void but that part which is Columbia County preferred to let it go and get set off by the next legislature, which was done..."

The river drivers were patently not residents of the county and there apparently was no alternate ballot from which to choose. This stuffing of the ballot box was a common occurrence in the formative period of American history, particularly over the question of locating a county seat when property stakes were at issue and men seemed willing to go to almost any length to win.

After Columbia County was set off from Portage County in 1846, the first to be so constituted, other counties to the south were later created which left the northern tiers of townships still holding the name Portage. When Marathon County was constituted in 1850, the townships to the north of Marathon could no longer be included in Portage County, now sandwiched between its former southern and northern townships. This arrangement continued until 1856 when Wood County was set off from Portage, leaving the latter within the constitutional limit. At this time, the name of the county might have been changed to avoid confusion with Portage city but tradition and the fact that the county seat of greater Portage County had become a fixed location at Plover and the fact that this region had once been known as "Plover Portage" both worked against a change in name. In fact the name Portage County might well have been changed in 1846 when Columbia County was created in the southern part of what was greater Portage County. Alfred Brunson explains it this way:

"This county took its name originally, from the portage between the Wisconsin and Fox Rivers. But when the county was divided, the representatives from it hailing from the north part of it, with a view, it is said, to keep the record books, and thereby save a few dollars in the purchase of new ones, managed to retain the *name* for the

<sup>1</sup> *Stevens Point Journal*, Feb. 11, 1905.

north part of it, in which is Plover Portage, calling the south part Columbia.”<sup>1</sup>

In this manner, then, are the circumstances of history often traduced and hammered into place. Significantly, the name suits the county and none other would do; for it is a fact that one of the most important Indian portages in Wisconsin history ran through the central townships of the county between the Wolf and Wisconsin Rivers. In the treaty of 1837 with the Chippewa nation, the United States government texts refer to “the Plover portage”<sup>2</sup> which, from the description, almost surely refers to this territory.

From 1856 down to 1899 when the last major changes were made in township boundaries of the county, it is possible to discern a continuing struggle for territory among the several townships as each sought to gain more for itself or fought off grabs by others. In 1870 the County Board was forced to create a special committee to handle all the complaints, petitions and inter-township rivalry. It was natural that it should be this way and, while there is room for improvements in the present township boundaries, there is reason to take pride in the rather reasonable lines of demarcation finally arrived at in 1899, especially in view of the spirited competition which marked their establishment. These boundaries were goals reached not by violence but by the democratic process of give-and-take, imperfect to be sure, but in the end fair and acceptable to the greatest number. By the time the “new” courthouse of 1959 is demolished to make room for still another, or is abolished entirely under a more centralized county system, the present township boundaries may be a thing of the past; but up to now they represent the best form of county government within the limits of present judgment.

In the beginning it was logical that three or four townships were all that was needed, but as new settlers moved into the different areas of the county and be-

<sup>1</sup> Alfred Brunson, “Wisconsin Geographical Names,” *State Historical Society of Wisconsin Collections*, Vol. I, p. 113.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Bureau of American Ethnology, *Annual Report*, Part 2 (1899), p. 760.

came numerous enough to organize their own townships of 36 sections, more or less, these earlier townships were reduced in size. Most of the townships have retained the records of their first town meetings together with election of officers. From these invaluable records a later generation is privileged to glimpse its own heritage and watch the pioneers of the county solemnly establish the foundation of government in a republic on the township level. It is also a privilege to note the minutes of their meetings, all following a similiar pattern of dignified legal form which reflects an abiding respect for order and the rule of law. The Anglo-Saxon instinct was strong with these pioneers, and, while the immigrants from northern Europe had their own traditions and respect for order when they came to the county, they have the Yankees who preceded them from the New England states, New York State, and the Ohio Valley to thank for leading them to an understanding of the broader aspects of democracy and the American attitude toward order — where no one trusts anyone with the employment of too much order.

## THOSE WHO CAME FIRST

In the beginning was the land, and the Indian was on the land, and it was Indian land. But the honor of being first, aside from the Indian in modern Portage County probably falls to John Lewis (or Louis) DuBay, a French-Canadian, who may have spent the winter of 1790 at an Indian village on the left bank of the Wisconsin River in Sec. 3 of modern Dewey township. This was a strategic spot. DuBay may have heard of it in Detroit or Green Bay and, with Indian guides, ascended the Fox River, portaged over to the Wisconsin, and made his way north on horseback, or, he may have ascended the Wolf and Waupaca Rivers, hauled a canoe on a travois from modern Amherst to the Yellow Banks at Plover, thence north to the slack water above Shaurette Rapids, and from there by canoe up the Wisconsin to the Indian village.

The spot DuBay probably picked to spend the winter of 1790 was important because this was the first place north of Petenwell Rock in Adams County where the Indians could cross the river on foot or on horseback. This was made possible by a rock formation, actually an underwater ledge, which stretches across the river at this point and by following the ripples, the Indians could ford the river without resorting to canoes. It was probably known to the Chippewas as *Nay-osh-ing*, meaning "the Point."<sup>1</sup> Here, along the left bank of the river, corn was being grown for the living and cemeteries established for the dead.

Evidence of Indian culture near this site is furnished in the field notes of Joshua Hathaway who surveyed this section of the Wisconsin River in 1839-40. On a

<sup>1</sup> Hiram Calkins, "Indian Nomenclature and the Chippewas," *Collections*, Vol. I, p. 122.

random line west between Secs. 3 & 10 (T. 25, R. 7) he ran into the "Portage Road" bearing northwest by west, and a few chains farther west he "enter(s) cornfield of A. F. Co."<sup>1</sup> The road referred to here probably ran southeast around the bend of the Wisconsin River to the Yellow Banks at Plover Portage, while the trail to the west of the trading post, after crossing "the place of the ledge," continued west by northwest into the Black River county. The initials "A. F. Co." doubtlessly refers to the American Fur Company trading post of the Astor syndicate at one time represented in Wisconsin, among others, by John Baptiste DuBay, son of John Lewis DuBay. In another reference to the trading post made by Hathaway, probably on the same day, it is referred to as "Am. F. Co. Trading house & farm."<sup>2</sup> He also encountered at least two other cornfields or old clearings along the left bank of the river all within a mile of the trading post.

An earlier reference to the trading post appears in a fractional survey of Town 24, Range 8 (part of modern Hull) made by Hathaway in the latter part of 1839. On a random line between Secs. 27 & 28, which lies just outside the city limits northeast of Stevens Point, he encountered a "blazed wagon track" bearing northeast. Here he made a footnote to his entry which states: "Made by the only wagon which has penetrated beyond this point — leads to A. M. Co. house."<sup>3</sup> That Hathaway knew this track led to the trading post several days before he actually reached the spot suggests that it was already well known. It is also significant that these were the only tracks, while the fact that they could be distinguished as wagon tracks, not as an Indian travois, suggests that they had been made that same year.

The circumstances of the alleged arrival and departure of John Lewis DuBay at this Indian encampment are buried in the mists of time, but there is reason to believe that he passed the information on to others, including his son, John Baptiste, who was born near De-

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Survey, Portage County, *Field Notes, Ranges 6, 7 & 8*, p. 707.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 726.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 518.

troit in 1810 of a mother apparently of mixed French and Indian extraction. The memoirs of Albert G. Ellis suggest that John Baptiste DuBay established the trading post in the early 1830s. The Mineral Point records also reveal that government Lots 1 & 4 in Sec. 3 were acquired by John Lewis DuBay on Jan. 29, 1841 and paid for at \$1.25 an acre. On the same page a duplicate indenture, dated June 6, 1850, reveals that John Lewis DuBay also had paid for a tract of land on a fraction of Lot 3 in Sec. 3, containing 65-plus acres, which had been pre-empted and, under the pre-emption act of 1841, entitled him to a return of \$81.57½ which was paid. This suggests that this last-named tract of land had been occupied for a trading post before 1839-40, when it was surveyed. It also suggests that John Lewis DuBay was familiar with the region around the ford on the river before the surveyors went through here and had visited it at one time, probably in 1790 as legend has it, or even a second time in the early 1830s in company with his son.

That his son, John B. DuBay, was in Fort Winnebago either in 1836 or 1837, is confirmed by Henry Merrell who met him "with two men and a dog train"<sup>1</sup> and where he purchased flour and tallow for an undetermined destination. This is the earliest eye-witness account of John B. DuBay, then a young man in his mid-twenties, grown to manhood in the tradition of the great French *voyageurs* and traders, speaking French and English as well as several Indian dialects, equally at home in a governor's mansion or the wigwam of an Indian chief. Apparently a man in a hurry, he also impressed those about him by his personal charm and wide experience and when he eventually shot and killed William S. Reynolds in 1857 over a disputed land claim at Fort Winnebago, the circumstances were so unique he found no lack of prominent men ready to go bail for him including three from Portage County, while defense counsel in the trial that followed in Dane County was headed by Moses M. Strong of Mineral

<sup>1</sup> Henry Merrell, "Pioneer Life in Wisconsin," *Collections*, Vol. VII, p. 391.

Point, long associated with pioneer developments in Plover and Stevens Point.

John T. De La Ronde, a pioneer of Fort Winnebago mentions seeing DuBay at the Fort in 1838. He may have been passing through at the time en route to his trading post on the Wisconsin River but in 1839 went back to Fort Winnebago for supplies and returned to the trading post and left the wagon tracks noted by Hathaway.

DuBay probably withdrew from the American Fur Company in the early 1840s. On July 22, 1842 he mortgaged several oxen, horses, wagons and other chattels at Fort Winnebago to Hercules L. Dousman, agent for the American Fur Company,<sup>1</sup> which might suggest that he was leaving the area and needed capital for new enterprises. He is listed in the 1842 territorial census among names definitely associated with the Upper Wisconsin at the head of a household of 14 white males and five white females. He is listed again in the 1846 census at Little Bull Falls Precinct and again in 1847 when a new precinct was created called "Dubays." The population of the DuBay Precinct was 119 of which 37 were females. In 1851 a post office was established at the trading post called Eau Pleine and DuBay became the first postmaster.

While a license was issued to DuBay in 1842 to operate a grocery, no doubt at Fort Winnebago, and the first of which there is record in Portage County, there is no further mention of any license to DuBay in the proceedings until May 29, 1846 when the clerk was ordered to "give notice to Charles P. Rice, Mathias Mitchell, and John B. DuBay that their licenses have expired . . ."<sup>2</sup> As both Rice and Mitchell were operating tavern-houses in Plover and Stevens Point, it is fairly certain that DuBay had also entered upon the tavern business at his trading post on the Wisconsin River. Moreover, the first county treasurer's book reveals that DuBay on Dec. 13, 1844 had paid \$5 for a tavern license and it was probably this license which had ex-

<sup>1</sup> *Mortgages*, Book A, p. 12, Register of Deeds, Portage County.

<sup>2</sup> *Proceedings*, County Commissioners Sessions, Vol. I, p. 76.

pired. On June 10, 1846, following this warning, the treasurer's book reveals that Rice paid \$12.50 for a tavern license, DuBay \$25, and on June 18 Mitchell also paid \$25. The entries fail to explain why Rice got his at half price. The license to DuBay was renewed May 23, 1847 for a period of one year. No further licenses to DuBay are mentioned and after Jan. 9, 1849 the town of Middletown presumably issued the necessary permits, if any.

DuBay pioneered some of the first "post-routes" in northern Wisconsin and his reputation for getting the mail through where others apparently failed was well known to the editors of the *Pinery* in Stevens Point who in 1853 were hoping that "satisfactory arrangements" might be made "with the prince of all mail contractors, Mr. DuBay, by which we may at least have a tri-weekly mail from Portage."<sup>1</sup>

In the 1850s DuBay appears to have spent more time around Fort Winnebago where he had a piece of land, by right of pre-emption, allegedly awarded him by one of his former employers in the American Fur Company. It was in a dispute over this land that led to the fatal shooting of Reynolds. Before the shooting, DuBay appears to have acquired substantial means, but after the trial in Dane County, actually two trials ending in an acquittal over a technicality, he was probably bankrupt and returned to the old trading post where he spent the remaining years of his life and died at Knowlton in 1887. The 1863 tax roll of Eau Pleine reveals that he paid no taxes on land around the trading post, but was assessed \$1.76 on \$110 of personal property. There are also several entries in pocket note books kept by E. A. Redford which reveal that both John DuBay and his brother Bozil had worked at the saw mill of Wallace & Redford in 1871, while one entry reveals that on Oct. 25, 1870 a coat costing \$5 had been purchased for DuBay at Hoeffler (Henry) & Andrae's (Gustav F.) store in Stevens Point which was charged to the account of Wallace & Redford.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Wisconsin Pinery*, March 12, 1853.

<sup>2</sup> In collection of Alex Wallace, Stevens Point, Wis.



DuBay's rather modest circumstances in his last years are also suggested in an entry appearing in the Eau Pleine town proceedings which reveal that in 1872 the town board "*least* (leased) the ferry scow to John B. DuBay for the sum of five dollars *untill* (until) the first of January 1873. It is further agreed that he shall only charge twenty five cents for each *ferrage* (ferriage)." At a meeting of the town board held at Wylie's tavern in 1878, among other items, appears this entry: "Gave the ferry boat to John B. Dubay to sell it for what he get and apply the avails (?) to build a new ferry boat. . ."

In 1879 DuBay was paid \$2 "for ferrying on election day" which suggests that the town board was paying the ferriage for electors located on the right bank of the Wisconsin River who had to come to Wylie's tavern to vote. In 1880 he was paid \$3 for ferrying at the general election. It was the last time; DuBay was growing old and despite the tragedy of his life, the picture of him rowing across the Wisconsin River where DuBay Lake now lies seems a fitting farewell because it was here that he began his rise to riches, a bold young man, fighting the elements of forest and river, probably dreaming of a future with a big house in it like the one in which his former employers lived at Villa Louis in Prairie du Chien.

Bozil DuBay, who registered several times in the Eau Pleine elections, was also having difficulty and early in 1876 the town board voted to provide him with a sack of flour, 28 pounds of meat, one pound of tea, and a quarter pound of smoking tobacco, totalling \$7.55. He died a few weeks later and was buried probably not far from the trading post. A marker placed on his grave reads:

to memory of  
 BOZIL DUBAY  
 March 21, 1876  
 age  
 56 years  
 May his soul rest in peace  
 Amen.

But he did not entirely rest in peace. Shortly before the DuBay reservoir was flooded in 1942, Alex Wallace, out exploring the area, came upon the foundation of a house, probably built around 1900, which had been demolished to make way for the flowage. In the foundation work of the house he found the headstone of Bozil DuBay, broken in two, which the builder had included as stone work. Wallace rescued the two pieces and removed them to his yard in Stevens Point.

Even John Baptiste DuBay, lying under the beautiful, yet lonesome pines of Knowlton Cemetery, has not been allowed to rest in peace. In 1957, when H-51 was being improved, a portion of the Catholic Cemetery on the east side had to be moved, and when the new line was run on the west side of the highway along the Protestant Cemetery, it was found that John DuBay's feet were protruding into the public domain. His coffin as well as one other, probably his daughter Minnie, which also lay to the east of the lot, had to be moved to the west side.

The impressive new headstone on DuBay's grave was erected in 1945 by George W. Mead, president of Consolidated Water Power & Paper Company, builder of the reservoir-dam, who, at Alex Wallace's suggestion, also named the flowage created by the dam, Lake DuBay. It covers some 7,000 acres, of which 3,000 lie in Portage County and 4,000 in Marathon County. Dotted with tree-covered islands and intersected by partially-hidden channels, this is today one of the most extensive duck hunting and summer resort areas in central Wisconsin and which retains, by its very lack of definition, a wildness and wilderness about it which is magnificent, while the sunsets across the flowage are often as vivid as a painting by Turner, filled with mystic rites and wonder.

While the Indians were first on the land, they were few in numbers, for even at their greatest probably numbered less than 7,000 souls in the entire Wisconsin Territory. As the eastern colonists sought to expand and find new sources of land and business opportunity, it was inevitable that this small number of Indians, who

in turn were divided among themselves by smaller enclaves of tribes, should come in conflict with a people who were the advance echelon of a higher civilization, characterized by a man with a sword in one hand and a Bible in the other, but also by a man with a will to do and to create things beyond himself. It was part of the evolutionary struggle for life and the side with the greatest numbers and cohesive political organization, not to mention fire power, won out.

The Indian, whose aboriginal culture depended mainly on hunting for food, required vast stretches of territory and even with all of Wisconsin to roam around in, was constantly on the move from east to west and north to south. But the white man could make a living on 40 acres of ground by raising grain and he could see no logic in allowing an Indian to keep a thousand acres or more to roam around in. He insisted that if the Indian could not learn to grow food instead of hunting for it, that he should be put on a reservation where the government could train and feed him after the manner of higher civilized man. This was like putting a wild bird in a cage and not all the Indian nations were willing to accept this arrangement, especially the Sauk and the Fox, and the Sioux, bravest of the brave.

But the white man was brave too, and while the Indian was cunning, the white man easily matched this with a greater cunning, and it was predictable that the white man was in a position entirely to wipe out every Indian on foot or horseback, but at this his Christian conscience balked. Instead, a form of legality was adhered to in the signing of treaties in which the Indian agreed to turn over his lands on the understanding that he would have a share in the outcome and that certain lands, called reservations, would be set aside which could not be transferred to the white man's title. That the Indians were often swindled and abused in the process is a blot on the conscience of men of good will everywhere. On the other hand they were also offered advantages which their primitive form of culture failed entirely to grasp, for example, not paying taxes.

The first of these treaties affecting modern Portage County was made with the Menominee Indians at Cedar Point on the Fox River, about 30 miles from Green Bay, on Sept. 3, 1836, when they agreed to turn over their lands along the Wolf and Fox Rivers, in addition to a strip on the Wisconsin River described in these words:

"Beginning at a point upon said Wisconsin river two miles above the grant or privilege heretofore granted by said nation and the U. S. to Amable Grignon; thence running up and along said river 48 miles in a direct line; and being three miles in width on each side of said river; this tract to contain eight townships or 184,320 acres."

The Grignon mill was located near modern Nekoosa (from the Indian *Nee'Koo'sa* "the place of the rapid waters") and the northernmost point terminated apparently at the mouth of the big Eau Claire River in modern Wausau. This was known as the Three Mile Survey, or more commonly, "the Indian strip." It was an arrangement promoted by the desire of the lumbermen to tap the great reserves of timber, especially white pine, which had been discovered along the Upper Wisconsin when the U. S. Army built Fort Winnebago in the late 1820s. (One of the officers who reputedly floated logs down the Yellow River in Juneau County was Lieutenant Jefferson Davis who would one day become president of the Southern Confederacy.) This timber was badly needed to supply the prairie states in the southwest with lumber for homes and building materials. Not only was the timber available in northern Wisconsin, but there was an avenue to get the lumber to market by floating it down the Wisconsin into the Mississippi. It seemed like an ideal arrangement.

While the ceding of the Indian strip occurred in 1836, it was not until 1839 that the government got around to surveying it and the man chosen to lead the expedition was Joshua Hathaway whose oil portrait today hangs in the collection of famous men of Wisconsin at the State Historical Society in Madison. Hathaway served in the Revolutionary War with the "Green

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Bureau of American Ethnology, *Annual Report*, Part 2, (1899), p. 760.

Mountain Boys" under Ethan Allan, later was graduated from Yale College and held an appointment as postmaster in Rome, New York. Governor DeWitt Clinton appointed him to break ground for the Erie Canal on July 4, 1817. He came to Green Bay in the early 1830s and for a time was associated with Albert G. Ellis as a surveyor. In 1835 he won a contract to survey government land around Kenosha and Racine and apparently having done well, on Feb. 18, 1839 signed a contract with Albert G. Ellis, then surveyor-general of Wisconsin and Iowa territories, to survey the three miles on either bank of the Wisconsin River commencing near modern Nekoosa and north to the big Eau Claire. Deputy-surveyor Hathaway probably began the task in spring, and by January 1840 had reached the northern limits of modern Dewey township and presumably continued the following spring north to the big Eau Claire.

With the land along the river subdivided, the government in 1840 offered these lands for sale at the U. S. Land Office in Mineral Point. Probably the first man to make an entry on this newly-surveyed land in Portage County was Daniel Campbell who on Sept. 23, 1840 acquired government Lots 1 & 2 in Sec. 7, Range 8 (opposite modern Whiting village) where the saw mill of Conant & Campbell was already located.

The second earliest entries were made by two men on the same day, Oct. 5, 1840, when Robert Bloomer acquired the west half of the NE $\frac{1}{4}$  of Sec. 9, Town 23, Range 8, around modern McDill pond, and George *Stephens* (as it is entered) acquired Lot 5, in Sec. 35, Town 29, Range 7, in other words, the land around and including Plumer and Clark Islands on the Wisconsin River at what was one day to become Wausau. The site selected by Bloomer is without doubt the most history-packed quarter section in Portage County. It was here that Hanchett & Courtwright built a saw mill in the early 1850s which, after Hanchett died, led to the dispute between Amos Courtwright and the Hanchett estate that ended in the hanging of the Courtwright

brothers in 1875.

While Robert Bloomer — after whom Bloomer Rapids just below the mouth of the Plover in the Wisconsin River is no doubt named — was the first to make an entry on this half of a quarter section, he did not build a mill here. On Oct. 6, 1840, the day after he made the entry referred to above, he sold part interest in this site to a Galena, Illinois, firm which also purchased an undivided half interest in a saw mill property on the Wisconsin River in modern Wood County, in addition to an undivided third part of a "claim" on the Plover River "about seven miles from its mouth on the Second Rapids of said River with the Bloomer and Harper saw mill so-called thereon together with one third part of said saw mill, other buildings and improvements . . ."<sup>1</sup> Mention of a "claim" in this indenture means that the saw mill at the second rapids, actually modern Jordan, was built on land lying outside the Three Mile Survey and still held title to by the Indians. This is also the first evidence of a saw mill at Jordan built by Robert Bloomer and James Harper either in 1840 or earlier.

Until Hathaway made the survey of the three-mile strip there were no records and no descriptions of the land except what the Indians and French missionaries repeated and which were largely inaccurate. Thus the work of Hathaway not only paved the way for commerce and settlement, not to mention taxation, but his field notes, aside from the territorial census, form the earliest material evidence of places and people available on Portage County and the Upper Wisconsin River.

While there was a four-year lapse between the signing of the treaty and the public sale of these lands, the timber cruisers and saw mill operators who had been eyeing the white pine from afar did not stand on ceremony and wait for the survey to be completed. Instead, they appear to have rushed north, almost in a body, to stake out mill sites on the several rivers of the county in what came to be referred to as part of the Wisconsin "Pinery" because it was richest in pine timber. And

<sup>1</sup> *Deeds*, Book A, pp. 220-221, Register of Deeds, Portage County.

how did they know where to look? Probably the DuBays, *pere et fils*, tipped them off, or Indian scouts advised them, as they appear to have known what to look for before they arrived.

John T. De La Ronde, referred to earlier, writes, *inter alia*, that in 1836 "Abraham Brawley commenced at Mill Creek; Parry (actually Perry) and Veeder on the same stream; Conant and Campbell occupied Conant's Rapids, while Harper and McGreer laid claim to several other points in 1837."<sup>1</sup>

This, written many years after the event, bears scrutiny. The only one of these names mentioned in the territorial census of the Upper Wisconsin in 1838 is Conant, while in 1839, when Hathaway surveyed this area along the river, the only one of these men he encountered was Conant who, with Daniel Campbell, had established a mill and wing dam on the right bank across from modern Whiting village.

While several references appear in early texts to Abraham Brawley establishing a saw mill on Mill Creek in the late 1830s, there is no evidence to support these claims, nor does Hathaway mention any mill on lower Mill Creek which was definitely within the Three Mile survey. On the other hand, local legend in Linwood holds that Brawley, before 1840, established a shanty for shaving shingles which were carried, piggy-back, from Mill Creek to settlements farther down stream in modern Wood County. Some credence is lent to this legend by Sherman. Referring to the saw mill which was later built on the left bank of Shaurette Rapids near the foot of Arlington Place in Stevens Point, Sherman (whose notes are often contradictory) seems to say that Brawley built a log house or shanty near the site of this mill in 1844 and pre-empted a tract of land extending from the river back to where the court house was later located. After building his house and living in it a short time, Brawley "moved back to Mill Creek, where he had built a saw mill in 1839, and where they

<sup>1</sup> John T. De La Ronde, "Personal Narrative," *Collections*, Vol. VII, pp. 358-359.

had a child born, the first in the county . . . later Mrs. Lucy Whitney, wife of Samuel Whitney.”<sup>1</sup>

That Brawley built a saw mill on Mill Creek — whether in 1839 or later — is confirmed in an indenture of Aug. 4, 1841 which reveals that he had mortgaged N $\frac{1}{2}$  of NE $\frac{1}{4}$  in Sec. 22 and “all appertenances” to Robert Bloomer and Moses Strong for a consideration of \$6,713.<sup>2</sup> This fails to mention a mill but no 80 acres of land had a valuation this high in the county unless it had a mill on it. What arrangements he made with Bloomer & Strong is not clear, but on April 13, 1842 Brawley mortgaged to Henry Jones of Fort Winnebago, for the sum of \$250 “one saw mill on Mill Creek or Whepheet River. . .”<sup>3</sup> which was described as in the NW $\frac{1}{4}$  of Sec. 22 (the John Szymasakowski place). With interest and sheriff’s fees he was facing a debt of \$307.55 which he had until 1844 to redeem.

The first evidence of a saw mill on Mill Creek, however, is an indenture of Sept. 28, 1840 in which Richard F. Veeder “of Mill Creek or Wee Peet River” mortgaged a “saw mill and all appertenances thereto situated on Mill Creek or Wee Peet River” in the south half of the west half of Sec. 10 (the Anton Bachinski place). Interestingly, older residents of Linwood point to this spot as the scene of a one-time “ledge dam” i.e. a dam built to create water for a head of logs to be run down stream. The “ledge dam” was probably built many years after the mill was situated here.

An indenture of Dec. 15, 1840 records the sale of a half interest in this mill by Harry Perry to Andrew Dunn. The other half interest was held by Veeder who, on Dec. 2, 1841, for a consideration of \$1,400, sold to Andrew Dunn “my one half of a mill known by the name of Perry and Veeder Mill by in and being on Mill Creek Portage County . . .”<sup>4</sup> Neither one of these transactions identifies the quarter section on which the mill stood and without the original mortgage between Veeder and

<sup>1</sup> *Sherman Note Book* No. 9, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

<sup>2</sup> *Mortgages*, Book A, p. 134, Register of Deeds, Portage County.

<sup>3</sup> *Deeds*, Vol. A, p. 24.

<sup>4</sup> *Deeds*, Vol. A, p. 223.



Jones, it would be impossible to determine the site. As Brawley was located in Sec. 22, it would appear that Perry & Veeder had occupied the next best site up stream situated in Sec. 10. This strongly suggests that Brawley was there first as the site of his mill is no doubt the best on Mill Creek, years later occupied by Milo S. Wood.

Apparently unable to redeem the mortgage on his mill in 1844 Brawley attempted to move back to Shaurette Rapids where, as noted by Sherman, he had already built a log cabin. The circumstances of this removal are clouded in legend and contradictory versions offered by Sherman and George W. Cate. The Sherman account holds that Mathias Mitchell built a board shanty on the Brawley claim at Shaurette Rapids and made an entry on this piece of land (Fractional Lot 3, Sec. 32, T. 24, R. 8) from under Brawley, which ended in litigation extending over several years with Mitchell emerging as owner.

The Cate account has this to say:

"Brawley conceived the design of buliding a saw mill on Shaurette rapids and made no secret of his intentions to do so; and finally started to the land office to purchase the land. One William H. Johnson, commonly called "Dick," a laborer living at the head of Conant rapids, learning of Brawley's scheme thought to appropriate it to his own benefit and immediately started for the land office, about 150 miles distant, and succeeded in getting there ahead of Brawley and entering the land before Brawley arrived... His (i.e. Brawley's) house was on the low land... near the natural bank of the Wisconsin river (i.e. near the west end of Arlington Place). His pre-emption was held invalid by the commissioner of the general land office [and] he immediately brought an action in equity to compel Johnson to convey to him... the title. His attorney was Moses M. Strong. The case lingered in the courts many years, outliving Johnson, and was finally tried at Baraboo..."

There is reason to accept the Cate account because the indenture on Lot 3 reveals that William H. Johnson made an entry on it Nov. 26, 1844.<sup>1</sup> Although Brawley won his suit, according to Cate, Strong had meanwhile

<sup>1</sup> George W. Cate, *Portage County Directory 1896*, (Stevens Point, Wis., Post Printing Company), pp. xxv-xxvi.

<sup>2</sup> *Land Entry*, Book I, p. 129, Register of Deeds, Portage County.

acquired title under an amicable arrangement with Brawley, and for a time shared ownership of a mill built here by Johnson and first known as "Johnson's Mill." The latter apparently began construction in the latter part of 1846 and was unable to finish owing to lack of funds. While Cate says that Strong acquired title by an amicable arrangement with Brawley, an indenture signed Jan. 8, 1847 reveals that Johnson mortgaged the property to Strong and both mutually agreed that they would "proceed as rapidly as possible to complete said mill and mill dam. . ."<sup>1</sup> James S. Young also had a deed of trust with Johnson on this mill entered into on Dec. 25, 1846 but apparently was unwilling to continue financing Johnson and it was then that Strong entered the picture.

Johnson, who died in 1848, had once boasted in Strong's absence that he would "not point his finger at the mill to save it from hell."<sup>2</sup> Apparently, having learned of this, Strong took over Johnson's interest and changed the name of the mill to "Shaurette" and either divided it or added to it to make three divisions, as one was called the "Reindeer," one the "Antelope," and one the "Buffalo."<sup>3</sup> No other source mentions these names. It may be that there were three saws operating in different sections of the mill property.

John Strong, brother of Moses, came from the East in 1849 to manage the mill on a pseudo-partnership basis. He found "a double row of piers driven into the river bottom, lined with planking and filled with soil and rock [which] constituted a dam across the river. Slides or wooden sluiceways at the top of the dam served as spillways and allowed lumber rafts to be run over the dam. Altho built of heavy timbers secured by immense bins filled with stones, these slides were constantly being cut away by ice hurled against them during the spring thaws, and by cribs of lumber rafted over

<sup>1</sup> *Mortgages*, Book A, p. 106.

<sup>2</sup> Kenneth W. Duckett, *Frontiersman of Fortune: Moses M. Strong of Mineral Point*, (State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1955), p. 144.

<sup>3</sup> *Loc. cit.*

the dam [and] in 1861 Strong lost 50 feet of his dam in this way.”<sup>1</sup>

The saws in the mill were probably whipsaws in a frame operated by a water turbine in the Wisconsin River. This was replaced at least as early as 1856 by a rotary saw when H. W. Morrison of Stevens Point was renting the mill property from Strong.<sup>2</sup>

Misfortune plagued the Shaurette mill or mills. In 1865 a raging flood bearing heavy floating ice tore out many of the booms on the river and damaged piers. The Wisconsin River Improvement and Lumber Protection Company, organized that same year by lumbermen in Stevens Point and Wausau, notified Strong to repair his dam or they would proceed to remove the obstruction. Strong borrowed money and got it repaired, but in the next four years advertised the mill for sale. Finally in 1869 he sold out to Owen Clark for \$25,000.

Meanwhile, Brawley had gone north to the Eau Clair River at Big Bull Falls (Wausau) and built a saw mill which he disposed of to Charles & W. T. Goodhue for \$2500 on Oct. 13, 1847.<sup>3</sup> He returned to Plover and for the next several years served in various official capacities. In 1855 he built another mill about where Bukolt Park is located today. Misfortune continued to follow him. The mill burned and there was no insurance to cover the loss. Brawley finally went off to join the Union Army in the Civil War and died in service, but whether in action or line of duty is uncertain. One version holds that he died in Andersonville. His wife, Sara Ann, according to Sherman, was the first white woman to live, at least temporarily, within the modern limits of Stevens Point, presumably in the log shanty located at Shaurette Rapids.

Returning now to the De La Ronde account of mills, it is stated that “Harper & McGrear” (probably James Harper and Hugh McGreer) established a mill at the rapids of modern Jordan (below the bridge on H-66) in 1837. This appears doubtful. McGreer made his ap-

<sup>1</sup> *Frontiersman of Fortune*, p. 147.

<sup>2</sup> *Pinery*, July 10, 1856.

<sup>3</sup> *Deeds*, Vol. A, p. 246.

plication for naturalization in Plover on Jan. 4, 1845 in which he swore that he entered the United States at Detroit in January 1839.<sup>1</sup> If the mill at Jordan was established in 1837, it obviously did not include McGreer, but that some sort of installation was located here by the summer of 1839 is suggested in the field notes of Hathaway which note a trail bearing northeast by east and a road bearing northeast along the left bank of the Plover River a short distance above the modern bridge at Iverson Park. The road was quite probably being used by Bloomer & Harper for a saw mill on the left bank of the Plover River at Jordan near the site of the modern Wisconsin Public Service Corporation power house. A road between this mill and Plover village would avoid crossing the big Plover River. Hathaway might have mentioned whether the road he saw near the modern site of the bridge at Iverson Park led to a mill at Jordan; on the other hand, he was not obliged to because the rapids at Jordan lay outside the Three Mile Survey.

The only saw mill in modern Portage County of which there is unmistakable evidence before 1840 is the one referred to earlier as Conant & Campbell on the right bank of Shaurette Rapids. The 1838 census lists Gilbert *Connant* on the "Upper Wisconsin" at head of a household of 11, none a female, which suggests either a construction or saw mill crew. In 1839, Hathaway was working his way down the right bank of the river from a post on the north boundary line of Town 23 (Range 8) and opposite the foot of the island at Shaurette Rapids, found "a log house in clearing" and a short distance farther south a "pole fence" bearing east-west, and still farther on down, a wing dam and "Conant Mill bears N 16 E 93."<sup>2</sup> About three chains southeast of the mill he found a "shingle house" and a few chains farther on, two dwellings. In Sec 17 he noted that the "rapids became furious." He continued on to a point at the head of two islands abreast of the channel where he found a

<sup>1</sup> *Application for Citizenship*, Microfilm Reel 177, Clerk of Courts, Portage County.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Survey, Portage County, *Field Notes, Ranges F, G & R*, p. 483.

small "half cleared patch & burned house logs." On a random line 60 chains north between Secs. 7 & 8 Hathaway encountered "Conant & Campbell's Garden" also on the right bank of the river, near the foot of an island, which places this just outside the south city limits of Stevens Point on the West Side.

The fact that there was a "garden" near Conant & Campbell's mill, as well as a wing dam in July 1839 suggests that the builders had commenced operations as early as 1837 for it is doubtful whether a wing dam and mill could have been built into the Wisconsin at this point in a matter of months, while the machinery and equipment for the mill had to be hauled, probably by ox team, all the way from Milwaukee, or Galena, Illinois. What lumber was required to build these first mills was probably manufactured locally with whipsaws, one man above and one below the log, pulling and pushing even as it is still done locally in the Orient. Food supplies for the construction crews also had to be hauled in from the southern part of the state or farther. One may wonder, in view of the scarcity of labor and materials, where the men could be found to build anything this far removed from the labor market and source of supply. No doubt the Indians helped.

The circumstances suggest that either Conant or Campbell explored the river in 1836 and probably built a shanty that year and left someone on their "improvement," lest their claim be jumped by others, and returned to the south to make preparations for the move up the river in the spring of 1837.

On the left bank of the Wisconsin River, Hathaway was working south from a meander post on the north boundary of Town 23, Range 8, (today Bliss Avenue in Stevens Point) and near the true line west between Secs 5 & 8, which today marks the city limits between Stevens Point and Whiting, he found the "fence enclosure N & S"<sup>1</sup> of Azon Richardson. A short distance south of the fence enclosure he found the log house of

<sup>1</sup> *Field Notes, op. cit.*, p. 484.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 464.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 470.

Richardson, who, in the 1838 territorial census, is listed with three other men on the "Upper Wisconsin." There were eight people in his household, none a female, in 1838. A few rods farther south of the log house, at the head of a chute or fall in the river, Hathaway encountered what is referred laconically in the field notes as "Superior Nat Mill site."<sup>1</sup> The abbreviation "Nat" probably stands for "national" but no further identification is made nor is it entirely certain whether this was a mill in operation or the site of a proposed mill. As Richardson is listed at head of a household of eight persons in the 1838 census, it is not impossible that these were mill hands employed at the "Superior Nat Mill site." Like Brawley, Richardson was "squatting" on the public domain and may have failed to make an entry on the site when the land was offered for sale in the fall of 1840 and was compelled to move on.

No territorial census is available for 1840 although the memoirs of Henry Merrell mention a census he took for the government on the Upper Wisconsin in 1840. Whether this was a special assignment is uncertain but it is not included in any records of the territorial census. On the other hand, in his recollections of this trip, he mentions only the mill of "Messrs. Campbell and Conant"<sup>2</sup> in modern Portage County, but which does not preclude others. He apparently crossed the Wisconsin below the Yellow Banks and made his way up on the right bank to the Conant & Campbell mill. Probably after spending a day or two here, he hired two Chippewa Indians to paddle him up to Big Bull. However, he explains that at Little Bull he left his horse while the Indians carried the canoe around the falls. This account, also written many years after the event, is not clear. What he probably fails to explain is that he had already sent his horse to Little Bull by an Indian with instructions to meet him there and, having accomplished this rendezvous, instructed him to continue on to Big Bull while he continued with the two Chippewas in a canoe.

<sup>1</sup> *Field Notes*, p. 487.

<sup>2</sup> Henry Merrell, "Pioneer Life in Wisconsin," *Collections*, Vol. VII, p. 397.

After reaching Big Bull, Merrell found George Stevens, who had not yet completed his mill on the Wisconsin River in the summer of 1840, and later returned to Conant & Campbell's mill where he states that Francis Shaurette and his brother were hired to take him to Portage in a bark canoe, again sending a boy ahead with his horse. The Shaurettes were probably of mixed French-Indian extraction, and the other brother may have been the "Pete" referred to by Sherman. Shaurette Rapids, immediately below Clark Street bridge in Stevens Point, was probably named after these early-day guides, while Conant Rapids, about two miles farther down stream, is no doubt named after the original mill owner, Gilbert Conant. The community which grew up around this mill was large enough by 1849 to warrant a post office which was established on Sept. 18 called "Shawrette" with John Strong as postmaster. Whether the postal department overestimated the size of the community or not, the post office was discontinued in 1850 after less than five months of service.

Several miles to the north of the Conant & Campbell mill on the right bank of the Wisconsin River, Hathaway, in Sec 23 (T.24,R.8) found a low, sandy bluff bank and a Chippewa trail running east to west (probably north of the Red Mill tavern on H-10). Southeast of here in Sec 25 he found "Charettes old place, now deserted, 1 log house & 2 log stables with cornfield &c."<sup>1</sup> He continued working southeast along the river and after leaving the "improvement" mentioned, encountered "Charettes new place farmhouse field barn &c about 1.50 from shore."<sup>2</sup> From the description the new place probably lay a short distance north of modern Mead Park either in or just outside the limits of Stevens Point. It is significant that in this description Hathaway refers not to a log house but a farm house and barn which suggests larger, possibly frame structures made of lumber, probably purchased at Conant & Campbell's mill. The fact that Charettes, presumably of French origin, had had

<sup>1</sup> *Stevens Point Journal*, Feb. 23, 1884.

<sup>2</sup> *Field Notes*, p. 695.

<sup>3</sup> *Loc. cit.*

time to build two establishments on the right bank of the river suggests that he had made money at something, probably trading with the Chippewas, and equally important, that he had been situated here for some time before Jan. 30, 1840 when this fractional survey was made. Nor is it impossible that the name "Charettes" is a misspelling for Shaurette.

No legend survives this trading post — if indeed it was a trading post — who Charettes was, where he came from, where he went, nor is he ever mentioned again in any records on Portage County. He also had the misfortune of living on the wrong side of the river or a city called Charettesville might well have been named after him, for he apparently was here before George Stevens.

At no point in the field notes of Hathaway, or in the memoirs of Henry Merrell, is any mention made of a warehouse or shanty at "Steven's Point," which does not mean that one did not exist. However, the fact that Merrell found George Stevens building a mill at modern Wausau in 1840 adds strength to the legend that the latter had stopped in 1839 at a point on the river today the west end of Main Street in Stevens Point.

In the territorial census of 1842, Portage County is mentioned for the first time in the census records and among the names of interest to this study are Enuck (Enoch?) J. Bean who is listed as the head of a household of five white males and two females; Horace (probably Hiram) H. Stow, head of a household of 17 (although this entry is not clear); George Stevens, head of a household of 19 (also not clear); Abram Brawley, head of a household of 21 males and two females; J. B. Boushay, head of a household of two; John B. DuBay, head of a household of 14 white males and five white females; Thomas Harper, head of a household of 19, of which three may have been females; Richard Veeder, head of a household of six which included one white female; Andrew Dunn, head of a household of two, and Henry Carpenter, head of a household of four which included one female. Andrew Dunn was the census taker.

The 1838 census lists only four names on the "Upper



Wisconsin," namely, J. Chamberline, Azai (or Azon) Richardson, Gilbert *Connant*, and David B. Whitney. The last may be an error for Daniel Whitney as the census taker failed to mention the number of people in David Whitney's household, whereas Daniel Whitney had been operating a saw mill near modern Nekoosa since the early 1830s, the first on the Upper Wisconsin. The 1842 census fails to mention David Whitney, but includes Charles Whitney, head of a household of two persons. This name is listed among others associated with Plover Portage but the nature of his business is uncertain.

The 1846 territorial census of Portage County was taken by George W. Mitchell who listed a total population of 933 persons of which 778 were white males, 153 white females, and two "females of color." The affidavit on this census was signed June 1, and covers four precincts, namely, Big Bull Falls, with a population of 303; Little Bull Falls, 121; Plover Portage, 204; and Grand Rapids, 305. The breakdown of the Plover Portage population in 1846 reveals 162 white males, 40 white females, and two females of color. Listed as heads of households in the Plover Portage precinct were H. McGreer, A. Brawley, David Danforth, Wm. H. Johnson, Hiram Stow, Jesse Anson, W. Mitchell, and Story & Flitz (?) (probably Solomon Story, but the last name is garbled.) From the number of persons in the households of McGreer, 13, Rice, 14, Brawley, 24, Stow, 23, Mitchell, 27, and Story & Flitz (?) 16, it may be assumed that all of these men were in business of one kind or another. Brawley apparently had two Indian women working for him as his household included two females of color.

In the Little Bull Falls Precinct, John B. DuBay, as noted earlier, is listed at head of a household of 21, E. L. Bean of ten, and Valentine Brown of seven.

Apparently a special census was taken in 1847; in the Plover Portage Precinct the following names appear: James Alban, Mitchell & McDill, C. P. Rice, Hiram Hartwell, O. Denten, H. McGreer, Maybee & Going (?), Cain & Mularky, Jon Wyatt, John Bristol, J. F. Myer, C.

Ellison, Geo. Bremmer, O. E. Dreutzer, A. W. Uline, and A. Hayden.

A new precinct, called Stevens Point, in the 1847 territorial census listed these names as heads of households of one to 32 people: James Harper, W. H. Kingsbury, A. H. Bencraft, Joseph Phelps, A. Warner, A. Brawley, W. H. Johnson, D. B. Danforth, Keith B. Niles, Isaac Ferris, J. L. Pickard (probably Packard), D. B. Bangle, S. Story, Jim Campbell, John Campbell, E. Metcalfe, and J. H. Winslow. Another new precinct, called DuBay, in 1847 lists the heads of households as Valentine Brown, J. B. DuBay, B. W. Finch, Walter Finch, Mitchell & Brown, Daniel Wicks, Peter Sharette, and J. W. Whitehouse. W. V. Fleming is listed at head of a household of 20 in the Little Bull Precinct and Luther Houghton at head of a household of 14 in Big Bull Precinct which suggests that the pioneer tavern-house keeper of the firm of Houghton & Batten had moved away from Plover. Azra Mann, later associated with Stevens Point history, is listed as head of a household of five in the Eau Clair Precinct.

Abraham Brawley took the census in 1847 of Eau Clair and Big Bull precincts, while Henry Chapman took the census of Grand Rapids, Plover, Stevens Point, DuBay and Little Bull precincts. Brawley signed an affidavit, apparently covering all the precincts, swearing that on Dec. 1, 1847 there was a total population in greater Portage County of 1,504 of which 1,221 were white males, 281 white females, one male of color and one female of color.

On the strength of the county commissioners proceedings and early indentures it is quite apparent that the census takers did not manage to get around to all heads of households and for this reason the names and numbers listed above can only be regarded as tentative, not final, but of those mentioned, they were among those who came first.

It is significant that at this early date, although the exact dimensions of the several precincts can only be guessed at, that Plover Portage Precinct had a total popu-

lation in 1847 of 185, while Stevens Point Precinct had a total population of 201. Of the 201 listed in Stevens Point Precinct, 159 were males, 41 were females and there was one male of color.

In addition to the names mentioned in the territorial census up to 1847, it may be interesting to include the names of men later listed as charter members of the Old Settlers Club who came to the county allegedly on or before 1847. The Sherman Note Book on the proceedings of this organization gives the names of the following men and their date of arrival in Portage County in this order: Antoine Precourt, 1839; Ed. H. Metcalf, Jesse Lea, James O'Brien, and John Eckels, 1840; Mathias Sluts and Ed Dunegan, 1844; Geo. W. Cate, Henry H. Travis, John Hawn, alias "Sailor Jack," and Orin Owen, 1845; Wm. H. Gilchrist, John Finch, A. R. Weller, Peter Grover, and Henry Cate, 1846; and John D. Curran, Alex J. Empy, James Brammer, J. B. Scott, and Reuben Thompson, 1847. Interspersed with these charter members Sherman includes the names of other pioneers and the dates of their arrival in the county and the fact that he includes them in the same pages suggests that they had joined the Old Settlers Club at a later date. These include, in the order of their appearance and date of arrival in the county: Leander Trudell, 1836; John Bousier, 1839; Jesse Anson, 1840; Jerry D. Rodgers and Jesse A. Martin, 1842; Jay Brawley, 1843; Geo. W. Franklin, 1844; James E. Gardner (no date,); Lewis Lombard, 1845; David Shelburn, 1846; and J. C. Myers and Peter Laux, 1847.

Sherman goes on to list the members of all the Old Settlers Club who came to the county before 1860, but the above are included in this account as a comparison between the census and Sherman's notes. No doubt most of the names mentioned by Sherman, but not listed as heads of households in the same period by the census takers, were working as mill hands, clerks and servants for the heads of households.

Among the names in the territorial census of 1847, it may be noteworthy to mention that Hugh McGreer was

the first foreign-born resident of Portage County to apply for naturalization at the county seat in 1845.

As this is the first, and also the most formal of any application for citizenship which appears in the records of Portage County, it will be quoted in full:

Territory of Wisconsin  
County of *Portage*

To the Hon. David Irvin

Judge of the District Court in and for the County of *Portage* aforesaid:

*Hugh McGreer* an alien born, being first duly sworn according to law on my said oath DO DECLARE and MAKE KNOWN, that I was born in the *County of Antrim Ireland* and that I am about forty two years of age; that I emigrated (immigrated?) from the Port of *Quebeck* (Quebec) in British Canada in the month of *Oct. A.D. 1838* and entered within the limits of the *United States*, in *Detroit* in the state of *Michigan* in the month of *January A.D. 1839*, and I have ever since remained within the limits of the United States, and that it is my bona fide intention to RENOUNCE FOREVER all allegiance and fidelity to every Foreign Prince, Power, Potentate, State or Sovereignty whatever, and more especially such allegiance and fidelity as I may in any wise owe to *Queen Victoria the 1st*, either as a Citizen or Subject, and that I do not now enjoy or possess, nor am I in any wise entitled to any order of distinction or title of nobility, by virtue of any of the laws, customs or regulations of the said *Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland* or any other country; and that I am sincerely attached to the principles contained in the CONSTITUTION of the UNITED STATES, and well-being of the same, and desire that this, my Declaration and Report, may be accepted and filed preparatory to my intended application to be admitted as a NATURALIZED CITIZEN of the UNITED STATES, in conformity with the several acts of Congress, in such case made and provided.<sup>1</sup>

*Subscribed & sworn to before me the 4th  
day of Jan. A.D. 1845,*

*Hugh McGreer*  
*Geo Wyatt Clerk D.C. Portage County*

The signature of Hugh McGreer is done with a flourish, apparently a man of great confidence and self-esteem. This application for citizenship is also the most formal of any while later ones become less formal and

<sup>1</sup> *Application for Citizenship*, Microfilm Reel 177.

many are even written on ordinary pieces of paper although witnessed by the proper authorities. The points of entry into the United States vary widely. Most of the Canadian-born entered at Detroit or Mackinac, Michigan, Buffalo or Ogdensburg, New York. The European immigrants in the 1850s and 1860s entered at New York City, Boston, Providence, Philadelphia, New Orleans, Milwaukee, Chicago, Sheboygan, Manitowoc, and Detroit, while one Andrew Hanson, who states that he was born in Russia in 1844, entered the United States at San Francisco in 1869 and in his application renounced all allegiance to Alexander II, Emperor of Russia.

Most of the Polish immigrants who applied for citizenship in the 1860s give Prussia as the place of birth, while the German immigrants who came over before Germany was created, usually designated one of the "dukedom," swearing to renounce all allegiance to the local duke whose name is given. The Norwegians renounced allegiance to the king of Sweden & Norway, while Michael Wagner, born in Strasburg, renounced allegiance to Louis Napoleon.

While the Sherman account attributes the first birth in the county to a daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Abraham Brawley in 1839, there is no official record of this. The first registered birth is that of LeRoy Shannon on March 4, 1844, son of Nathaniel and Rosina, nee Arnold, Shannon.<sup>1</sup> This entry, however, was made many years after the event. In 1862 LeRoy Shannon married Emily Moyer — both families associated with the early history of the town of Amherst — and in 1864 entered the service and was attached to the 5th Regiment, Wisconsin Infantry. Third Brigade, First Division of the 6th Corps, Army of the Potomac.

<sup>1</sup> *Births*, Vol. 50, p. 257, Register of Deeds, Portage County.

## ROADS INTO THE PINERY

Imagine, if you will, what a sense of adventure and daring it must have been for the pioneers of Portage County who came looking for a new home on the virgin soil or a new job in the saw mills of the Pinery. It was not all a wilderness, untracked and loathsome, but in many places a beautiful country-side dotted with oak openings, pine barrens, rolling hills and valleys, much of it prairie, and all crisscrossed by old, yes very old, Indian trails.

A news correspondent from Oshkosh, visiting the county in 1853, caught this sense of unlimited freedom and aboriginal beauty. He followed a road south of the Tomorrow River from Waupaca to Plover which he refers to as the "south road" and found the "whole country had been settled since the spring and summer of 1849." Nearer to Plover he found many "large farms" growing rye, wheat, corn and potatoes which "looked better and of larger growth than in Winnebago County [and] better looking farms than I have seen anywhere else in the State. . ."

From Plover the traveler went on to Stevens Point and later, on the return trip to Waupaca, followed what he refers to as the "north road." Leaving the "pine country" about five miles east of the village, i.e. Stevens Point, he "found the same pretty country that I saw on the road going up . . . straight, level, smooth and almost entirely unbroken grass for many miles. . ."

Between 1841 and 1848 a series of territorial roads were authorized in Wisconsin Territory, among others, which were scheduled to link modern Portage County with points to the east, south, and north, and it is quite

<sup>1</sup> *Pinery*, July 27, 1853 reprinted from *Oshkosh Democrat*.

certain that the correspondent from Oshkosh followed two of these roads when he arrived and left, the "south road" being part of an old territorial road, later constituting, roughly, modern U.S. H-54, and the "north road" roughly, U.S. H-10.

But these were not the first in the county. It was quite natural after the Indian strip, three miles wide along either bank of the Upper Wisconsin, was opened to settlement in 1836, that the first travelers, mostly lumbermen and cruisers looking for mill sites and timber, should follow the left bank of the river from Fort Winnebago (Portage city) north to the Pinery. This trail was given official recognition in 1841 when the territorial legislature authorized a road from Fort Winnebago to "Plover Rapids (presumably Plover Portage) on the Wisconsin River" which a year later is referred to in the county commissioner's sessions as the "Pinery Road."<sup>2</sup>

Obviously, this was a round-about way for people coming to the county from Green Bay or Milwaukee and as the years advanced the "Pinery Road" came to be used less and less, probably mostly by river drivers "gigging" up stream.

From about 1845 to 1853 most of the pioneers approached the county over a territorial road from the southeast which came up from Milwaukee via Waupun and thence northwest into modern Almond township and north to Plover, and another road which came up from Portage city via Montello into Almond township. One who followed the trail from Waupun was S. A. Sherman who arrived at Plover in October 1848. Some of the pioneers, during this early period, also came up from Fond du Lac and Oshkosh via the Wolf River to Weyauwega by river boat, but up to 1853 this was still not a popular route because the steamers anchored in mid-stream near Weyauwega and passengers had to be transferred to smaller boats in order to land on higher

<sup>1</sup> Moses M. Strong, *The History of the Territory of Wisconsin From 1836 to 1848* (Madison, Wis., Democrat Printing Company, 1885), pp. 343-344.

<sup>2</sup> *Proceedings, County Commissioners Sessions*, Vol. I, p. 18.

land farther upstream on the Waupaca River. But in 1853 John Gill built a plank road three miles east of Weyauwega across the bottom land to the Wolf where he established the famed Gills Landing.<sup>1</sup> With these new landing facilities, more freight and passengers for Portage County and Wausau began using the Gills Landing route and, in 1854, the first stage line was established between Plover and Gills Landing by Jacob L. Myer.

By 1858 the Milwaukee & Horicon Railroad had reached Berlin and this became a staging area and jumping off place for travelers to Portage County. Thus from 1853 and 1858 down to the coming of the railroad in 1871, the two most frequently used routes into the county were either from Gills Landing or Berlin.

Although the territorial legislature had authorized these several routes into the county in the 1840s, it was some time before the county found the means to build these roads, most of which appear to have been in use even before they were officially recognized. Hathaway's field notes, made in the summer of 1839, make quite evident that a rather extensive system of wagon roads running east, north, west and south out of Plover Portage had already been established, not by official sanction, but by common usage, and most of them no doubt followed long-established Indian routes of travel. This nexus of trails also suggests an amazing amount of activity at this early date in the history of Portage County.

A beginning in road improvement was made on Nov. 19, 1842 when the commissioners of greater Portage County hired Clark Whitney "to examine the county from this place (Portage city) to Plover Portage for the purpose of ascertaining whether there is a more practical *route* (route) from this place to the Plover Portage than the one where the road now runs, and if he shall find a *route* that he shall judge better than the present that he survey the same as soon as circumstances will permit, and report the same to this board. . ."<sup>2</sup> When he later turned in a bill for his own services as well as

<sup>1</sup> J. Wakefield, *History of Waupaca County*, (D. L. Stinchfield, 1890) p. 157.

<sup>2</sup> *Proceedings*, County Commissioners Sessions, Vol. I, p. 15.



that of an assistant, he computed the distance from Portage city to Wausau as  $126\frac{3}{4}$  miles for which he received \$126.75 or a dollar a mile. He also received \$3 for running a line for a public square, but the clerk fails to identify it. An Indian got \$4.50 for three days service, no doubt as a guide, and R. F. Veeder was paid \$21 for renting a pack horse for 14 days.

Although a road from Waupun to Plover was authorized by the Legislature in 1845, the county commissioners did nothing about it until 1849 when, following a meeting held Jan. 1, it was noted that there was no plat of the road from "Strong's Landing" (Berlin?) to Plover on file "in this office as the law directs that would enable the board to adopt same as a county road." But a week later the board approved a survey to be made of the Portage County share of this road.

On Sept. 5, 1847 the county commissioners accepted a report from James Alban and Adam Uline (Urine?) for a road commencing at the Wisconsin River which was to run east, past Plover, to about the range line between modern Plover and Stockton townships which probably laid the foundation, east of Plover, for modern Trunk B. There is reason to believe that Alban was interested in laying out the western section of this road for the purpose of establishing a ferry on the Wisconsin River near the mouth of Mill Creek.

Interestingly, the road description in the above specifies that the eastern section was to terminate at the "Menominee Lands." As the Indian strip was confined to three miles on either bank of the river, this road ended at the boundary of this strip, that is, somewhat less than three miles east of Plover. It also suggests that the pioneers of this period were aware that they were still confined to this strip of territory and were keeping to their side of the bargain with the Indians, although lumbermen like Bloomer and Harper had definitely overstepped the limits when operating a mill on the upper Plover.

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings, County Commissioners Sessions, Vol. I, p. 141.*

At a meeting of the county commissioners held Sept. 5, 1847 another road was ordered laid which was to commence south of Plover village and run north along the section line between Secs. 27 & 28 for a distance of three miles and 60 rods, apparently terminating at the Big Plover River. This may have been altered when the actual road was laid and thus became the basis of modern H-51 between Plover and Whiting.

In 1844 the commissioners heard a petition from William H. Kennedy and others "praying for a road from Winnebago Portage (Portage city) to Big Bull Falls (Wausau)."<sup>1</sup> And on Jan. 9 the commissioners appointed John DuBay, James Harper and John Blanchard as "viewers to examine the country between Winnebago Portage and Big Bull Falls with reference to the most practicable *route* (route) for a road. . ."<sup>2</sup> For reasons left unexplained this trio failed to "view" the proposed highway, and on April 3, 1844, the commissioners appointed a new trio consisting of John DuBay, Samuel R. Merrill, and William H. Tanner. These men later reported "that in their opinion the road now blazed and travelled from Big Bull Falls, as far as Houghton and Battens at Plover Portage, is as good and practicable a route as any other that can be found, with the exception of a few places where it may be straightened and shortened a little. . ."<sup>3</sup>

But a later generation is left to speculate on the necessity of these additional surveys made two years after Clark Whitney had already "viewed" the road to Wausau.

The road Messrs. Alban and Uline surveyed in 1847 west from Plover to the Wisconsin River, presumably to a ferry opposite Mill Creek, was probably linked with the old "Pinery Road" to Grand Rapids. Until past the century, Wisconsin Rapids was actually two cities, Grand Rapids on the left bank, Centralia on the right, connected by a ferry licensed to George Neeves

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, County Commissioners Sessions, Vol. I, p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50

on March 5, 1850. During the 1840s and early 1850s, Centralia appears to have been the shopping center for mill hands and lumberjacks in Linwood. The road from Mill Creek followed the right bank of the Wisconsin to Centralia.

By all odds, the most famous of the early roads in Portage County was the "Air Line Road," so called, no doubt, because in the south end it was laid along the high ground on the east side of the West Bluffs in Buena Vista township. Part of this road, still a residential address in the telephone directory, runs southeast out of Whiting at the east end of Elm Street through Plover township and terminates on a town road in Sec. 14 near the home of Town Clerk Cecil Allen. The old roadbed from here is still visible through the oak trees in Sec. 24. It formerly continued to the southeast corner of Sec. 24 where it turned south along the range line between Plover and Stockton for about a mile, then bent southeast, thence due south through the middle of Secs. 18 & 19 in Buena Vista to the east of modern Keene store where it picked up the Berlin and Portage road. This last stretch through Secs. 18 & 19 has been known in recent times as the "Springer Road" after G. C. Springer who owned a farm on the east side. One of the last references, if not the last, to the Air Line Road in the Plover proceedings appears in 1873 when a portion near McDill (Whiting) was discontinued. There is no record that the latter was known by this name south of Keene, but that it was known by this name between Keene and Plover is confirmed in a road statement which describes a crossroad above Buena Vista Creek which was to run from the "Buena Vista Road" to "intersect Air Line Road." This crossroad is still used as a town road.

The Air Line Road fell into disuse as the main north-south highway when the town of Plover ordered another road laid in 1855, then referred to as the "Buena Vista Road" (roughly H-51), which more or less paralleled the Air Line Road.

The Plover town board applied the name "Buena

Vista Road" to the new highway running south probably because the survey terminated at what was then the village of Buena Vista, east of modern Keene. A stretch of this road, south of Plover, as well as the road between Plover and modern Whiting was known as one of the most sandy in the county. Horses pulled in their harnesses as if a magnet were attached behind each wheel, and the wheels ground the sand ever finer until there were two deep ruts filled with a powdery substance that flowed back and forth across the inside rims and clung to the spokes.

No records tell of a bridge across the Big Plover on the territorial road ordered laid in 1842. After the river was dammed up near the mouth for a saw mill (circa 1840) the road probably followed the embankment across the dam. By 1851 there is definite evidence that a bridge existed here, whether across the dam or separately is uncertain, but on May 3, Moses Strong addressed a page-long petition to the town board of Stevens Point to explain as "one of the largest tax payers in the township aforesaid" that a proposed highway through his land was unnecessary owing to the fact that "a public highway from said town plat to Plover bridge, has been already laid out and duly recorded. . .".<sup>1</sup> Apparently, an extension to Church Street was being contemplated at the time, but after this remonstrance from one of the leading taxpayers, was tabled. His petition also confirms the fact of a well-established road already running along the left bank of the Wisconsin River into Stevens Point (Water Street). A portion of this road in 1857 was planked along the hill "near Courtright's mill"<sup>2</sup> (McDill Pond) and north along Water Street to the Public Square and because of the planking, became known as the "plank road."

The crossing on the Little Plover after 1851 was probably made over John R. Mitchell's flour-mill dam.

As the several townships in the county became organized, many of the first town roads became recognized

<sup>1</sup> In George E. Rogers Collection of Portage County Historical Society.

<sup>2</sup> *Pinery*, Nov. 2, 1857.

as landmarks, usually named after one of the early settlers or sawmill owners. A road from Stevens Point to Jordan (roughly H-66) which developed in the early 1850s appears to have been called the "McGreer Road," and later the "Jordan Road." A statement of 1859 refers to a road in Sharon which ran "from Oesterles to Northfields Road." Another road order of the same year refers to a survey terminating at "Stone Hill Road" which apparently lay in north Stockton. A road survey of 1861 took a bearing "at a stake in the center of the Jordan and Spring Branch Road..." which, from the description, followed the right bank of the Plover River. The road from modern Polonia (Trunk K) south to Trunk I was known as the "Hugh Black Road" and the stretch east along Trunk I as the "Hugh Black and Dineen Road." The road from a sawmill near Glisezinski Lake in Sharon north to Shantytown was called the "Shingle Shanty Road." A section of another road in north Sharon which approached the Plover River in Sec. 7 was known as "Norwegians Road."

In several townships of the county, the building and maintenance of roads, bridges and drainage proved to be a distinct hardship, especially in Sharon, Linwood and Grant. Wooden bridges wore out, burned out, or washed out. Corduroy roads across the swamps had to be constantly under repair — in fact the road across Jordan swamp completely disappeared at one time. Thus the advantage of having a great river like the Plover running through the township, where water turbines could turn saw mills and grist mills, was compromised to some extent by the added expense of the several rather large bridges required. A description of one of these bridges appears in the town of Hull records where the town board contracted on June 1, 1870 for a new bridge to replace an older one at Jordan which appears to have been located — veterans of the township agree — less than a rod or two above the modern H-66 bridge. However, it is believed that the bridge built in 1870, costing \$380, was located on the same site as the present

one. Specifications for the bridge built in 1870 follow:

"The foundation of said bridge to be two piers, said piers to be 12 by 16 feet, built of square timber 8 by 10 inches, halved together so as to make a solid face, each piece of timber to be pinned at the corners, with inch and a half oak [and] pine, each pier to have five gurts and be filled within two feet of top with stone; said piers to be same height as piers in old bridge, distance between said piers to be 32 feet; also a wing pier on each side three feet high and 16 feet long running diagonally toward the shore on the upper side of the bridge; the said bridge to have five stringers 36 feet long, 13 inches square and ten stringers 30 feet long, 13 inches square to reach from inside of piers to shore. Length of bridge to be 90 feet covered with plank 3 inches thick and 16 feet long. There shall also be two stringers 10 by 12 inches 90 feet long on top of plank, bolted through the center with two inch iron bolts; there shall also be a railing on both sides of bridge, three feet high and 90 feet long, the timber for railing to be 4 by 6 inch posts, 5 feet apart with a cap-piece 5 by 6, the whole of the timber in bridge shall be good white pine, also a docking to extend from the west end of bridge to the road, and the same tied and filled with slabs, brush, and gravel, level with the bridge."

One part of the contract for this bridge is pertinent because it says that after the old bridge was torn down the space was "to be filled with logs and leveled with small stuff making a good solid corduroy the same height it now is with 6 inches of shingle sawdust over the same. . ." A road base of small tree trunks or "stringers," usually of cedar, laid side by side transverse to the road, was called a "corduroy" (from the French: *corde du roi* "cord of the king"). These were common even at the turn of the century in Portage County. After the town roads were covered with gravel or macadam, these corduroys were often allowed to remain. Later, in the 1930s, when blacktopping of town roads began, it often happened that the blacktop was laid over gravel which covered a stretch of old corduroy. The telltale sign was the washboard nature of the blacktop which usually developed later.

It is also significant that shingle sawdust was specified in the above to cover the corduroy. This could, no doubt, be hauled from the shingle mills on the Plover

and in some ways was better than gravel for buggies and wagons. It was probably not used more both because the supply was limited and it was a fire hazard.

All roads laid prior to 1848 were called territorial roads, and after that date, state roads. This designation continued into the automotive age when some were changed to "federal roads" which are actually state roads but interstate highways in the sense that they are marked the same from one state to the next. None are federally owned. There was no state aid or supervision until after 1911 when the legislature created state aids and the State Highway Commission. In order to determine responsibility, the county and later the townships, appointed road commissioners, in some townships referred to as path masters, or road masters, or overseers. Each township was responsible for that part of the "state" road which passed through it as well as for town roads. There were no county trunks. And throughout this period prior to 1911, every man of voting age, whether in city or country, was required to contribute one day of labor each year to highway maintenance as a right to vote, referred to as a poll tax. Those who failed to make this effort were required to pay \$1 or more to hold their voting franchise.

While these early communication links were called roads, they were more likely to be mere wagon tracks, grass growing in the middle, or trails which a man with a yoke of oxen or team of horses could traverse along the lines of least resistance, turning to avoid trees, rocks, stumps and other obstacles. Rivers were often forded and swamps avoided as much as possible.

In winter time these roads, often hemmed in by trees or underbrush, became filled with snow. As the sleighs passed over in winter, each new snow became packed and in this manner the tracks built up quite high. Thus one of the most common sources of friction, even down to the turn of the century, was the question of who had the right-of-way. To leave the track was a hazard; the horses were apt to flounder around in belly-deep snow and the sleigh box tip over. Thus a man hauling a load

of lumber or produce expected that a neighbor or stranger driving a cutter or empty sleigh to turn off and let him pass, but when two teams met, both loaded, a heated argument could easily follow. Andrew Sikorsky of Polonia recalls a time when two sleigh teams met on the road to Stevens Point, one loaded, the other not. The driver of the empty sleigh refused to yield more than his half of the track. On the way back, the situation was reversed and the one who came light was returning from Sharon with a load of lumber when he met the same man he had passed earlier in the day. The latter, now with an empty sleigh, refused to yield more than one track and as a result the man with the lumber tipped over. One Yankee individualist who had a saw mill on the Plover was known to drive his team directly into an oncoming cutter or sleigh if the latter refused to yield.

In the spring time, many of these roads were filled with mud holes where horses waded at their own risk and wagons became mired. In the summer time, the narrow-rimmed buckboards and buggies cut into the sod and ground the sand into dust. Here and there plank roads were laid but these wore out and were in constant need of repair as were the wooden bridges across the sloughs and creeks. Travel, in other words, was hazardous, unpleasant, yet imperative if one was to sell one's goods or purchase the necessities of life.

There were seldom any markers on these early roads and losing one's way, particularly at night, was a common occurrence. Some of the first auto roads in the state before World War I were referred to by trail names and marked after a fashion. One of the most noted of these was called the "Yellowstone Trail," a transcontinental highway from the East which came up from Waupaca to Amherst, west along "old 18" for a short distance, thence northwest to McDill and Stevens Point apparently somewhat along the territorial road authorized in 1846. West of Stevens Point the Yellowstone Trail turned along modern Trunk M for a few miles and angled northwest to Junction City and Marshfield. Telephone poles and trees along the trail



were marked with a yellow band and in 1957 faint traces of this paint were still visible on several poles in the town of Carson.

The *King's Guide* of 1917, one of the early attempts at an auto guide, includes in a map of Wisconsin the main routes of car travel in Portage County. What is known as H-51 ran from Plover through Stevens Point north to Knowlton and Wausau, but in order to travel south to Madison by car, the most frequently traveled route ran from Plover via Grand Rapids, apparently along the old "Pinery Road" to Kilbourn. Here the road forked for travelers going south to Madison via Baraboo or southeast via Portage. The direct route (roughly H-51) between Portage and Plover in 1917 was considered sandy and hazardous for car traffic.

Another main auto road through the county in 1917 ran north from Wisconsin Rapids via Rudolph, Junction City to Knowlton and Wausau along modern H-34 in some stretches. The third main auto road ran east of Plover along modern Trunk B to Amherst, and the fourth along (roughly) H-10.

Probably as a result of identifying these main roads by numbers in *King's Guide*, the numbering of state trunk highways in Wisconsin was begun in May 1918 and the entire state system marked and numbered in one week. Within a year several other states copied the idea, and it is now world-wide. The "U.S." numbers began in 1926 which provided continuous routing from one state into another.<sup>1</sup>

In the *King's Guide* map of 1917, the cartographer identifies each stretch of road along the main auto routes by arbitrary letters and numbers so that the route between these two points may be referred back to the text in the guide book where actual directions for travel are outlined. The route between Stevens Point and Plover, for example, is listed on the map as "Route 130A — Reverse Route 129A."<sup>2</sup> Directions for

<sup>1</sup> Correspondence, State Highway Commission, Aug. 26, 1957.

<sup>2</sup> Sidney J. King, *Official Automobile Route Guides*, (Chicago: 1917), p. 351.

driving this route between Stevens Point and Plover, a distance computed at 5.4 miles, are as follows:

- .0 Leave the POST OFFICE, corner of MAIN and STRONGS AVE., go south on STRONGS AVE.
- .2 Pass COURT HOUSE on left, continue to four corners
- .3 Go between churches
- .5 Pass fire engine house on left, continue to four corners
- .7 TURN LEFT on MONROE ST., to four corners
- .8 TURN RIGHT on CHURCH ST.
- .9 CROSS R. R., continue on macadam road
- 1.0 Pass large brick school on right
- 2.2 CROSS R. R.
- 2.4 Through irregular crossroads, curve left
- 2.5 McDill Mills, cross iron bridge over PLOVER RIVER, to three corners
- 2.7 TURN RIGHT (road straight ahead goes to Amherst and Waupaca)
- 2.9 Pass road on left
- 3.3 Pass road on left
- 4.1 Pass mill on right, cross bridge, pass road on right
- 4.6 Pass road on left
- 4.7 Pass frame school on right
- 4.8 Curve right, through cross roads
- 5.2 CROSS R. R., to POST OFFICE on left, four corners
- 5.4 PLOVER, (Road straight ahead goes to Waupaca).

Under this system, apparently, one man had to do the driving while another kept an eye on the speedometer or all was lost.

Down to about 1920, although many people in the county were by this time driving early model cars, there was little car traffic on the highways during the winter months. Villages like Rosholt became in a sense isolated except for the daily arrival of a train, while travel between Rosholt and Stevens Point by sleigh or cutter was rare. Around 1920 the first attempt was made to plow the state highways in the county when two caterpillar tractors, boosting each other, opened the road between Stevens Point and outlying villages. County-supported trucks also began operating around 1920, and in 1921, John Groshek of Rosholt recalls that he began using a Packard truck on H-66. When the first county and town roads were being plowed in winter, many farmers considered it a mixed blessing because the snow

plows took most of the snow off the roads and made sleighing difficult. John J. Herkowski of Arnott, who began patrolling the road through Stockton with a team and grader in the early 1920s, states that he was given a used Packard truck in 1924 ("those old clunkers") after they had already seen service on the state roads. He believes that Ole Auby, John Groshek, Edwin Park and he were the first four patrolmen hired by the county in 1921 from a list of 17 applicants.

In the spring of 1937, the County Board, taking cognizance of the mounting death toll on the highways from automobile accidents, created a new law enforcement agency known as the county highway police. Neal O. Ketchum and B. A. Precourt were the first two patrolmen selected. Precourt left the department in 1938 and was replaced by L. A. Beier, later to become head of the state traffic patrol. He was followed by Ray Zinda who began in 1944 and resigned after World War II when he was replaced by William Kvatek. Ketchum, meanwhile, served three years in army intelligence and after his discharge rejoined the force which today includes himself as captain in addition to Ray Kitowski, Myles Burcham, and Kvatek.

## STOPPING PLACES ALONG THE ROAD

In the decade that followed the establishment of the main territorial roads into Portage County, a number of stage-coach inns, or tavern-houses, were built along these routes of travel to cater to the eager young men who came to work in the logging camps of the Pinery, or in the saw mills, shingle mills and grist mills, or to settle on the land as farmers. As traffic increased, stage-coach and freight lines came into being which also patronized the tavern-houses and these became recognized as landmarks in the early history of the county. Most of them appear to have been built after the style of New England, single frame house, two story, with smaller lean-to wings running off the main building. Along the front of the house, facing the road, ran a porch — some called it a “verandah” — which extended the length of the building, often on two sides if it was located on a highway corner. Here were chairs where patrons could pass the time of day waiting for the next stage, or exchange gossip of the road, new developments in land, timber and trade. Immigrants, state-of-Mainers, speculators, farmers, surveyors, government officials, timber cruisers, teamsters and lumberjacks all stopped here, for it was a time of high adventure, calculated risk, and many plungers. The rivers were a challenge to the imagination, the pine in the forests a challenge to the material instincts of man, for in a society where the retrograde of collectivization has not gained the ascendancy, this is what makes man aggressive and eager for gain. It was a time of hard work, but nothing can be considered too hard when it carries meaning and the hope of new life, and especially when it is possible to see this hope realized within the space of a single generation. This was and still is Portage County where

man then was and still is free to pursue his own goals, not the goals of a five-year plan enforced by one-party government based on terror.

Inside the tavern-house some of the owners installed a dance floor or built a shanty nearby where dances were held. Thus the tavern-house also served as a social center although not all handled liquor by any means. The temperance movement was gaining ground in the 1840s; in an indenture of 1846, when Samuel L. Keith and Smith Niles of Belvidere, Illinois, took over the "tavern house now occupied by John K. (R.?) and G. W. Mitchell," in Plover, the latter made it part of the contract that no liquor was to be served on the place. The license to handle liquor was in addition to the license to operate a tavern-house, although there is reason to suspect that liquor was often handled "under the counter" without a license.

The first tavern-house in the limits of modern Portage County was operated by Luthern Houghton and John Batten, probably as early as 1842. One of the road districts established by the county commissioners on July 5, 1844, took a bearing on "Houghton and Battens" and from the description it appears that it was located near the modern intersection of H-51-54 and Trunk B, where a community, known as Rushville, developed before Plover village was platted in 1845. The license to "keep tavern at Rushville for one year from date of this filing (Oct. 25, 1844). . ." was issued in Houghton's name.<sup>2</sup> The latter was also elected one of the three county commissioners in the first election at Plover in 1844; in 1845, Batten's name appears in the commissioners' sessions as county treasurer.

However, the pioneer tavern-house or tavern-inn was associated more with an institution located not in the village, but along the road somewhere at a spot selected to cater to the needs of a man with a horse or team at intervals of ten miles or so. As a fast team can walk four miles an hour, a ten-mile interval represents two

<sup>1</sup> *Deeds*, Vol. A, p. 192.

<sup>2</sup> *Proceedings*, County Commissioners Sessions, Vol. I, p. 50.

and a half hours' driving time. Probably the first of these country taverns in the county was located "at the forks of the road leading to Portage City and Berlin and was known as the old Junction, which now is in the town of Almond."<sup>1</sup> This fork in the road is indicated on the Ellis map of 1855, but owing to lack of definition on a map covering the entire state, it is impossible to pin-point it on a modern plat of Almond township except that it lay in one of the west sections. It may have been situated at modern Spirit Land Corners, but owing to the nature of the terrain and swamp land to the south of Spirit Land this seems unlikely.

Some years ago Alfred Peterson of Almond, working with a crew on a local saw machine, ran the saw into a nail embedded in an oak log which had been cut north of Washburn Lake. This aroused speculation and Nils Washburn, member of a pioneer family of Almond, suggested that it was a relic of the stagecoach road which ran through this grove of oak trees. He later pointed out the spot where the stage road crossed modern Trunk D north of the lake. An investigation of this tract of oak north of Trunk D was made by the author in the company of Peterson on May 18, 1958, and the vestiges of a road, as well as the fork of two roads, was discovered in Sec. 30 about three quarters of a mile north of Trunk D. As this is not logging country, and as the indentation of a road bed, although overgrown with grass, is still plainly visible, there is reason to believe that one fork of one road ran west of Washburn Lake to Montello and Portage, the other fork to the east of the twin lakes to Berlin.

It was probably at this junction that Sherman built the "first framed building erected upon the Indian lands after the treaty was signed with the Indians..."<sup>1</sup> As the treaty no doubt refers to one concluded in 1848 and as Sherman arrived in Plover in October of 1848, it is quite possible that this was the first frame building also erected in the county and is the stagecoach stop associated with local tradition. Sherman's use of the

<sup>1</sup> *Note Book*, No. 9.

term "framed building," however, is somewhat puzzling. It seems extraordinary that no one had yet built a frame building before this time, what with saw mills only a few miles away, but erecting log cabins was probably easier and even cheaper up to this time. Moreover, when Sherman, a carpenter in his youth, came to Plover he was in fact one of the first of his trade available for this type of construction. Most of the others appear to have been lumbermen or traders who, to judge from the indentures of the period, doubled as justices of the peace, sheriffs, and constables, while the first doctor, John Bristol, even served as probate judge and county treasurer.

However, while Sherman claims to have built the first frame house "upon the Indian lands after the treaty was signed with the Indians," meaning, no doubt, in 1848, he was not the first to build a frame house on the Indian land because Hathaway tells us in his field notes of 1839 that the second place of Charettes (Shau-rette?) (across the river from modern Stevens Point) was a frame house and barn. But if Sherman's statement may be taken as *prima facie* evidence, it would appear that everyone on the left bank of the Wisconsin River in Plover and Stevens Point Precincts was living in log cabins up to 1848, and this suggests a rather interesting picture in retrospect.

The second country tavern-house was probably located on the Air Line Road in the middle of Lot 2, Sec. 30 (T. 22, R. 9) known as "Buena Vista House," first mentioned in the field notes of the government survey made in the summer of 1851. This was probably built in 1850 on land pre-empted by Wellington Kollock and William Wigginton. George F. Schilling, according to family tradition, fashioned the window frames and window sashes on the completed building. In one of the rooms on the third story was a "rocking dance floor," apparently the only one of its kind in the county, said to be constructed on levers which allowed an 18-inch sway in the floor. Whether it allowed an 18-inch sway,

<sup>1</sup> *Note Book*, No. 9.

which seems extraordinary, or a 2-inch sway, it was no doubt a popular place for teen-agers of the period whirling about in the traditional cotillion, better known as the square-dance. All this came to a sudden end in 1863 when a tornado destroyed Buena Vista House.

Another tavern-house, whether the third or not is problematical, was built in the future village of Almond in the early 1850s. The fact that a post office was established in Almond as early as July 8, 1850 suggests that it was becoming recognized as a community which logically would soon have a hotel. Whether Isaiah Felker built the first tavern-house or not, the town proceedings establish the fact that he was operating one there in 1857, probably on the east side of lower Main Street of the modern village in the northwest corner of Sec. 34 where the 1876 plat identifies a "hotel."

Thus a traveler with private rig or traveling by stagecoach from Berlin could stop, in the early 1850s, at either Almond or at Buena Vista before going on to Plover. Either in 1855 or shortly thereafter, another stopping place was established at the intersection of modern H-51-54, since known as Moore Barn. This intersection was probably not created until 1855 when the "Buena Vista Road" was ordered laid by the Plover town board. As this was now a short cut on the road going south to either Portage or Berlin, it obviously occurred to more than one person that this intersection, and not the one farther east created by the Air Line Road crossing modern H-54, held the greatest opportunity for the future. The first assessment roll available on the town of Buena Vista reveals that Jacob F. Moore in 1857 was paying taxes on nearly a dozen government lots (forties) around this intersection, which suggests that he had deliberately planned to keep anyone else from building on this corner without his approval or lease. "Fod" Moore, as he was known, apparently did not operate a tavern-house as such, but rather a livery barn where wagon teamsters and others could feed and water their horses and, if necessary, sleep on a cot in the livery office. It was located a few rods west of the southwest angle of the intersection.



The main tavern-house between Buena Vista House and Plover in the 1850s was at Stockton, Wisconsin, about three miles east of Plover on the Air Line Road in Sec. 31 about half a mile southeast of Morrill Cemetery. Here Nelson Blodgett built a hotel in the early 1850s known as Stockton House, more commonly referred to as "Blodgett's," which was advertised in the *Plover Herald* of Aug. 14, 1856, as "new, commodious and well furnished [with] good stables attached to the house." There are several references to this hostelry in the town proceedings, while an advertisement in the *Pinery* of July 3, 1856 advises readers not to forget "the dance that is to come off this Thursday evening, July 3, at Stockton House." A week later the *Pinery* reported that about 100 couples were present "and yet plenty of room for more."

But after the new road to Buena Vista was laid south of Plover in 1855 (today H-51) Blodgett no doubt suffered the fate of modern-day eating houses and motels which locate on an old road only to have a new one run some distance away. Not even legend can suggest what Blodgett's inn looked like.

No doubt in an attempt to capitalize on the new road out of Plover to Buena Vista ordered laid in 1855, Mathias ("Butch") Mitchell built a tavern-house in Sec. 35, about a mile or so southeast of Plover (the Clifford West place). It changed hands early in 1857 when J. Lamphear became the proprietor. Originally known as "Mitchell's Tavern," or "Mitchell's Farm Stand," Lamphear renamed it Cottage Inn. A "cottilion party" (square dance) was held in February 1857 at Cottage Inn with Henry J. Boyce acting as floor manager and E. B. Worthen's band furnishing the music.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. & Mrs. Abraham Coulthurst may have operated Cottage Inn at one time, probably while Mitchell owned it.

Two people who still remember Cottage Inn are Mrs. Jesse Grant, nee Isherwood, of Plover township, and John Fisher of Almond township. The latter re-

<sup>1</sup> *Pinery*, Feb. 12, 1857.

calls the last time he saw the building "things was a-running down" and the inn had been vacant for many years. Mrs. Grant recalls, as a girl, going for the mail in Plover accompanied by her brother Henry who drove "Prince," a small horse, and cart. The youngsters usually made this trip after school and on the return trip, with dusk approaching, Mrs. Grant ducked low in the cart while her brother whipped the horse into a gallop past the abandoned building of Cottage Inn because the children in the neighborhood all said it was spooked.

Moore Barn was a landmark not only because it stood at the most important intersection in the county where it could be seen by everyone, but also because the long-abandoned building survived into the 20th Century. Before it was razed in the mid-1920s, several legends had grown around it, one that a number of skeletons were found in the floor of the barn. This rumor, which apparently had no basis in fact, probably developed as a result of several incidents which had occurred in the past, not in the barn itself, but on the road to the south. Hold-ups — some say killings — were made easy by the thick underbrush along this stretch which made it possible for bandits to step into the road at night and grab the reins of the horses without being seen.

There is no record of an actual stage hold-up, but an interesting account of another incident comes down through the Russell family of Buena Vista. William Russell, a youngster in his teens, drove one of the stages on the Berlin route in the late 1860s. The stage in Berlin was boarded from a high and rather long platform, the more easily to step into and load. On one occasion, Russell noticed a prospective passenger walking back and forth along the platform, clinging possessively to a small bag under his arm. As the other passengers boarded the stage, the one with the small bag scrutinized them sharply and just before the stage was ready to depart, he asked Russell if he might ride with him atop the stage. As there was no one riding "shot-gun" on

these stages, the stranger was allowed to share the high driver's seat. Once under way, he asked Russell if he would be willing to make a detour around the Moore Barn corner, suggesting that he had something valuable to protect and did not wish to be waylaid by bandits. Russell agreed and probably followed the Air Line Road up to Plover "and that same night, be damned if there wasn't a hold-up near Moore Barn," concluded Bacon Russell, son of William.

Another veteran of the district recalls the story of a farmer who went to Stevens Point with a load of frozen pork. Two or three highwaymen, who apparently noted his passage to the north with the load of pork, waited for his return south of Moore Barn. The intended victim was a native of the district and knew the danger of traveling at night with money. Taking no chances, he hid most of the money realized from the pork in or under the wagon box, but kept a few pieces of small change in his pocketbook. He was held up according to schedule and when asked for his money allegedly said, "Do you think I would travel with that much money? I left it in the bank in Stevens Point. If you don't believe me, search me." The story seems a bit pat, but the ruse apparently worked and the highwaymen took the change in his pocketbook and left after a search failed to disclose anything of value on the wagon.

Another stopping place on the road to Plover was the Isherwood Hotel about two miles west of Moore Barn in Sec. 1 of Plover township. The *Pinery* on Dec. 21, 1865, reported that James Isherwood had "just completed and has now in running order a tip-top hotel [where] travelers will find a good fare. . ." The tavern-house was built around a smaller house constructed earlier and remains practically unchanged since 1865, today occupied by Mr. & Mrs. Jesse Grant. Three or four small rooms on the first and second floors were reserved for transients but the main section of the second floor was reserved for a dance hall. A platform, still intact, is located over the stairway where the fiddlers seated themselves (they could not stand without hitting the ceiling) and by this

device, more floor space was provided for the dancers. On this platform many a time sat Will Allan and Lew Johnson, better known as "Nigger Lew," probably a Negro fugitive slave, both playing fiddle, with Johnson calling most of the square dances. He became widely known throughout the county and died at Plover in 1899.

Isherwood was issued a \$25 license by the town of Plover on July 19, 1866 to handle liquor. The bar-room was located on the first floor in the room on the southwest corner of the house facing the road. A small bar stood on the north side of the room and chairs were provided around a wood heater in the center. One of these chairs, a home-made affair, resembled a barber chair and everyone called it that. It was comfortable to sit in with the feet on the stove. This is also preserved by the Grants.

Later, as business picked up, Isherwood built a small dance hall across the road which everyone referred to as the "bowery," a common name for dance halls after the New York thoroughfare of the same name.

On the same side of the road stood a log barn, later replaced by a frame barn which had two rows of stalls, and a special box stall for visiting stallions. The outside of the barn was sided with vertical pine strips or batten painted white to serve as cleats in the siding. This white batten stripping was common on many barns before the turn of the century and may be viewed even now on a few older barns in the county. Outside of Isherwood's barn stood one of "Nate" Howard's wooden pumps where the horses were watered.

After passing through Plover and Stevens Point, the first stop a traveler made farther north on the territorial road was probably at Charles Mann's tavern-house about ten miles from the Public Square on the left bank of the Wisconsin River just below Crocker's Landing. An anonymous traveler states that on July 25, 1853 he spent a night here on a trip north.<sup>1</sup> Mann's tavern apparently did not flourish, probably because of the fame which gathered around a more strategically located tavern-

<sup>1</sup> *Pinery*, Aug. 17, 1853.

house two miles farther north built that same year by Melanchthon Wylie "who has just completed a large and commodious Hotel, which he calls the 'Plymouth' and where he holds himself ready to wait upon the Public in the most approved style. . ."<sup>1</sup> This hostelry came to be the center of political activity in northern Portage County and many of the Eau Pleine town board meetings were held here in the 1860s and '70s. It also had a dance hall. In the spring of 1855, an excursion was run from Stevens Point to Wylie's on the newly-commissioned steamer *Northerner* with "100 ladies and gentlemen" who, after "an excellent dinner and refreshments" returned to the city the following morning, apparently having danced all night. Excursions were arranged on a number of occasions in the next decade with people coming from both Wausau and Stevens Point to enjoy the hospitality of Wylie who, among his other accomplishments as a host, had concocted a special drink known as "whiskey and tansy" which was taken up by saloon keepers all the way down the river to St. Louis. A tansy is a coarse perennial herb used in days gone by both for cooking and medicine. Alex Wallace believes Wylie's brew was quite bitter.

The 1876 plat shows that the tavern-house was located on the north side of the stage road where it ran east-west around the big bend of the Wisconsin River just below DuBay's trading post. In 1863, the assessor put an evaluation of \$2,000 on this property, including one lot of 68 acres, which suggests a fairly large establishment, no doubt equipped with horse barns, sheds and probably a granary. The entire site is today covered by DuBay Lake.

Mr. & Mrs. Ole P. Quisla, later of Alban township, worked for the Wylies after their marriage in Stevens Point (circa 1870). While Mrs. Quisla remained in the hotel, her husband was employed as a chopper in a logging camp a few miles away. Mrs. Quisla often told her children about this experience and recalled Althina

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Merton E. Krug, *Du Bay: Son-in-Law of Oshkosh*, (Appleton, Wis., C. C. Nelson Publishing Company, 1946), p. 80.

<sup>2</sup> *Pinery*, May 31, 1855.

Wylie, the second wife, as a most considerate woman to work for. She always encouraged the girls to throw any unused bread in the kitchen into the ash cans because she wanted the Indians to have it. When the bread was deposited in the can, an Indian woman seemed to appear out of nowhere, as if waiting for it, filled up her sack and stole away.

As to Melanchthon Wylie "no man rich or poor was ever turned away from his door hungry."<sup>1</sup> He died in 1880 and lies buried in Union Cemetery.

From Wylie's the traveler continued north to another famed hostelry in Marathon County known as the Twin Island, probably built in 1849, at modern Knowlton.

Travelers approaching Portage County from Gills Landing in the early 1850s on the road later part of H-54 were apt to spend a night at Badger Hotel located near the Portage-Waupaca line in the middle of Sec 36 of Lanark. The road at this time did not follow modern H-54 through eastern Lanark, but dipped south somewhat from the intersection of H-54 and Trunk A, thence through the hills southeast and finally along the hillside south of Badger Cemetery into Waupaca County. Part of this road in the eastern section of the township is still used as a town road and is probably the only original stagecoach road left in the county not black-topped or abandoned.

The Badger Hotel, or "Gray's tavern-house" as it was more commonly known, was located on the north side of the fork of two roads, one going east to Waupaca and the other southeast to Rural and Gills Landing via Parfreyville. This latter road was probably the main highway into the county from this direction up to the mid-1850s when stages also began to travel from Gills Landing via Waupaca and Amherst to Stevens Point. The tavern-house was probably built by John Fletcher who may have sold or rented to Gray before 1856. After the stagecoach days passed, this property passed to Edward ("Ted") Minton who razed the old building and erected a residence somewhat on the same foundation. This

<sup>1</sup> *Stevens Point Journal*, Dec. 4, 1880.

house eventually burned but the foundation and cellar are still visible, not to mention the lilac bushes to the east.

Alexander Gray, a "Yark stater" (New Yorker) was a Yankee descendant of Englishmen and, when he took over the tavern-house in Lanark, followed Ye Olde English custom by hanging out a wooden sign on the road decorated with the likeness of an animal, in this instance, the Wisconsin Badger; and from this came the Badger Post Office, Badger Hotel, Badger School, Badger Cemetery, and Badger Community Church on the county line to the east.

After leaving Gray's place, a traveler on the stage from Gill's Landing to Plover was almost certain to stop at John F. Phelps tavern-house, first mentioned in a road survey of 1858, which was located in Sec 19 of Lanark less than a mile east of modern St. Patrick's Church. The Madely post office, established in this vicinity on May 9, 1855, was named after John Madely who probably originated in Madely Manors, England, and settled in the north of the township and after whom Madely School is also named. John Phelps, not Madely, served as the first postmaster, but whether Phelps built his tavern-house before or after his appointment is uncertain. Even as the Mitchell tavern near Plover was often referred to as "the Mitchell Farm Stand", the Phelps tavern was popularly known as the "Phelps Stand," a word seldom heard any more in this connection.

One of the girls who worked for the Phelps' in the late 1860s and early '70s was Hattie Whipple, nee Porter, who came from Waushara County with several other girls whom the one-time town chairman, Ira Whipple, had gone to recruit as hop pickers. (Porter Lake in Waushara County is named after her father, John Porter). When Ira Whipple's first wife died in the early 1870s he courted and married Hattie Porter and from this union came eight children, and Harry, the youngest, was born in 1887 when his father was 67. From his mother, Harry Whipple heard many fascinating tales of the Phelps tavern-house. It was not uncommon to serve 40

"freighters," i.e. wagon teamsters, at a single meal, most of them driving four-horse teams with freight between Gill's Landing and Stevens Point. In addition, one or two drivers of the stage-coaches might happen to be at the tables. This was the coach which carried mail as well as passengers even as they are seen today in Western films, but oddly enough were not referred to in Lanark as stage-coaches but as "mail coaches." Waybills in the archives of the State Historical Society, dated 1855, also refer to "post coaches" although advertisements in the Plover papers usually refer to them as "stage-coaches" and operated by stage lines, not "post" lines.

The original building of Phelps tavern-house, which stood on the north side of the road (the Myron Schultz place) is described as a big frame structure facing the road, long porch with columns, and lean-to wing running off the back. Wide boards, probably pine, were used for flooring, and the doors were featured by long panels. Most of the overnight guests were accommodated in several rooms on the second floor and when these filled up there was always room in the livery barns to handle the overflow. A big water trough and wooden pump stood near the long porch of the inn where the teamsters pumped their own water. Traces of the well are still visible.

Hattie Whipple also told her son how the drivers, on approaching from the east, and before anyone could actually see them, whipped their horses into a gallop and came up to the tavern-house in dead heat to give the impression that this was the manner in which they traveled all day. After feeding the horses, they started out with a great flourish towards Moore Barn but scarcely got over the hill to the west before they dropped their reins and permitted the horses to poke along at their own pace.

Aside from the business of catering to travelers and freighters at Phelps' "stand" — where no liquor was served — two of the Phelps' sons, George and Willie, were avid horse traders as well as hostlers and were known to "chew the ears off a horse" to make him mind. Trading horses required great skill and knowledge of



animals and there was no guarantee offered on a trade-in such as a second-hand car dealer might make today. A horse that stood ever so gently in the stall could, on being worked, turn into a kicker, a biter, or one afflicted with soft shoulders or nervous fright, or was "moon blind," shying away from a field sparrow.

Probably owing to the comparatively long distance between Phelps tavern and Moore Barn, a small tavern-house was established by Ashley Maynard in Sec 18 of Buena Vista on the northwest corner of the intersection of modern H-54 and County Trunk J, since known as "Maynard's Corners." The land was purchased in 1857, but when the tavern was actually built is uncertain. Nor did it appear to have any special name, although the 1876 plat identifies a "hotel" on this site. Part of the original building is today occupied by Town Chairman George Fletcher.

After 1858, the year that a stage line appears to have begun operating directly between Gill's Landing, Wau-paca and Stevens Point via Amherst, a tavern-house was probably established in Sec 1 of Lanark on the north side of modern H-10. This building was taken over by Thomas Pipe in the early 1870s and, according to family tradition, had been used for some time as a stage coach stop. An old photograph (circa 1890) reveals a long porch running the length of the house facing the road. Although remodeled, part of the original tavern-house is today occupied by Ray Pipe, a son of Thomas. John ("Jack") and Frank Pipe, brothers of Thomas Pipe, were familiar in Stevens Point for many years before the turn of the century, John as a stage-coach driver who later operated a livery stable, and Frank as a river driver. It was no doubt through his brother John that Thomas acquired the old tavern-house. This former tavern-house and the homes occupied by the Fletchers of Buena Vista and the Grants of Plover townships are the only ones left in the county which can trace their heritage to a stagecoach stop.

Finally, on the road west of Plover below the Yellow Banks stood the Jockey Tavern in Sec 25, owned and

operated by Cornelius Halladay after he was mustered out of service in the Civil War. The Jockey Tavern got its name after the horse traders and others who frequented it and Halladay too was engaged in raising horses both for drivers and for the race track. The tavern was not primarily a stopping place for transients although one or two rooms were available. The residence of Halladay was located a few rods to the east, closer to the high bank of the river where a visit to this spot in 1957, accompanied by Grandson Fred Halladay, 86, revealed several lilac bushes planted by "Grandma" Halladay still growing. But all traces of the Jockey Tavern a few rods west have been obliterated by the march of time.

Although not a tavern-house, the home of Joseph Oesterle in Sharon was a landmark for people traveling from Alban, east Sharon and New Hope, to Stevens Point. Here, on the long haul, the horses could be watered and the driver could rest and visit with the Oesterles where a bite of homemade cheese washed down with buttermilk was a commonplace hospitality. Many people also came down from Stevens Point on a Sunday drive, terminating at Oesterles, or picnicking under the grove of tall pines that stood on the island of Oesterle Lake.

## FROM DOG SLED TO AIRPLANE

The earliest forms of conveyance to be used in Portage County may have been dog sleds in winter, and in summer two-wheeled carriages known as carioles or trains. John DuBay was using a dog sleigh when he appeared at Fort Winnebago in 1836 or '37, and also purchased a horse and French train there from Henry Merrell, probably en route to the trading post on the Wisconsin River in modern Dewey township.

But the most common form of conveyance used later by the lumbermen and settlers in the 1840s and 1850s was a light wagon with four, spoked wheels mounted on iron tires not more than an inch and three quarters wide. This proved impracticable in the sandy country of central Wisconsin and after the Civil War the wide, iron-tired wagon wheel with wagon box grew in favor for hauling both freight and passengers, while the four-wheeled buckboard replaced the light wagon with an even narrower tire which, despite the sand, was practical because it was not meant for heavy freight but as a passenger vehicle. The top buggy, which came later, apparently developed from the buckboard.

In the winter time the narrow-sleigh cutter was used for passenger traffic and the wide-bunked bob sleigh for freight and logging.

The first scheduled stage line in the county may have been established by Jacob Myer in 1847. It probably followed the old Pinery Road between Plover and Portage via Grand Rapids. Myer (or Myers) is also listed in the 1847 territorial census; in 1861 the Plover tax roll reveals that he had a lot valued at \$400 in Block 1, Lot 1, northeast corner of Union and First Streets, which may have been the main livery barn and office of his stage line. In the first issue of the *Plover Herald*

published in 1856, Myer ran an advertisement headed "Summer Arrangements," meaning, no doubt, the schedule of his stages during the summer months. These stages left Stevens Point daily at 3 a.m., except Thursday, for Portage, arriving at 8 p.m. the same day. The Stevens Point-Berlin route was a tri-weekly service, leaving Stevens Point Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday at 1 a.m., arriving Berlin the same day at 4 p.m. A line to Grand Rapids left Stevens Point Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at 7 a.m. (arrival time not given.) The route to Weyauwega left Stevens Point daily at 5 a.m. "connecting with boats at Gills Landing."

Two weeks later, under "local items" in the *Herald*, it is learned that Myer had begun using a new set of coaches on the Weyauwega run "which is a desirable change from the old Prairie Schooner that was used during the days of pioneer staging." The editors of the *Herald* wished "Mr. Myer" well and referred to him as the "oldest stager of the Northwest." From this it would appear that up to 1856, the so-called stages to Portage County were wagons converted into prairie schooners, that is, with canvas over the box, and, in making the change to a new set of coaches, Myer had converted to the type commonly associated with the stagecoach still seen in motion picture dramas of the American West. Early engravings of the type of stage used on other Wisconsin lines confirms this.

At the height of operations before the Wisconsin Central reached Stevens Point, Myer reputedly employed 150 horses at various points and changed horses on his stages every ten miles or so. Most of the horses were probably Morgans raised on a farm he owned in Sec 20 of Buena Vista. As there were no fences on the Prairie to speak of, his horses, according to local legend, roamed at will, and the neighbors were kept busy sending the dogs after them.

Probably the only livery barn left in the county dating back to the days of the stagecoach, and which local tradition insists is a "stagecoach barn," is located in Sec 31 of Buena Vista on the west side of H-51 about two miles be-

<sup>1</sup> *Plover Herald*, Aug. 21, 1856.

low Keene (the Roman Brychell place). The siding on this barn is no doubt a replacement but an investigation of the interior reveals the framework to be of ancient vintage, with pegs binding the timbers together. Further confirmation is added by the fact that the abstract on this forty shows that Myer purchased it from the government in 1854, and in 1856, mortgaged it to the Milwaukee & Horicon Railroad in exchange, probably, for bonds which later had to be redeemed at a loss to himself. The distance from this barn to Plover is a little more than 10 miles but not unreasonable for the last stretch home.

John DuBay, one of the early competitors to Myer, in July 1852 began operating a stage line between Fort Winnebago and Stevens Point. It appears to have been discontinued in the autumn of 1853. During this period he ran an advertisement, every second week, in the Fort Winnebago *River Times*<sup>1</sup> which carried this information:

#### NEW STAGE LINE

THE undersigned has now completed arrangements for running a tri-weekly line of stages between Fort Winnebago and Stevens Point, straight through, via Grand Marsh and Buena Vista, in two days, using two horse epliptic spring carriages, as follows

Leaves Fort Winnebago Mondays, Wednesdays,  
and Fridays:

Leaves Stevens Point Mondays, Wednesdays, and  
Fridays:

Fares through, upward \$3.50

Fares through, down \$3.00

July 12, 1852

#### JOHN B. DUBAY

The advertisement fails to explain why it cost more to go from Portage to Stevens Point than from Stevens Point to Portage. Probably the road running north was considered more uphill.

Another stage line, known as the Wisconsin Stage Company, began operations out of Stevens Point and Plover late in 1856 or early 1857. This was a state-wide organization.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in DuBay: *Son-in-Law of Oshkosh*, p. 79.

Up to 1858, while there was a stage line from Gills Landing to Plover, there was no direct connection from Stevens Point to Gills Landing via Amherst. "Bad business," noted the *Pinery*, whose editors had seen "a respectable gentleman from the East yesterday who footed it all the way from Gills Landing to Stevens Point."<sup>1</sup> Apparently this was corrected that same week when the Wisconsin Stage Company "put a team on this route yesterday."

By the spring of 1859, the Wisconsin Stage Company was operating five carriages every day to Berlin, Weyauwega, Grand Rapids, and New Lisbon; and on May 20 the *Pinery* reported, *inter alia*, that more than 50 passengers arrived by these stages "night before last," and that "passengers arrive daily by stage in three days from St. Louis by Oshkosh and Gill's Landing."

In addition to these stage lines, O. C. Wheelock, later mayor of Stevens Point, operated a line between Stevens Point and Wausau from 1858 to 1862,<sup>2</sup> and either before or during 1864 the Wisconsin Stage Company was operating a daily service to Wausau.<sup>3</sup>

A stagecoach driver well remembered in Linwood township is George Sutton. Some time in his career, Sutton came into possession of a horse chestnut, a flat variety rounded like a dollar, which he carried in his pocket as a talisman when driving the stages. Long after he retired in Linwood his right hand was ever in his pocket fondling the horse chestnut, and when he died it was still in his pocket. But it did not follow him on the 'long day's journey into night' and is now in the interesting collection of buttons kept by Mrs. Wallace Diver of Linwood.

Meanwhile, it seems that one or more freight lines had begun operations out of Stevens Point-Plover by 1856. One of these may have been owned by J. H. Morgan whose livery barn, at least in 1861, appears to have been located on the southeast corner of First and Walnut

<sup>1</sup> *Pinery*, April 23, 1858.

<sup>2</sup> Obituary in *Stevens Point Journal*, April 6, 1895.

<sup>3</sup> *Pinery*, Dec. 9, 1864.

Streets in Stanton (Plover). Earlier, the *Pinery* advised that freight rates from Waupun to Stevens Point were \$1.25½ per hundred weight, plus 17 cents from Milwaukee to Waupun for a total of \$1.42½ for Milwaukee-Stevens Point through freight. From Fond du Lac to Stevens Point the rate was \$1.09½.<sup>1</sup>

In the spring of 1854 construction was begun on a steamboat, apparently rather small, to sail the Wisconsin River between Stevens Point and Mosinee. The boat, a side-wheeler, was launched that summer and christened the *Northerner*. Two years later a new and larger boiler was installed and the vessel was capable of carrying 30 passengers and several tons of freight. In the years following, excursions on the *Northerner* and other river steamers were fairly common. On Aug. 7, 1856, an excursion party left Anson Rood's Wharf at the foot of Main Street and made its first stop upstream at Wade's place at 6 a.m. By 8 a.m. it had reached the landing near Charles Mann's tavern-house ten miles north of the city; and by 9:30 a.m. the excursion passed Wylie's tavern and shortly DuBay's trading post, Whitehouse Landing at Knowlton about a mile and a half above DuBay's, then Warren's Mill, Drake's Landing, Bean's Eddy, and at 3 p.m. arrived at Little Bull. It is not clear from this whether passengers were allowed ashore at any of the above points, but it would appear that some stops were made as it should not have taken the steamer nine hours between Stevens Point and Little Bull. On the other hand, low water was often a problem. Alex Wallace recalls a family story about the arrival in Knowlton of "Uncle" (George) Whitney. En route to the north, the family had purchased a cow in Stevens Point; while the other members and their baggage went on board the steamer, Daniel Whitney, a brother to George, led the cow on foot to Knowlton on the same day and arrived ahead of the steamer. The other men had been forced to get out in the water and push in order to negotiate several spots on the river.

On March 31, 1859 a second steamboat, christened

<sup>1</sup> *Pinery*, March 15, 1856.

the *City of Stevens Point*, made her trial run under Martin Perkins, master. The ship was scheduled for daily service to "Mosinee" — one of the first times this name is used instead of the more familiar Little Bull Falls. By 1860, the name of the above steamer may have been changed to *City Belle* which by then was making "regular trips to Mosinee."<sup>1</sup> By 1864 the steamer *Star* was making daily runs to Mosinee.

River steamers continued to operate from Stevens Point into 1890s although by that time were being used mostly as excursion boats.

The main stage lines appear to have been discontinued in the 1870s, but some form of stage transportation between Amherst and Stevens Point continued as late as 1901,<sup>2</sup> and Abbott ("Abbe") Boyington, operating the star route from Stevens Point to Alban post office around the turn of the century, also carried passengers.

Milwaukee and Chicago newspapers in the 1860s were reaching Stevens Point in one day after publication and letters from New York in four days. In the 1870s, the United States mail was turned over to the railroads running through the county, not without a fight from the stage lines, and star routes were established to carry mail to the rural post offices. Most of these were discontinued shortly after the turn of the century and replaced by rural free delivery, abbreviated R.F.D. One of the first mail carriers from Green Bay to Plover may have been Olaf E. Dreutzer,<sup>2</sup> the same who in 1846 was licensed to operate a "grocery" at Plover.

The first rural delivery route in the county was laid out late in 1900 and the contract for carrying the mail was awarded to Smith Harroun at \$500 a year. The route went from Plover to Liberty Corners and east to St. Patrick's church, thence northeast to Carey Corners, thence west along the "Lombard road" (roughly Trunk D) and back to Plover for a round trip of 30 miles. In 1902

<sup>1</sup> *Pinery*, June 15, 1860.

<sup>2</sup> *History of Waupaca County*, p. 157.



three rural routes out of Stevens Point were established with W. F. Cartmill on Route 1, William Dergan on Route 2, and F. Campbell on Route 3.

Harry Whipple of Lanark recalls that when the first mail routes were established, the farmers were advised to buy a standard type red mail box with lock and key. If several boxes were situated at a given corner even as it happens today — convenient for some and inconvenient for others — the red mail boxes were placed a few feet apart, not all on a single buggy wheel as often happened later. When the mail carrier approached, he stopped his horse, or horses, in the middle of the road, got out of the buggy and, carrying a big ring of keys, opened the mail boxes. After depositing the mail, each box was again locked. This precaution seems a bit odd to a later generation which has grown up with no locks on its metallic mail boxes. However, tradition lingers, for even the latter are equipped with a latch for a padlock which no one bothers to use. The lock-and-key type mail box might suggest that people at the turn of the century were less trustworthy than they are today, which is unlikely, but it was no doubt easier to trifle with a mail box 50 years ago when travel was slow and travelers few. Moreover, the system of money orders has made trifling with the mails unprofitable. Nor does the modern mail carrier get time to read the postcards.

\* \* \*

Lacking a river to serve a pioneer community, even in a limited manner, the one avenue to the outside world which people waited for and dreamed about in the hinterlands of the Wisconsin frontier in the 1850s and 1860s was the railroad. This was the new invention which was making sport of the bad wagon roads, sand hills, sloughs and swamps.

And wherever the railroad went, it attracted a crowd of local people who drove in from miles around to watch

the track layers and to greet the first passenger train. Years after the first train came in, it was still a source of wonderment to hear the hoarse whistle of the engine echoing back and forth through the forest or across the prairie several minutes before it came into view. As the black monster moved closer to the depot, the bell began to ring, growing louder and more insistent, demanding of everyone to clear the tracks. Looming larger in front than behind, the engine slowed down, huffing and wheezing, still talking for all to hear. Suddenly it came to a noisy, metallic halt and the cylinder behind the high iron wheels let loose with a terrific WOOSH which shot steam clean across the depot platform. After that it just stood there, thumping in low pulsating beats, impatiently waiting for the engineer to turn it loose again. Barefoot boys gingerly picking their way down the platform through the small cinders dropped from the smokestack were wont to gaze admiringly up to the engine cab window at the man with the long visored cap and blue handkerchief around his neck. He was a genius.

Thus for the next half century or more the railroad became a part of the American legend, and no less so in Portage County. But with most things, even the rail road, it had to be bought with a price which, in the amount of discord and suffering it brought to many in the county, was high. And yet the county needed the railroad if it was to survive on a competitive basis with other counties, and the business men and farmers — although not all the latter realized it — also needed it desperately.

Up to 1860 the southern part of the state was served by two east-west railways connecting Prairie du Chien and La Crosse to Milwaukee with branch lines, including one north from Horicon to Berlin and one to Oshkosh. And when Ellis wrote his *Hand Book* in 1857 he included a map of a projected route of the "Milwaukee-Horicon-Stevens Point Rail Road" which was to cut diagonally through the state from Milwaukee to Superior via Stevens Point. No railroad reached Stevens Point until 1871 and when it did, it came by way of Menasha

and Waupaca, not Berlin, under the name of the Wisconsin Central. When promoters of the projected Horicon line to Stevens Point came up to sell stock in the company in the mid-1850s, at least one town board met to vote on bonding the county. Diarist Lombard tells us that he went to the polls in Lanark on Oct. 15, 1857 to vote on "the county given bonds to amt (amount) of \$200,000 in exchange for that amt of capital stock of the Milwaukee & Horicon Rail Road." He fails to say whether he was for or against it. Meanwhile, some 6,000 investors, many of them farmers including some from Plover and Buena Vista townships, bought stock in the Horicon line against a mortgage on their farm or property. The stock company sold these mortgages to investors in the East and when the railroad company failed in the panic of 1857, the stockholders were holding worthless paper which the Eastern interests forced them to redeem or lose their property. This became known as the "Horicon Swindle" and left a bad impression about the railroad companies which lasted many years. One who bought stock in the Horicon railroad was Almon Maxfield who mortgaged 129 acres of land about a mile southeast of Plover for \$1,100. His certificate is dated July 1, 1856 with maturity falling in ten years at eight per cent interest.<sup>1</sup> It looked like a good investment.

In an effort to stimulate the construction of railroads, the federal government, which held most of the lands taken over from the Indians, began making grants of these lands for the purpose of encouraging investors to build railroads through the several states. On May 5, 1864 the Congress made a grant of 839,276 acres to the Winnebago and Lake Superior Railroad and the Portage and Superior Railroad companies which included every alternate section of land ten miles on either side of the railway right-of-way along the proposed routes to be followed by the two lines. These two companies consolidated in May 1869 and on Feb. 4, 1871 became the Wisconsin Central Railroad, which in 1909 was leased to the Soo Line.

<sup>1</sup> In collection of Regional History Research Center and Records Depository, Library, Wisconsin State College at Stevens Point.

The most interested backer of the original Wisconsin Central from Menasha to Stevens Point was Judge George Reed of Manitowoc, and the leading backers in Stevens Point were Matthew Wadleigh, a member of the original board of directors, and Almanson Eaton. On Feb. 4, 1871 contracts were let for the building of the line from Menasha, and on Nov. 15 the first construction train pulled into Stevens Point. This was as far as the railroad went until the early spring of 1872 when the track laying was resumed northwest to Colby, and eventually to Superior.

The city of Stevens Point purchased the right-of-way through the city and donated it to the railroad, but in making this grant, specified that the division point, the shops and roundhouse would remain forever in the city. In writing up this contract the financiers, Gardner, Colby & Company, left out that portion of the contract and the omission was not discovered until 1886 when the company decided to move the main shops to Waukesha. Only then did the city realize the deception. The gradual removal of the division point and shops continued down to 1899 by which time a dangerous situation had arisen in Stevens Point because workmen who had spent their lives in the yards were about to lose their jobs. The *Stevens Point Journal* on Sept. 30, 1899 called it "the most arbitrary exhibition of capitalistic power that has taken place in Wisconsin for many years [and] is just the sort of thing that breeds anarchists. . ."

The timetable of the Wisconsin Central on June 16, 1888 reveals that there were five passenger trains west daily, three passenger trains south, three freight trains west and three freight trains south. In addition, Stevens Point was served by two passenger trains on the Green Bay line south and east, and two passenger trains south and west. On Aug. 28, 1957 the Soo Line was operating four passenger trains, that is, two each way, and 12 freight trains daily, and four freight trains daily except Sunday; there was no passenger service into Stevens Point on the Green Bay spur from Plover. On Jan. 4,

1959 still another reduction in passenger service on the Soo Line was adopted which allowed only one daily passenger train west and one east. Stops at Custer, Amherst Junction and Amherst, which had been served since the railroad was built in 1871, were also dropped. Low passenger usage and resultant deficits were cited by the railroad company for the cutbacks. On the other hand, it also portended better and faster service on the remaining trains.

The first Diesel locomotive to operate at Stevens Point began on Aug. 26, 1942 as a yard engine. The first road Diesel began Sept. 13, 1948 on train No. 24. The last steam locomotive to operate in or out of Stevens Point was 2711 on Dec. 21, 1954, passenger train No. 1.

The employees of the Soo Line in Portage County are represented by the following unions: Order of Railway Conductors; Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen & Yardmen; Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers; Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen & Enginemen; Railroad Yardmasters of America; Brotherhood of Railway & Steamship Clerks, Freight Handlers, Express & Station Employees; Order of Railroad Telegraphers; Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees; American Train Dispatchers Association; International Association of Machinists; International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers; Brotherhood Railway Carmen of America; International Brotherhood of Firemen, Oilers, Helpers, Roundhouse & Railway Shop Laborers; and Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen of America.

The big fight in the early 1870s arose not over the Menasha-Stevens Point line, but the building of a railroad from Portage to Stevens Point. The County Board proceedings are marked by numerous entries, some page-long or more, referring to action taken on the bonding of the county to support this line. In a special election held Dec. 2, 1871 the county voted to buy \$100,000 in bonds, but when the builders failed to begin construction in the next two years, it is quite understandable why the people went to the polls and voted to rescind their bonded indebtedness. On June 18, 1875 the County

Board commenced suit in Boston for the recovery of the bonds which, mysteriously, had been smuggled out of the county into Boston banks. While the case lingered in the courts for years, construction on the railroad actually began in October 1876. A stringer correspondent in Bancroft of the *Stevens Point Journal*, under date line of Dec. 18, 1875, had this to say: "The locomotive has at last traveled the entire length of our town. . . The bell on the locomotive is the noisiest and can be heard the furthest of any bell we have heard — except our two legged belles. . ."

If the Portage line reached Bancroft in December 1875 it appears that the last section to Plover was a long time being completed, probably because of the marsh. The Portage line continued in operation through World War II and on Nov. 9, 1945 all stations were closed; in 1946 the tracks were removed.

A third railroad into the county was the Green Bay & Lake Pepin chartered in 1866 to build a line from Green Bay to the Mississippi River. Construction was begun in 1870 and by 1872 the tracks had been laid through Portage County via Amherst Junction and Plover. In 1881 a spur was laid to Stevens Point. For a time the name was changed to the Green Bay & Minnesota Railroad and eventually to the Green Bay & Western.

To judge from an article in the *Plover Times* of Oct. 25, 1872, the arrival of the railroad in that village was a great occasion. Said the *Times*: "Hurrah! Ring the bells! Fire the guns! Bring out your fire crackers and pop guns! Never mind the powder, St. Patrick's eclipsed! Fourth of July is nowhere! Thanksgiving is in order! For sixteen long and weary years the inhabitants of Plover have been looking, toiling and hoping for a railroad. . . But now we've got a RAILROAD! Hear it O doubter despite all your prophecies to the contrary — the Green Bay & Lake Pepin R. R. is finished to the village of Plover. . ."

A fourth railroad, chartered in 1871, was the Wisconsin Valley which originated at Tomah, went north via Centralia (Wisconsin Rapids) and Junction City to Wau-

sau. The track layers passed through Junction City in 1874 and reached Wausau the same year. The building of this line had its background in an old feud between Wausau and Stevens Point. In 1854 the voters of Marathon County approved a bonded indebtedness to build a plank road from Wausau to the Portage County line. Work on the road was begun in 1857 and completed in 1858. But there is no mention in the proceedings of Portage County about extending the Marathon plank road into Stevens Point. According to Judge Louis Marchetti, Portage County's failure to complete the plank road "created an unfriendly feeling in the minds of the Wausau people. . . and asserted itself finally in the determination of the Wausau business men to resist the building of the Wisconsin Valley Railroad to Wausau via Stevens Point, leaving the two cities unconnected by railroad except by way of Junction City, no doubt to the detriment of both places. It is surmised if not susceptible of proof, that the sum of \$25,000 given by a large number of the business men of Marathon County, nearly all Wausau men, as an additional contribution to the Wisconsin Valley Railroad after it had already contracted with the county for the building of the road to Wausau, was expressly given on condition that said railroad should not run into Stevens Point. They seemed to fear that if the road once struck Stevens Point, some mysterious influence would prevent the building of the road to Wausau."<sup>1</sup>

However, when the railroad reached Wausau, the latter appeared willing to forgive Stevens Point as the Portage County proceedings carry a vote of thanks to the Common Council of Stevens Point for inviting the members of the board "to participate in the pleasures of an excursion to the city of Wausau on the occasion of the late Rail Road Celebration at that place. . ."<sup>2</sup>

A fifth railroad, the Chicago & North Western, came into the county via Almond village from Fond du Lac. An account of the building of this line is furnished in an

<sup>1</sup> Louis Marchetti, *The History of Marathon County*, (Chicago: Richmond - Arnold Publishing Co., 1913) pp. 93-94.

<sup>2</sup> *Proceedings*, Board of Supervisors, Vol. III, p. 526.

article by J. F. Frost who gives a vivid description of the repeated entreaties made by the citizens of Almond to the several railroads to run a line through that community. The main inducement in the 1890s was the export of potatoes which had become the cash crop in the area after wheat raising declined. With statistics and arguments, the Almond people appealed to the railroad authorities but the latter treated these enquiries with the disdain of empire builders — which they were.

Finally, the Chicago & North Western decided to build a line from Wild Rose to Almond which would continue to Grand Rapids to create a through service from Fond du Lac. Ground at the Wild Rose end was broken in December 1900 and on Aug. 27, 1901 the track layers crept into Almond village. Of this memorable occasion, Frost wrote: "There was much rejoicing. All Almond celebrated. A free dinner was served in the grove, the Belmont band provided music, and hundreds celebrated the day as one awaited for many years. . ."

With the coming of the railroad, property values went up, warehouses were built to handle the potato business, the Portage County Bank was opened, hotel accommodations were expanded and new stores and saloons blossomed in the warmth of the glow cast by the fire of the "Iron Horse."

The sixth and last railroad line to enter the county was a spur of the Chicago & North Western laid from Elderon to Rosholt village in 1903 (See *Rosholt, The Village of*). Interestingly, in the latter part of 1904, when the new electric power station was being installed at Jordan on the Plover, a news report referred to the possibility of establishing an electric car line from Stevens Point to Rosholt to serve as a connecting link between the Soo Line and the North Western with stops at Jordan, Ellis, Polonia and Batory. However, nothing came of this. "Batory" was actually the name of a creamery built by George W. Allen some 30 rods west of the Tomorrow River on the town road between Hamilton School and a saloon-store once known as "Little Wau-

<sup>1</sup> *Stevens Point Journal*, Sept. 22, 1926.



pun," in the town of Sharon not too far from what was once known as "Stanislawski's Corners." The name Batory, famous in Polish history and today a passenger line sailing between Poland and New York, was probably suggested by Joseph Omernick, secretary of the creamery association of which Nick Kruzicki, Sr., was president.

\* \* \*

Less than nine years after the Wright Brothers successfully demonstrated the world's first airplane at Kitty Hawk, Virginia, Frank Castory, a Hungarian-born barnstorming pilot flew into Stevens Point in a Curtis byplane and landed at the Fair Grounds to thrill a large crowd of people, most of whom got their "first glimpse of one of the marvelous scientific and mechanical inventions of the century." The pilot boldly predicted that the day would come when the airplane would be used "as a medium of transportation, for scouting purpose in warfare, and in several other capacities beneficial to humanity."

One of the first to encourage local flying in Stevens Point after World War I was Paul Collins, a U.S. Army flight instructor during the war. Local interest in airplanes picked up in 1929 when Harold ("Vic") Cartwright bought a Pheasant biplane which was based on a small strip now part of Point Manors in the town of Hull. Another field developed after 1936 east of McDill (Whiting) where Mr. & Mrs. Felix Gauthier began giving flight instructions, did charter work and crop dusting. But both of these fields were inadequate to the rapidly-improved models of aircraft developed in the 1930s. When World War II broke out, and a pilot training program was inaugurated at the Central State College, trainees at first had to be sent to fields at Wausau and Wisconsin Rapids. Steps were taken to develop a new airport, and, under Raymond M. Rightsell, coordinator of the training program at the college, Wilson S. Delzell and Guy W. Rogers, the matter was laid before the Common Council which agreed to buy

<sup>1</sup> *Stevens Point Daily Journal*, Centennial Edition, June 28, 1958.

land northeast of the city and build an airport. The field was dedicated Sept. 20, 1942 and from that day forward became a focal point in pre-flight training for army and navy cadets as well as civilian pilots.

The first manager of the Municipal Airport, A. E. Padags, was also the first to attempt commercial aviation out of Stevens Point. He maintained a DC-3 after World War II which made a daily flight in the north central part of the state. But the first permanent airline was established in 1948 by Francis Higgins of the town of Stockton who, in cooperation with the Clintonville Four-Wheel Drive Corporation, flew a five-place Howard between Stevens Point and Clintonville. This line was shortly taken over by the Wisconsin Central Airline which began with five-place Cessnas and later with two-engine, ten-place Lockheeds — actually only nine passengers were carried because the tenth place was removed to make room for communications equipment. In 1951 the Lockheeds were gradually replaced with Douglas DC-3s, the “workhorse” of World War II fame. In 1958 this airline, which had meanwhile reverted to an old name used by Higgins, namely, North Central, maintained 11 to 12 flights a day with connections to Chicago, Wisconsin cities, Minnesota and North Dakota. And as 1958 passed into 1959 North Central was looking forward to replacing the DC-3s with the larger Convair airplane.

The present manager of the Municipal Airport is Kenneth D. Barlow, assisted by Earl G. O’Keefe.

But the invention that was to transform the social and economic pattern of life in Portage County after the turn of the century, even as it would around the world, was neither the railroad nor the airplane, but the automobile, first referred to by a horse-conscious generation as the “horseless carriage.” Perhaps the first of these to reach Stevens Point was an electric single-seater, the product of a new firm known as the Western Automobile Company, which demonstrated the vehicle on Jan. 7, 1900 in the hope of attracting local capital for a factory to be located in Stevens Point.

The demonstration failed to interest a sufficient number of backers. In 1902 an automobile was the featured attraction at the annual fair in Stevens Point. This was also a one-seater known as the Orient gasoline runabout and was operated as an exhibition stunt by Adolph Hoeffler. A year later the first locally-owned runabout, an Oldsmobile, also gasoline-powered, was acquired by E. H. Joy who was accompanied on the trip from Milwaukee by a mechanic-chauffeur provided by the manufacturers.

The race was on.

## THE ETHNIC GROUPS OF PORTAGE COUNTY

### *The French*

The French were probably first among European man to view the depth of the pine forest and to taste of the spring-fed streams of Portage County. In the century that followed the discovery of the Mississippi River by Marquette and Joliet in 1673, it is quite possible that French fur traders and missionaries followed the Indian portage from the Wolf River across the southern townships of the county to the Yellow Banks at Plover. Or, they could have gone from Green Bay southwest on the Fox, down to the portage between the Fox and Wisconsin near modern Portage city and from there on foot or horseback north along the left bank of the Wisconsin. Perhaps this was the route followed in 1790 by Louis DuBay, father of John DuBay, when he reputedly journeyed from Green Bay to the modern township of Dewey.

Some 40 years later John Baptiste DuBay, son of Louis DuBay, came to Fort Winnebago (Portage city) probably with the intention of journeying north from this point to visit the spot his father may have suggested to him as a place to establish a trading post.

A number of French-Canadians were also attracted to the county after it was opened up to settlement along the Wisconsin River in 1836. The history of the area was not new to the French by any means and they were no doubt in close touch with developments in Wisconsin before and after it gained statehood. When the log jobbers moved in and the sawmills were established on the rivers and streams of the county between 1837 and 1857, many of the employees both in the woods and in the mills were French-Canadians. While some were transient workers, moving north with the receding

timber belt, others remained in the county and became farmers and tradesmen, and because they were among the first, were able to select choice lands on the prairie in south Stockton and northern Buena Vista. The 1876 plat includes such names as Doville, Packard, Bussard, Bourcier (originally Busha, today Boursier), Pollit, and two Precourt families, as well as a De Clark, probably of Belgian ancestry. However, the first Belgians in the county to apply for citizenship at Plover in 1853 were Hypolete and Alexander Jack, who settled for a time in Sharon. Charles Van Hecke, also born in Belgium, applied for naturalization at Plover in June 1855.

While the early French explorers left little material improvement in Wisconsin, they left a legacy of travel and high adventure. A lasting reminder of their association with the early history of the state are the descriptive names of rivers, lakes and places, many of which were given the French translation of Indian names. In Portage County the Little Eau Claire and Little Eau Pleine are reminders of the French heritage. And when Hathaway surveyed the Indian strip in 1839-40 he came upon a clearing about four miles north of modern Stevens Point on the left bank of the river in Sec 10 called *Presque Prairie*, meaning, in French, a meadow or grassland on a peninsula.

In addition to the French-Canadian communities, a small settlement of French-speaking Americans developed in Linwood, mostly along the river road between the ferry point in Sec 23 and Conant Rapids. These would include, among others, the families of Puariea, Couture, Chepreau, Fountain, Trudell, and Shaurette. Mrs. Malvina Trudell, nee Puariea, of Stevens Point, recalls, as a girl, that her mother usually addressed her in French, but she replied in English. Most of the original French families in Linwood conversed in French, she said.

A third generation farmer of French descent is Martin Steffanus, whose grandfather, William, settled on land north of modern Ellis in the mid-1850s. William was born in Etting, Lorraine, and served seven years in the

7th Regiment of Artillery as 1st *cannonier*, and later married Melanie Paupaun. While the couple spoke French between themselves, William was also conversant in German.

Two other pioneer families from France were John Nicholas Dehlinger, who settled in Stevens Point, and applied for naturalization at Plover on Aug. 11, 1866; and Michael Milius, who made his first application in Milwaukee County in 1852 and later settled in the township of Almond. However, both families allegedly spoke German which suggests that they too originated in Lorraine. Two families of French descent who settled in the old town of Eau Pleine were Peter LeMeux and Joseph Paupon (or Paupaun), both listed in the 1863 tax roll.

*The English, Irish and Scots.*

Like the sun that never sets on the British Union Jack, it may be said that the sun never sets on the Yankee-English of Portage County, for their descendants may be found in nearly every township, village and city and their headstones in nearly every cemetery.

The vast majority were descendants of Englishmen, probably one, two or even three generations removed, who had lived in the New England and Middle Atlantic states, the Ohio Valley, and Canada, before making the final move to the Indian Land. They were the original pioneers of Portage County beginning in the late 1830s and continuing into the 1850s when they began to be superseded by immigrants from the United Kingdom and from Europe. They were the people who organized government on the county and township levels, built the first roads, saw mills, grist mills, established business firms and hotels, began logging off the white pine and running the rivers.

Most of the southern townships of the county — Belmont, Almond, Lanark, Buena Vista, Plover, the central sections of Amherst, the southwest of Stockton, the Mill Creek district of Linwood, the southern sections of Pine Grove — in addition to the northern sections of Dewey and Eau Pleine, were pioneered largely by these Yankees and their families. In the very beginning

there was a dearth of women folks among them and not a few took on Indian women as wives or consorts.

While many went into farming, others speculated in land and timber. Some were shrewd traders and, with luck, made money; others lost out, for even when timber was cheap or free as part of the public domain before the government surveys were made, the cost of getting the lumber to market was dear and filled with hazards. The rapid turn-over in saw mill ownership and the frequent dissolution of saw mill partnerships both reflect the need for ever and ever more investment capital, apparently not available locally, which had to be provided by Eastern or out-of-state interests.

But those who would get rich quick and failed often found more modest means of making a living and stayed on in the county because the opportunities for advancement were still about them. And for many years political office on the state, county and township level was dominated by these pioneers from the Eastern states and Canada.

While a number of families of French-Canadian descent settled in the county, it would appear that an equal number of English-speaking Canadians came to the county, some, no doubt, descendants of the United Empire Loyalists whose fathers fled from the colonies and settled in Canada as political refugees from the American Revolution. It was natural that they would be attracted to the timber business in Wisconsin because they already had considerable experience in lumbering and river running and it was from these men as well as the "state-of-Mainers" that the technique of rafting lumber on the rivers was learned. Among the first English-speaking Canadians who applied for naturalization at Plover were Jermiah D. Rogers, 1849; George W. Kollock, 1849; William D. Spurr, 1851; Matthew Wadleigh, 1858; Hugh Black, 1859; Moses Puariea, 1864; John Sanders, 1870; and George A. Whitney, 1871.

The first Englishman to apply for naturalization at Plover was Robert Hutchins of England's Lincoln

County — land of Robin Hood and Sherwood Forest — who entered the United States at New York in 1835, appeared at Plover on May 19, 1845 and signed an "X" in his application for naturalization. He did not remain long in the county. The second Englishman to apply was Isaac Coulthurst, who left Liverpool in October 1841 and landed at New York in November the same year — obviously a fast passage even if he sailed on Oct. 1, and landed in New York in the latter part of November. He applied for naturalization at Plover on Nov. 11, 1845 and was followed by Abraham Coulthurst, born in Manchester, England, in 1820, who came to New York in April 1849 and applied at Plover on Nov. 5, 1849. This pioneer family has many descendents in the county and elsewhere in the state.

Other early English emigrants to the county were James Morrison, who applied for naturalization at Plover on Nov. 6, 1849; William Weston, lumberman, who applied in 1850; Louis Shelburn, pioneer farmer of Buena Vista, 1854; Ellis Hicks, pioneer farmer of Almond township, 1855; Joseph Diver, pioneer farmer of New Hope, 1866; John W. Northfield, mentioned briefly in early Sharon road statements, who applied in 1859; William Reading, lumberman on the Plover, 1860; and Benjamin Radcliffe, pioneer lumberman of Pine Grove, 1860.

The first and apparently only man to give his birthplace as Wales was John C. Clarke who entered the United States at New York in June 1844 and applied for naturalization at Plover on Nov. 6, 1849.

In addition to American-born families, the county in the early 1850s attracted a number of immigrants from Ireland who came after the great potato famine of the late 1840s. At the first election of Hull in 1859 English names like Redfield and Wollingworth are balanced against Irish names like Finneran, Sweeny and Leary. Many of the Irish, finding the choice lands of the southern townships occupied, began to settle on the Stockton prairie and in the lower sections of Hull. But the emigration of the Irish to Portage County



started long before the potato famine. Among the earliest were Hugh McGreer of County Antrim, Robert Campbell of County Tyrone, and Henry Clinton of County Armah, who all applied for naturalization in 1845, followed by Patrich O'Riley in 1846, Angus (often misspelled "Agnes") McCauly in 1848, and Patrick Dunn in 1849.

Although Stockton was settled largely by Irishmen mixed with a few Yankee-English and Scandinavians looking for farm lands in the 1850s and '60s, there was only one Irish descendant on the male line still operating one of these farms in 1958; namely, Leonard O'Keefe who lives near Arnott. The deed on this land shows that his grandfather, Patrick O'Keeffe, acquired four government lots in Sec. 7 in 1863.

Off the south porch of the house built by the O'Keefes stands a big elm tree which is regarded with a certain amount of veneration. This, according to family tradition, is a "witness" tree, (also referred to as a bearing tree) presumably used by the government surveyors in 1851-52.

Aside from the town of Stockton and the Stevens Point North Side, a fairly homogeneous settlement of Irishmen developed along the Portage road (H-51) below Keene and south into Almond township around Lone Pine. As the majority moved to the county from Wilmington, Delaware, these people were known as the "Delaware Irish." George McMulkin may have been the first to settle here before the Civil War and in letters to friends in Wilmington, boasted about the "big peaches in Portage County." When his friends later settled in the district they never ceased joking about the "big peaches." McMulkin was appointed postmaster at Lone Pine in 1866.

John Fisher, 90, living in retirement on H-51 near Lone Pine, son of John Fisher, Sr., who also came from Wilmington and settled in Sec. 8, recalls most of the "Delaware Irish," namely, George ("G. P.") Nugent, Daniel O'Connell, D. McGuire, John Brady, Nathaniel Brown (whose wife served as the midwife to the com-

munity,) James and John Russell, Charles Sharkey, Nicholas Burns (all confirmed in 1876 plat) in addition to others who settled in the lower sections of Buena Vista; namely, James and Hugh Tracy, James McGinly, and James Turrish (also confirmed in 1876 plat).

These Irishmen were all Catholics except John Fisher, Sr., and the Russell Brothers. All were allegedly Democrats except the two Protestant families in addition to James McGinly who voted the Republican ticket while his brother, John, in the words of Fisher, "was a rank Democrat."

A number of small homes built by these pioneer Irish families may be seen today along this stretch of H-51, the mark of age and neglect upon them, yet singularly beautiful in their historic association with a proud and courageous people. This community originated St. Martin's Catholic Church which, although located in the town of Almond, still uses a letterhead "St. Martin's Church Buena Vista" which suggests that in the early period it was considered part of the Buena Vista community.

A small Irish settlement also developed in the western sections of Lanark and eastern Buena Vista, later centered by the establishment of St. Patrick's Church where most of these pioneers are buried. In addition, an Irish colony developed in the old Fourth Ward of Stevens Point north of the slough, all within a few blocks of the Wisconsin River.

Many of the Irish who settled in the eastern part of the county, particularly in Lanark and Stockton, spoke Gaelic, their native tongue. Most spoke broken English, and because they were surrounded by Yankees and English-speaking people, the jump from Gaelic to English for them was not as great as it was for the Germans, Norwegians or Poles. But the second generation Irishman in the county usually spoke no Gaelic. The Irish were also inclined to Anglicize their names to conform to English usage, for example, the name O'Bouren which was changed to Burns. Some of the second-generation Irish also acquired a working vocabulary of Po-

lish for it was about this time that the Poles began to settle in the township.

In Lanark township, some time before the turn of the century, the Irish, known as a people with vivid imaginations the world over and whose private worlds are often peopled with leprechauns, began moving an old cemetery located south of H-54 to the new cemetery at St. Patrick's church established in 1888. Among those buried in the former cemetery were several who were known or believed to have died of smallpox. The fear of smallpox was still so great that these graves were not moved lest the living be infected. According to legend, the dead who were left behind became disconsolate at this deliberate oversight and assumed the form of a fiery dog which roamed the neighborhood at night and threatened anyone who drew near the graveyard. One of the Phelps boys, whose family once operated the Phelps tavern-house a short distance up the road, was driving by the graveyard one night when one of the horse's hoofs struck a stone which sent off a spark. Thinking that the fiery dog had run directly under the wagon, young Phelps whipped his horses into a furious gallop and arrived home white in the face. But the fiery dog apparently has been consumed in its own flames as it has not been seen in many decades while the several neglected gravestones nearby, buried in the grass, are still there — mute reminders of bygone fears.

The Scots, some from the Eastern states, some from Scotland, began moving into the southern Wisconsin in the 1830s and by the early 1850s into central Wisconsin. One of these districts — it cannot be called a settlement — developed in Lanark where Scottish names are evident in the early tax rolls such as Swan, McGregor, Haskell, Erskin and Hutton. While the English and Irish names far outnumber the Scots in Lanark, the latter, although few in number, had their own way about naming the township.

### *The Scandinavians*

The Scandinavians in Portage County include, in the order of their numbers, the Norwegians, Danes and

Swedes, although it is difficult at this point in time to determine whether the Danes by 1900 outnumbered the Swedish immigrants or whether the opposite was true. Both were a minority group as compared to the more numerous Norwegians and the honor of being first in the county among the Norwegians probably falls to one Elisha Larson, born in the "Province of Norway & Kingdom of Sweden."<sup>1</sup> His naturalization papers reveal that he left Stavanger on the west coast of Norway, entered the United States at New York in September 1838 and applied at Plover on April 16, 1846. He remained in the county at least until Oct. 22, 1847 when he mortgaged 80 acres of land south of Plover village to one Elias Larson<sup>2</sup>, and apparently moved away.

The second Scandinavian was probably Olaf E. Dreutzer<sup>3</sup>, a Swedish immigrant who spent his youth at sea before entering the United States. In 1836 he volunteered for service against the Seminole Indians of Florida, and trained as a lawyer before coming to Plover at the age of about 30. The exact date of his arrival is uncertain, but on Oct. 5, 1846 the county commissioners approved his bonds "to keep a Grocery . . . for the space of nine months from the 21 day of August 1846."<sup>4</sup> The following year he applied for a license to operate a tavern-house but the petition was denied. He may have been selling liquor without a license because in 1848 the county commissioners ordered John Delaney, attorney for the county, to "commence immediate suit . . . against Olaf E. Dreutzer for . . . selling spirituous liquors without a license."<sup>5</sup> This suit was dropped when he agreed to buy a license which, according to an entry in the county treasurer's book, cost \$75. But liquor in his locker or not, Dreutzer was the first man in Plover

<sup>1</sup> *Application for Citizenship*, Microfilm Reel 177.

<sup>2</sup> *Mortgages*, Book A, p. 148.

<sup>3</sup> All indentures in Portage County on Dreutzer refer to him either as "O.E." or "Olaf" Dreutzer. Whether he changed his given name in later life, which seems unlikely, it appears as Otto Emanuel Dreutzer in an autobiographical sketch published in the *Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly* Vol. I, no. 3, p. 14.

<sup>4</sup> *Proceedings*, County Commissioners Sessions, Vol. I, p. 84.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127.

to operate a "grocery." He remained only a few years and moved to Waupaca County where he played a leading role in the establishment of the county seat at Waupaca and in the organization of several towns and villages. He was named county judge in 1859 and in 1861 was commissioned a brigadier general of the militia by Governor Alex W. Randall. In 1862, in recognition of past political favors, Lincoln appointed him United States consul to Bergen, Norway, a post he filled with distinction until 1867. He died in Kentucky in 1900.

There is reason to suspect that Dreutzer was instrumental in bringing Andrew Week, a Norwegian, to the Pinery in the late 1840s, and the two men formed a partnership to build a saw mill on the Big Eau Pleine in what later came to be Sec. 13 in the town of Green Valley, Marathon County. The first indenture on this mill appears on March 2, 1850 when Dreutzer sold his half interest in "the Upper Saw Mill on the big Oplain River . . . commonly known as the Dreutzer & Wicks Mill" to John W. Batchelor and Amaziah Hayden, both of Plover township, for \$2,456. In the Helgeson account of the Week mill, it is stated that in 1849, Andrew Week, for reasons of ill health, turned his interests in the mill over to a brother, John, and left to prospect in the California gold fields.<sup>1</sup> His brother later acquired the other half interest held by Batchelor and Hayden.

The brothers Andrew and John Week, according to Hjalmar R. Holand, were from Eidfjord in Hardanger, Norway. They came to the Wisconsin Territory in 1840 to work in the lead mines. In 1844 John Week went to Dodgeville where he, together with a John Lee, also a Norwegian, opened the first shoe maker shop in the territory outside of Milwaukee. A few years later both the Week brothers were attracted to the Pinery.<sup>2</sup>

Early indentures refer to the name Week as "Wicks"

<sup>1</sup> *Deeds*, Vol. A, p. 380.

<sup>2</sup> T. (Thor) Helgeson, *Fra Indianernes Lande*, (publisher not given; probable date of publication 1911-1915), p. 153.

<sup>3</sup> Hjalmar Rued Holand, *De Norske Settlementers Historie*, (Ephraim, Wis., 1908), p. 177.

which was probably a Yankee way of transliterating the Norwegian name *Vik* (pronounced Veeek). The name "J. R. Week" appears as a witness to a sale of lots made in Plover village in 1849 by Churchell Ellison and wife to John W. Batchelor. Ellison, a Swede, applied for naturalization at Plover on April 6, 1847 and is also listed in the 1847 census of Plover Portage Precinct. In 1848 he served as an election clerk and judge, but later indentures suggest that after 1849 he was no longer a resident of the county.

The Week mill on the Big Eau Pleine burned in 1880 and the company moved its operations to Stevens Point where the sons of John Week, namely, Nelson A., Edmund R., and Andrew R., under the firm name of the John Week Company, operated a saw mill and planing mill on the left bank of the Wisconsin River a short distance above the slough. The firm continued in business for the next 40 years or more.

From local legends still repeated among the Norwegians of the county as well as in anecdotes recorded by Helgeson, there can be little doubt that John Week was one of the most extraordinary personalities in the Wisconsin Pinery. When the big sawmill on the Eau Pleine burned in 1880, Helgeson writes, the mill hands fought like tigers to smother the flames and when this failed, stared in unbelief at the holocaust. At this moment Week produced a jug of whiskey and placed it on the log truck — a low-wheeled vehicle used for hauling logs to the mill — and said to the men: "*Idag gaar det godt for Viken! Kom naa Karer aa drikk!*" (To-day things are going fine for Mr. Week! Come now men and drink!)"<sup>2</sup>

John Week learned the great American pastime of poker playing and by his shrewd intelligence became somewhat of an expert, particularly when matched against the Scandinavian newcomer boys who worked for him. Every Saturday night, according to legend, he paid off the men and then in the poker game that fol-

<sup>1</sup> *Deeds*, Vol. A, p. 390.

<sup>2</sup> *Fra Indianernes Lande*, p. 153.

lowed, often lasting all night and Sunday, recouped nearly all he had paid out in wages.

Nevertheless, because he was an all-around man, Week was considered, by early labor standards, a good man to work for. A number of families living around the sawmill had their own shanties and Week referred to these people as his *husmaend* and *husmands-kjaer-ringer* (literally, “house men” and “house man’s wives”), a term in Norway referring to tenant farmers who lived in a cottage on the estate of the landlord and were obligated to him. The fact that Week used these terms reflects a paternalistic attitude toward his workers.

Among the anecdotes about John Week in the Helgeson account appears this story:

“Week had his whiskey barrel in an outside cellar. Soren (not identified) was one of those who worked in the mill on the night shift and, as a comfort and encouragement to himself and others on the shift, went into the cellar with a tin pan and tapped Week’s whiskey barrel. As he (Soren) did not have any light along, he merely inserted his index finger into the tin pan and let the whiskey run until it reached the middle joint on his finger when he calculated he had enough for the night crew. Now Week served good chow and as long as the night shift received an extra helping from Week’s whiskey barrel, they lived like kings. But one night a big lock appeared on the cellar door, closing a glorious period in Week’s camp.”<sup>1</sup>

On one occasion, Marcus Thrane, a former leader in the labor movement in Norway, came to lecture in Stevens Point. The Helgeson account refers to him as a “free-thinker,” meaning that he held beliefs independent of the established church whether in Protestant Norway or Catholic France, which was a heritage of the period when men were persecuted for religious heresy.

When Thrane came to Stevens Point in the early 1880s, Week was in the city and decided to attend the lecture although he did not approve of Thrane’s views.

<sup>1</sup> *Fra Indianernes Lande*, p. 184.

Before leaving for the meeting he took several drinks to bolster his courage. A big crowd had already gathered in the lecture hall, and when Week arrived he walked straight up to Thrane and said, in mock irony, "I understand there is going to be a service (i.e. religious) here tonight. Maybe we need this, but knock me down if I haven't forgotten my hymn book, so I haven't anything more to do here," turned and stalked out.<sup>2</sup>

Interestingly, in recounting this incident, Helgeson fails to grasp the social significance of the Thrane movement in Norway, for Thrane was not only an advocate of union labor but also a strong backer of emigration to America.<sup>3</sup> For holding these views he was denounced by the ruling class, actually an aristocracy of inherited privilege and wealth, held in jail and finally hounded out of the country by an anti-labor government.

Among the first Scandinavians employed at the Week mill, Helgeson lists Osten Ostenson Ingolfsland, better known as "Big Osten" but to native Americans as "Big Ole;" Johan Peter Peterson, better known as "Peter Svenske" (Peter-the-Swede); Nils Olson Hereid and wife Tone Kittilsdatter, who served as cooks in the Week boarding house; Ola Klemmetson, Steffen Nygaard, Soren Hermanson, Hans Heisholt, Knut Jorgenson, Knut Olson Lia, Lars Gjertson and wife Gundvor Lia, Andreas Greson and wife, and Isaac Aamodt.<sup>3</sup>

John Week influenced many of his countrymen to come and work for him on the Big Eau Pleine, and after 1887 his sons employed newcomers on the log drives down to Stevens Point when the famed circled W became a familiar stamp mark on the Week-owned logs. Relatives of the lumberjacks and river drivers no doubt influenced others to come and work in the Pinery, or to establish boarding houses, wagon shops, blacksmith shops and shoemaker shops in Stevens Point. Norwegians applying for naturalization in Circuit Court at

<sup>1</sup> *Fra Indianernes Lande*, p. 185.

<sup>2</sup> Theodore C. Blegen, ed., *Norwegian Emigrant Songs and Ballads*, (University of Minnesota Press, 1936), p. 146.

<sup>3</sup> *Fra Indianernes Lande*, pp. 153-154.



Plover in the early 1850s appear to outnumber all other foreign nationalities.

One of the first Norwegians to settle in Stevens Point, according to Helgeson, was Maria Scott (1796-1885) who married a Scotsman, John Scott, and operated a boarding house for a time.<sup>1</sup> Helgeson fails to give the maiden name of Mrs. Scott and it also appears that the name John should have been Joel, although both appear in early indentures of the county. The boarding house is believed to have been located immediately north of the Clark Street Bridge near the river bank.

A favorite stopping place for the Scandinavian lumberjacks in the late 1850s was a boarding house operated by Christian Haagensen (or Haakonson).<sup>2</sup> A daughter, Emma, according to legendary accounts, was taken by ox-cart all the way to New Hope's North Church for the baptismal service. She later married Ludwig P. Moen, also a Norwegian pioneer of the county, who later operated a store in partnership with his father-in-law and eventually a general store of his own which he sold in 1935. Moen had a distinguished record in city affairs, having served as city treasurer several terms, 24 years as city assessor, and 42 years as public administrator. He died in 1958 only a few weeks from his 100th birthday.

Other Norwegians who operated boarding houses in Stevens Point, probably from the late 1850s into the 1870s, were Nils Jenson and wife Karen; Thor Aamundson and wife Helga; Kristian Olson Loberg and wife Johanne; Ola O. Wrolstad, Jr. and Ola Landsverk; and Hans Johnson Landsverk.<sup>3</sup> In naming these people, Helgeson refers to their establishments as *gjestgiveri*, i.e. hotel, although it appears that they were more closely associated with the idea of a boarding house.

One of the first blacksmiths and wagon makers, if not the first in Stevens Point, was Lars Iverson from Har-

<sup>1</sup> *Fra Indianernes Lande*, p. 144.

<sup>2</sup> Martin Ulvestad, *Normaendene i Amerika, deres Historie og Rekord* (Minneapolis, Minn., 1907), p. 50.

<sup>3</sup> *Fra Indianernes Lande*, pp. 144-146.

danger, but when Iverson settled in the little village (ca. 1850) he went by the name of Louis Moe.

The first Norwegian religious service in Stevens Point, according to Helgeson, was conducted by the Rev. Nils Brandt in 1857 in a shanty of Knut Kvie which stood hard by the Wisconsin River. There were nine worshippers in attendance.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the Rev. O. F. Duus, first pastor of the Scandinavia congregation in Waupaca County, in a letter written Oct. 23, 1855, mentions seven congregations he was serving and the seventh one was "the Norwegian Congregation in Stevens Point."<sup>2</sup> No organization, however, developed until 1873 when the Trinity Lutheran Church congregation was founded.

A man and woman to remember among the Norwegians of Stevens Point were Ole and Gunhild Reton (originally Reiten) who settled briefly in New Hope and around 1870 moved to the city. Their home, which Helgeson refers to as a *gjestgiveri*, became a receiving station for newcomers who were aided and guided in finding work and lodgings. Niels and John, their sons, founded a jewelry and optical store on Main Street in 1886 which continued in business for several decades.

While reference has already been made to Norwegians in the county before 1850, Martin Ulvestad, who spent a lifetime collecting information on the Norwegians of America, believes that the first to actually settle in the county was Matias Lia from lower Telemark, Norway. He came to Amherst township in 1849, he says, and was followed later by Andreas Natkjem from Laurdal, Anders Nederlo and Peter K. Hilbus from Lerdal, together with Aslak Moe and Peder P. Kjen from Gjerpen and Skien.<sup>3</sup> (The Hilbus took the name Hiller and Kjen became Kjaer, today pronounced Care.)

<sup>1</sup> *Fra Indianernes Lande*, p. 147.

<sup>2</sup> Olaus Fredrik Duus, *Frontier Parsonage, The Letters of Olaus Fredrik Duus, Norwegian Pastor in Wisconsin, 1855-1858*, translated by Verdani Study Club of Minneapolis and edited by Theodore C. Blegen, (Northfield, Minn., The Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1947), p. 5

<sup>3</sup> *Normaendene i Amerika*, p. 49.

In another account, Hjalmar Holand states that the Hillers, Moes and Kjaers came into Amherst and New Hope townships in 1853<sup>1</sup> but fails to mention Lia or Natkjem, who may have moved away or adopted a different name; nor are they listed in the first available tax roll (1863) of the town of Amherst.

In 1854, according to Holand, several more Norse families entered eastern Portage County as well as Scandinavia township in Waupaca County (but by no means the first). He makes no distinction between the two townships, but it is possible through the tax rolls to pick out some, if not most of the names which became identified with Amherst and New Hope, namely Lars L. Loberg, Lars Gordon, Simon and Johan Loberg, and Simon Aamodt together with sons Nils and Simon, Jr., As Scandinavia township was made up mostly of families from around Skien and Ringbu in Norway, a close kinship existed for many years between the townships of Amherst and Scandinavia across the county line.

Despite the earlier settlers in New Hope from Gjerpen and Laurdal, the township became identified shortly as the biggest settlement in America of people from Gudbrandsdal, a long valley running through central Norway. Within the valley itself people are identified by lesser valleys and districts, one of which is Gausdal. Some of the first *Gausdolars* to reach New Hope in the years 1855-56, according to Holand, were Johan Hole, Amund Mortenson, Simon and Johan Iverson, Hans Kankrud, John and Hans Hagemoen, Johannes Aamodt, John Reiton, Simon Rustad, Ole Lien and Anders Nyflodt. These names do not all appear in the first tax roll of 1857, although this does not preclude their residence. The Holand account explains that Anders Nyflodt, one of the 1855-56 arrivals, returned to Gudbrandsdal in 1857 to a district around Ringbu, as distinct from Gausdal, where he aroused so much enthusiasm among his countrymen for "*det deilige Indiland*" ("this

<sup>1</sup> *De Norske Settlementers Historie*, p. 201.

beautiful Indian land") that a big group of immigrants followed him back to New Hope.<sup>1</sup>

The traffic between Norway and New Hope township was so heavy in the latter decades of the 19th Century that the Thingvalla Steamship Line found it advantageous to maintain a booking office in Amherst (advertised in the *Amherst Pioneer* in 1886). The steamer *Thingvalla* (pronounced Ting-volla) operated by this line was so well known to the people of New Hope that when one of the first Buick cars made its appearance under local ownership, it came to be called "Thingvalla," which of course led to endless jokes and good humor.

From New Hope, the Norwegians began to spread north in the 1860s into the future town of Alban where, together with the village of Rosholt, the second most important settlement of Scandinavians developed. The collective "Scandinavians" is used here because the movement into Alban was led by a number of Danish families, mostly from the island of Lolland off the east coast of Denmark. While some of the Norwegians of Alban were relatives of people in New Hope, several families were the children of earlier pioneer families of the town of Scandinavia in Waupaca County such as the Brekkes, Lystuls and Bestuls.

Around 1870, several families, also related to settlers in Scandinavia and east Alban, began to settle in the town of Sharon west of the Tomorrow River. All who settled here were blood relatives or related through marriage. The land they chose was hilly, stony and sandy, but it was not too far from the river where they got their drinking water, and it was near marsh hay which could be cut without having to clear the land. The several families followed one another to the Tomorrow River settlement no doubt because they were related and could be of help and comfort to one another in the first years of uncertainty in a strange but wondrous land. The fact that they picked out poor land

<sup>1</sup> *De Norske Settlementers Historie*, p. 202.

apparently was secondary in importance to the fact that they could be together.

Among the settlers in Sharon was Knut Halverson, writer of the only Norwegian pioneer diary available in Portage County. Halverson, along with the other Norsemen in this settlement who left Sharon in the 1880s, moved to the eastern part of Alban. Asked why her father moved away, Maren Paulson, nee Halverson, said: "Father thought it was too far to go to church. We had to go way to New Hope in them days and all our people were settling in the eastern part of the township, too."

Here, probably, the expression "our people" gives a clue to the main reason for the Scandinavian movement away from Sharon. No doubt the several families could have continued to live here and make a fair living, particularly with the Boyington sawmill nearby for extra employment. But, in the 1870s, Sharon began to fill up with Polish settlers and to the Norwegians, the former were foreign to their religious beliefs and alien to their language because English was not yet, in a restricted sense, the lingua franca of these specialized areas. Moreover, these earlier Norwegian families had become acquainted with new opportunities and more fertile lands and, finding themselves being surrounded by an element alien to their own, decided to move away, some going to western Wisconsin and Minnesota, some to New Hope and Alban. Although Halverson, like the others, got along with his neighbors, his sense of belonging was not being satisfied, and for him it probably meant more to belong to his "own people" than to belong to the country of his adoption which was still an impersonal factor in his life. In 1878, for example, his diary reveals that on the Fourth of July he was out in the field working, as if there was no Independence Day, nor does he make any comment, for that matter, on the Norwegian Independence Day on the 17th of May.

In the 1880s and 1890s, a number of Scandinavian families, probably more Swedes than Norwegians, be-

gan to settle in the town of Eau Pleine, some no doubt former mill hands in the Week mill. But no special Swedish settlement developed in Portage County, and most of the Danish families who settled in Alban and Belmont soon lost their specific identity through inter-marriage with neighboring Norwegians or Yankees.

And what kind of people were these Scandinavian immigrants who helped to conquer the forests of northern Portage County, who cut down the white pines and Norway pines, the hemlocks and spruce? Many of them came from the land and most of them sought out land when they came, the sons and daughters of peasants and tradesmen. But after they got their own land and built their own cabins and shanties, it is obvious that many looked back upon the Old Country and wondered whether they had not made a mistake in coming to America. The diary of Halverson reveals he was extremely lonesome during the first years after he settled in Sharon, and on the inside back cover of the diary, a special notation appears, "Norway my Norway." Other sentiments creep in from time to time which suggest that he was desperately unsure of himself and, in his own words, "fed up with time," at the age of 29! This strong feeling for the home he left behind was widely shared by other immigrants in their first years, and more so by the women than by the men.

These early Scandinavians also brought with them a strong attachment to the Lutheran Church and as soon as there were enough of them to support a pastor, they commenced work on a church building. Before that, they met in each other's homes to read the word of God to each other, many still profoundly influenced by the great revivalist, Hans Nilsen Hauge, of the late 18th Century.

When they came they brought with them their Old Country clothes, habits, customs, dialects and even superstitions. As a child the author recalls that his grandfather, J. G. Rosholt, never allowed anyone to whistle in his house. This was considered an eccentricity on his part, but may have been a superstition that went back

to the fjords and fjelds of Norway, and even unto the deserts of Mongolia where the Mongols to this day regard anyone who whistles with apprehension for fear that he will stir up the winds.

Many of the Scandinavians were slow to use the English language because it sounded strange to them. Moreover, anyone who attempted to forge ahead of the others in the use of it was considered a "smart-aleck," too good for his own people. When the pastor at Alban Lutheran Church attempted, in the late 1880s, to preach a sermon in English, the congregation was so deeply shocked by his irreverence that he was forced to discontinue until several years later. Polish and German pastors, whether Protestant or Catholic, ran into the same opposition in other churches of the country, even down to World War I, by which time English had been introduced on alternate Sundays in most churches.<sup>1</sup>

One Norwegian pioneer family who defied the taboo against learning English were the Gasmanns of Amherst. Said Miss Minnie Gasmann: "Mother didn't want to hear us speak a word of Norwegian. No sir-ee, we were Americans and we had to speak English right from the time we were kids, and when the neighbor ladies came to visit mother, they spoke Norwegian to her, but she answered them in English."

One of the reasons the Gasmanns could take this position, no doubt, was the fact that when the elder Hans Gasmann immigrated from Norway in 1843 with his family of 13 children and settled near Pine Lake, west of Milwaukee, he joined the Methodist Church, as there was no Lutheran Church in the community. When his son, Captain Johan G. Gasmann and family moved to Amherst in the mid-1850s, the latter continued his membership in the Methodist Church which in a sense set the family apart from the other Norwegians who belonged to the Lutheran Church. Moreover, they were among the first Norwegians to settle in Amherst township which gave them the prestige which goes with any-

<sup>1</sup> See Einar Haugen, "The Struggle Over Norwegian," *Norwegian-American Studies and Records*, 1952), Vol. XVII: 1-35.

one who comes *first* as compared to those who come *second*.

An old photograph of the Gasmann family estate in Norway reveals that Squire Hans Gasmann was a man of considerable wealth. Asked why her father (Johan) came to America, Miss Minnie Gasmann said: "Father always had said that, despite their big farm in Norway, America offered greater opportunities for everyone." Hans Gasmann had twice been elected a member of the Norwegian Parliament (*Storting*). A photograph in the collection of granddaughter Minnie Gasmann reveals him, pork-chop whiskers, attired in a long, formal coat bedecked with civilian medals which were probably decorations from more than one government.

The racial exclusiveness exemplified in the reluctance to learn English by most Europeans who settled in the county is sharply reflected in the directives of the New Hope Norwegian Mutual Fire Insurance Company, which, when it was founded in 1887, wrote out policies only for Scandinavians. When it was proposed at the annual meeting in 1889 to include other nationalities, the stockholders left it up to the board of directors whether "to insure americans and germans or not."<sup>1</sup> The board reached no decision on this matter and when it came up again at the annual meeting in 1890, the matter was tabled and the final breakthrough did not come until the 23rd annual meeting held January 1910 when the directors adopted a resolution to "take insurance of all *nationalities* (nationalities) within the respective territory. . ."<sup>2</sup> Little headway was made, however, before World War I which probably acted as the main catalytic agent to force European nationality groups in America to become full-fledged Americans, if not entirely in thought, at least in action. To be otherwise now was considered un-American. Meanwhile, the New Hope Mutual has dropped the "Norwegian" from its title. Organized at the instigation of the Rev. K. O. Eidahl, pastor of the North New Hope Lutheran

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, New Hope Mutual Fire Insurance Company.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*



Church, it has since developed into one of the strongest local fire insurance companies in Wisconsin.

The marriage of Olaus Hansen Rambeck to Rande Larshursen (?) on June 26, 1856 in New Hope township is the first among Norwegians in the county of which there is record. The ceremony was performed, according to county records,<sup>1</sup> by O. F. Dints of Scandinavia, no doubt an error for *Duus*, who served the pioneer congregation in New Hope as visiting pastor. The second marriage was between Gunder Olson Wimme from Holt, Norway, and Berte Helene Rambeck, which took place on Dec. 13, 1856 with Duus officiating.<sup>2</sup>

The 1857 tax roll does not refer to Wimme, but to Gunder Olsen, and without the testimony of Helgeson, it would be difficult to identify Olsen as Wimme because some time between 1856 and 1866, the man who gave his name as Gunder Olsen became Gunder O. Wimme. He served as town chairman a number of years. Another change in names in New Hope was effected by Sondre G. Loberg, mentioned as one of the first town supervisors, who shortly after took the name Sundre Gunder-son, less Loberg. This was rather typical among the Norwegians of the early period. Many were known by names used in Norway and brought over to America and retained; others took the names of the valley or hilltop which identified them in Norway; most took their fathers' Christian name and added a "son" or "sen." As Ole (or Olaf) is one of the most common given names in Norway — after St. Olaf — a great many Norwegians came to be known as "Ole's son," or Oleson, later contracted to Olson.

Most families in Norway before 1800 did not have a surname and, as tenants or hired hands on the land, they were identified by the farm on which they worked. Thus when the feudal system was breaking up in Europe, men who had been known according to the place they lived or the work they did, took surnames related to the land or to their work. In Norway, a man who had

<sup>1</sup> *Marriages*, Vol. I, p. 31, Register of Deeds, Portage County.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

served as a tenant on the "north pasture" took the name *Nordhagen* with him to America. A name like Halvor H. Brua, which appears in the New Hope tax roll of 1900, suggests a man whose family lived near a bridge in Norway and was probably referred to as "Halvor-on-the-Bridge." The word endings of Norwegian names brought to New Hope also suggests associations which go back many centuries. For example, in the name Wogsland, the "land" ending signifies that this family in Norway was located on or associated with a piece of land which was under cultivation; the "rud" in Kankrud signifies a clearing; the "stad" in Rustad signifies a place or fixed residence, while the family of Helik Foss no doubt originated near a *foss*, meaning waterfall or cataract.<sup>1</sup>

Women, until their marriage, were known by their father's given name. In the New Hope treasurer's book of 1862 may be found a receipt for \$.72 on \$30 of personal property owned by "Anne Thorsdatter," which is to say, "Anne, the daughter of Thor." Several female members of the Alban Lutheran congregation are entered in the records of the 1880s as the "daughter of their father," a practice which appears to have been discontinued after 1890.

The early Norwegian women carried few Biblical given names. More were called after famous women in Norwegian history such as Ingeborg, Sigrid, Ragnhild, Karen, and Kjisten. Other common names were Anne, Maren, Maria, and Berte, with variations of Anne the most common of all, apparently after St. Anne who, according to tradition, was the mother of the Virgin Mary and patroness of women in childbirth.

The most common given names among the men were Ole, Nils (a corruption of St. Nicholas), Knut (or Knud), and Halvor, in addition to the Biblical Hans (a corruption for Johannes or John), Johan (John), Peder (Peter), Abraham, Thomas, and Matias (Mat-

<sup>1</sup> See Einar Haugen, "Names in a New World", *The Norwegian Language in America* (Philadelphia, Pa., 1953), pp. 191-232; see also Theodore Jorgenson, *The Cultural Development of the Norwegian People*, (Minneapolis, Minn., 1930), pp. 11-12.

thew). Among these Ole or Olaf was probably the most common and it was not unusual to name more than one son in the family by this name, the first-born being called "Big Ole" and the second or later son "Little Ole" even as one family is still remembered in east Alban. But worse fate, a man could become better known by his wife's name than his own. One who fell under this spell was Ike Anderson who married a Fjeldbo girl of Alban. As the Fjeldbos were among the earliest settlers, their name was well established when Anderson arrived later from Norway and married. He came to Portage County with the given name of Aslak, which he changed to Ike, but his neighbors referred to him neither as Ike nor Anderson, but as "Aslak Fjeldbo."

Most of the Norwegian names in the first New Hope tax rolls end with "sen," which has the same meaning in Danish. Even though Norway had been separated from Denmark since the Napoleonic wars, Danish cultural influence was strong, particularly through the Lutheran Church of Norway which still considered Copenhagen the source of ecclesiastical authority. This respect for Danish culture is noted in the spelling used by the first New Hope town clerk, a Norwegian, who wrote "sen" throughout the tax roll. As the years advanced, and as American cultural subtleties encroached on the European, more and more Norwegians in New Hope began to spell their name with a "son" instead of "sen," in this manner asserting their independence of Danish culture and the willingness to be identified with a new culture while retaining something that was Norwegian of their own.

Early Scandinavian weddings in the eastern part of the county were not quite as boisterous as the Polish weddings of Sharon, but a feature of the Scandinavian wedding was the shivaree (although not of Norse origin) which followed in the evening when the young men gathered at the home of the bride or groom and banged on tin pans, rang cow bells and even shot off guns to attract the groom who was then supposed

to treat from his own liquor jug. Later, it became more common for the groom to pay off the celebrants with a gift of one or two dollars to attend the nearest saloon for refreshments. Fred Dahlen of Rosholt village recalls the time, before World War I, when some 20 boys shivareed a newly-wed couple in east Alban. The groom donated the handsome sum of \$4 and the youths jumped into their rigs and drove west of Rosholt to the first "hop house," actually a saloon converted from a former hop drying house, and purchased a "double-header" (eight gallons) of beer. Stops were made on the road back but with no cups to drink from, the cow bells in the shivaree were used for cups — Vikings drinking from ox horns!

When the double wedding of Dorthé Margrete Klincke to Hans P. Anderson together with Johanne Nilsdatter Fjeldbo and Jens Lorentson took place in the late 1860s at the Hans Klincke home in east Alban — the first wedding in Alban says Helgeson —<sup>1</sup> the young folks gathered at the "Klingen" home to shivaree but failed in their mission when the two bridal couples hid away until the storm blew over. The custom of shivaree continued well past the turn of the century but after the coming of the automobile was largely defeated by newly-weds going off in a car on a honeymoon.

In the traditional Scandinavian wedding dress of the period, Dorthé Margrete, at the wedding referred to earlier, wore a neck-high ankle length dress of changeable purple-grey, hand made of wool and silk thread brocade, supported by petticoats and hoops of resilient steel. The waist was gored and fitted, the sleeves set to a yoke with drop shoulder effect. Around the yoke and lower part of the sleeve were three rows of velvet ribbon. She also wore a shawl with a wide border which appears to have been of Oriental design, as well as a silk belt and buckle, the latter a family heirloom from Denmark. The dress and shawl are still in the family collection, while the sash and buckle are exhibited at the Pioneer Museum in Rosholt village.

<sup>1</sup> *Fra Indianernes Lande*, p. 132.

Death in the pioneer period was a rather tragic affair both because the consequences could mean hardship and even poverty to the survivors if it happened to be the head of the family, and because the circumstances of providing for a funeral were primitive. Embalming fluids were not used and it often happened before the funeral that the corpse began to discolor and deteriorate. Lest the corpse be lying in a coma and come back to life in the grave, most early Scandinavian funerals were not held until the eighth day which was known as the period of *skindod* (apparent death).

Coffins were rude boxes of pine lumber made by a local carpenter who visited the family of the deceased and measured the corpse and built the box according to his own specifications. When the commercial type coffin came into use, it was shaped narrower at the feet than at the head, like an Egyptian mummy, although quite shallow. As a result the nose of the corpse came dangerously near the cover when it was closed. According to legend, one pioneer of Alban failed to get the cover down on his wife's nose and he slammed it shut with the words, "*Den store nesa var alltid i ve-gan!*" (That big nose was always in the way). The more fancy of these early coffins had a piece of glass across the upper end.

There was no hearse and the pine box was carried to the cemetery either in the farm wagon box or sleigh. The coffin was lowered into the grave with ropes or straps handled by the pallbearers. When the mechanical lift was first introduced by an Amherst undertaker at a funeral in north New Hope around World War I a visiting pastor refused to countenance it on the grounds that what was good enough for the past was good enough for the present.

One custom of the pioneer funeral, of which legends survive in New Hope, was to stop in front of each house en route to the cemetery and drink a toast to the departed. This may have been a tradition from pagan times in certain parts of Norway. But in the early days of New Hope there was such a shortage of places to stop,

the pallbearers, it is said, were forced to improvise on old custom by calling a halt at each mile post. One of the last funerals in New Hope accompanied by drinking probably was held before 1880.

Early funerals among the Scandinavians in eastern Portage County were by invitation. This, no doubt, was a tradition from the Old Country where it was necessary, owing to the few people who subscribed to a newspaper, to send a youth out to all the neighbors and personally bid them to "be so kind" as to attend the funeral. Until churches were built in Portage County, the corpse was taken directly from the house to the cemetery although this too was a custom long followed in the Scandinavian countries where the coffin was conveyed not to the church but to the front gate of the church. The pastor then came out of the church and met the funeral party at the gate, and, after a song by the *klokker* (precentor), the funeral party marched to the graveyard where the committal took place.

The custom of conducting funeral services inside the church probably began in the New Hope congregations after the "split" (*infra*) when both groups appeared anxious to be first to follow American custom in this respect. The custom of eating at a funeral is common in many cultures. In some districts of Norway food was served at the home of the deceased both before and after the funeral. Today most funerals among Scandinavians in Wisconsin end at the church basement for a lunch which has been prepared by the Ladies' Aid Society. This is a custom likely to continue as it provides an opportunity for relatives — who seldom see each other any more except at funerals — to exchange family intelligence and count the living.

The congregation of the New Hope Lutheran Church was organized Oct. 15, 1857, the first Scandinavian group to incorporate in the county although it was not before 1864 that work on the church building was begun. The Rev. Nils Bryngelsen Berge delivered the sermon when the church was finally dedicated in 1874. He was also the first pastor to be buried in the New Hope cemetery.

In 1887 the New Hope congregation became divided over the great theological debate of the period concerning predestination, faith and grace (*naadvalgs-striden*), and, while most remained in the original congregation, others left and built a new church about a mile or so to the south on the same road. The two churches, still active, have been referred to since as the North New Hope and South New Hope congregations, although both patched up their theological differences in 1917 to become part of the same church body. The "split" (*split-telse*) that followed in the New Hope congregation in 1887 also broke up the Alban Lutheran congregation, and those who left built Concordia Lutheran Church about a mile or so north on modern H-49.

Politically, the Norwegians, although a minority group in the county and rather isolated in the early period from the county seat by bad roads and slow transportation, have held several offices on the county and state levels. The first to achieve elective office on the county level was Ole O. Wogsland who was appointed one of the three district supervisors of the county in 1865 under an appointment by the governor. In 1866 he became a duly elected supervisor of the Second District and served until 1868. In 1874 he was elected register of deeds.

In 1889 John A. Murat became the first of Norwegian descent to be elected county judge, although as the name Murat suggests, the family is descended in the male line from a Frenchman. John Murat served as judge for so many years that, in the words of Helgeson, he "became an indispensable personality and, so to speak, a necessary inventory (*"uundvaerlig personlighed og saa at si et nodvendight inventarium"*) of the Portage Court House that anyone looking for him would always find him at his post."<sup>1</sup>

Three Norwegians have been elected assemblymen from the county although this office since pioneer times has been dominated by candidates from Stevens Point and Plover. The first Norseman to be elected was T. W. Anderson of Stockton in 1876, followed by P. N. Peter-

<sup>1</sup> *Fra Indianernes Lande*, p. 146.

son, of Amherst in 1896-98, and Ben Halverson of New Hope in 1922-26. Halverson was widely known before he entered politics as a "pump man," that is, one who drills for water and installs pumps and windmills. According to local legend, Halverson drove down so many good points that his neighbors began to joke about his "good" points and out of this developed a political campaign which helped him to win.

George B. Nelson, son of J. J. Nelson of Amherst, rose to county and state level politics. He attended public school in the village and later finished at the University of Wisconsin. After practicing law for a number of years in Stevens Point, he became district attorney and in 1917 was named president of the board of regents of the Normal School. Nelson Hall is named after him. Later, by appointment of Governor Walter J. Kohler Sr., he was made associate justice of the Supreme Court.

The Hon. Alexander Wiley, senior United States senator from Wisconsin, first elected to office in 1938, is a grandson on the maternal side of Mr. & Mrs. John Ekern. New Hope tax receipts reveal that Ekern first paid taxes on two forties in Sec 28 in 1863 (the Karl Kolden place.) Senator Wiley's mother, Sophie Ekern, was born in Norway, but spent her youth in New Hope and later found work in Stevens Point where she met her future husband, Alex Hvila, also known as Alex Alexson, a lumberjack and raftsman on the Wisconsin River. After their marriage in the early 1870s, they moved to Chipewa Falls where Hvila, in partnership with another Norseman, operated "Norway House." He also changed his name to Wiley.<sup>1</sup> Senator Wiley, accompanied by his first wife, visited the home of his maternal grandparents in New Hope in the 1930s before he was elected to office, and after becoming senator, has twice visited the scene of the old homestead to refresh childhood memories.

According to the census of 1850,<sup>2</sup> greater Portage County had a total population of 1,250. Out of this number there were 13 persons of Norwegian stock which in-

<sup>1</sup> Correspondence, The Hon. Alexander Wiley, May 18, 1956.

<sup>2</sup> Carlton C. Qualey, *Norwegian Settlement in the United States*, (Northfield Minn., Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1938), pp. 221-225.



cluded one family and eight single individuals of whom 11 were born in Norway and two in Wisconsin. In 1860, four years after Portage County was constituted in its present limits, with a total population of 7,507, there were 621 persons of Norwegian stock which included 123 families and 50 single individuals of whom 407 were born in Norway and 214 in Wisconsin. In 1870, Portage County, with a total population of 10,634, had 1,415 persons of Norwegian stock which included 231 families and 141 single individuals of whom 741 were born in Norway and 672 in Wisconsin.

These population figures reveal that more than half of the Norwegians who settled in the county before 1860 came here from other parts of the state, while in 1870 the proportion was much higher, many of the Wisconsin-born, no doubt, originating in the first Norwegian settlements around Muskego in Waukesha County and Koshkonong in Jefferson County.

### *The Germans*

Three rather widely scattered settlements developed in Portage County which came to be associated, loosely speaking, with immigrants from Germany or Prussia, one in Almond, one in Sharon and the third in Grant. The settlements in Almond and Grant were mostly Germans of the Protestant faith and in Sharon Germans of the Catholic faith. Churches were built in these three settlements which conducted services in the German language, while a German parochial school was established in connection with the Lutheran church near Kellner.

The first German-born resident of the county to apply for naturalization was John Stumpf who entered the port of New York in 1841 and applied at Plover on Nov. 6, 1849. Apparently well versed in the English language, he quickly rose to prominence in city and county affairs and by 1854 was clerk of circuit court.

But the first German-born immigrant to settle on the land was probably George Frederick Schilling, born in Berndorf, principality of Waldeck, who, with Daniel Shafer, another native of Waldeck, entered the port of New York on July 24, 1849. Schilling, a political refugee

from the abortive German revolution of 1848, together with Shafer, joined his countrymen flocking to the city of Milwaukee. But according to his daughter, Mrs. Emil (Lauretta) Zimmer, "he didn't like all that card playing and drinking that was going on there and got out of Milwaukee as far as he could." A master cabinet maker and carpenter by trade, he made his way to Portage County via Sauk City where he stopped to apply for his first naturalization papers on Nov. 2, 1850.<sup>1</sup> From Sauk City, according to Mrs. Zimmer, he continued north on foot and arrived at "Buena Vista House" thoroughly exhausted by muddy roads and rain. Here he was engaged by Kollock & Wigginton to make the doors, sashes, and window trimmings for the unfinished tavern-house then located east of modern Keene. Apparently Shafer assisted in this as he was asked to bring Schilling's carpenter tools from Milwaukee. Probably on the strength of his work here, Schilling was hired by George Neeves to make the furniture for a newly-built tavern-house at Grand Rapids and for a time Schilling conducted a cabinet shop in that village. Later, he may also have built Cottage Inn below Plover.

But Schilling found that despite fairly steady employment he could not get ahead, chiefly, because he was forced to barter most of his labor for produce, including timber on one occasion which he had to raft to St. Louis and sell. Most of the pioneers who built stores, saw mills or tavern-houses had, no doubt, stretched their credit facilities to the utmost in order to get started and made every effort to exchange their own wares for labor whenever possible. This is a phase of pioneer life often overlooked and it continued down to the turn of the century although on a diminishing scale.

Thus Schilling, out hunting one day along the west Bluffs of Almond township, looked over the oak barrens and undulating countryside to the east and decided to become a capitalist in his own right by buying a farm and raising horses to cater to the stage coach lines and freighters. As he was among the first in the area, he

<sup>1</sup> *Application for Citizenship*, Microfilm Reel 180.

had his choice of land and there is little doubt that he picked one of the finest farms in the county in Sec 5 not far from the stage road to Berlin. While the indenture on part of this land reveals that Schilling purchased it on Sept. 1, 1854 from Mathias Mitchell he probably made arrangements to settle on it before that time as family legend insists that he built his own house there in 1853 — a house which the Indians allegedly referred to as the "big white wigwam" although by no stretch of the imagination is it big nor does it resemble a wigwam. It is still standing, a model of cottage-type architecture familiar in the early history of New York state, two stories high, the second story low-ceilinged with roof slanted directly over the inner rooms. Small, horizontal windows were cut below the eaves and later a columned porch was built below these windows extending the length of the house.

George Schilling seemed determined to shut out all memory of his youth in Prussia, never talked about his part in the revolution and insisted on having his children learn English even though he conversed with his wife in German. "Father didn't want us to be saying *der, de* and *das*. He wanted us to speak good English," commented Mrs. Zimmer who betrays not the slightest trace of a German accent in her speech (d. 1958).

But, while some of the Germans turned their back on Europe, they could not entirely change their palate and one of the favorite dishes remembered in the German community of Almond township was potato dumplings (*kartoffel kloese*) made mostly of potatoes, flour and salt which, when tossed into the pot, sank to the bottom like stones, but when boiled, rose and whirled around. Chopped meat and vegetables were often inserted in the middle of these dumplings.

Schilling School was established about half a mile from the farm and when the children came home for lunch, often bringing three or four neighbor children along, they all had to sit quietly and bow their heads while Schilling read this prayer:

Himmlischer Vater

Wir danken Dir dass Du uns wieder hast  
 das Morgenlicht erblicken lassen.  
 Sei Du ferner mit uns.  
 Wir Danken Dir Fue Speise and Trank  
 die wir wor uns haben  
 Lass Deinen Segen auf den selben ruhen.  
 Gib uns darum Kraft und die Staerke  
 Deinen Willen zu tun hienieden  
 und endlich mach uns selig aus Gnaden. Amen.  
 (Literally: We thank Thee Heavenly Father  
 that you us again have the morning light let  
 be seen. Be further with us. We thank Thee  
 for the food and drink which are before us.  
 Let Your blessings rest upon them. Give us  
 therefore power and strength. Your will to  
 do here on earth and finally bless us with Thy  
 grace. Amen.)

The same prayer was read at dinner and supper by omitting the morning salutation and substituting:

Leiber volles Treurer Gott (Loving full true God)  
 Sie Du ferner mit uns, etc.

Schilling was followed into Almond township, among others, by Daniel and Michael Shafer, Andrew Lutz, Isaiah Felker, John Walter, Jacob Helback, William Schleicher, Frederick H. Young, Jacob Mehne, and the several branches of the Hetzel family who at one time were so numerous in a district around a local store north of Almond village that a post office, called Hetzel, was opened here in 1896.

Meanwhile, a second Germany community, led by Joseph Oesterle, developed in northeast Portage County. A passenger ticket made out in Oesterle's name reveals that it was picked up at Le Havre, France, April 23, 1849.<sup>1</sup> Oesterle also left Prussia for reasons connected with the new spirit of the revolution but apparently was not a member of the underground. According to family legend, Joseph Oesterle's father was a forest warden whose main duty in Germany was to keep poachers out of a game reserve maintained by a titled family. During the

<sup>1</sup> In collection of Miss Frances Oesterle, Stevens Point, Wis.

period of the revolution he clandestinely permitted a few outsiders to enter the forest for needed food and game and among these who took advantage of this leniency was his own son, Joseph. When word of this finally got back to the owners, new orders strictly prohibited ("streng verboten") any further poaching, and anyone caught was to be shot on sight. At this point son Joseph allegedly said, "I can't let my father shoot me, and I said Joseph it's time to leave."

In Milwaukee, where Oesterle remained for three-four years, he renewed an acquaintance, apparently through family connections in Prussia, with Joseph Schlitz then developing his famed beer cellars which would one day make Milwaukee famous. Oesterle's decision to leave Milwaukee was probably prompted by Thomas Stark, to whom he was related by marriage. Stark, with his three sons, Anthony, Wendell and Alois, had begun business in 1853 by shaving shingles and hewing timbers about a mile west of modern Knowlton on the Wisconsin River. Oesterle remained with the Starks for about a year and in 1854, dissatisfied with his present arrangements, picked up his gun and ax and headed back into Portage County on foot until he struck a lake, later to be named after him. He probably noted the deer coming down to drink and the lily pads around the shores and reputedly said, "Joseph Oesterle, this is your home." In the next several years he acquired around a thousand acres of land in east Sharon. At least two forties in Sec 26 were acquired under a pre-emption entry made May 24, 1856 under the swamp lands act approved by the state legislature in 1855.<sup>1</sup> The 1876 plat reveals that even after he had sold land to men like Kozickowski, he was still holding more than 800 acres.

And here in Sec 3 (T.24,R.9) Joseph Oesterle, whose photograph in later life strongly resembles Benton's famed portrait of John Brown, built a log cabin and trading post where the Indians came to exchange furs for flour, salt pork, beads, and calico. Said granddaughter Frances Oesterle: "Grandmother had chickens and they

<sup>1</sup> *Pre-emption Certificates*, Register of Deeds, Portage County, Vol. I, p. 221.

(the Indians) would buy eggs from her. Once a week in that cabin he (Joseph) had a dance for the Indians. Had liquor, but he measured it out for them, only so much, no more. They were camped all around him on the lake and they used to pick blueberries, highland berries, and dry them. Made little racks and put a canvas on, and turned the berries. And they were there the whole summer and even winter."

The exact date of Oesterle's arrival in Sharon is uncertain, but his reputation as a hunter had already reached the ears of the editors of the *Pinery* who on Oct. 25, 1855 noted that "that invincible hunter, Mr. Oesterle . . . keeps his friends supplied with venison and bear meat. He killed three deer and four bears last week."

During the Sioux Indian uprising in Minnesota in the early 1860s, the Indians around Oesterle Lake began to show signs of hostility and one morning while Mrs. Oesterle was down to the lake for water, she was shot at, whether with a rifle or bow and arrow is lost in family legend. In any event the aim was poor and after that the Indians were persuaded to leave.

Far more interesting is the story of hidden gold found in the cellar of the Oesterle frame house which replaced the original log cabin and is still standing. A few years after he came to Sharon, Oesterle learned that a boy, to whom his wife was related in Milwaukee, had been left an orphan as a result of an outbreak of cholera. Oesterle drove his team to Milwaukee and brought back Albert Steiner and raised him as one of the family. In the 1890s, after Joseph passed on, Steiner, considerably older than August, only son of Joseph, kept insisting that he had once seen "grandfather" bury gold in the cellar. No one took him seriously. This went on for several years until one day, Mrs. August Oesterle, at Steiner's insistence, went down to the cellar and began digging and shortly struck an old soda can, rusted and scarcely in one piece, but filled with gold coins. She continued to dig and found many more rusty tins. Said her daughter Frances: "I can see her yet, coming upstairs, with her apron filled with gold coins. And we counted \$2500 in fives, tens and twenties!"

But she dug only in one corner of the cellar!

Oesterle was followed in Sharon by a number of German families, some of whom were born in north France. Most of them settled on the watershed to the west of the terminal moraine and around modern Ellis such as Nicholas Eiden, Richard and Nicholas Gross, Nicholas and Balthasar Bender, Conrad Miller, and Michael Mersch who, although born in Holland, was considered more German than Dutch. Henry Windorf, born in Germany, settled in northwest Alban as did several Simonis families, although early indentures identify them with Hull and north Sharon.

A custom observed in the early 1900s, at least by the Germans in north Alban, was to shoot the old year out. Usually the men marched down to the village of Rosholt and took up a position in the middle of the intersection near the State Bank and commenced firing. Meanwhile, Wolding Hardware Store, located on Main Street a few steps from the intersection, kept a delivery horse called Lazarus (pronounced *Lah-zah-roos* in Norwegian) in a small barn back of the store. On one occasion, Martin Wolding said, laughing good naturedly at the memory of it, when the German boys began shooting off their guns, Lazarus, failing to grasp the import of the moment, kicked up his heels and nearly knocked out the end of the barn.

The only community named after a German in Portage County is Kellner, probably for Ernest Kellner, in the town of Grant, where a small trading center developed after the Chicago & North Western Railroad came in 1901. But the district to the east along both banks of Buena Vista Creek, more on the left than on the right bank, had long been settled by German immigrants most of whom appear to have originated in Mecklenburg-Schwerin, Prussia. The 1876 plat includes German names, all within a mile of Buena Vista Creek and within two miles of Kellner, such as Mueller, Krueger, Timm, Panter, Knueppel, Schmidt, Klug, Knoll, and Goldberg, Descendants of most of these pioneers are still living in the township.

A feature of the early German settlement around Kellner was an outdoor brick bake oven used in common, no doubt a European tradition, also seen in other German communities of the state. Indoor stoves that could be used for baking were a luxury in the 1850s in Portage County and those who could afford to buy them had to drive a team to Berlin or Portage city even as Almon Maxfield is said to have done when he settled east of Plover.

The German settlement along Buena Vista Creek developed in the early 1860s and by 1865 there were sufficient families to form a German Lutheran church congregation called St. John's. The church building came some years later. The devotion of these German pioneers to their faith is reflected in one of the by-laws of the constitution adopted in 1870 which held that every person who neglected to partake of holy communion for longer than one year was to be expelled from the congregation. But building the church, parsonage and later a parochial school was slow work. Although labor was mostly donated, contributions in money were minuscule and each additional facility for one of the buildings, such as a chimney, became a major problem for the trustees. In the early 1870s the alms-bag, or *klingelbuetel*, a velvet purse with small tassels underneath tied to the end of a staff, was introduced for Sunday collections. But even as late as 1899 total collections for the year from the *klingelbuetel* amounted to only \$24.11. Norwegian Lutherans in Rosholt as late as World War I used a red plush bag with gold fringes, no doubt originating in the German *klingelbuetel*, which was extended to the end of each pew by the ushers holding a staff. The bag was deep and prevented anyone from making a note of what his neighbor had contributed although a rough estimate might be made by the sound of the coin. Probably around 1930 the alms-bag was replaced by the wooden plate which unfortunately exposed the contributions.

Services at St. John's at Kellner were conducted in German until the beginning of the 1930s when English was substituted at least once a month. In 1932 the original



German constitution was supplemented by the adoption of an English constitution.

The church minutes also reveal that in 1897, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Missouri Synod, the Kellner congregation installed 50 hitching posts in front of the church and another 50 at the cemetery. This gave the horses an official place to stand; it is assumed that after one or two services each family tied the horse, or horses, to the same post by right of pre-emption, even as the members occupied the same pews in church, the women on the left, the men on the right. Mingling of the sexes in the Protestant churches of the county probably began after World War I and especially after women won the right to vote and decided to overlook the Pauline admonition that "it is a shame for women to speak in the church."

One of the first German-born business men to settle in Stevens Point was Adam Kuhl who applied for naturalization in Circuit Court at Plover in 1856 and later began business in the city as a brewer, although not the first. However, the movement of the German-born to the city did not become noticeable until the 1860s. Among the later arrivals were William Zimmer who entered the United States at New York in 1856 and applied for naturalization at Circuit Court in Plover in 1859; Alex Krembs, who entered at New York in October 1856, probably settled in Stevens Point a few years later, and in 1871 got his final citizenship papers; John Peickert, who entered at New York in September 1853, applied for naturalization in Fond du Lac County in November 1855, and got his final papers in Stevens Point in 1871; Nicholas Jacobs, who entered at New York in June 1865 and applied for naturalization at Plover in 1867; Michael Hartl (today Haertel) who entered at New York in August 1866 and applied at Plover in 1867; Alois Hartl who entered at New York in October 1866 and applied at Plover in 1867; Joseph and Anton Green who immigrated from Prussia in June 1865 and both applied at Plover in 1867; Henry Hoeffler, who entered at New York in April 1850, made his first application in New

York and got his final papers at Plover in 1868; and Henry Vetter, who entered at New York in March 1868 and applied for naturalization in Circuit Court in 1870, presumably in Stevens Point.

In the late 1870s and 1880s a number of immigrants from Austria-Hungary, usually referred to in Stevens Point as "the Bohemians," began to settle in the old 5th Ward, including Mathias Adams, Martin Neuberger, Albert Zinniel, John Ruppelt, Stephen Roth, Martin Gabler, John Huber, Josef and Martin Rischel, Ignace Kolby, and John Hautzinger. Most of them attended St. Stephen's church in the beginning but in 1883 organized St. Joseph's Catholic Church where ground was broken on April 16, 1884. Another German congregation, St. Paul's Lutheran, a Protestant group, was organized in the city in 1872 and shared a church building with the Trinity (Norwegian) Lutherans on the corner of Strongs Avenue and Brawley Street until its own structure was completed in 1898. This was located at Center Street and Wyatt Avenue and was destroyed by fire in 1934 and since has been replaced by a beautiful building of Ellis stone. Another German congregation was organized in 1895 as the *Friedens Gemeinde*, today known as Peace United Church of Christ, located on Dixon Street at Wyatt Avenue.

A German-language weekly in Stevens Point, called the *Post*, was founded by Carl Rebenstein of Neillsville in October 1892. The newspaper was taken over by Stephen von Szinnig in January 1893 who continued until September when J. H. Gerlick became the publisher. The latter continued until Aug. 26, 1899 when publication ceased. William Moeschler also held an interest in the weekly at this time. It was never revived.

The most noted German cultural organization in the county was organized at Stevens Point in the 1880s and known as *Eintrachts Verein* (Good Fellowship Association.) The members appeared at local gatherings and on two occasions in 1898 and 1908 were hosts to state-wide *saengerfests* of choral groups who assembled in the city for two and three days of singing and fun when the general atmosphere was one of great *Gemuetlichkeit*.

*The Poles*

Poland, which had been a powerful nation in the Middle Ages as well as protector of the Holy Roman Empire, after 1795 lost her pre-eminent position in national and church affairs. This decline was not due so much to internal weakness as to Poland's democratic organization and the growing strength of absolutism around her. By the end of the 18th Century Poland had become a nation divided among Prussia, Austria and Russia. This situation continued down to the end of World War I when, by the treaty of Versailles, independence was restored and the three parts of Poland reunited.

Most of the Polish emigrants to Portage County came from German-Poland, i.e. Prussia, especially from the districts around Poznan and Danzig. Immigrants from this area were apt to speak some German and it also appears that on first arriving in the United States they considered themselves a trifle above their compatriots who may have come from Russian or Austrian-Poland. This was a natural assumption because Germany under Bismarck had risen to a first-class power in Europe within the space of a single decade.

It is generally agreed that Michael Koziczkowski (pronounced Ko-zhich-kofskee) was the first Polish immigrant to settle in Portage County. In his application for naturalization made at Circuit Court in Plover on Nov. 4, 1861, he states that he was born in Prussia (i.e. German-Poland) in 1811 and entered the United States at New York in the month of September 1857.<sup>1</sup>

Mrs. Martha Cecelia Liebe, the youngest daughter of Michael Koziczkowski, born east of Polonia in 1865, died in Rosholt village in January 1959. Her father, she once told the author, came to Portage County within a few weeks after landing in the port of New York. Circumstantial evidence tends to confirm this.

Family tradition also holds that Koziczkowski was a member of the nobility and known in German-Poland as Michael von Koziczkowski. This cannot be confirmed at this time, but when he applied for naturalization in

<sup>1</sup> *Application for Citizenship*, Microfilm Reel 177.

1861, he signed his name with a lower case 'v' between the two names, but no period after the 'v,' probably an abbreviation for "von." But when he got his final citizenship papers on Sept. 14, 1868 he signed "Michael Von Koziczkowski," upper-case in all instances. This suggests that in his original application, owing to the ban on foreign orders and decorations implied in the naturalization proceedings, he was not sure of his status and inserted the small 'v' which could have passed for a middle initial, but when he later found out that there was no ban on this sort of title, which was actually a family affair made possible through hereditary circumstance and privilege, he was emboldened to use the "von." It may have been the last time as none of the Sharon tax rolls uses it and it is quite possible that he realized by this time that it was out of place.

Asked why her father came to the United States, Mrs. Liebe said: "Well, he heard in the papers that it was such g-o-o-d country an' it was free land an' everything. He was lookin' here and there for farm, and ol' man Oesterle, then he went there and he said why can't you buy your land here by me and we'll be neighbors. He bought it and he had it, and he died there and my brother Joe was there pretty near to his death too."

When Koziczkowski decided to emigrate to America, he was apparently the first from the district around Danzig to make this decision, and it caused such a stir that the local priest made a special announcement of it at church services. When time came for the family to leave, the entire community gathered at the railway station to bid Godspeed and farewell. According to a story told by L. E. Glinski of Stevens Point, Anton Hintz, who once worked in the tailor shop of Joseph Glinski at 306 Main Street, was among the children tugging at his mother's apron strings the day that Koziczkowski and family departed for America. Many years later Hintz himself emigrated to America, made his way to Portage County and to his amazement encountered Koziczkowski on the Public Square the first day he arrived. He never ceased wondering about the vagaries of life in recounting this incident.

Koziczkowski allegedly left his family in Stevens Point in the latter part of 1857 and went on to Marathon County, probably at the suggestion of German acquaintances in Milwaukee, to look over the prospects of buying land. It would be natural that he would associate with Germans when he came to Wisconsin as he spoke little English. Mrs. Liebe said that her father also spoke French, Swedish and Latin, which was not uncommon among the Polish aristocracy who were, before the partitions of Poland, probably the most cultured people in Europe, fluent in several languages, widely traveled, musical and advanced in the sciences. But Koziczkowski was not satisfied with Marathon County for some reason — probably the land was too dear — for he returned to Stevens Point where he found temporary employment.

According to legend handed down in the Steffanus family of Sharon, William Steffanus, who pioneered on land north of Ellis in the mid-1850s, attended church in these early years at St. Stephens in Stevens Point and one Sunday found himself seated next to a stranger reading a Polish prayer book. Although Steffanus was a Frenchman from Lorraine, he also spoke German and after the service addressed the stranger who was Koziczkowski. After hearing his story, Steffanus suggested that he should see his neighbor, Joseph Oesterle — although several miles removed to the east he was still considered a neighbor — who had land for sale. The upshot was that Koziczkowski was introduced to Oesterle who either sold or contracted to sell him a tract of land in Sec 11 about three miles east of where the community of Polonia was located some 20 years later.

When he first settled here, according to Mrs. Liebe, her father was such a curiosity that people drove into the yard merely to see what a Polish settler looked like.

On the strength of letters written to friends and relatives in Poland, Koziczkowski induced others to come to Portage County. Among them may have been Joseph Deuckee (who signed his name as *Josef Doizik*, today spelled Dudzik) who entered the United States at New York in June 1859 and became the first Polish settler in

the county to apply for naturalization at Circuit Court on July 25, 1859; Joseph Platta, who entered at New York in September 1858 and applied on Aug. 22, 1859; John Scendas (who signed his own name as *Jan Zynda*) who entered at New York in September 1858 and applied Aug. 31, 1859; Volanda (i.e. Valentine) Wyoch (later spelled Woyak) who entered the United States at Milwaukee in August 1859 and applied at Plover on Sept. 21, 1859; Anton Lorbiecki who entered at New York in August 1859 and applied at Plover on Sept. 21, 1859; and Adam Kleinshmidt (later shortened to Klesmit) who entered at New York in August 1858 and applied at Plover on April 2, 1860.

From the above it will be noted that Platta, Zynda and Kleinshmidt all preceded Dudzik to the United States and local legend holds that they arrived in the county ahead of him, but from the evidence, did not make application for naturalization until after Dudzik.

Other early Polish settlers to Portage County and the date they applied for naturalization in Circuit Court are as follows: Francis Woyak, 1860; Andrew Sikorski, 1861; John Pollak<sup>1</sup> (who gave his birthplace as Austria, probably Austrian-Poland, and signed his own name *Polak*), 1861; Thomas Kuklinski, 1861; Joseph Lukshitz (who signed his own name *Lukowicz*, later spelled it *Lukasavitz*), 1861; Joseph Shulfer, 1861; Onofry Kruzynsky, 1861; Joseph Klopatac, 1862; Joseph Kleman 1862; Adam Kedrovski, 1862; Antony Woyak, 1862; Jacob Werachowski, 1862; John Shelbrzchowsky, 1862; Francis Birna (who signed as *Frank Birna*), 1863; Andreas Stroik, 1865; Mateusz (i.e. Matthew) Dulak, 1865; Casimier Lukaszewitz, 1866; Andrew Siuda (today Shuda), 1866; Albert Hommernik (who signed his own name as *Omer-nyk*, today Omernick), 1866; Frank A. Kozickowski, 1866; Johanus Kluk, 1866; Joseph Mylanoski, 1866; John

<sup>1</sup> This is no doubt the Rev. Jan Polak mentioned in Wacław Kruska's *Historia Polska w Ameryce* as having been the first Polish pastor to serve St. Stephen's Congregation from 1860-62. His naturalization papers reveal that he was born in 1818 and entered the United States at New York in September 1855.

Boyer, 1866; Martin Szarafinski (today Sharafinski), 1866; Michael Worzalla, 1867; Thomas Jack (later Yach), 1867; Richard and Nicholas Gross, 1867; Andrew Isadore, 1867; John Brychel, 1867; Andrew Levandowski, 1867; Peter Orlikoski, 1868; Thomas Molski, 1868; Andreas Klushkikowski (later Kluczykowski), 1868; and August and Daniel Kirshling, both in 1868.

A Polish immigrant who preceded Michael Koziczkowski to the United States but apparently not to Portage County, was Augustin Domeke (who signed his own name as Dimka, today probably Dimke) who entered at New York in 1854 and applied for naturalization at Plover in 1859. This is also the first Polish name to appear in a Stevens Point tax roll in the original 2nd Ward for 1863. He is believed to have established a bakery on Elk Street which continued in business for many years.

Most of the Polish newcomers settled in the towns of Sharon and Stockton and formed a colony where they could be neighbors to one another and out of this nucleus grew the most important Polish-American agricultural settlement in Wisconsin. But the Civil War discouraged large-scale migration among Europeans to America and it was not until after the 1870s that the number of Polish immigrants increased to a point where it could be said that they were definitely making up a separate ethnic community in the county.

The migration of the Polish people to the cities of Chicago and Milwaukee and to the farm lands of Portage County is somewhat of a mystery when compared to other ethnic groups from Europe. There were no real estate offices or American railroad representatives in any city of Poland to encourage emigration and, as far as it is known, no advertisements of cheap land were carried in the Polish-language press of Europe. Although many of the Polish people lived under Prussian occupation, there was no political persecution or church-sponsored movement to either encourage or discourage emigration, although cultural duress was applied by discouraging the Polish language in the churches and forbidding anything but German being taught in the schools. Many Poles,

however, had served in the Prussian army in the wars of the 1860s and early '70s and probably felt that as a token of their service to the state they should be given a greater share in the economic life of their country. Bismarck not only refused to accede to any policy of leniency but actually made it more difficult for Polish peasants to buy or even to own land, as he wished to conserve the land for future Germans. The emigration of the Poles, then, was one of choice, occasioned largely by self-interest, and not the result of either religious or political persecution, and the Bismarckian policy thus gave rise to the first great wave of Polish emigration in the 1870s.

There were two factors which probably determined why Portage County should become the center of Polish agriculture in Wisconsin. One was a coincidence; Koziczowski spoke German and he naturally clung to people with whom he could converse and came to Stevens Point as a jumping-off place to Marathon County where the "Pittsburgers," a large colony of Pennsylvania Dutch, were settling. Dissatisfied, as mentioned earlier, he returned to Stevens Point where he was already acquainted and found temporary employment.

The main factor which probably determined that Portage County should be the permanent home of Koziczowski was cheap land, although not necessarily the best land. Nearly all the good land in the southern half of the county had been either pre-empted or purchased from the government or the land grant companies. There was still unoccupied land in the county, that is to say, land which no one had attempted to break or prove up. One of these areas lay to the east and northeast of modern Polonia along the watersheds of the terminal moraine, among the rolling hills studded with stones, undisturbed since the last glacier dumped them there thousands of years ago. There were also a few trees of mixed oak and pine, not enough to log off commercially, but sufficient for firewood and with care, even for selected lumber. It was an unlikely place to farm, but Koziczowski and the Polish families had what this land required, namely, big families which meant cheap labor. The hand-built stone fences that still survive along the roads and the cow al-



leys on the farms south, north and east of Polonia are mute evidence of the years of back-breaking labor required to clear the land sufficiently for a plow to get through on a fairly straight line between two points. Even at that, most of the larger stones lay buried, half in and half out of the ground, until the period after World War II when the bulldozer moved in and began snubbing them out. Before that time, these stones were an everlasting source of frustration which dulled the plow point and wrecked the cultivator shovels. At these times the Polish farmer was apt to utter a mighty oath, "*piorun!*" and reach for his snuff box.

On the evidence of the 1876 plat, the Polish immigrants had taken over quite a few forties between modern Highways 66 & 10 in the towns of Sharon and Stockton and also in areas to the north of H-66 in Sharon. In addition, a few scattered families had settled in Hull and a small community in the old Fourth Ward north of the slough in Stevens Point.

Some of the land which the Polish immigrants purchased were from landlords like Oesterle or from realty companies and brokers. But much of it was purchased from the Irish pioneers who preceded them. The Irish, less accustomed to farming, more inclined to urban life and politics, were moving back to the cities.

Since 1922, after quotas were imposed on immigration, the number of people entering the country directly from Poland has practically ceased, but over the years there has been a steady trickle of city workers who have been buying farms in the poorer quarter sections of the county, most of them from Chicago and Milwaukee or from the coal mines in southern Illinois. The fact that they insist on becoming farmers, even after years of urban settlement, suggests that most of them were farmers in Europe who longed to return to a life on the land.

By 1910 the Polish settlers in the county were largely grouped in four areas, the largest in the north-northeast covering much of Dewey, Hull, Sharon, the north half of Stockton and west half of Alban. The second area lay west of the Wisconsin River in Linwood and Carson, al-

though well interspersed by other nationalities, and a third, rather isolated settlement, developed to the southwest of Plover in the mid-1880s. A fourth, even more isolated, developed after the turn of the century in the southern part of Belmont township. The majority of the latter appear to have been Austrian-Poles, as the names on the headstones of St. John's the Baptist Church cemetery differ from names around Polonia; for example Wiora, Robster, Yeska, Hajuk, Nowak, Walotka, Jendrzejczyk, Muszynski, and Swendrzynski.

A small community of Slovaks, ethnically related to the Poles, settled in the southeast corner of lower Grant (T. 21) around the turn of the century which included among others, the Hurant, Kallata, Winecknack, Rodak, Malick, Pavel, Palik, Poenka, Pionka, Mojercak, and Petrusky families. These people were multi-lingual, speaking their own dialect of Slovakian as well as conversational Polish and German.

It is often assumed, on the basis of the above, that these districts in the county were taken over entirely by the Polish immigrant, or by immigrants who had stopped off in the big cities to save money to buy a farm. The plat books bely this assumption. The only nearly perfect Polish township in 1903 was Sharon and even here there were still Norwegian and German names to be found. With the exception of Sharon, all the other townships in the so-called Polish areas are studded with family names of Irish, German and Yankee descent. Since World War II, with new and better roads, and with an expanding population, the trend is definitely away from identifying any specific area with one national group or another. New Hope, which was once almost entirely Norwegian, has become a mixture of Norwegian, Swedish and Polish. The most cosmopolitan township in the county, since the beginning, is probably Eau Pleine where names of most north European languages may be discovered, although Town Clerk Otto Paetch estimated in 1957 that about half of the township was Polish. The trend toward blending of race and culture is probably the most pronounced in the town of Hull which includes the new residential areas building east and north of Stevens Point.

Joseph Barnowsky, town clerk, explained it this way: "First were the English and Irish, then came the Germans, then the Polish. Now the Americans have arrived." He was referring to the new names appearing in the poll lists since 1950, and smiled when he realized what he had said. Nevertheless, his statement is significant, not only for its factual value, but also because it reflects a new social attitude which Barnowsky himself has adopted towards his environment.

By 1958 descendants of the Polish pioneers had penetrated every township of the county. These are families mostly of the third generation, still fairly pure ethnically. This process will be more difficult to determine in succeeding generations because inter-marriage with other ethnic groups is creating the new commopolitan race of American man. By the time the new Portage County Court House is replaced or removed, the habit of identifying each other's racial background will have probably changed and men will be identified not by their Polish or Irish ancestry, but as coming from such-and-such a locality within the United States, a factor which will no doubt be influenced by heightened sectional interests.

Like the first Norwegians who brought along their *trolls* to plague them in the new land, the early Polish immigrants brought along their respect for the *boginki*, or water spirits with invisible human bodies who could be heard washing their clothes at night or at midday and who could bear children and even exchange their own for human ones, particularly if they had not been baptized. Instead of the bear, although there were enough of them in Portage County, the Polish mother was apt to scare her children with the threat of calling *jedza*, the horrid old witch.

Most of these beliefs in a naturalistic spirit world may be traced back to pagan times and are closely related to the Norwegian *nisse* and *huldre* even as they are related to all people in all lands since time immemorial. Occasionally, the loneliness and frustration of the early years of life in America brought on tensions which the immigrant was unable to cope with and he went to all kinds

of lengths to defeat the power of the *boginki*. At such times, lacking psychiatric treatment, the local priest was brought in, and, by performing certain rites, he attempted to cast out the evil spirits which allegedly inhabited the house. Often it had the right effect. Today, a person who begins hiding from the *boginki* is more apt to be taken to a hospital for therapeutic treatment under doctors trained to detect the difference between the world of reality and the world of fancy.

A comparison between the letters written home to Norway by Norwegian immigrants in America and letters written home to Poland by Polish immigrants suggests that a Norwegian was more apt to boast about his success in his adopted land, while the latter was apt to discuss family affairs and express himself especially in what is known as the "bowing letter." Polish letter writers have been classified into several categories, such as the "bowing letter," the "informing letters," "sentimental letters," and so on. The difference between the general run of Norwegian letters and Polish letters lies in the fact that the latter, writing from America to relatives in the Old Country, were not obliged to justify their reasons for emigrating to America. The opposite was true of the Norwegians; they faced the same scarcity of land for their children, nevertheless the Norwegian government and state church did everything short of passing a law to discourage people from emigrating to America. To leave Norway, particularly during the period from 1840-1860, was an act of defiance which had to be justified as soon as the newcomer had settled in America. The Polish emigrant was not a rebel against the government; when he arrived in America his relation to his people in Poland was still that of a son who had left home to seek a better life, and when he wrote home he was careful to fulfill his social obligations to his family which he did in the so-called "bowing-letter."<sup>1</sup> It was a beautiful form of expression, for even though separated by time and space, the writer of the letter could be visualized bowing to his relatives and friends in Poland. The letter writers in

<sup>1</sup> William I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*, (5v Boston: R. G. Badger, 1918), Vol. I, pp. 317-356.

Poland make frequent mention of feast days in the church year, and often addressed their relatives in America with religious salutations such as "Praised be Jesus Christ" answered by "In centuries of centuries. Amen."

An example of the "bowing letter" was received by Mrs. Mary Check, nee' Kozolek, living near Polonia in 1928. It was sent from Walentynowo, Poland, and opens with a stylized version which translated may read as follows:

My dear little letter  
don't be detained anywhere  
but speed to the threshold  
of my sister and brother-in-law.  
Bow low to their feet  
and praise God (with the words):  
Jesus Christ be praised!

On the occasion of a birthday in 1910, Mary Kozolek received a card which had two small pages inside for a message. The first page of this card carries a printed form which reads in Polish:

Ile rosy pada z nieba,  
Ile kropli mieści morze  
Tyle zdrowia, szczęścia, chleba  
Niech Twe życie wspiera, wzmoże.

(Literally: "As much as there is dew from heaven, as much as there are drops in the sea, so much of health, happiness and bread may your life bring to you.")

Appended to this card appears the following message in Polish, the translation of which follows:

Dear Sister:

I am taking pen in hand and this white paper, hoping that my words will please you. I went into the garden to look for a fragrant flower, but I could not find anything but this piece of paper, and now I have to think what sort of greetings I should send you. I am wishing you many of God's blessings. May you live 150 years and grow as the most beautiful flower. These wishes are sent to you by your brother, Antoni.

Dear Sister, Give my best regards to Aunts, Grandfather, Brothers and Sisters. They are probably angry with me for not having written so long. Dear Aunt, I'll write you a long letter and tell you about everything, so don't be angry. Greetings from Father, Mother, Sister, Brother-in-law, and all relatives and acquaintances, and finally from Anton. Amen.

Both Polish and Scandinavian immigrants in the first and second generations were exclusive in their cultural habits and traditions, and tended to remain in their own communities with little social contact with other Americans, but of the two ethnic groups, the Poles were more marked in their banding together. Even though many Polish families stopped en route to Wisconsin to work in Schenectady or Chicago, they usually settled in communities where the Polish language was spoken, and, when they came to Portage County, were still unable to converse freely in the English language. This linguistic isolation was probably heightened by the fact that the Poles were the last of the major ethnic groups to settle in the county. Moreover, family ties were strong and life revolved around a complicated structure of family obligations which were deep rooted and affected those who emigrated to America in the first and second generations.

But the third and fourth generations, while still having trouble with their "th" sounds, have become completely adopted to the mechanical aspects of American civilization, equally at home in a spanking new car or on the seat of a John Deere "70" tractor, often delaying the installation of modern plumbing in the old house in favor of a TV set. The familial attitude, so strong in the first generations, has weakened in the third and fourth generations under the circumstances of rural American civilization where the head of the family, with one of the boys still at home, can operate the farm — even with the addition of two forties bought from a neighbor — while the children are working in Milwaukee. On a week-end, two or three cars are apt to be parked in a Polish farmer's yard in Portage County for these are the cars of the children who have come home for a visit, bringing gifts

from the city, and being given fresh eggs and probably a bushel of potatoes in return. The instinct to see one another remains strong and even today it is not uncommon to find a framed quotation hanging in the kitchen of the Polish home, *Boże Błogoław Nasz Dom*, meaning "God bless our home."

While the first generation was continually being reminded by those who remained in Poland not to forget the land of their fathers, the third and fourth generations entertain no nationalistic feeling toward Poland. Many of the first generation served in World War I and the third generation in World War II. After the last war the lack of sentiment for Poland as the "motherland" was reflected in the marked absence of political feeling over the Stalin betrayal of Poland after Yalta. Attempts by American politicians to use this as campaign material failed and the vast majority of citizens of Polish descent continue to vote Democrat even as their fathers before them.

The reason why the Poles, as an ethnic group in Portage County, vote Democrat and the Scandinavians once voted Republican cannot be easily determined. The Scandinavians, however, who came to the county in the 1850s, were deeply influenced by the issue of slavery. Many felt they had escaped from a form of human slavery themselves and sympathized with the abolitionist sentiment of the North. Their support of Lincoln established a political pattern and as in so many matters, what father did, his son did after him. Scandinavian Republicanism held almost unbroken down to the Depression when many, especially among the farmers, shifted to the Democrat ticket. This broke a familial tradition, a process which is being continued, and Scandinavians are today divided by self-interest, not necessarily sentiment. The fact that a Democrat but Protestant candidate for the United States Senate (William Proxmire) could carry a heavily Catholic majority in Portage County in 1958 also suggests that the people of Polish descent today cast their ballot on the basis of self-interest.

The majority of the Polish newcomers to the county arrived in America some time after the Civil War and

many came during the corruption of the Grant administration of the 1870s. This may have had some effect in determining a pattern, but probably the main reason lay in the fact that many of the early settlers did not come directly to Portage County from Poland. While most of the Scandinavians were nearly destitute when they arrived, they had been lucky enough to come early when land was cheap. The Polish decision to emigrate to America came later and most of the good land had already been taken or acquired by speculators and logging companies. To make up the difference for being late, many heads of Polish families, who later settled in Portage County, came here by a decision made not in Poland, but in the cities of the East. In the early 1900s a colony from Illinois was attracted to the southern part of Belmont where a broker, J. J. Heffron, offered cheap (but sandy) land for farming. Long before the 1900s it was common for the Polish immigrants to work in the cities before moving to Wisconsin. From this contact with the early labor movement they were imbued with the Democrat tradition which established a pattern their children followed after them.

Polish wedding customs in Portage County have changed in the last several decades, although one feature which has not changed is the rather early-morning ceremony at the church, usually between 9 and 10 o'clock. About 10:30 a.m. the parade of highly-polished cars, often with tin cans dragging behind the car of the bride and groom, rush gaily down the highway, horns blowing and streamers flying. In this manner speed is identified with life as opposed to death.

After the wedding, the bridal party, relatives and friends, many from Milwaukee and Chicago, arrive at the local ballroom, often operated by a tavern adjoining the dance floor. About 11:30 a.m. dancing begins with an orchestra specializing in Bohemian polkas, waltzes interspersed with Rock 'n' Roll. This is an occasion when children dance with each other among the adults, and when women, with or without escorts, dance with each other for the sheer joy of dancing. Drinks are poured at the bar and breakfast is served. The bride and groom, ob-



serving one of the sacraments of the church, have not eaten before the ceremony. Dancing continues all afternoon and evening with a dinner party late in the afternoon.

A Polish wedding before World War I was an historic affair. People referred to its coming with awe and a sigh of regret if not invited. The featured event was the bridal dance, a custom brought over from Poland. Usually reserved for the evening, it began when the father of the bride announced "*Jeszcze nasza*" (pronounced yesh-che nashah) meaning, "Yes sir, she's still ours!" The musicians and guests were expected to echo the same phrase whereupon the men formed a circle around the bride and began to exchange dances. The father stood among the guests and everyone who wished to dance with the bride was expected to throw a dollar into a cigar box or, as it was often done, throw a silver dollar against a dinner plate on the table so that it would ring or even break the plate. Each partner was expected to dance only once or twice around the ring and in this manner the young bride was whirled round and round in great humor. The music was furnished by a fiddler or two who played the same tune over and over until it rang in one's ears for days.

The money collected from the bridal dance was given to the bride. The custom was probably deliberately pursued to make up for the lack of a dowry which was part of wedding ceremonies in the Old Country but dropped in the New World. After World I the American custom of a "shower" grew more common among Polish brides-to-be and since World War II it has become almost as common among the girls of Polish descent as among other ethnic groups, again indicating the nearly complete absorption of Polish culture into the American.

A common way of serving liquor before the turn of the century was to scrub an ordinary wash tub and fill it with punch, one part alcohol, one part water, mixed with sugar, and a big chunk of local pond ice floating in the middle. Tin cups were available on a nearby table and anyone who wished had only to dip and sip, often toasting

the other with the familiar expression, *Na zdrowie!* (pronounced nahs-dro-vie) "To your health!"

Early weddings among the Poles, as with other ethnic groups in the county, were often held in the barn in spring before the new hay was brought in and which made it possible to dance on a temporary platform, or upstairs in the hayloft. One of the last of the Polish barn dances in Sharon occurred shortly after World War II.

Before the wedding dance broke up in the middle of the night, or later, a fight usually began, often between the Polish guests, but especially if some neighboring Irishmen or Norwegians crashed the party and began to make remarks touching on the honor of the Polish people.

In 1958 a fight at a wedding was considered in poor taste and also unwise because most of the guests arrived and left in the latest model cars which dent easily.

Down to 1925 inter-marriage between the Polish and other ethnic groups in the county was uncommon, although considerable mixing was already under way among Scandinavians, Germans, Irish and Yankee strains. The failure to inter-marry was not only a result of a deeper loyalty to church precepts among the Poles, but also one of communications. Before World War II North Star in Sharon seemed, to those who did not live there, like a place apart from the rest of the county because it was inaccessible and the roads sandy and irksome to drive over even after the Model-T Ford was introduced. But today the blacktop road and modern automobile have destroyed both isolation and clannishness among all people everywhere and while the various churches may still frown on mixed marriages which involve separate church affiliations, there is no known cure for this aside from ex-communication which no one in the 20th Century would attempt to use on these grounds; in fact, it is considered un-American to dissuade mixed marriages if both sides in the union are sincere.

The position of Polish women to their menfolks differs in some respects from other Europeans in that the

husband and wife are socially on a basis of greater equality than women in, for instance, England and Germany where the male assumes a more dominant role in the affairs of the family. This near-equal status of wife to husband among the Poles was carried over into Portage County in the first and second generations. A cattle broker, for example, when buying a cow from a Polish farmer seldom closed the deal before the husband went into the house to "see what the woman says." Her word on the price of the cow was final. It could be argued that she held the deciding vote because she and the children did most of the milking, which was naturally being done by hand, and therefore had a more vital interest in the disposition of the cow. But it was also a reflection of a closer economic partnership between man and wife, a tradition adhered to in Poland.

Increasing acquaintance with American values and customs has all but eliminated this feature among third generation farm families of Polish descent. The milking machine has largely replaced the milkmaid, and the women wash the milk cans and pails in a Grade A milk house.

Down to World War II, both Polish and German women helped their menfolks in the field more than women of other ethnic groups, but since World War II, women of all nationalities — all Americans now — work in the fields, especially during planting and harvesting, when they drive a tractor as well as anyone. Barn cleaning has also become a man's job on most farms, although in the early days, when women did most of the milking, they also did much of the cleaning. As a rule the men took care of the horses.

Like the names of other nationalities which do not translate well into English, it is not uncommon for people of Polish descent in the county either to alter the spelling of their surname or to shorten it. The change in spelling between early documents involving Polish farms in 1900 and 1950 is unmistakable. It is also a fact that young people who move away from the county to Milwaukee or elsewhere often alter their names to make them sound less Polish. This follows the present pat-

tern of American social values which seeks to bring everyone up to a level where no one is supposed to be different from anyone else. Christian given names among people of Polish descent have definitely changed and instead of calling a boy Roman, he is named Robert, and the girl, instead of Apolonia is called Darlene. Nor do the young folk any longer, when speaking of a third person, refer to him by his surname first, for example, "Stanislawski Joe," but rather as Joe Stanislawski, although the former expression may still be heard among the older generation.

In the break-up of the feudal system in Europe, many of the Polish peasants were given names from the estate on which they worked, or from the fauna and flora around them, and carried these names with them to America. They often added a "ski" signifying a family of titled ancestry which in many cases was not valid. Names which have not been changed, would include, for example, Laska (meaning a cane or walking stick), Wiora (wood shaving), Skiba (a field farrow), and Shroda (Wednesday).

The main cultural bulwark of the Polish newcomers to the county was the Catholic church, even as the church of the Lutheran faith served the Scandinavian and German newcomers. The church gave the people a sense of belonging to a continuous culture which had been briefly interrupted by the transition to America and helped to bridge the gap between the old and the new in their lives. The center of this Polish culture was at Polonia because the largest congregation of Polish Catholics developed here, and because it was the heart of the Polish farming, or folk, community.

Sacred Heart Church at Polonia originated as a result of a split in St. Joseph's church at Ellis because of frequent disturbances of the peace and rowdiness in adjacent saloons. Part of the congregation at St. Joseph's agreed with their pastor, the Rev. Joseph Dombrowski, to leave the church and build a new one a mile and a half to the east near a new post office called Polonia which Dombrowski was instrumental in having established in preparation for the move. St. Joseph's then

became known as the "condemned church" and eventually closed.

The Rev. Dombrowski is still remembered in the eastern part of the county as one of the most beloved and respected pastors to serve his people. The exact date that the new church at Polonia was occupied is uncertain, but it was in process of construction in the latter part of 1874. On Oct. 31 the editors of the *Stevens Point Journal* had this to say, *inter alia*:

"While in the town of Sharon last week, we spent a very pleasant hour with Father Dambrowski. . . a zealous and efficient worker, and although he has been located there but a comparatively short time, has already accomplished a great work. He is a man of indomitable perseverance and energy, of which fact the large and handsome church which he has far on the road to completion bears ample evidence. [He] has also maintained a school in one of the rooms in his own house, and is now putting up another building in which he will establish a permanent school in a few weeks. He has sent to Europe for Poland Sisters and they are expected to arrive in a short time. It will be the first convent school in charge of Polish Sisters ever established in the United States. Father Dambrowski has established a printing office, and is now engaged in getting out a Polish almanac, a good deal of the type for which he is setting himself. . . He is a strong temperance advocate, and is doing a good work in that direction. . ."

The *Journal* reported on Jan. 30, 1875 that it had received a copy of Father Dombrowski's Polish almanac "the first one ever published in America. It is a pamphlet of forty pages, and presents a very creditable appearance."

On May 18, 1875, fire destroyed the new church at Polonia in addition to the parsonage and convent. The *Journal* said "there now seems to be little doubt but that the fire . . . was the work of an incendiary." Work was commenced within a few months on a new and larger church which, though in use before 1884, was not completed until that year. This second church, built of local stone and capped by parallel steeples, served until 1902 when it was replaced by a larger structure, strongly reminiscent of European cathedrals, and reputedly the largest rural Catholic church in the United States.

Standing near the apex of the terminal moraine, it could be seen for many miles in all directions. On St. Patrick's Day, 1934, it was struck by lightning and partially burned. As a result it had to be razed and was replaced by the modern building which was located on the opposite side of the street facing north.

The Rev. Dombrowski also labored to convert local Indians to the Catholic faith, and the church records of the 1870s and 1880s carry the names of quite a few Indians who were baptized. Older parishioners still recall a story told about Dombrowski's attempt to help an Indian village near Shantytown Lake. With his own funds he purchased seed potatoes and showed the Indians how to plant the seedlings. Weeks later he returned to see how they were doing with the potato patch only to learn that the Indians had become hungry and eaten the seed.

Despite the dishonor which fell to St. Joseph's Church at Ellis, it was nevertheless the first Polish Catholic church established in the county, probably in 1864. Before this time, the Polish people participated in Catholic services with their German and Irish brethern in Stevens Point at St. Stephen's Church, built in 1856, and at St. Martin's of Ellis, built by German and Irish pioneers in 1857. As the Polish community in Sharon and Stockton grew, St. Martin's became crowded and the Polish settlers were naturally anxious to have services conducted in their own language. This led to the creation of St. Joseph's. The second Polish Catholic congregation was established at Casmier, north of Stevens Point, as the Polish newcomers began to buy up lands being vacated by the Irish in the town of Hull. The third Polish Catholic and second largest congregation in the county, was established on the Stevens Point North Side with the building of St. Peter's in 1876.

Although many first generation Polish settlers, like other nationalities in the county, could not read, many of the second generation were able to follow the newspapers both in English and in Polish. To fill a demand for a Polish-press in the county, Zygmunt Hutter and Teofil Krutza in December 1891 founded a weekly news-

paper at Stevens Point called *Rolnik* (The Farmer) which has maintained a steady readership down to the present day. The subscribers who still take *Rolnik* are people in their seventies and eighties, probably the last descendants of the Polish-born to read a newspaper in the language of their fathers. Although the Poles were a generation later than the Scandinavians in the county, it does not follow that *Rolnik* will be read by a generation beyond the present; the process of Americanization has become so complete that any suggestion of cultural advantage to be had by maintaining a link with the Old Country through a Polish paper has vanished.

*Rolnik* was taken over by John Worzalla and sons in 1903 and is still in the Worzalla family. Since the 1930s it has been edited by Adam Bartosz, an immigrant in his youth from Poland who first settled in Baltimore and later came to Portage County. In addition to *Rolnik* the Worzallas in 1908 began publishing a national weekly, *Gwiazda Polarna* (The Northern Star), which is also edited by Bartosz, and will probably be read beyond the present generation because it has a national circulation and appeals to Polish immigrants still arriving in the United States under the quota, as well as to political emigres. Worzalla Publishing Company, which occupied a new and enlarged printing plant and office at Stevens Point in 1958, has gained a national reputation for excellence in general printing and bookbinding.

Other concerns which began with Polish backing and administration around the turn of the century were the Stevens Point Brick & Construction Company, the Stevens Point Automatic Cradle Company, today known as Lullabye Furniture Corporation, and the Nigbor Fur Company. Probably the first Polish business man in Stevens Point was Thomas Kuklinski who established a tailor shop in the early 1860s. L. E. Glinski of Stevens Point, who in the mid-1920s took over a tailor shop established by his father in 1881, has inherited the original pair of shears used by Kuklinski.

In 1914 Dr. L. P. Pasternacki, a local dentist, 29, became the first mayor of Stevens Point of Polish descent, the second native son and the youngest ever to be elected

to that post. He was encouraged to run by Dr. D. S. Rice as well as Meehan Pfiffner who acted as campaign manager. The campaign was non-partisan, and after the victory, the city band, with a crowd of supporters in tow, marched to the home of the victor and serenaded. The new mayor, following time-honored custom, came out on the porch and made a short speech. This custom has been discontinued, but while it lasted it was a strong reminder of earlier days when torch light processions as well as noisy bands assembled to celebrate political victories. In the formative period of growth, when new patterns of life were being created, it was important that the party which considered itself *most* right should win, and when it did, it was considered a vindication of good over evil and called for a celebration.

Dr. Pasternacki did not choose to run in 1916. He says that the odds at Jack Rowe's Saloon on Main Street, where the sports of the period did their serious betting, was 5-3 in his favor and when he heard this he withdrew because it was not enough of a fight. The position was mostly honorary as the mayor's salary was only \$300.

In the 1930s county offices, formerly dominated by Republican candidates, came largely under Democrat control. The first Polish postmaster of the city was Herman Glinski and the first Polish assemblyman from the county was John T. Kostuck, blinded by an accident in his youth, who was elected in 1930 and in 1958 was serving his fourteenth consecutive term.

Probably the only Polish settler to come to Portage County as a result of the Chicago fire in 1871 was Jacob Zbelewski who immigrated from Poland a short time earlier. After the fire he found it more difficult to find a place to live than a place to work. Through the Woyak families who had already settled southeast of modern Polonia, and to whom he was related, Zbelewski was encouraged to come to Stockton township. Recounting his father's early experiences, Andrew Zbelewski said: "The trouble was, he could raise turnips and carrots, and he had plenty to eat but there was no market for these things and so he had no money. They was cryin' in Poland about bad times, but when they came to America,



the times wasn't so good either. He bought two young steers for \$100 from a Norwegian farmer near Iola. Them Norwegians was here before, you know, and so they was raisin' steers, like, to sell'm. But on the start he didn't have his own barn. He built the barn by digging into the side hill which gave him three sides and finished the roof and covered it with leaves."

Before the turn of the century and well into the 1920s one of the most noted institutions in Stevens Point was the Public Square which, owing to the number of Polish farmers who brought products to sell, was often referred to as "Polish Square." Market days around the turn of the century and down to World War I were Thursdays and Saturdays and on these days the powerful voice of Lon Myers, son of the first stage line operator in the county, could be heard all over the square as general auctioneer and factotum.

And on Monday, May 4, 1891 the Polish people of the county and surrounding counties gathered at Stevens Point to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the adoption of the Polish constitution. The grand march down Main Street was headed by John Boyer, Joseph Moses (Mozuch) and John Maslowski as "generals," and by John Borchardy, Andrew Kreiger, and E. C. Naliborski as "marshals." Following them came the color bearers, bands (one from Grand Rapids), girl singers in carriages, representatives of church societies, and guards on horseback trailed by thousands of civilians on foot. It was the greatest parade ever staged by people of Polish descent in Portage County.

In the evening the visiting delegates, local officials, church dignitaries and leading citizens of Stevens Point assembled at the Rink Opera House at the corner at Clark & Strong's Avenue where speeches and greetings were heard in English and Polish, and dances and skits were presented in native Polish costume. By this "coming out party" the Polish established themselves in the community and in the life of their fellow citizens, proud of their cultural background, but even more proud to exhibit it as Americans surrounded by other Americans.

In 1929 Stevens Point, together with other cities having heavy populations of Polish descent, celebrated the 150th anniversary of the death of Casimir Pulaski, a volunteer and general officer in the American Revolutionary War killed in action near Savannah, Georgia, Oct. 11, 1779. Several cities sponsored campaigns to erect memorials, but Stevens Point was the only one which unveiled a monument of Pulaski on the date of the anniversary and today stands in McGlachlin Park.

### *The Hollanders*

South of Mill Creek and across Hayden Creek, half way between modern H-34 and the Wood County line in the west of Carson, runs a town road known for the past half century as "Holland Road." Here a small settlement of immigrants from Holland and first generation descendants of Hollanders from around Little Chute and Hollandtown in Outagamie County made their homes, cleared off the terrible array of pine stumps and oak stumps and then, in the Depression years, moved away. The people were ethnically pure Dutch or, as they often referred to themselves, "full-blooded wooden shoes."

The settlement originated around 1900 and when Mrs. Albert Peters came here as a bride with her husband (ca. 1901) there were still only a few Dutch families in the neighborhood. The Peters, like their Dutch neighbors, were Catholics who either originated, or whose parents originated in Brabant and Limburg provinces, and in the city of Amsterdam, Holland. Mrs. Peters watched the settlement along Holland Road grow and by the beginning of World War I it included the families of Cornelius Vanasten, John Van Ert, Joseph Van de Loop (or Vandenloop), Cornelius Newbore, Theodore Timmerman, John Hartjes (pronounced "hart-cheese" but originally spelled Hartjens), Henry Van de Wetering, Cornelius Van Lith, Joseph Peters, and Fred Manders. Others living off the road a short distance, east and west, included Peter Hartjes, John Joosten, and Henry Van Gemmert, a bachelor, and one Belgian family, the Adolph Shelfhonts who remained

only a few years and sold out to Van De Wetering. The names listed by Mrs. Peters are all confirmed in the 1903 and 1915 plats, although the 1915 plat, in addition, lists Jos Van De Berge in Sec. 20.

These people conversed in Dutch among themselves, although the first generation born in Outagamie County spoke both Dutch and German as well as English. Most of them apparently had ceased to wear wooden shoes by the time they reached Portage County, although Joseph Peters (living near Rudolph, Wis.) remembers that he was wearing wooden shoes as a youngster in grade school near Little Chute. When his father, Peter Johannes, a native of Limburg province who emigrated to Outagamie County in the mid-1850s, wished to show his displeasure at some prank of the youngsters, he nearly always kicked his wooden shoe into the air and woe to him who caught it behind.

Although the Dutch Catholics of Holland Road celebrated Christmas holidays, their big feast day was December 6, known as the feast of St. Nicholas or "St. Nick's Day." After chores had been finished, the neighbors drove from one farm to the other, ate candy, popcorn, apples and, while the children played parlor games, the older folks enjoyed a game of cards and seldom got home until past midnight.

Most of the Dutch along Holland Road attended St. Philomena Catholic Church across the county line at Rudolph, and St. Phillip's Parochial School. The Sunset Valley School, the neighborhood public school, was once located on Holland Road in Sec. 30.

But most of the original settlers of Holland Road are dead and their descendants have nearly all moved away and the name of the road itself is being forgotten except by the few, a nostalgic memory of things past not of thoughts present.

In a family history prepared especially to eulogize Peter Johannes Peters and his wife Maria-Ann, nee' Van de Loop, first generation settlers in Outagamie County and parents of the two Peters families once of

Carson, one of the final paragraphs ends with this prayer:

“Let us say with Peter and Maria-Ann:  
God Hemelschen Vader!

Ik bedank U, uyt geheel myn hert. Ik offer alle  
de werken van myne dagen tot uwen  
glorie!

Ik Maek en voo'nee' men van better te leven.  
In den naem des Vaders, des Zoons, en des  
Heglegen Geest, Amen.”

(Literally, “God, the Father in Heaven! I  
thank you with my whole heart. I offer the  
works of all my life toward Thy Glory! I  
promise to live in a better way. In the name of  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.  
Amen.”)<sup>1</sup>

One of the favorite dishes prepared by the Dutch along Holland Road is called *bry*. According to Mrs. Peters, this is made with “scrapples” i.e. the lard fried out. Her recipe:

“Take quart or more of water and put scrapple in salt and pepper; let come to a boil and stir in flour, either buck-wheat or white flour, to a batter hard to stir. Pack in large pan and pat down solid and, when cold, slice and fry with lard.”

But long before the settlement along Holland Road developed, individual families of Holland or Flemish descent had settled in various parts of the county. Probably the first was William Vanderverker who purchased a tract of land in the town of Plover from A. Brawley in 1845. Later arrivals included Van Buskirk, Vanskiver, Van Myer, Van Ellis, Van Gorder, Valtenburg, Vandervoot, and Van Order. A dispropor-

<sup>1</sup> Booklet in collection of Joseph Peters, Rudolph, Wis.

tionate number carried the prefix "van" which suggests that some may have adopted this when coming to America at one time or another in order to add a touch of gentility to their family background.

## THE ADVANCE OF EDUCATION

Free education for the youth was a novel idea before the state of Wisconsin was admitted to the union in 1848. When it was first proposed in the territorial legislature in the mid-1840s it was turned down, and, while the principle of a free education was incorporated in the state constitution of 1848, a considerable struggle was to follow before elementary students were assured of an education supported by the taxes of all citizens whether they had children or not.

From 1849 to 1862, reading, writing and arithmetic, traditionally taught "to the tune of the hickory stick," was in the hands of the town board on the local level. Town superintendents, who ran for office with other town officials, hired the local teaching staff. That their qualifications were largely political is amply demonstrated by the misspellings and grammatical errors which appear in the certificates issued by the various town superintendents of Portage County. Meanwhile, the Wisconsin Teachers' Association carried on a campaign to eliminate town superintendents and replace them with county superintendents which was realized in 1862.

The first mention of a school district within the limits of modern Portage County appears in the county commissioners sessions dated April 6, 1847 when Mathias Mitchell, James M. Campbell, John Campbell *et al* petitioned for a school district in Town 24, Range 8. The petition was approved for a school district "designated and known as Stevens Point School District Number Two and that the clerk issue notices for an election to be held at the House of A. H. Bancraft in the town of Stevens Point on 17th April. . . ." The pur-

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings, County Commissioners Sessions, Vol. I, p. 96.*

pose of this election is uncertain, but the fact that the Stevens Point district is referred to as "Number Two" suggests that another existed as "Number One" which in fact it did. The Grand Rapids School District No. 1 in Town 22, Range 6, was organized Jan. 6, 1847, the first in greater Portage County.

Early pioneer accounts seemingly agree that Miss Mandana Hale was the first school teacher in Stevens Point, and, as the school district referred to in the above was established in April 1847, it is reasonable to assume that Miss Hale was the teacher, probably during a summer session. As the system of tax-supported schools had not been adopted, this school was supported by private subscription. It was probably located on the east side of 2nd Street north of the Public Square (Frank's Hardware Store).

According to legendary accounts, Phillip D. Bangle was leaving for Belvidere, Illinois, to purchase badly needed supplies, and a number of citizens begged him to engage a school teacher, too. In Belvidere, Bangle approached Miss Hale who agreed not only to teach, but to drive back a wagon load of supplies, probably by oxen team, while Bangle presumably took the lead team. The headstone of Mandana Hale Bliss in Union Cemetery reveals that she died in 1907 at the age of 81 which means that she was about 21 years of age at the time she drove the wagon north. In Stevens Point she met Nathaniel F. Bliss whom she later married. From this union came five sons and four daughters. Geraldine, the eldest (mother of Ray Clark of Stevens Point), was born July 26, 1849 and was probably the first white girl born in Stevens Point.

It was not until Jan. 3, 1850 that the lot for a new school building was acquired for \$10 by the "Stevens Point School House Building Committee of Middletown. . ." From the description, the building was to be located on Clark Street where, in fact, it was built at No. 420 and still stands more than a century later. (In 1958 its preservation was being considered by the Common

<sup>1</sup> *Deeds, Vol. A., p. 460.*

Council.) The was the first tax-supported school in Stevens Point. It was vacated as the district school in 1858 when a two-story building was completed between Water and Elk Streets, popularly known as the "White School." Most of the future citizens of Stevens Point attended school here, and in 1904 the alumnae organized the Old White School Association which was open to all who had attended previous to 1877 as well as those who taught there before that date.

A reunion was held in 1905 when some 100 former pupils and teachers assembled to hear speeches, letters from those unable to attend, and a long poem written by Helen G. Sharman, nee' Wilmot, called "*To My School Friends of '59 and '60.*" At a dinner banquet, Byron Park, acting as toastmaster, declared that, "We are the product of pioneer days. Whatever tendency there is for good, whatever tendency there is for evil, in us and each of us, is the result of the environment and teachings of the old days. Our fathers and mothers came to Stevens Point and to the Wisconsin Valley, and out of the wilderness they hewed a civilization of which we are justly proud. They were a great, brainy, sturdy lot of pioneers, fearless of hardship and ever ready and willing to work and labor that the future might bring assurance of peace and plenty. . ."

One alumnus, John H. La Vaque, was unable to attend but sent a letter which appears in the souvenir booklet of the association. Among other matters touched upon, La Vaque had this to say: "Oh, it (the school house) was a beauty, and it had desks in it too, but we, the scholars, had to furnish our own chairs, for Mr. Maloney (J.C.F.) the first male teacher in 1854, would not allow the trustees to put in benches. . . How well I remember starting out every morning from my home across the slough, and out on the plank road and carrying my chair and carrying it back again after school, for we needed it at home. . ."

A few weeks after School District No. 2 was established in Stevens Point, the county commissioners on May 24, 1847 heard a petition from the citizens of the



town of Plover for a school district and "it was therefore ordered that said township be organized as a School District and designated and known as 'Plover' School District No. 3 — and that the clerk of this (next two words illegible) notices for the election of the (word illegible) officers at the House of Messrs. Mitchell and McDill. . ."

School in Plover may have been conducted in private homes for a time as the next mention of a school in the village does not appear until March 31, 1853 when the County Board agreed to lease one-half an acre of ground for 20 years to "School District No. 1" with "the privilege of building school house thereon." From the description, it appears that this school house was to be located east of the Public Square originally platted by Moses Strong in Plover. The fact that the County Board acted on this matter suggests that this land was county-owned, or part of the Public Square property. No other references are made to school organization by the County Board because after the incorporation of the townships of Plover and Middletown in 1849, these matters were handled on the township and city level.

After most of the townships were organized in the 1850s, school districts and rural schools were established throughout most of the county, usually about two miles apart. How many of these were painted red is uncertain, but after a log house was built for Alban School in the early 1870s it was sided and, according to Henry Anderson, an alumnus, painted red. Most of the school clerk's records on these rural schools have been lost, but a few years ago the original records of the Pipe School in Sec. 1 (NW-SE) of Lanark were discovered in the attic of the house occupied by Ray Pipe. As this is the earliest school record available in the county, it is possible to follow the proceedings of the school board and note the several teachers and their salaries from 1857 to 1867.

When School District No. 1 was organized, the quali-

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, County Commissioners Sessions, Vol. I, p. 101.

<sup>2</sup> *Proceedings*, Board of Supervisors, Vol. I, p. 206.

fied voters were notified to meet at the house of John G. Severance on Dec. 16, 1856 at five o'clock. This entry in the record book was signed by William W. West, town superintendent of schools, and by H. E. Dudley, district clerk. Severance was also responsible for notifying personally H. E. Dudley, Horace Dewey, Jr., A. Foster, H. Ciperlie and Mikel Clinton of the meeting.

On Dec. 20 it was decided to make this a joint meeting with the citizens of Amherst township and form a joint district, and on Jan. 20, 1857 it was voted to build a school 18 by 24 feet, to have a three-month school in the summer, to raise \$130 for the building and \$15 for the teacher. Adaline Severance became the first teacher but apparently managed to get a little more money as her contract was made out for \$2 a week commencing May 25. Her pupils were five girls and four boys.

In 1858 Charles Hewitt became town superintendent of schools for Lanark and Miss Eliza Ann Jeffers applied for the teaching job at Joint District No. 1. Hewitt certified that he had examined her qualifications "and do *believe* that she is qualified in regard to *morul chraracter*, learning and ability to teach a common school in this town for one year from the date hereof." Miss Jeffers agreed to teach for \$1.50 a week for four months. She was followed by an Amherst girl, Miss Azuba A. Webster, in 1859, who agreed to teach four months at \$6.25 a month beginning May 16. She taught 18 children which means that in two years the enrollment had doubled.

In the annual report signed Aug. 13, 1859 it is revealed that the school was using Sanders' *Spelling Book*, McGuffrey's *Reader*, and Thompson's *Arithmetic Series* and Davis' *Arithmetic Series*.

It was not until a school meeting held on Sept. 26, 1859 that the district "voted the teacher board among the scholars" which means that the teacher was to spend some time with each family during the four months of the school term to equalize the cost of supporting her. Her pay was to be \$15. This suggests that no teacher was willing to come for the same arrangements as in

1858. Almira Childs accepted this offer for the summer term of 1860. At the annual meeting held Sept. 24, 1860 it was agreed to have two months of winter school and three months of summer school and to raise \$25 for the teacher's wages and \$25 to repair the school house and other purposes. Miss Cordelia Thayer taught the winter term which began on December 27. For textbooks she was using a Sanders' *Reader*, a Sanders' *Speller*, Thompson's *Mental and Practical Arithmetic*, Cornell's *Geography* and Clark's *Grammer*. The school had one blackboard.

At the annual meeting on Sept. 23, 1861 the teacher's salary was raised to \$20 although it was voted to have six months of school, three in the summer, three in the winter. In addition, each pupil was to provide half a cord of wood and "every man that does not get his wood shall pay the money to J. G. Severance 50 cents per cord."

In 1862 the teacher was not examined by the town superintendent of schools, but by a county superintendent of schools who in this case was George W. Hulce, the first to serve in this capacity.

Wages skyrocketed during the Civil War and at the annual meeting held Sept. 28, 1863 it was voted to pay the teacher, for six months of school, the sum of \$56. In Item No. 10, voted on at this meeting, it was also decided "to *bild* a back house 4 by 8 ft" for \$6. William H. Ciperlie, treasurer of the school district, got the nod to build it.

The first indication that a teaching certificate was required is given on April 16, 1863 when Superintendent of Schools Hulce certified that Almeda M. Bostwick had passed a satisfactory examination upon all points required by law for a third grade certificate and was licensed to teach in the towns of Belmont, Sharon, Lanark, Amherst and New Hope for one year unless the certificate was sooner annulled. She was graded in the several branches upon a scale of ten in the following manner: orthography 6, reading 7, mental arithmetic 8, written arithmetic 6, primary grammar 5, and geography 9.

The first male teacher, Nils J. Swan, was hired for 1864-65 at \$12 a month to teach six months.

At the annual meeting held on Sept. 26, 1864 it was decided that each pupil should bring a quarter of a cord of wood instead of half a cord to keep the stove going.

At the annual meeting held Sept. 25, 1865 the teacher's wages were raised to \$75 for six months of school, three in winter, three in summer. In the report of this meeting, one line states: "Move schoolhouse a tie no vote," which indicates that an effort was made to win support for the removal of the schoolhouse to another area but failed on a tie vote.

The next teacher was Miss Martha King of the town of Belmont who was hired at \$17 a month for the three winter months beginning November 1865. She was followed in 1866, for the summer term, by Miss Lucy Childs who agreed to teach for \$14 a month, probably the difference between the comforts of teaching in summer as compared to winter when the teacher was expected to build her own fires. Apparently the stove burned more than expected, for in a report dated Sept. 24 (presumably for 1866) it was resolved that "each *schollar* to bring  $\frac{1}{2}$  cord of wood before school commences." At this meeting it was also resolved to raise the sum of \$155 for teacher's wages. Thus in less than ten years the wages of a teacher had risen from \$2 a week without board, to more than three times this figure, probably as a result of inflationary times following the Civil War. Nothing is said about boarding the teacher in the several years preceding 1866.

On Dec. 1, 1866 James Morison, "a qualified teacher of the town of Plover" was hired to begin teaching on the first Monday of December. As this entry was dated Dec. 1, it appears that Morison was hired on a last-minute notice and as a result got \$30 a month to teach the three winter months. More inflation.

A new county superintendent of schools, W. R. Alban, had examined Morison's qualifications and stated that, "The following is his standing in the several branches upon a scale of 10: *orthoephy* 8, reading 8, mental arithmetic 7, *geography* 5, English *grammer* 5, orthography 6,

written arithmetic 5, penmanship, fair, United States History 4, theory and art of teaching, fair." Morison was weak in American history but the one who made this entry spelled orthoepy with an extra "h", geography without an "h", and grammar with an "e".

In the summer term of 1867, Miss Elizabeth Swan agreed to teach for three months at \$13 a month beginning May 27. Deflation had commenced.

The last entry in this interesting document of an early country school reveals that Miss Elizabeth Swan had been given a third grade certificate to teach in the town of Lanark for four months from April 22, 1867. Her penmanship was considered "passable" which may be of some comfort to students of the 20th Century who may wish to recall that there were many in the "old days" who could not write well and some not at all.

In the above proceedings, it may be noted that a vote was taken to move the school house which failed on a tie vote. In another part of Lanark, the process of democracy had temporarily taken a different turn. A school located in the northwest corner of the township, probably organized in 1858, was considered too far away for some taxpayers, and, while others slept, the former moved the school house away from its original foundation to a new site. The next year it was allegedly moved back, only to be pulled to a new site the following year by the members aggrieved. The pupils were no doubt fascinated by this change of venue but around 1862, Bradley Rice, a member of the school board, assisted by an anonymous Irishman from the southern part of the school district, allegedly used his oxen to pull the school house to its present location in the southwest corner of Sec 8 where succeeding frame buildings have stood, known before the turn of the century as the "Carey Corner School" and later as the Valley View School. The legend ends with the story that the school was not moved again because Rice took the precaution of filling the walls with brick and placing it on a solid foundation. There is probably more to the story than this legend suggests because the moving of the school house occurred, as

far as can be ascertained, within the limits of two forties of land and could not have made that much difference in walking distance.

Another fairly comprehensive school record has been preserved of School District No. 1 in Buena Vista beginning with 1867. By this time, four months of school in winter and four in the summer was becoming accepted. The school board also attempted, whenever possible, to get a male teacher for the winter session and a female for the summer which appeared to be a general practice in the county, presumably because shoveling snow, carrying wood and firing a primitive stove was a job for a man, although it is well known that women accepted winter positions too.

From entries of the annual meetings of the Buena Vista school, clues appear, in the rather formal minutes, which suggest that school meetings caused equally as much spirit among the neighbors then as they were to do a century later in the consolidation of school districts. Whenever a major issue had to be faced in the Buena Vista school, such as the need for a pump on the school grounds, or a new paint job, or even worse a new school, a vote by ballot, not by any show of hands, was usually demanded, and the ballot of any elector who might not be qualified was at once challenged. At a meeting held in 1916, six votes were withdrawn as a result of challenges over the question of who was to act as chairman of the meeting. John Dineen defeated George Newby 110 to 95.

In 1892 the school year in the Buena Vista District No. 1 was advanced to nine months, three in the spring, two in the fall and four in the winter, a description which fails to explain the sequence of months or vacation periods. At the same annual meeting, Frederick Huntley, long active in town politics, presided, and District Clerk William A. Clark entered these minutes, *inter alia* (the author's italics):

"Moved and *caried* to raise \$5.00 to build one half the fence between the school house ground and Mrs. Jones place Moved and *caried* that we *rais* \$35.00 to paint the

school house Moved and *caried* that it be left with the *bord* to get it done as cheap as they can and to have it done in a good workman like *maner* and to have good material used Moved and *caried* that we hire a man teacher if they can without too much *truble* Moved and *caried* that we *dont allow* any scholars of age out of the district to *atend* our school."

School District No. 1 did not get a pump until 1896 when \$55 was appropriated for digging a well and installing a pump. A pump for the school house here and elsewhere in the county was considered a luxury. Water, when required, was carried by the pupils or the teacher from the nearest neighbor. It may be assumed that little was used in the winter months when the water pail, in any event, was bound to freeze during the night. Even the ink bottles were unsafe. At the Saumer School in Alban, Oscar Nelson, an alumnus of the 1890s, recalls that in zero weather the pupils buried their ink bottles every night in the warm sand at the base of the wood stove.

In addition to his or her duties as school teacher and keeper of the wood stove, the rural school teacher of Portage County was asked to report annually on the titles of books used for reference reading. For the years 1895 to 1898, Joint District No. 1, (Stockton and Amherst) the following books were purchased for the school: 1) *Young Folks Cyclopedia of Common Things*, 2) *Young Folks Cyclopedia of Persons*, 3) *Benjamin Franklin*, 4) *Farmer's Institute*, (donation from state) 5) *Child Life*, 6) *Grandfather's Chair*, 7) *Youth's Companion*, 8) *King of the Golden River*, 9) *Stories for Young Children*, 10) *Stories of American Life and Adventure*, 11) *Cats, Dogs, and Other Friends*, 12) *When Molly Was Six*, 13) *The Sea and Its Wonders*, 14) *Winter Fun*, 15) *Beautiful Joe*, 16) *Little Men*, 17) *Boy Emigrant*, 18) *Queer Little Princess*, 19) *Melody*, 20) *The Story of Patsy*, 21) *Little Pilgrims' Progress*, 22) *Stories (of) Transatlantic Travels*, 23) *Juan and Juanita*, 24) *Jack and Jill*, 25) *Ice Queen*, 26) *Left Behind*, 27) *Dora's Housekeeping*, and 28) *Washington's Young Aids* (probably *aides*).

In Joint District No. 2 of Stockton the teacher appears to have picked more interesting books. In addition to

the encyclopaedias above, this school in 1896 purchased the following books: 1) *The Seven Little Sisters*, 2) *The Seven Prove (?) Sisterhood*,<sup>1</sup> 3) *Boy's Workshop*, 4) *Principles of Agriculture*, 5) *Hans Brinker*, 6) *Glimpses of the Plant World*, 7) *Robinson Crusoe*, 8) *Swiss Family Robinson*, 9) *Speech and Manners*, 10) *Footprints of Travel*, 11) *Green Mountain Boys*, 12) *George Washington*, 13) *Farmers' Institute*, (donation) 14) *Youth's Companion*, 15) *Child Life*, 16) *Grandfather's Chair*, 17) *Household History*, 18) *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, 19) *Life of Lincoln*, and 20) *Little Lord Fauntleroy*.

From the limited evidence on other district schools in the townships of the county before 1900, there appears to have been little variation from the titles listed above, and nearly all the schools of Stockton, at least, carried the encyclopaedia of things and persons as well as the *Seven Little Sisters* and *Seven Prove (?) Sisterhood*. Several of the schools had *Black Beauty*, apparently one of the all-time favorites and still being used in most grade schools of the county.

By 1917 the rural schools were equipped with fairly standard appointments which, aside from electric lights adopted after REA lines came through in the 1930s, have remained more or less the same. Many, of course, have closed. A document made out for Keene School in District No. 10 by W. M. Scribner, school clerk, in 1917 describes what appears to be a typical rural school, and which in 1958 was still functioning. The building is described in this report as being 36 feet long, 24 feet wide, and 13 feet high, with two by six studding and rafters sheeted up with matched lumber, papered and sided with No. 1 pine and painted white. The inside is back plastered, lathed and plastered and hard finished with a floor of hard maple. There are three windows on the north and south sides, and two windows in the cloak room. The building has a belfry with bell and a flag pole in the yard. It was heated by a system, approved by the state, with a jacketed stove having a 12 inch fresh air pipe and an 11 inch foul air pipe.

The school room at the time had one black board

<sup>1</sup> There is no record of this title in the Wisconsin Traveling Library.



three feet high and 23 feet long, with the following pictures hanging on the walls: "Sir Galahad," "Can't You Talk?" "George Washington," (and several other presidents of the United States) "The Gleaners," "The Horse Shoer," and "The Angelus."

The furniture was described as 24 double seats, one bookcase, an organ and stool, one clock, six lamps, one card catalog, one wash stand and sink, one porcelain water cooler, a dictionary stand, teacher's desk and three chairs, a globe, a Portage County map, a state map, and a case of maps.

In summation, Scribner writes: "The school house is beautifully located on an eastern slope with plenty of shade trees, two excellent closets, a good wood shed with plenty of good dry hard oak wood, pump and pump house [and] the school grounds occupy an acre of ground."

At one time it was apparently a custom for rural school teachers to present to a graduating pupil a souvenir card which contained a picture of the teacher with a quotation from poetry on one side, and on the reverse, the year, and names of the pupils with a place to write in the name of the pupil to whom the card was being presented. One of these survive from School District No. 11 in the town of Stockton dated 1897-1898.<sup>1</sup> The names of the pupils are listed as well as the school board, namely Peter Doyle, clerk; William Leary, director; John O'Keefe, treasurer; Stacia Livingston, county superintendent; and below, the name of the teacher, E. G. Higgins. A short poem on the reverse side reads:

"Ah me! those joyous days are gone!  
I little dreamt till they had flown  
How fleeting were the hours."

The first Portage County Teachers Institute was held in the White School in Stevens Point on May 21, 1860. The program on the first day was as follows:

*A.M.*

Second hour — Roll call at which each mem-

<sup>1</sup> In collection of Mrs. Grace Leary, Stevens Point, Wis.

ber present is to respond with a quotation from the Bible.

Third hour — Arithmetic, by Mr. Allen.

Fourth hour — Geography, by Mr. Packard.

Fifth hour — Theory and Practice of Teaching, Mr. Allen.

*P.M.*

First hour — Roll call, members to respond with quotations and sentiments.

Second hour — Lectures on "Schools and Education."<sup>1</sup>

Teachers from Stevens Point, Plover, Almond and Hull townships attended the institute and on May 25 the *Pinery* said: "The Teachers Institute under the direction of Hon. J. L. Pickert, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Prof. Allen, has been in session at this place the past week. We are grateful to note this fact as it betokens a disposition on the part of Educational officers to render the cause of Education more popular by fixing more firmly in the minds of the people the principles of our state system of Public Instruction."

A fact of early rural life in American schools was the advanced age of elementary school pupils usually referred in old texts as "scholars." Photographs taken of school classes in Portage County in the 1880s and 1890s suggest the advanced age of many of the pupils. Many of the young folks who were not financially able to attend higher schools of learning, or the academies and institutes, continued to attend grade school, particularly in winter terms even after they had been graduated. The teacher, often scarcely older than some of the pupils, did his or her best to keep them occupied with books available and, if nothing else, to inspire them.

Rural school teachers were also faced with another problem in Portage County, namely, the choice of spell-

<sup>1</sup> *Pinery*, May 18, 1860.

ings for the names of children of immigrant parents, especially among the Polish and Norwegians, many of whom had not decided on the proper spelling of their own name in English. Mrs. W. F. Owen, who taught in or near Amherst Junction before the turn of the century, relates that when Helen Werachowski entered school the first day she was asked to give her name. Mrs. Owen, who admits she was "innocent of all foreign names except a few Irish ones" asked the new pupil to repeat her name and after several unsuccessful attempts at spelling Werachowski, wrote down "Verhusky." Years later the pupil still wrote her name the way her teacher spelled it for her and apparently someone else was also influenced by this spelling as the Amherst township tax roll for 1895 carries the name "J. F. Veryhuski."

On May 20, 1882 District No. 5 School, later Violet, was organized in Sec 27 of Carson. According to Mrs. Fred Zimmerman of Carson, this was a log building, that is, logs "flatted" or hewed on two sides with a broadax. But the hewed log school was already on the way out and probably the last one in the county, Runkle School, was built in the spring of 1887 in Sec 23 of modern Eau Pleine township. The contract in the clerk's book called for a building "18 x 28 feet of timber *flated* (flatted) on two sides to compose the body of the house, with a good shingled roof & double floor, & sealed overhead with a ship-lap & the gable ends boarded & *batened* (battened), chinked & plastered on one side together with a good *cornish* (cornice) & six full windows & one door." W. C. Pitt was given the contract for \$225. For an extra \$50 he was to enclose half an acre of ground with board fence, four boards high with cap board on top, and he was to build a double out-house, 6 x 12 feet, with shingled roof "and two good doors." Miss Jessie Sager of McDill was hired as the first teacher at \$24 per month for three months of school beginning June 27, 1887.

There is no contemporary evidence of any rural school being organized in the county before 1855, although the Portage County treasurer's ledger carries an entry

<sup>1</sup> *History of Amherst*, Red and White School Association, 1912, p. 38.

dated June 5, 1853 "paid Almond School money \$8.64" which indicates that a school existed in Almond township on that date. One of the first rural schools was organized by George W. Morrill on July 9, 1855 in the town of Stockton covering Secs 1, 2, 11, 12 and the east half of Secs 3 & 10; in other words, this district lay about half way between modern Custer and Amherst Junction. Morrill, who pioneered on land in Sec 30 of Stockton on the old Air Line Road, was a school teacher by profession and when the town of Stockton was incorporated in 1855, became its first school superintendent. A school, called Morrill, is identified on the 1876 and 1895 plats in the southwest corner of double section 30 where, in fact, it is still located. It may have been organized before 1855 as it was part of the community known as Stockton, probably the first to develop east of Plover.

Most of the rural schools in the county were organized between 1855 and 1895, only a handful later. Thus by World War I the peak in rural school expansion had been reached and by 1926 two had already closed. The only available directory of rural schools in the county covers the school year of 1926-27 when Marion E. Bannach was county superintendent. As many of these schools have been consolidated since that time, and no doubt more will follow, it is fitting that the names of the schools and their teachers in 1926-27 be recorded. They were:

ALBAN township: Saumur, Hazel Evenson; Simonis, Violet Smith; Alban, Everett Martin; Lake View, Ruth Leklem; Brown, Alice Lee; and Hamilton, Lorena Kiloran.

ALMOND township: Lone Pine, Luman Precourt; Mehne (school closed and pupils transported to Almond); Hetzel, Kathryn M. Cobb; Spirit Land, Alice I. Peterson; Prairie View, Fern E. Manley; Geo. F. Schilling, Helen Peterson; and Boelter, Arloine Krohn.

AMHERST township: Wm. V. Fleming, Leola B. Allen; Lysne, Mona Aanrud; Black Oak Grove, Sarah Dwinell; Hie Corners, Grace Allen; and Fountain Grove, Mamie Gelman.

BELMONT township: Brookside, Cora Washburn; Pioneer, Edna Oestrick; Sunny View, Bessie Parsons; Dopp, Lelah Dalziel; Neale, Mildred Mathe; Lincoln, Katherine Doyle; and Pickerel Lake, Ethel Bowers.

BUENA VISTA township: Liberty Corners, Alice Sweitzer; Pleasant Valley, Myrtle M. Barden; Stewart, John Wentworth; Keene, Esther Newby; Sunny Side, Olivia Adams; Coddington, Mrs. H. Sumpter; Polly, Mayme Swetalla; and McKinley, Ruth Tess.

CARSON township: Rocky Run, (school closed, pupils transported to Training School at Stevens Point Normal School); Green Meadow, Vincent Slusarski; Lieut. Mallory, Thos. Keithley; Violet, Jessie Finnessy; Lake View, Laura Lewison; Sunset Valley, Henry Dorhorst; Grover, Doris Martin; Cary, Lawrence Beaudin; Lone Elm, Florence Albert; Victory, Myrl Clark; and Oak Hill, Mrs. Julia Day.

DEWEY township: Wilson, Carl Kitowski; Liberty Bell, Leona E. Polar; Thorun, Mrs. Minnie Yanke; Rockland, Mrs. S. Firkus; Cartmill, Delphia Siem; and Bruski, Julia E. Lemancik.

EAU PLEINE township: Maple Valley, Esther Ernst; Marion, Evelyn Nichols; Whitehouse, Julia E. Tormey; White Lily, Gilman M. Coombs; Runkles, Ruby Mae Parsons; and Wolfe, Edna Martin.

GRANT township: Kellner, Irene Medenwaldt; Clover, Harry Timm; Oak Park, Helene Rathke; Major Whiteside, Carolyn Knuteson; Meadow View, Ruby Brien; and Quentin, Mrs. Erma Smith.

HULL township: Nugent, Isabelle Welch; Pulaski, Mane Simonis; Casimir, Bernice Bruse; Ark, Johanna Wroblewski; Plover Hills, Evelyn Rybicke; and Glinski, Esther Peickert.

LANARK township: Gen. Irwin, Anna Lawrence; Oakdale, Marion Robinson; Pipe, Evelyn Smith; Valley View, Coral Atkinson; Madley, Helen McTigue; and Badger, Irma Stedman.

LINWOOD township: La Follette, Mary Ann Treder; Riverside, Esther Peterson; River Valley, Phyllis Pike;

Woodville, Crescent I. Britz; and John Francis Sims, Wilma Strauss.

NEW HOPE township: Peru, Loretta Kussman; Garfield, Tecla Damask; Loberg, Thelma Gullikson; Rhinehardt, Leila Aanrud; Oak Grove, Ethelyn Wrolstad; and Malloy, Alice Burant.

PINE GROVE township: Bluff, Belle Peterson; Schenck; (school closed, pupils transported to Bancroft); Williams, Iva Bender; and Harris, Esther Lowe.

PLOVER township: Maine, Beulah Isherwood; McDill, Hazel Isherwood; Worzella, Mary Rosenthal; Meehan, Winifred Wells; Pine, Clarence Teske; Whiting, Mrs. Roy Cartmill; Roosevelt, Lucy C. Doyle; and Isherwood, Gertrude Scribner.

SHARON township: Twin Lakes, Mrs. Flossie Schulist; Geo. Washington, Grace Isidor; Polonia, Agnes Repinski; Edison, Catherine Sikorski; Tomorrow River, Martha Studzinski; Gen McGlachlin, Deloma Valentine; Madison, Cecelia Wiczek; and Pine Island, Margaret B. Bricko.

STOCKTON township: Prairie, Edith Parks; Arnott, Edith Heasty; Heffron, Lucy Higgins; Town Hall, Gladys Kussman; Stockton, Gertrude Doyle; Custer, Emil Bannach; Harper, Helen Saeger; Paderewski, Florence Berry; J. Hosmer Felch, Veretta Pratt; Fancher, Nellie Clark; Morrill, Florence Beaudin; Hillcrest, Carl Scheider; and Oakland, Marion Lukasavitz.

In addition to the rural schools in 1926-27 there were grade schools in Amherst Junction, known as the Amherst Junction; the Junction Public school in Junction City; and the Jerome Nelson school in Nelsonville. The grade schools in Almond, Amherst, Bancroft and Rosholt were combined with the local high school.

The lowest salary for a rural grade school teacher during this period was \$75 per month and the highest \$120. The average was about \$100.

Up to 1947 town, village and city boards had power to consolidate school districts, but little was accomplished along this line in the rural areas owing to the conflict of interests between one township and another. As a

result the state in 1947 enacted legislation which made it possible for each county to create a school committee on the county level which would deal not only with the conflict of township and urban interests, but also with neighboring counties. Before action on any consolidation was taken by the school committee, hearings were held in the district to learn the views of interested citizens. These meetings in the county, especially from 1948 to 1950, were often featured by moments of tense excitement as the taxpayers fought, each for his own reasons, to stay in one district or keep out of another.

The first to be consolidated in Portage County under the new establishment was the Tomorrow River School District No. 2 which brought several rural schools under the Amherst village school system effective July 1, 1948. By June 30, 1957 the number of school districts in the county had been reduced to 37 of which 24 were still one-room school districts. But with modern roads and bus travel, the one-room or "country" school had become an anachronism and what was good enough for father is no longer good enough for his son who is being challenged not only on the home front by a "technological explosion" but in outer space by *sputnik zemli* (satellite of the earth).

One ceremony which goes largely unchanged through the years is the high school commencement exercise. The main speaker of the evening usually advises the graduates how to face up to life, to follow the Golden Rule, and not to forget the lessons taught them by their parents and teachers. The practice of adopting a class motto may have been first used in the late 1870s, while class colors and flower came later. The first graduating class of 1881 at Stevens Point High School had as its motto *Esse non Videri* (to be not to seem) but had no class color or flower. George B. Nelson, addressing the Stevens Point High School graduating class of 1930, stated that when he graduated in 1894 in a class which numbered 14 pupils, the class failed to adopt a motto on a tie vote of seven to seven. In 1899 Plover High School included class colors, which were maroon and gold, a

class flower, the red carnation, and their motto "Today we anchor, tomorrow we sail."

Nelson spoke on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the first commencement held in connection with the 1930 exercises at Stevens Point High School then located between Clark and Ellis Streets, in 1958 used for vocational school classes. Among the honored guests on this occasion were two members of the graduating class of 1881, Mrs. W. B. Buckingham, nee Bertha A. Scott, valedictorian in 1881, and Mrs. Mary E. Wing, nee Mary E. Clements. The others were deceased. On hand in 1930 to give out the diplomas to the 144 "promising young men and women [who] graduated with all the advantages that modern academic education can bestow" was Mrs. Emmons Burr, nee Jennie Ferriss, assistant principal in 1881 and a teacher of Mrs. Buckingham and Mrs. Wing who, as the authorized representative of the school board, had handed out the diplomas to the graduating class of 1881. A sentimental touch was added when Mrs. Buckingham, on behalf of the graduating class of 1930, presented Mrs. Burr with a copy of their annual, "*The Tattler*," dedicated "to those men and women who preceded us as students in the Stevens Point High School. . .", even as a copy of Milton's complete works had been presented to her at that long-ago commencement of 1881.

The first high school commencement exercises were held at McCulloch's Hall on Main Street, Saturday evening, July 2, 1881. The program for the class of nine pupils was as follows:

#### PRAYER

MUSIC — "Greeting Glee"

SALUTATORY — "The Russian and the Turk,"

Frank E. Gilchrist.

ESSAY — "Our Country" Belle H. Brown.

MUSIC — "Slumber Dearest"

ESSAY — "The Quaker Poet." — Mary E. Clements.

ORATION — "Scholars in Public Life." — Charles M. Chamberlain

ESSAY — "The Philosophy of Colors." — Carrie L. Wade.

<sup>1</sup> *Stevens Point Journal*, June 13, 1930.



MUSIC — "Echoes"

ESSAY — "American Literature" — Abbie F. Wheelock.

ORATION — "Antagonism." — Carl F. Phillips.

MUSIC — "Nearer Home."

CONFERRING OF DIPLOMAS

VALEDICTORY — "The Last Days of Pompeii".  
Bertha A. Scott.

MUSIC — "Good Night."

Only one member of the graduating class of nine failed to appear on the program, namely, Arnold D. Slutts.

The nine pupils who graduated in 1881 were probably enrolled in the freshman class of the first high school built in the county at Stevens Point in 1876-77 under the provisions of the free high school act of 1875. Built of Menasha white brick, it stood at the northeast corner, one lot east, of Clark and Church Streets. F. L. Green served as the first principal.

The high school was badly damaged by fire on Feb. 15, 1892 and eventually a new high school was built farther east on Clark Street between East Avenue and Reserve. This was enlarged in 1925 by a connecting building which became Emerson Grade School when still another high school, named after P. J. Jacobs of Stevens Point, was built on east Main Street and occupied in 1938.

With the organization of the first high school in Stevens Point, the school board named a city superintendent of schools, J. K. Mc Gregor, who served one year from 1877-1878. He was followed by William Weston, F. L. Green, F. W. Cooley, H. A. Simonds, J. W. Simmons, Edmund J. Vert, F. F. Showers, John N. Davis, J. E. Roberts, H. C. Snyder, Paul M. Vincent, and in 1956 by the incumbent, Albert Moldenhauer.

While a board of education presumably ruled the city schools before 1873, there is no record of it and the first known board of 1873 included G. L. Park, president; A. G. Hamacker, clerk; and E. D. Brown, treasurer. Serving on the board of education in 1958-59 were Alf Anderson, Gordon Hanson, Leo Larson,

Edward Hoppa, Francis Roman, Leo Ohlert, H. Bartig, Fred Klingbail, Ted Holthusen, Dr. W. G. Wochinski, Leslie V. Courtney, Milton Sorenson, Robert H. Peder-son, Jr., Dr. F. Reichardt, and O. A. Dehlinger.

A city-wide system of parochial schools, mainly of Roman Catholic denomination, originated with the first parochial grade school established in 1873 in connection with St. Stephen's Church in Stevens Point and since known as St. Stephen's. Others established since 1873 are St. Peter's, St. Joseph's and St. Stanislaus. Several grade schools are also maintained in the county by Catholic parishes. Two Catholic high schools completed and operating in 1956, were Maria High School for Girls and Pacelli High School for Boys. Maria High is an outgrowth of St. Joseph's Academy for Girls established in 1922, and is the only all-girl high school in the county. Pacelli is the only all-boy high school.

Only one Protestant parochial grade school is presently in operation, namely St. Paul's Lutheran Church School in Stevens Point which opened in 1955, although parochial school classes have been held intermittently by this church since 1889.

In addition to P.J. Jacobs High School in Stevens Point, Allen G. Bostad, principal, there were three other high schools in the county in 1958 namely at Almond, John Brown, principal; Amherst, Walter L. Bowman, principal; and Rosholt, Russell W. Wrolstad, principal.

The Wisconsin State College, located in Stevens Point, opened Monday, Nov. 17, 1894 as part of a state-wide system of normal schools maintained at taxpayer's expense chiefly for the training of elementary teachers. First known as the Sixth Normal School, it was authorized in 1923 to offer the degree of bachelor of education, and in 1927 was designated the Central State Teachers' College. Later, authority was given for a bachelor of science degree, and, with a four-year liberal arts program added to teacher training work, the school in 1951 was designated the Wisconsin State College at Stevens Point.

A copy of the school paper, *The Normal Pointer*, dated Oct. 15, 1898, then in its fourth year of publication, carries stories and advertisements of local business men and one entire page by the Normal School which advertised itself as "Thoroughly Equipped: Modern Building; New Apparatus; New Library; New Gymnasium." Three advanced courses were advertised, namely, a two-year course for high school graduates and other competent students; an elementary course of two years for those holding certificates or passing entrance examinations; and a common school course of one year "for special benefit of those who must teach soon." A preparatory course of ten weeks was also offered in all the common branches.

The new quarter was scheduled to open Nov. 7, 1898 and new classes were to be formed at that date "in nearly every subject in the course of study except Latin, German, and some advanced science studies." Board was \$2.50 to \$3 per week, all school charges about \$1.25 per quarter (i.e. ten weeks), and no tuition fees were charged for those expecting to teach. Tuition of \$.65 per week or less in the preparatory grades was charged. Prospective students were urged to write for a circular "or better still" directly to President Theron B. Pray for "an immediate personal reply."

The Stevens Point Normal defeated Oshkosh Normal on Oct. 1, 1898 by a score of 22 to 6 in a football match which was described in the sports writeup as "one of the best games of football ever played in Stevens Point." The writer said Oshkosh's weak point was her line "whereas our line was practically invulnerable [and] our boys all played a good clean game. . ."

Beginning with an enrollment of 201 students in the normal department from 25 counties, in addition to 165 pupils in the training department, the 1958 fall enrollment at the college had risen to more than 1500 students from 175 Wisconsin high schools, several other states and foreign countries. New dormitories and a student union were built in the 1950s in addition to one of the finest libraries in the state.

The Normal School and later the College has been served by the following presidents: Theron B. Pray, 1894-1906; John F. Sims, 1906-1926; Dr. Robert D. Baldwin, 1926-1930; Frank Hyer, 1930-1938; Philip H. Falk, who remained only a few months and removed to Madison where he became city superintendent of schools; Ernest T. Smith, acting in 1938 who received permanent status in August 1939 and carried on until his death in 1940; and William C. Hansen, the seventh president, appointed in October 1940, a position he still holds. He is also the first graduate of the school to serve as president.

The longest tenure of office was held by President Sims, a fastidious man who usually wore a carnation boutonniere. When William Hansen first entered the Normal School as a student in 1909 he recalls that while he had difficulty crossing Main Street without getting his shoes dusty, he noted that President Sims always appeared before his students in polished shoes. Years later, commenting on this phenomenon to Miss Bessie May Allen, long-time head of the Home Economics Department, he learned that Sims kept a shoe kit in his office and as soon as he came off the street, polished his shoes. When Hansen became president in 1940 he found the kit in the office, apparently untouched since the time Sims last used it. East Main Street had meanwhile been paved and was no longer dusty.

Aside from the schools mentioned above, a boarding school for young ladies called the Northern Institute opened in Stevens Point in the 1850s and was discontinued at the outbreak of the Civil War, and the Stevens Point Business College, which offered a short course for professional people, was begun in the 1890s and discontinued shortly before World War I.

Whether students in general are paying more attention to their work in 1958 than they did 60 years ago, to judge from a letter appearing in the *Stevens Point Journal* of Nov. 21, 1898, is also problematical. The letter, signed by "Observer," noted that the Woman's Club had appointed a committee "to inquire into the conduct of the schools..." "Observer" suggested, in-

stead of inquiring into the conduct of the schools, that the women should confine their time to more profitable employment by "inquiring into the conduct and whereabouts of the boys and girls of this city, during at least seven nights in the week [and] make a house to house visit between the hours of eight and twelve, to find out whether the parents know where their children are. . ."

Despite this rather oblique reference to the Woman's Club, the latter served as one of the leading women's organizations in the city from the time of its founding in 1895 through the early decades of the 20th Century, concentrating its activities on literary, cultural and civic improvement. The founders were Mesdames Edwin Horace Joy, G. E. McDill, Owen Clark, Morly Townsend, Henry Curran and Byron B. Park. Among the outstanding projects which the Woman's Club helped to organize and promote were the Public Library in 1904 and a city hospital in 1910, later known as St. Michael's.

The Public Library grew out of a long-felt need in the community. Reading circles and a library association date back to the 1860s in Stevens Point. Eventually, a small library was established in rented rooms and finally in 1903, with the help of the Stevens Point Common Council and private subscriptions, in addition to a substantial grant-in-aid from the Carnegie Foundation, it was decided to build a library, a dream which was realized in the completion of the building on the northeast corner of Clark Street and Strong's Avenue. The staff of the library in 1958 included Miss Aileen MacGeorge, librarian; Mrs. Belva Lloyd, assistant librarian; Miss Beulah Larson, children's librarian; Mrs. Herman E. Pagel, cataloguer; and Miss Patricia Malick, reference librarian.

Other women's clubs which have added their bit to social and civic activity in Stevens Point are the Progress Club, organized in 1897; the Catholic Woman's Club, 1921; the Business and Professional Women's Club, 1928; the Twilight Music Club, 1931; the American Association of University Women, 1935; and the Women's Civic Council, 1950.

## GROWTH OF THE SOIL

The main factor which influenced people to settle on the land of Portage County was not its productivity, but its availability and low cost. Contrary to oft-repeated stories of an unbroken wilderness, the county was spotted with oak openings, pine barrens and prairie where the land was comparatively easy to break. The surveyor's field notes on Almond and Buena Vista, for example, mention rather extensive farm lands already in production in 1851-52. This would not have been possible unless the land was easily broken within a matter of a year or two, as compared to the northern and western townships where the timber impeded the advance of farming.

If some of the pioneers were behind their neighbors in developing the land, it was not necessarily the fault of the land, but of the pioneers themselves. It is often thought that when a settler arrived he was in fact a farmer, or why should he stake out a claim to land? Actually, the majority of the earliest Yankee settlers as well as some of the newcomers from Europe were not farmers by profession, but by choice, who were to learn the art of farming by experiment. This may explain why so many of the older generation recall how hard their fathers and mothers had to work. Many of the first Yankee settlers on the land from the eastern states were carpenters, artisans, mechanics, school teachers, lumberjacks, and shop keepers, all intent on taking advantage of the new opportunities offered by cheap land which was bound to increase in value if nothing more than a single "improvement" or log shanty could be built on it. Even after the county began to fill up with immigrants from Europe, many of them came to the land as tradesmen and artisans, or sailors from the seven seas

and the Great Lakes. Around the towns of Lanark and Belmont there were even "gentlemen farmers" who acquired land because it was cheap and hired others to do the work for them. Probably the most native agriculturists, that is, men with actual farm experience, were the Poles and after them the Germans.

Although most of the settlers from the eastern states were accustomed to hard work when they arrived, many of the European immigrants were the products of a different attitude toward labor who, in their native lands, had prided themselves on their ability to make a living in a more genteel manner. Some found it difficult to adapt themselves to the new regimen of American life and had to move off their farms, unable to stand up to the challenge of individual responsibility. Moreover, the majority of so-called farmers from Europe had not been farm operators or owners, but, in the manner of the feudal system, tenant farmers, or hired hands who had always been told what to do. Most of the men were nearing middle age and without much education. Many signed an "X" between their names when applying for naturalization. The amazing fact is not that some failed, but that the vast majority succeeded, and within two or three years were living better than they had in the Old Country. This was the "land of their choice," the America of which they had heard and dreamed. Few went back.

The history of agriculture in Portage County may be divided into two epochs, the first 40 years from 1850 to 1890 which was featured by crop farming, and from 1890 to 1958 by dairy farming with crops to support the dairy industry. Thus in the beginning the equipment of the farmer was limited to a few implements and tools, a yoke of oxen or a span of horses to pull the breaking plow and homemade A-shaped harrow. There were no milk cows aside from one or two which were kept for domestic purposes.

The main crop across the southern townships in the 1850s and into the mid-1860s was wheat, followed by oats, barley and corn, but little rye. Hay as a crop was rare. Most of this was cut from local marshes and car-

ried out on two poles. The marsh hay was stacked in the log barn, or on the marsh where it could be removed when the ground froze. Here and there potatoes, and a few turnips and beans were raised. In the northern townships where the lumber companies had taken the timber and left the stumps, a favorite method of raising potatoes was to burn the stump as much as possible for the ash that was created and then with a grub hoe, dig holes around the stump and drop in potato seedlings.

Some idea of what an average farm in the southern townships of the county in the 1850s was like is gained from a diary kept in 1857 by Leonidas Lombard who owned a farm in Sec. 5 of Lanark, but specialized as a surveyor. He rented 40 acres of land that year to P. L. McMillin, 20 acres of which was "new-break," that is, land which had recently been broken and could not be expected to be worked as easily as land broken earlier. In return for half the crop he was to furnish McMillin 25 bushels of seed oats, four bushels of wheat, and ten bushels of potatoes, and the use of a cradle and scythe for six months.

In 1857 threshing was done in the spring as well as autumn, presumably with a flail, or oxen tramping over the grain on a dirt floor. On March 2, the diary reveals, 84 sheaves of oats were threshed; a few days later 144 sheaves, a day later 60 sheaves, on another day 156 sheaves, and on March 16 the diarist finished threshing with 90 sheaves. On the day he threshed 60 sheaves he cleaned 21½ bushels of oats.

On June 4 Lombard sowed and harrowed 15½ bushels of oats on four and one-half acres, and the same week sowed more oats. On July 6 and 7 he hoed potatoes on his father's farm at \$1 per day. On the morning of July 18, which was very warm, he hunted stray cattle and in the afternoon picked blueberries. On July 22, which was cloudy and windy, he cleared and grubbed. Three days later he grubbed more land and in the afternoon picked blueberries. On the morning of Aug. 6 he hoed turnips for William H. Remington and in the afternoon worked for William Pillsburg cutting "grubs," i.e.



undergrowth. The following day he cleared brush. On Aug. 8 he began "mowing" hay, apparently with a scythe for the mechanical mower had not yet been invented. A day later he began to harvest winter wheat for Remington and also bought a cow from him for \$30 to be paid by September 17 either in oats at the market price or in money. On Aug. 13 he and his brother, George, cut hay at Spring Lake, no doubt marsh hay, and two days later he cradled wheat for Remington in the morning and in the afternoon raked and put up his own hay. Although Aug. 16 was Sunday, it was a rainy day and apparently afraid of the prospect of more rain, he put up "12 cocks of hay."

Early in September the diarist was threshing more wheat, both for himself and for others, and on Sept. 11 he "received and cleaned up 14 bu. of winter wheat." On Sept. 14 he sowed eight bushels of wheat on a five-acre piece, which was in addition to some previous sowing he had done and "all together sowed  $10\frac{1}{4}$  bu. on  $6\frac{1}{2}$  acres, 4 acres of it new breaking."

In the meantime he had been out surveying for a number of new settlers in the neighborhood, splitting rails at home, plowing, chopping wood, cutting weeds, building a house, and on Oct. 21-22 he harvested turnips. On Jan. 8, 1858 he drove to Mitchell's flour and grist mill at Springville and went on to Stevens Point where he sold seven bushels of oats at \$.25 a bushel, purchased some candles at \$.20 a pound and "returned to Prairie."

A notation toward the end of this diary, undated, reveals that Lombard had harvested, presumably in 1857, a total of 60 bushels of turnips, 366 bushels of oats, 82 bushels of wheat and 200 bushels of potatoes; but how much of this he raised himself and what part of this he got from the rental to McMillin is not made clear.

Another local diary, this one written in Norwegian by Knut Halverson who settled (*ca.* 1870) in Sec. 26 of Sharon, reveals that some changes in the pattern of agriculture were already noticeable while much was the same as in the 1850s. The first entry in this diary begins in 1872 and carries through to 1878 and, while parts

of it are missing, a fairly consecutive account appears for the year 1876.

During the winter months of 1876 Halverson, who lived in a log cabin and had a fairly commodious log barn, spent a great deal of his time cutting cedar rails on a forty north of his place along the Tomorrow River. In April he began to clean oats, rye and wheat in preparation for the spring sowing. By May 4 he had sowed all his wheat and harrowed, and a few days later "hauled a load of manure away" which, for the first time, suggests that barnyard fertilizer was now being used on the land. In the latter part of May he finished planting a field of corn, and on June 1 he plowed for potatoes. Later entries reveal that he was hoeing both the corn and potatoes. One entry mentions that he had been "cultivating" the corn, although it appears doubtful that he was using a cultivator in the modern sense.

On July 20, Diarist Halverson cut timothy hay "on the lower field" which is the first mention of this crop, but most of the hay was marsh hay which he cut on the swamp along the river. In the latter part of July he began to cradle winter wheat, a task which went on well into August, by which time he was also cradling the oats and rye. He brought the grain back to the barn and stacked it in preparation for the threshing machine which actually arrived at his place on Sept. 21. Meanwhile, he had been around to the neighbors exchanging labor on the machine. On Sept. 23 he cut down the last of his corn and a few days later built a corn crib, the first time this is mentioned.

On Oct. 6 and 7 he dug potatoes, apparently not for sale, but enough to supply the family. About the same time, John Printz, a neighbor, had been over to the Halverson place to help butcher a pig, and in the latter part of November Halverson butchered another pig and the following day "cut up some pork and salted it down."

Through October he spent quite a few days plowing which suggests that even on a limited acreage, the work went slowly. Although he fails to mention husking corn

in 1876, an entry of 1875 brings in this phase of pioneer life. He also raised "ponkis" which was his way of twisting the English word pumpkin into Norwegian.

Whenever he had any spare time, the diarist was either cutting more rails in the swamp or wood for the kitchen stove, grubbing roots and burning underbrush for new-break, picking stones, chinking the log cabin and barn with moss and mud, or patching shoes for the children. He also worked now and then hauling logs to the *rulle vejen* (skidway) in Boyington's saw mill located east of the Tomorrow River, and on several occasions hauled grain to be ground for feed at Jordan, or wheat for flour in Stevens Point. He had no well on his farm and hauled water from the Tomorrow River.

Although neither the Lombard nor Halverson diaries make any reference to the sowing of grain according to the position of the moon, great emphasis was placed on this by some of the pioneers, a practice which was followed even into the 1900s. Seed grain, carried in a small sack supported by a strap over the shoulder, was tossed to one side in a wave-like motion of the hand. In this manner the sower could judge from his footsteps how far to move over on the next row back without too much duplication. One Norwegian pioneer of east Alban was known to take five steps to each toss of the seed, but just before making the toss, he threw a few extra grains into the ground for Odin, the Norse god of pagan times, apparently to take the evil eye off the other seed. What this farmer did about appeasing Odin when the mechanical drill came into use is not recorded.

Evidence that a threshing machine had reached as far as the town of Sharon in 1876 appears in the Halverson diary as noted above. This rig probably included an "agitator" (separator) constructed mostly of wood which was powered by a belt from a winch that went with a circular sweep, one team of horses or oxen to each sweep, four or five sweeps to the winch, with a man standing on a central platform over the winch holding a long whip to keep the draft animals from lagging. This type of horsepower was being used even after the turn of the century on many farms of Portage County.

Before the advent of the traction steam engine, which pulled itself as well as the separator, oxen or horses were used to pull the steam engine from one farm to the next, and it was customary for the owners of the rig to pull only the engine with their oxen or horses. It was the responsibility of the farmer who wanted the threshing done to go to the last place of threshing and haul the separator to his own place; and the farmer who had just finished threshing was responsible for hauling the water wagon — which also served as a tool wagon — over to the next neighbor. Thus the task of moving a threshing rig in the 1870s and early 1880s was divided three ways among the owner of the rig, the man who wished to thresh, and the one who had just finished. Photographs taken in Buena Vista of a threshing rig in the 1890s show the steam engine, now self-propelled, standing at a considerable distance from the separator in order to increase the length of the belt which gave more power. Nearly all farmers stacked their grain near the barn so that the separator could be wheeled between the stacks. This made it possible for the men to pitch bundles into the separator from two sides.

Usually 12 to 15 men were required on a threshing job, some to pitch bundles, one or two to sack the grain, several to carry the grain sacks into the granary — usually up a stairs as steep as a ladder — others to handle the straw, later the blower, while the permanent mechanic who traveled with the rig, his mouth filled with tobacco juice, stood atop the separator and surveyed the scene like a king.

Threshing was an annual event when neighbors exchanged labor and women came to assist each other for the big dinner which followed each job no matter how small or large. Everything had to be of the best with plenty of pie and cake to top off the meat and potato course. None of the threshers ever thought of wiping off more than the dust and chaff accumulated around their necks before sitting down to eat. This was the time when the men proved to their women that they were men — and smelled of whiskey consumed behind the straw pile.

One of the duties of the town clerk, before 1900 and down to 1930, was to record all chattel and property mortgages and the date of their satisfaction. While many of these records have been lost, a complete account is contained in the proceedings of Belmont which cover a period from 1877 to 1892. From these entries it is possible to visualize the type of equipment and draft animals used on the farm at the time, the type of stock and crops most farmers were raising, and to some extent, the type of home appliances in general use.

From the Belmont record it is clear that the most favored cow was a brindle or a cow of reddish hue. There were black cows, presumably of Holstein ancestry, with a white spot now and then, but the predominant color was black. A number of cows mortgaged are also referred to as "muley" cows, having no relation to the mule, but meaning a cow without horns. Most of the oxen were either red or dark brown.

For draft animals the farmers were using horses, oxen, and now and then mules. The horses, mostly Morgans, ranged through all colors such as cream, gray, bay, roan, black, dark bay or brown, chestnut, white and mixed white. One mortgage in 1879 describes a nine-year old weighing about 1200 pounds. The weight of horses is seldom mentioned but from the few entries which do, it appears that 1200 pounds was slightly above the average weight of a horse between 1877 and 1892. As Belmont was one of the first to be settled, most of the actual breaking of land had been accomplished before 1877, usually with a yoke of oxen on the breaking plow, occasionally three oxen, the third one in the lead. The plows had to cut deeply into the ground in order to turn over the surface grub and sod after the land had been cleared of trees and stumps. One mortgage mentions a breaking plow with an 18-inch cut.

The breaking of new land in Belmont was continued after 1877, but this was mostly a process of adding an acre here and there to already-cleared fields. After 1877 most of the farm work in Belmont was being done by horses. Between September 1877 and September 1879,

references to horses mortgaged outnumber oxen more than two to one although it is also true that single horses were more often mortgaged than single oxen. After 1883 oxen are seldom mentioned.

Although Alban township was largely developed after 1870, the change over to horses appears to have followed the trend in Belmont and therefore may be applied tentatively to the rest of the county. Some farmers continued to use oxen even after the turn of the century, but these were the exceptions even as there are horses still being used in the county in 1958 long after the vast majority of farmers have changed to tractors. In the early period, the Morgan horse was favored, followed in the 1890s and later by the popular Percheron. A few Belgians and Clydsdales were used but the latter was generally considered too "soft-boned" for work on the farm or in the logging woods.

While the early horses were light-weight compared to later farm horses, they probably were preferred at the time because they could be used for light farm duty as well as for drivers. Many farmers had a driver in addition to work horses, but some used their work horses to drive a Democrat wagon to the village or to church.

Two horses are usually referred to in the Belmont mortgages as a "span," not a team, while two oxen are referred to as a "yoke." Some entries, referring to a span of horses, mention the "nigh" horse and the "off" horse. A horse teamster always stood to the left of his horses if he was working them on foot. Thus the "nigh" horse was the one closest to the teamster which would be the left horse, and the "off" horse, being farthest away, was on the right. In mortgaging a horse or cow, the clerk always described the distinguishing features such as coloring, or a spavin on one of the feet. The clerk often went one step further by mentioning that it was known, for example, as the "John Smith horse," meaning, as a rule, that John Smith had raised the horse or owned it some years before the ownership changed.

One entry refers to a four-year old horse with a brand "on near stifle joint," i.e. on the left side of the horse. The use of the term "stifle joint" suggests that horse

owners in pioneer days were well acquainted with the main points of anatomy on a horse even as a later generation was to learn the technical names of the main parts of a car. The stifle joint on a horse is located just behind the flank which means that the brand on this horse was located where it should be, i.e. near the rump.

As a rule the mortgager was forced to put up his most valued possessions, and, if he had anything more valued than a horse, such as a new piece of machinery, he usually had to include it. There are numerous references to vehicles such as lumber wagons with box, nearly all painted red, as well as Democrat wagons which were lighter with narrower tires, and spring buggies, top buggies, and bob sleighs. When a lumber wagon was mortgaged, the owner usually had to include the neck yoke, often the evener, and nearly always the whiffle trees which no one ever pronounced except as "whipple" trees.

Grain in shock or still uncut formed another basic mortgage item. The proportion of the various types of grain raised in Belmont cannot be judged accurately from these entries, but it is clear that more wheat was still being raised than any other crop in the early 1880s. However, one farmer had a \$20 mortgage on five acres of beans and four acres of potatoes. Another had 15 acres of barley, two acres of wheat, 40 acres of rye, three and a half acres of corn and four acres of potatoes which he mortgaged for \$55. While hay crop is seldom mentioned, one farmer mortgaged 25 acres of clover and timothy.

Aside from the grain crops mentioned above, a few acres of buckwheat were being raised in Belmont in the 1880s.

The types of machinery then in use were developments of new inventions, many of them less than 25 years in the past. At least one farmer had a sulky cultivator in 1879 and another a McCormick Harvester. Around 1880 one-horse rakes and reapers were being used on a limited scale. But as the years advanced through the 1880s, more and more machinery is mentioned. By 1884 a number of farmers had acquired Perry mowers,

one had a seeder, another a springtooth seeder. A steel-tooth horse rake is mentioned in an entry of 1878, and a Daisy McCormick single rake in 1885. At least one farmer in 1878 had a Wheeler No. 6 combined reaper and mower. In 1886 a new binder, mentioned for the first time, was mortgaged for \$75. In 1887 reference is made to a DePere "reversible tooth harrow" and a double shovel plow. By 1889 at least one farmer had a Deering all steel binder.

Other equipment includes a knitting machine, fanning mills and cane mills, some with evaporators. The cane mills were used for crushing sorghum and making sirup from the heavy cane-like grass which was grown on a small scale in most parts of the county. The juice from the cane was collected in a receptacle and placed in an evaporator, or else boiled down on the family stove in much the same manner as maple sirup. Sugar was both difficult to buy and expensive after the Civil War; and for the next two decades at least, many farmers grew a little sorghum from which to make their own sirup for sweetening purposes, or even as a spread on bread. In fact, Karo sirup, later purchased in cans, was a favorite spread among the poorer people of the county into the 1920s. The Van Order grist mill at Jordan, before it was moved upstream a couple of miles, was equipped to process the sorghum grass, but the largest sorghum mill in the county was located at Plover. Mrs. Anna Bushman, 97, of Sharon, recalls that Frederick Mersch, who lived north of Ellis, was famous for his brand of sirup in the 1880s.

The combustion engine had come to Portage County farms by the 1880s and there are a number of references in the Belmont mortgages to engines, mostly under ten horse.

Sewing machines were the most commonly mortgaged household appliances, followed by organs. One man in Belmont apparently had reached a point of no return. In 1879 he mortgaged "one stove, one clock, one bed and pillows, one breaking plow, and one fiddle," all for \$10!



The Civil War and the need for woolen uniforms and blankets gave a fillip to sheep raising, mostly of the Shropshire breed, in Portage County. This continued to expand through the 1860s when nearly every farmer had a flock of sheep for domestic use and as a cash commodity, particularly in the northern townships where cut-over lands provided pasture. The big demand for wool slacked off in the early 1870s and, as the Belmont mortgages suggest, the majority of farmers were no longer raising sheep except for domestic purposes. The wool was washed and carded at home and made into yarn on the family spinning wheel, or it was sent to the Waupaca Woolen Mill which both purchased the wool and sold the finished products, or did custom carding and dressing.<sup>1</sup>

The striking feature of the Belmont mortgages is the near-absence of any mention of hops used in the manufacture of beer and sold to buyers especially in St. Louis. The raising of hops appears to have been the main cash crop in the 1860s and into the 1870s in Belmont as well as in other townships of the county, but is mentioned only three times in the Belmont mortgages between 1878 and 1879. In 1878 John Gray took a \$300 mortgage with Milo Clark on "hops mown on my farm. . . also the hops purchased by me from Milo Clark which is now being picked and dried at my dry house." This is the only evidence that a hop house was also known as a "dry house." In the summer of 1879 Albert Taylor took a mortgage of \$229.31 with Smart & Crowell (Almond) on five acres of hops growing on his farm. This would represent roughly \$46 an acre which, manifestly, was not the full value of this crop. The last reference to hops in these entries is dated Sept. 29, 1879 when M. Richman mortgaged "about three hundred boxes of hops now in John Gray's hop house."

The development of the hop industry spread rapidly throughout most of the county and farmers hurried to build hop houses where the green flower of the hop vine could be dried. The hop house was actually a form of kiln. A central chamber with plastered walls was built

<sup>1</sup> *Pinery*, March 18, 1870, advertisement.

to resist heat, and underneath a brick or stone oven was installed. Flues for the fire were provided in the foundation of the building on two or three sides so that the draught could be regulated according to the prevailing wind. Capping the building was a ventilator which turned with the wind and allowed the heat to escape. Under the roof of the main chamber were screens on which the green hops were laid to be dried.

The hop plant is a vine and each year long poles have to be dug down for the plant to climb. During the harvest, men and women shared in the work and between neighbors, although some pioneers with larger acreage brought in girls from other communities to assist in the picking. The menfolk cut the vine, pulled out the poles and carried the vine, still clinging to the pole, to a big box about four feet deep and laid the pole and vine across the top of the box. Here four girls, two on each side of the box, picked off the hop pods and dropped them into the box. The hop pod or flower is light as a feather and fills up a box like dried leaves. One hop grower in Lanark was known to approach the box and kick it occasionally with the side of his heel which, of course, shook down the hops and slowed up the filling of the box — an act that did not endear him to the hop pickers who were being paid by the box. After the box was filled, the hops were poured into sacks and hauled to the drying house.

Many hop houses were built with a lean-to on the side where a dance floor was provided and here, every night, the young people gathered and danced, usually to the tune of a fiddle or two. This was the famed "hop dance," actually a form of the square dance, and apparently out of this developed the "hop waltze" favored by the Polish people of Sharon.

In the early 1870s the hop louse, active in the eastern states in the 1860s, finally made its way into southern Wisconsin and spread northward. As there was no insecticide to combat this insect, which made the flower of the vine wither, hop raising declined rapidly after 1880. Many elders of the county remember abandoned hop houses

still standing after the 1900s, but most of these had been converted to grain and machine sheds, or saloons. One of the only original hop houses left in the county in 1958, long converted to a machine shed, stands on the farm of Clarence Doyle in Lanark.

It was not the hop louse alone that caused the decline and disappearance of the hop industry in the county. Many other factors influenced this change such as the growing size of farm clearings, bigger horses, new machinery, and finally the rise of the dairy industry.

To repeat, farming in Portage County between 1850 and 1890 was a part-time job. There were no chores to be done in the barn that a woman could not handle. When winter came the menfolks hitched up their team and drove to a logging camp where they found employment for themselves and their draft animals. Others went off in the early spring and joined the river drives on the Plover, Little Wolf, and Wisconsin Rivers, or worked in the saw mills scattered throughout the county. Still others worked in their spare time as carpenters, cabinet makers, mechanics, and stone masons.

Some idea of the crops and products of one township in the county in 1891-1892 appears in the proceedings of the town of Sharon. As no other town clerk appears to have made a similar entry, the reason for this isolated instance is uncertain. It is made in this manner:

	<i>Acres</i>		<i>Acres</i>
Wheat	341	Rye	1,695
Oats	1,804	Potatoes	875
Barley	6	Hops	149

Grown in the year 1891

	<i>Bushels</i>		<i>Bushels</i>
Wheat	3,040	Potatoes	41,620
Corn	17,687	Hay	157 tons
Barley	10	Cheese	700 <sup>1</sup>
Rye	14,582	Hops	564
No. of Cows	425		

<sup>1</sup> The record fails to explain whether this may be tons of cheese or not.

Statement of personal property assessed in the year 1892:

	<i>Number</i>		<i>Number</i>
Horses	249	Sheep	375
Cattle	647	Mules	6
Swine	438	Wagons	167
Other Personal property		\$1,901	

Thus it might have gone on for some time except for the great experiment carried out at the University of Wisconsin by Dr. S. M. Babcock who invented the milk test by which it was possible to determine the butterfat content in the milk of any cow. This, together with the invention of the cream separator in the late 1870s, changed Wisconsin crop farming, a six-month job at the most, into dairy farming, a twelve-month job, seven days a week. Up to this time, the making of butter and/or cheese was done mostly in the home. The milk taken from the one or two cows was usually allowed to stand in vats or wooden pails until the cream came to the top at which time it was skimmed and placed in a home-made churn usually fashioned from pine staves in the form of a cylinder. A cover with a hole in the center went over the top of the churn, and a whittled ironwood stick, the knobs of branches not entirely removed from the bottom, was inserted through this hole in the cover and worked up and down in the sour cream. To judge from a pencilled notation which appears in a school secretary's book of Lanark dated March 16, 1875, making butter in this fashion was a frustrating experience. The notation reads: "Mrs. (name withheld) churned from half after eight in the morning till half after two in the afternoon and I tell you if she *wasent mad*."

Home-made butter was kneaded with salt and made into round loaves or impressed into butter molds and carried to the local store and exchanged for groceries. It was not uncommon for people to walk to Waupaca or Stevens Point in order to realize cash for their butter. Probably the main reason why the Polish and Norwegian pioneers were so fond of sour milk was that they had been raised on the whey of the butter which, without re-

frigeration, quickly soured and curdled. The Norwegians ate this sour milk clear, like Jello, while the Polish people were fond of mixing it with boiled potatoes. In fact, for many of the Polish pioneers this combination formed a staple diet.

Home-made butter continued to be sold in local grocery stores even after World War I, but mechanized butter churns, cranked by hand, speeded up the process and made it less maddening.

The rise of the dairy industry not only changed the mode of farming in Portage County, but the very architecture of the farm itself. The log barn gave way to frame barns with room for horses, dairy cows, heifers and calves.

A feature of rural life between 1895 and World War I was a barn raising, actually a form of bee, when neighbors gathered to help raise the frame of a barn, preconstructed as much as possible, pegged it together. Later a bee was organized to shingle the roof. One who remembers a barn raising in Carson is Joseph Peters who began farming (*ca.* 1913) along "Holland Road." Said he: "Yes, there was always quite a crowd gathered for a barn raising, maybe 75 men, but the best guys did the work, the rest stood lookin'. But got to be dinner time, they were all there. Some times we got the whole barn done in one day except for the shingles."

This was in the tradition of the earlier pioneers who, instead of raising barns, organized corn husking bees in the autumn, and even clearing bees when the neighbors gathered at a newcomer's cabin, bringing their own teams or oxen, and helped to clear and burn off the slashing on a piece of land considered essential for the newcomer to get started. One of these clearing bees was held near Alban Corners in the 1870s.

Work on the threshing machine was another form of bee, but this too is being displaced by the combine as well as by farmers who have their own threshing rig and manage, with a tractor, to thresh by themselves.

Grandchildren of the pioneers of Portage County look back upon these various bees, when neighbors gathered

to help each other, and wonder whether people in pioneer times were not more kind and generous than they are today. It may be well to think so, but there is little evidence that the milk of human kindness was any more, or less, thick 100 years ago than it is today, or will be 100 years hence. The fact is that these bees were not only an economic, but a social necessity, when men and women could break away from the terrible boredom of their log cabins and meet each other, to eat and drink and laugh without restraint. It is true that they also met their neighbors briefly after church services but here voices were subdued, no one laughed, and even these meetings were often limited to one or two a month. Actually the generosity of Americans is a phenomenon known throughout the world and it has not been suspended in this generation nor is it apt to in the next. It is the very stuff of our pioneer tradition.

With the rise of the dairy industry came another innovation on Portage County farms, namely, the silo, first built of wood construction when introduced in the southern part of the state in the late 1880s, but later of brick, stone, and concrete when it was found that the wood rotted. The silo in turn required more corn and grass acreage which speeded the clearing of more land, particularly in the cut-over sections of the northern townships, a process which was accelerated before World War I by the use of stump pullers and after World War I by cheap government surplus dynamite. Since World War II the bulldozer is annually reclaiming many acres of land once studded with stones which no team of horses, however powerful, could budge.

The need for more feed crops for the dairy herd also encouraged the development of new grasses, such as clover and alfalfa, and brought about systematic rotation of crops and the proper use of barnyard manure and commercial fertilizers. Meanwhile, wheat growing fell behind, both because the small acreages could not compete with the Western market and because the land had been depleted which resulted in weak seed and disease.

With more forage crops such as corn, more hogs were

raised in the county and by the turn of the century hog raising formed an important subsidiary to dairying. The Poland China breed was favored. Since World War II, owing to changed economic conditions, shortage of labor and high cost of feed, the domestic herd of swine has been drastically reduced and many dairy farms no longer have any, even as many have ceased to raise chickens, long considered an indispensable adjunct to the family table. The era of specialized farming is under way.

The new dairy industry not only changed the complex of the farm, but also brought butter and cheese factories into the county. The University of Wisconsin enrolled its first short-course Dairy School in 1892, a 12-week course, which offered instruction in the manufacture of butter and cheese, pasteurization, with lectures, among others, by Dr. Babcock, inventor of the test, on the chemistry of milk.

But the farmers of the county were making both cheese and butter before this time. The 1876 plat identifies a cheese factory in the southwest corner of Sec 19 of Stockton on the Air Line Road, probably the first cheese factory in the county. It was apparently abandoned when the Air Line Road ceased to be the main highway to the south and is not identified on the 1895 plat. One of the first creameries in the county was built in Amherst in 1891 by John Harkness, and one of the first farmer cooperative creameries was built at Nelsonville in 1895-96, today known as the Farmers' Co-operative Dairy Association.

In the first year of operation at Nelsonville, 21,000 pounds of butter were produced, and in 1923, the total output was 487,000 pounds. Butterfat in 1923 averaged 52c a pound, and the average selling price of butter was 45c. The creamery had 297 patrons in 1923, nearly all Guernsey breeders, with herds numbering from one to 30 milking cows.<sup>1</sup>

Up to 1900, the scrub cow, a brindle or a black, probably of Guernsey or Ayrshire ancestry, formed the basis of most dairy herds in the county. That year L. L. Loberg of the town of Amherst purchased two pure bred

<sup>1</sup> *Guernsey Breeders' Journal*, Sept. 15, 1924, p. 268.

Guernsey cows, two heifers and a bull, Valoss 6553, from a breeder downstate. Later, three more cows were acquired and from this stock many of the pure bred Guernsey herds in the county are descended. One of the first to buy a foundation heifer from Loberg was L. E. Gordon who built up the famed Gordondale Farm at Nelsonville and made headlines when he later sold two cows from his herd to an eastern buyer for \$4500. A third leader in the Guernsey movement was Matt Domaszek whose "New Hope Lily," on test, produced 17555.7 pounds of milk and 887.74 pounds of butterfat, or an average test of 5.06 per cent, a world champion in the early 1920s.

Dairying in Portage County continued to expand into the 1920s and herds were not only improved in quality, but in size. While the Guernsey was preferred in the eastern and southern townships, the predominant breed in the northern and western townships was the Holstein with a great deal of cross-breeding between the two, not to mention mixtures of Jersey, Brown Swiss and Ayrshire. The Holstein cross-breeds were favored by many farmers not only because they gave more milk, but because the calf was more apt to survive and also brought a better price on the market as veal.

By 1949 the number of farmers engaged only in dairy farming in Portage County amounted to 82.5%, and though the county after 1900 became one of the two or three great potato producing areas in the state, the total percentage of farms devoted only to potato growing in 1949 was 3.0%, and the total percentage of farms engaged in both dairying and potato growing was 4.5%.<sup>1</sup> It was probably less in 1958.

One of the important factors influencing the size of dairy herds was the introduction of the milking machine after 1900. Most Portage County farmers were milking by hand up to 1930, but in the 1930s the milking machine spread rapidly, and by 1958 most dairy farms were so equipped.

Another important advance after World War II was in artificial insemination which made it possible for the

<sup>1</sup> *Extension Bulletin I*, University of Wisconsin, September 1952, p. 14.



average farmer to build up a graded herd at a fraction of what it would cost to buy and maintain a pure bred sire. Well remembered in the early 1930s was the attempt to dramatize the need for better sires in the trial of the scrub bull held on the Public Square in Stevens Point. This trial, arranged by Harry R. Noble, county agent, was attended by farmers of the county and leading lawyers of the city. Despite the best efforts of defense counsel, the prosecution won the case and the bull was sentenced to die. It may have been from this demonstration that Reid F. Murray, who ran for Congress on the G. O. P. ticket in the 7th District in 1938, conceived the idea of campaigning with an underfed scrub bull, named "Reciprocity," to emphasize the alleged danger to the Wisconsin farmer of the Reciprocal Trade Act passed by the Democratic administration in the 1930s and still adhered to by the Republicans in 1958. He won the election.

Since the 1920s, with improved feeding and breeding, even the cows of Portage County have grown in size. Stanley Cieslewicz of New Hope township recalls that in 1914 when the "new barn" was built, the cow stanchions were four feet and eight inches long. In 1958 he renovated the barn to make the stalls five feet long. Many other farmers were doing the same in the 1950s.

In the late 1890s, when creameries began to appear in various parts of the county, an adjunct to the creamery was the local skimming station. One of these was located east of North Star and operated by Michael Pallen. Here the farmers of east Sharon brought their milk to be skimmed, and the cream was then hauled to a creamery. But the skimming station was destined to a short life by the invention of the cream separator.

The first farmer in the county to use a separator may have been James Isherwood of Plover township who probably purchased one either 1893 or 1894. However he was not hauling cream but was using it to make home-made butter which he sold to private customers in Stevens Point.

Nevertheless, the separator did away with the skimming station, and, the farmer, separating the milk at

home, began hauling cream directly to a neighborhood creamery. Later, the creameries installed their own separating equipment and the farmer hauled whole milk which was separated at the creamery and the skim milk returned to him for his hogs. The milk was first hauled in 15-gallon cans with no neck on the top. These were shortly replaced by the more familiar ten-gallon can with neck commonly called "railway cans."

The neighborhood creamery survived less than three decades. Most of them were co-ops, managed by farmer-directors, and rather small. Nevertheless, they filled an interim need when the horse and buggy was still being used. Most of the creameries either failed because of poor management or were forced out of business by larger co-ops and the burgeoning cheese-making business. With the automobile truck the farmer found it possible to haul his milk or cream to a cheese factory or creamery which was paying more than his own, and in the 1930s the larger companies established milk pick-up routes which lowered costs of hauling to the individual farmer. All this was the result not only of the automotive age, but of changing market conditions, the demand for fluid milk, cheese and dried milk products. Buttermaking, once king, fell quickly behind.

While the majority of farmers in the county still sell to larger dairy plants which haul the milk in cans, an important advance was made in the 1950s by bulk milk handling, probably first used in the county by Ray Domaszek of the town of Amherst and Pierce Olson of the town of New Hope in June 1953. Special equipment is required for this, chiefly a big cooling tank located in the milk house where the milk can be stored temporarily and later pumped into a tank truck for delivery to market or factory.

In the late 1920s a Dairy Herd Improvement Association was organized in Portage County to further improve herds and milk production. This involves taking samples of milk, weighing, making tests, and keeping monthly and yearly records. Among the dairy farmers of the county who have maintained a steady interest in

this through the years are Matt Domaszek and son, Raymond, of Amherst township; Martin Steffanus of Sharon; Peter Hopfensperger of Carson; D. F. Gates of Buena Vista; and LeRoy Gordon of Amherst. However, as of Jan. 1, 1958, Portage County lagged behind in DHIA with only 4.6% of its producing cows on test, somewhat below the state average of 13.9%.

Milk production in the county in 1950 ranked 43rd among Wisconsin counties. The peak year in butter production apparently was in 1930 when 4,775,000 pounds were manufactured in the county, declining to 1,100,000 pounds by 1950. Meanwhile, cheese production had reached 3,677,000 pounds by 1950.<sup>1</sup>

While the average dairy farmer in Portage County was milking 12 to 15 cows in 1958, the trend was definitely to fewer and larger herds with resultant demand for more fodder and pasture on the part of the few. This was encouraged both by the parity support program of the federal government as well as the capacity for greater production of milk brought about by improved feeding, breeding, and mechanization inside and outside the barn.

One reason why dairying as a specialty has been compromised in the county may have been the advantages of growing potatoes for cash crop. While the estimates of 1949 show that only 4.5% of the farmers were engaged in both dairying and potatoes, the percentage in the 1920s and 1930s was much higher; and even after mechanization began to envelop the farm, it was still difficult for many dairy farmers to give up potato growing entirely. Nevertheless, it was a losing battle for many against economic factors largely beyond their control, and by 1958 most farmers realized that a ten-acre piece of potatoes was no match for an \$1800 potato sprayer.

Potato growing in the county has been taken over by the specialist, made even more specialized by the introduction of irrigation and the additional equipment needed thereto. First to utilize irrigation in the county, probably in 1934, were the Krogwold Brothers (Law-

<sup>1</sup> *Bulletin*, Wisconsin Crop Reporting Service, March, 1953, p. 5.

rence and William) of New Hope, followed by Andrew Stanislawski of Alban. Other leading potato growers of the county in 1958 would include Okray Produce Company and Alois Firkus-Potatoes of Stevens Point, James Burns and Harold Ammel of Almond, Michael J. Patrykus of Almond-Pine Grove, August Stanislawski and Peter Kaminski of Alban, Felix Soik and Emil Perzinski of Stockton, and Clarence Worzella of Plover. By 1957 there were an estimated 75 irrigators in the county, though no longer confined to potato growing.

Varieties of potatoes favored in the county before 1900 were the Peerless, Rural New Yorkers, Ohio (pink), Early Rose (red) and Burbank. Later came the Green Mountains, Irish Cobblers, Long Whites, Triumphs (reds, usually pronounced "tramps"), Blue Victors, and still later the Chippewa, Pontiac (both reds), Russet Sebago, Kennebec, Russet Burbank and finally Gems.

While most potatoes in the county were being dug by a six-tine fork up to World War I, the elevated potato digger was already being advertised in the mid-1890s. After the first war most farms acquired diggers, and the ultimate seemed to have been reached after World War II in the development of the two-row potato harvester which digs and picks, followed at the side by another tractor with wagon or truck to catch the potatoes as they come off the elevator. However, this new machine also picks up small stones which have to be sorted out by hand and thus another machine was developed in the 1950s to pick off the stones.

The first farm tractors were introduced to the county around World War I, steel-wheeled, heavy and rather difficult to handle. Between 1925-40 most farms were using both horses and tractors, the tractors for heavy duty and plowing, the horses for odd jobs and hauling to market. The shortage of labor during World War II further enforced mechanization on the farm. Tractors which wore out for lack of spare parts were replaced by old trucks, or even automobile engines, geared to pull like tractors.

One of the significant advances in mechanization was made in the machine appropriately called the combine

which harvests and threshes the grain in a single operation. One of the first tractor-drawn combines in the county was used by Harry Gullickson of the town of New Hope in the late 1930s. With the combine, two men displace some 12 to 15 once needed on a threshing machine, not to mention days employed in binding, shocking the grain by hand, and later hauling to the barn for stacking. The tractor-drawn combine has already been superseded by the self-propelled combine and probably the first to use one in the county were Russel Krogwold and son Kenneth of the town of New Hope in 1956. But up to 1958 only a minority of farmers in the county were using combines, the others threshing in traditional manner with binder and threshing machine, or hiring others to do custom combining.

The cost of tractors has risen steadily. The price is high not only because the factory worker is getting paid better, but because the tractor itself is bigger and more efficient. The advance in machinery on the farm since World War II has been so rapid that a 1950 tractor is almost obsolete five years later, not because of its styling, but because of improvements on later models. All these factors have out-distanced the limits of the small farm both in capability of operation, and in cost; and since 1950 there has been a general movement of small farm operators off the land. The chattel on small and/or inefficient farms is being disposed of at public auction while the land is usually offered for sale in several parcels so that neighbors who wish to buy an adjoining forty may do so. Thus the trend to fewer and larger farms in Portage County.

An innovation in Portage County farming, known as "muck farming," was introduced on the Buena Vista marsh in the 1940s by Max Haviland who in 1958 had some 500 acres planted to the growing of spearmint and peppermint which is distilled in a plant on the farm. This acreage is augmented by corn and grass for a herd of some 250 head of Herefords (pronounced "herferds" in Portage County). Meanwhile, stock raising has become fairly widespread on the marsh.

Many farmers of the county once augmented their

incomes by raising a half-acre plot of cucumbers. However, within the last several years, this too is declining rapidly not only because of increased labor costs, but by the trend of canning companies to buy from larger contract growers, and especially from growers using irrigation. The small operators usually overload the "pickle" factories on the same day in harvest season and moreover are not able to produce a uniform brand of cucumbers without irrigation. The larger growers in the county have for the past 15 years hired Mexican transient labor from Texas or Mexico to harvest cucumbers and it is reasonably certain that they too will be replaced by a mechanical "pickle picker" now in process of development.

Bean growing was also favored on a small scale by many farmers, but the bean market has followed the cucumber market in that larger contract growers are being favored by the canning companies both for uniform quality and staggering the harvest.

While apple growing was common on many farms before and after 1900, increased costs of insecticides and labor have combined to eliminate most family orchards. One of the few commercial growers in the county is John Guth who has taken over the orchard his father, John Guth, Sr., originated in Buena Vista in the early 1920s.

Encouragement has been given to agriculture in the county through the years not only by the College of Agriculture at the state university, but by the Wisconsin Farmers' Institute established in 1886. Experts from both the university and state experimental stations are sent into the smallest communities to instruct and help train men and women in the latest developments of agriculture and home economics. One of the first of these institutes in the county was held at Amherst Junction in 1897 and another at Almond early in 1898. These were two-day affairs, beginning in the morning with lectures and demonstrations, and halting only for warm lunch prepared by the Women's Institute. After the 1930s the Institute became a one-day affair. These activities are today part of the cooperative extension work in agriculture and home economics sponsored through the ex-

tension service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture and state land-grant colleges under the Smith-Lever Act of 1914.

Under the Smith-Lever Act, county agents, whose sole function is to aid agriculture, were appointed by the county boards. The first to serve in Portage County was J. M. Coyner who began March 1, 1916, followed by W. W. Clark in 1920, Harry R. Noble in 1922, and M. P. Pinkerton in 1944. In 1938, as a further service to the community, a home agent's office was established to assist in problems relating to the home. The first to serve as home agent in the county was Irene Skutley in March 1938, followed by Margaret Warner in 1940, Stacia Lonergan in 1940, Dorothea Barton in 1942, Vera Hub in 1945, Gladys Garrow in 1952, Mrs. Joyce Kruger, nee Natzke, in 1954, and Mary L. Kay in 1956.

Working closely with the county and home agents as part of the extension service is 4-H, a youth organization which originated in Minnesota in 1912 and since has become an integral part of American life. The 4-H emblem is a four-leaf clover with the letter "H" on each leaf for Head, Heart, Hands and Health, while the four-leaf clover itself signifies "Good Luck" and "Achievement." Mrs. Ingman ("Emma") Olstad, an indefatigable voluntary worker in Portage County 4-H since 1930, is still active in 4-H as leader of the Alban Jolly Jumpers — a record of public service to the youth of the county without equal.

Another organization devoted to encouraging vocational agriculture among the youth of the county, known as the Future Farmers of America, was organized in 1928, an outgrowth of the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 which provided that instruction be "designed for those who have entered upon or are preparing to enter upon the work of the farm or the farm home." Under this program federal and state aids are provided to high schools offering courses in agriculture and, under the Future Homemakers of America, the corresponding organization for girls, to schools offering courses in home economics. The first chapter of F.F.A. in Portage County was established at P. J. Jacobs High School in Stevens

Point under V. C. Hendrickson and is presently directed by Ray A. Gilbertson. Similar chapters were established at Amherst in 1949 and at Rosholt in 1952 which in 1958 were directed by Dale Nestingen and Walter Oestreich respectively. Chapters of the Future Homemakers have also been established in these three high schools.

Encouragement was lent to the extension movement in Portage County by the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Julius Chylinski at Fancher and J. W. Dunegan, Stevens Point banker. Bronze achievement pins were presented to boys and girls by Dunegan in 1927 which has since become a project of the Portage County Bankers' Association.

Tree growing has been one of the outstanding 4-H and F.F.A. projects, aided by the county agent's office. From 1934 to 1944 tree seedlings were distributed free in Portage County by the state extension service as part of the federal government program to combat wind erosion in the central counties of Wisconsin. Since World War II a small charge per thousand trees has been made. Nearly two million were sold by state and private nurseries to growers in the county in 1957, and all told it is estimated that more than 10,000,00 trees have been issued or sold in the county, 90 per cent of which are Norway pine.

In 1929, the New York Stock Exchange crashed, wiping out savings of a lifetime for millions of stockholders in the market as well as in banks which forced them to close. This marked the beginning of the Great Depression affecting more people than any economic disaster in American history. Many in Portage County were directly affected, particularly the farmers. The situation continued to deteriorate down to 1933, and on Jan. 13, 1933 Gov. Albert Schmedeman asked the circuit judges of the state to delay mortgage foreclosures until relief legislation could be enacted. This was done on a standby basis from 1935 to 1939 throughout the state. Meanwhile, the federal government stepped in to lend direct aid to the unemployed through the Works Project Administration and other agencies. The peak of W.P.A.



was reached in May 1934 when many farmers were working with village and city unemployed on public projects supported by the government.

Portage County farmers relying mostly on dairying might not have been affected as much by the Depression as others, but their difficulties were compounded in 1933-34 by one of the worst droughts since pioneer times. It was necessary to import hay to feed and keep dairy herds alive. This led the government to enact special loans to farmers known as feed loans, more popularly as "barnyard loans," which made it possible for local banks to lend money for this purpose. In addition, the federal land bank stepped in with direct loans to farms to prevent mortgage foreclosures; but despite this, many second-generation farms, settled and developed by first-generation pioneers, were tragically lost in the reshuffle, and others stepped in to take their place.

In an effort to bring further relief and provide modern facilities for the farmers, the federal government on May 11, 1935 established the Rural Electrification Administration which brought electricity to the local farmer on a nominal cost basis and did much to lighten the burden of home chores and housework.

On the basis of assessment rolls affecting Portage County in 1956, there was a total of 8,316 people living on 1,977 farms. In 1957, these farms had 27,113 acres of corn planted or still to be planted for harvest, 7,653 acres of potatoes, 515 acres of soybeans, 33,770 acres of oats for grain, 13 acres of barley for grain, 3,214 acres of rye for grain only, 142 acres of winter wheat for grain, 54 acres of spring wheat for grain, 34,900 acres of clover and timothy and mixtures, 32,701 acres of alfalfa and alfalfa mixtures, 1,317 acres of tame hay, 1,850 acres of cucumbers, 126 acres of canning peas, 68 acres of sweet corn for canning, 1,663 acres of snap beans for canning, 32 acres of lima beans for canning, and 358 acres of other crops for harvest. Corn cut for silage in 1956 amounted to 9,094 acres, and hay to 980 acres. Livestock on the 1,977 farms in 1956 included 19,803 milk cows, 2,299 brood sows for spring farrowing, 753 stock sheep, ewes and ewe

lambs kept for breeding, and 2,350 beef cattle and calves, beef breeding stock, and beef cattle and calves for feeding.

The first in Portage County to engage in farming, according to Sherman, were Hiram Hartwell and George W. Franklin, apparently a family partnership, who acquired a tract of land "about half a mile east of Plover."<sup>1</sup> The 1876 plat reveals that H. Hartwell had 80 acres in the SW $\frac{1}{4}$  of Sec 23, with a residence on the north side of modern Trunk B; and G. W. Franklin had two forties east of Hartwell in the same quarter section, in addition to an eighty across the road in Sec 26 where his residence was then situated. Both families may have shared a single log house in the early years.

The first third generation farmer in the county to be awarded a century certificate by the state department of agriculture was Pierce T. Olson whose grandfather, Peter Halverson (Houen) pre-empted land in Sec 36 of New Hope and, oddly enough, was given a patent to this land in 1854 not in Stevens Point which had a U. S. land office, but in Waupaca. This confusion probably grew out of the fact that up to 1851 Range 10 in modern Portage County was part of Brown County and apparently, for a few months, a part of Waupaca County which in 1851 was set off from Brown County. However, there is no evidence in the Portage County proceedings which either confirms or denies that Waupaca County had temporary jurisdiction over Range 10.

Other farms which have been in the same family more than 100 years would include the Herbert Steadman place in Lanark; Clair Eckels, Jay and Stephen Albertie, and Harry Precourt in Buena Vista; Ed Schilling (d. 1958), Mrs. Isel M. Peterson, Miss Olive Livingston in Almond; and Martin Steffanus in Sharon.

During these 100 years or more, farming in Portage County has advanced from the primitive technique of cutting grain with a sickle, tying the bundles together with a few sheaves of grain stalk wrapped around the bundle, to the self-propelled combine which cuts and

<sup>1</sup> *Note Book No. 9.*

threshes in a single operation. The revolution in agriculture began in 1831 when Cyrus Hall McCormick tested the first reaper. From the reaper it was only a step in 1879 to the McCormick mower, a front-cut, jointed bar machine with iron frame and enclosed gears.

The advance continued into the 20th Century until finally it was apparent to everyone that what was happening was more than a revolution. It was, in the words of Ezra Taft Benson, a "technological explosion." Even in the decade that followed 1940, the combined impact of more machinery, more fertilizer, deadlier insecticides, and higher-yielding hybrid seed had upped overall United States farm productivity by one-third and lowered the number of man-hours needed to produce 100 bushels of wheat from 67 to 26.<sup>1</sup> Nothing like it had even been seen in 5,000 years, and many of the older farmers of Portage County who have actually been witness to this great epoch in their own lifetime sigh in unbelief when they compare what they once had to work with and what their grandsons are now using. It is, indeed, an age of wonderment, interesting beyond comprehension.

Portage County is part and parcel of this advance in agriculture, and yet, the surveyors who subdivided the county in the early 1850s repeatedly remarked on the second and third-rate soil of the several townships. They were not misled. Their findings are a matter of fact, and soil maps of Wisconsin have always referred to Portage County as sandy. But the estimates made by surveyors of this land for farming were wrong because they judged the land by the standards of their own generation, and no blame need be attached to them for it. They could not have foreseen the coming of 10-10-10 fertilizer, new hybrids, and irrigation pumps.

With the advance in agriculture Portage County has adapted itself to the land and made it produce beyond original capability. This is modern man's answer to nature, a reflection of his versatility and intelligence, and his refusal to accept things as they are.

<sup>1</sup> *Time*, Aug. 19, 1957, p. 12.

## THE COUNTY BOARD

The county known as Portage, today administered by a board of supervisors from eight incorporated villages, 17 townships and 13 wards in the city of Stevens Point, lies near the geographical center of Wisconsin and comprises 810 square miles of territory. It is bounded on the north by Marathon County, on the east by Waupaca County, on the west by Wood County, and on the south by Adams and Waushara counties. It has a population (1950 census) of 34,858 inhabitants.

The form of government in Portage County is a heritage of the early colonies along the eastern seaboard where there were, in fact, three types of local government, namely, the town, the county, and the mixed system represented respectively by New England, Virginia and New York. The closest approximation to pure democracy was represented by the town meeting of the New England states where no villages were incorporated and each township managed its own affairs. Somewhat the opposite to this was carried out by the pioneers of Virginia where the county administered the affairs of all government, a form of aristocratic control growing out of the plantation economy where the few controlled the many.

New York state combined features of the New England town government and Virginia county government where local matters were divided between township and county, while retaining the town meeting on the local level, yet responsible to the greater will of the majority of townships in a given county at the county seat. But owing to the fact that Illinois was once part of territory claimed by Virginia, the southern half of the state, dominated by settlers from Virginia, tended to favor the Virginia system of government and as a

result Wisconsin and Michigan, even after they were severed from the Northwest Territory, inherited part of the Virginia tradition. One result of this was a law of 1820, passed by Michigan Territory — then controlling Wisconsin etc. — which made it the duty of the governor to appoint three commissioners for each county with powers over local matters. This was changed in 1827 when the commissioners became elective officers and thus, when greater Portage County was created in 1842, there were three commissioners elected to serve as a county board. This system was continued until Wisconsin became a state in 1848 at which time the system of supervisors was adopted with members from each township, incorporated village or city represented on the County Board, in this instance the townships of Plover, Middletown, and Bull Falls.

The village of Plover was incorporated in 1857 as the village of Algernon and changed to Stanton in 1858 and had a supervisor on the County Board until 1862. The city of Stevens Point was represented from 1858 to 1862 by three supervisors, one from each of three wards.

In 1861 the Legislature voted to change the township-village system of supervisors to a district system and in the spring election of 1862, three district supervisors were elected in modern Portage County, namely William Avery of Stevens Point, member of the 1st district, Enoch Webster of Amherst, member of the 2nd district, and Daniel B. Frost of Linwood, member of the 3rd district. The 1st district appears to have covered the city of Stevens Point and the modern townships of Sharon, Hull, and Dewey; the 2nd district probably the southern tiers of townships north to and including Plover, Stockton and New Hope; the 3rd district probably to the west of the Wisconsin River in modern Linwood, Carson and Eau Claire. No special provision was made for the city of Stevens Point but as the latter had grown to be the largest and only city in the county, it controlled enough votes to elect at least one from its own incorporate limits who in this case was Avery.

When the three supervisors held their first meeting in 1862, a ballot was cast for chairman and whether each voted for himself or the other man, there was no majority. On the second ballot Frost was elected for the term of one year. However, this form of government was still referred to as a "board of supervisors," not commissioners.

In 1868, the system of limited supervisorships was rescinded by law and in the spring election of 1870, new supervisors from the townships of Portage County were elected as well as three from the wards of Stevens Point. On this revamped board the following members appear: Almond, Charles E. Webster; Amherst, A. H. Bencraft; Belmont, William D. Dopp; Buena Vista, M. L. Winslowe; Eau Pleine, D. C. Bullock; Grant, Joe Timm; Hull, Robert Maine; Linwood, James Meehan; Lanark, Malcolm McGregor; New Hope, Frederick Reinhardt; Pine Grove, Eli Grannis; Plover, J. O. Raymond; Sharon, Mathias Gosh; Stockton, D. W. Baker; Stevens Point (township), Frank Alridge; and city of Stevens Point, 1st Ward, Matthew Wadleigh; 2nd Ward, G. L. Park; and 3rd Ward, Benjamin Burr who was elected county chairman.

The County Board proceedings carry the name Plover village in this list but no supervisor's name appears then or later. However, at a meeting held May 25, 1870 a report was heard from a committee which had been appointed earlier to study the legality of Plover village representation on the board. It was moved and adopted "that F. J. Wilmot, Esq. who appeared and claimed a seat as a member of this Board and to vote herein is not entitled to such Seat or vote and that the clerk of this Board Shall not call his name among the list of Members."

This suggests that Plover had dissolved its incorporation on or before 1870 and not realizing that it would not be represented on the County Board under the new statutes, had elected a supervisor in the spring election. Thus Plover village, which not only lost its place as

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, Board of Supervisors, Vol. II, p. 285.

the county seat in 1869, had also lost a place on the County Board itself.

There were no other villages represented on the County Board until after the turn of the century and, with the final demarcation of townships made in 1899, plus the addition of three city wards to Stevens Point in 1957, there were 38 representatives on the County Board after the spring election of 1958. There have been no basic changes in the supervisory system of county government since 1870.

The year of 1870 was also marked by decentralization of power when the first County Board committees were appointed, namely: 1) Committee on Town Organization, 2) Standing Committee, 3) Committee on Claims and Appropriations, 4) Committee on Roads, Bridges and Ferries, 5) Committee on Public Buildings, and 6) Committee on Settlement with the County Treasurer.

When greater Portage County was created in 1841-42, extending from below Fort Winnebago (Portage city) north to the state line, eight townships wide, the first board of commissioners elected at a special election held Monday, March 4, 1842, included one member from Mill Creek, namely, Andrew Dunn who a year or so earlier had acquired ownership of the Perry & Veeder mill. The other two commissioners elected at large were Henry Jones and Thomas C. Nelson. One of the first items of business acted upon was to divide the county into election districts and appoint election judges.

At a meeting held a few weeks later on June 13, 1842, the commissioners approved "J. B. DuBay's bond as grocery keeper. . ."<sup>1</sup> The location is not specified, but it was probably at Fort Winnebago and is the first of which there is record in the county. The first treasurer's book of Portage County kept by Satterlee Clark in 1842 reveals that DuBay paid \$100 for this license whereas two years later he paid only \$5 for a license to keep a tavern-house. This suggests that the "grocery," while it may have handled food supplies, was mainly a liquor store, more often referred at the time as a grog shop.

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings, County Commissioners Sessions, Vol. I, p. 8.*

On Jan. 23, 1843, the county had a balance on hand in favor of the county from the year 1842 of "Two hundred forty 87/100 dollars one mill."<sup>1</sup> Four years later at a meeting held in July 1847 the commissioners established the following rates of taxation for the current year: county charges, 3 mills; support of poor, 1 mill; viewing and laying out roads, 1 mill; contingent expenses, 1½ mills; roads and co. (probably meaning road construction), 2½ mills; and the payment of territorial tax of 12¼ mills on the dollar.

As the result of a special election held in greater Portage County in 1844 on the question of choosing a permanent county seat, the majority of voters — apparently not all qualified — selected a northern location which later came to be Plover although the village itself had not yet been platted. Instead, the small community of Rushville served as the meeting place of the county commissioners when they moved north from Fort Winnebago and held one of their first meetings on Oct. 25, 1844. At this time a building committee, consisting of Nelson Strong, E. S. Minor and Silas Walsworth, was appointed to draw up plans "for a Court House and Jail and submit it to this board at the January session, and procure lumber and other materials at the expense of the county . . ."<sup>2</sup>

Nothing appears to have come of this committee, probably because it saw no reason to buy materials until the plan of the building had been accepted. In this manner the building of a court house for Portage County got off to a slow start and before it was finished, probably established something of a record for a building which had to be only "24 feet square, 1½ stories high, square roof and finished in a good substantial plain manner."<sup>3</sup>

By April 1845 Messrs. Strong (Moses) & Dunn (Francis) advised the board that they had entered land for the location of a court house and jail in the newly-platted village of Plover. Apparently some sort of an understanding had been reached beforehand between the com-

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings, County Commissioners Sessions, Vol I, p. 21.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 54-55.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68



missioners and Moses Strong whereby the latter offered to give the county the choice of a free lot and public square if the county seat were located on a tract of land to be platted by himself as a village. This was a form of collusion, but the circumstances at the time insisted upon it, and the county commissioners were no doubt pleased to have a man of Moses Strong's enterprise to help them.

The dimensions of the court house, described above, appear in a motion adopted July 9, 1845, when sealed bids were to be received for the contract. Apparently there were no takers and it was not until February 1847 that one William Dunton was finally awarded the contract for \$1,950. The building was to be completed in six months, but in September the commissioners reported that the court house "was not finished according to the contract on file in this office. . ."<sup>1</sup> The contract was then extended to June 1, 1848. Four months after the termination of this extension date, Dunton appears to have suspended operations entirely and the board ordered him "to proceed with the work on the Court House immediately. . ."<sup>2</sup> By Jan. 9, 1849 the board was threatening to withhold further payments "until said Dunton shall remove the shavings and the rubbish from the Court House, hang the doors and furnish locks upon then."<sup>3</sup> Apparently Dunton had other things to do than to sweep up the shavings, because on June 4, 1849 the board was prepared to bring a civil action against him and his bondsmen unless the building was immediately completed. The court house was probably ready for occupancy late in 1849 or early 1850, but Dunton left the shavings for the sheriff to sweep up as the board on June 5, 1849 ordered the latter to buy "sufficient number of lights of glass to fill the place of those now broken in the Court House and to remove the shavings and rubbish. . ."<sup>4</sup> Not only was the board having trouble with window-smashers, but on Nov. 15, 1850, it ordered

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings, County Commissioners Sessions, Vol. I, p. 115.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 138.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 152.

Miner Strobe to "bring to the Court House the stove pipe taken by him, and that said Pipe and the furniture belonging to the Court House be put in the North East Room. . . . and that no one be allowed to take or use any part of said furniture without leave from the clerk of the board. . . ." Strobe later became county judge.

Meanwhile, on Feb. 12, 1850 the board ordered Dunton and his sureties to "perform or cause to be performed" the painting of the court house, inside and outside, except the ceiling, with three good coats of white lead and oil, and also to repair and finish the doors and trimmings. In addition, he was to put a single architrave around the casing of each door and window, all of which was to be completed by June. Apparently the job was finally completed as nothing further is said on this matter.

While the court house was under construction, the board meetings appear to have been held in local tavern-houses in Rushville and later in Plover. In 1846 H. (for Hiram) Stow & Company were paid \$20 for the use of their building for holding court. The other county offices were probably maintained in private log cabins or rented rooms in the tavern-houses. One of the officers was George W. Wyatt who in 1842 served as the first assessor of the reorganized county and in 1844 appears to have been appointed register of deeds at Rushville. Another officer in 1844 was Clark Whitney, county treasurer, who probably died in office as a notation in the treasurer's book dated Feb. 10, 1845 refers to money received "of Clark Whitney, late Treasurer. . . ." His place was filled by John Batten, presumably an appointee.

The third county treasurer was also the first medical practitioner in the Pinery, namely, Dr. John Bristol who was elected in the spring of 1846 and served until early in 1848 when he died and was replaced by George W. Cate, an appointee.

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings, Board of Supervisors, Vol. I, p. 177.*

In 1850 Portage County was reduced to its present limits plus the territory of modern Wood County. In 1853 there were five townships represented on the County Board, but no villages or cities. The tax base of the real estate assessed in these townships was: Stevens Point township, 3,444  $\frac{45}{100}$  acres; Plover township, 41,757  $\frac{47}{100}$  acres; Grand Rapids township, 6,497  $\frac{53}{100}$  acres; Almond township, 1,080 acres; and Amherst township, 3,360 acres.

After Portage County was reduced to the constitutional limit in 1856, divorced from the new county known as Wood, one of the first actions taken by the new board on Nov. 12, 1856 was to approve a \$5 bounty on every wolf killed "provided the persons who killed the same shall within ten days thereafter deliver the scalp with both ears on. . ."<sup>1</sup> This is also the first instance of wild life conservation in the county.

After 1862, as noted earlier, the county was governed for several years by three district supervisors. In the spring of 1865 a vacancy occurred on the board which was filled by a direct appointment of Governor James T. Lewis, signed at Madison on March 11, who named Ole O. Wogsland of New Hope to act as supervisor "in and for the Second District. . . until the first Monday of January next and until his successor is elected and qualified. . ."<sup>2</sup> Wogsland was duly elected in the spring of 1866 and served until 1868.

In 1869 the three district supervisors were Benjamin Burr of Stevens Point, Isador Samuelson of Almond, and Henry Warriner of Linwood. The latter lived only a mile or so west of the city limits of Stevens Point. With this in mind, the stage was set for the battle over the transfer of the county seat from Plover to Stevens Point and it is clear why, in 1869, that Warriner and Burr voted in favor of moving it to Stevens Point with Samuelson vigorously opposed. The southern and southeastern part of the county would naturally favor Plover, which was easier to reach, while the northern and western townships would favor Stevens Point.

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, Board of Supervisors, Vol. I, p. 276.

<sup>2</sup> Document in collection of Pioneer Museum, Rosholt, Wis.

Rumors of a proposed change in the county seat had reached Milwaukee at least as early as 1864; a letter in the board proceedings written by a manufacturing firm asked whether the "stone Court House and Jail" at the city of Stevent Point was to be slated or galvanized iron work. No further mention of the court house appears in the proceedings until suddenly, at a meeting held on Jan. 4, 1869 it is learned that the city of Stevens Point had handed over \$10,000 to the County Board which had been "raised and tendered pursuant to Chapter 280 of the Special Laws of the Year 1868. . .".<sup>1</sup> The special laws refer to the action taken by the Legislature which had confirmed the right of the citizens of Portage County to vote on the question of the removal of the county seat provided the majority of all the votes cast were in favor of removal.

At a special election held on Aug. 1, 1868 the northern forces of the county won by a rather slim margin and there were reports in the press that the ballot box had been abused here and there. On the other hand the pro-Plover forces earlier had attempted to sidetrack action on the referendum question in the state Legislature, but were thwarted by a parliamentary maneuver of the pro-Stevens Point forces which brought the question of voting on the proposed change under a rider to another last-minute bill that passed.

H. G. Ingersoll, outspoken editor of the *Plover Times*, kept up a running battle in his editorial columns in which he denied the need for a change in location of the county seat and confidently predicted that if the change was made, it would only be temporary. When he first learned that the business men of Stevens Point were discussing a possible grant of money for a new court house, Ingersoll apparently refused to take the matter seriously and ran an editorial headed: "Tax Payers of Portage County Read and Reflect!" which he opened with these words:

"The saloon keepers, broken down politicians and corner lot speculators of the city of Stevens Point are endeavoring to make you believe that the city of Stevens

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, Board of Supervisors, Vol. III, p. 239.

Point intends in good faith to present to this county the sum of \$10,000 in case you vote to locate the county seat at that place on the first of August next. . .”<sup>1</sup>

After this editorial blast it is easy to imagine why the business men of Stevens Point went out and raised the money.

At a meeting held Sept. 29, 1869, with Warriner and Burr voting “aye” and Samuelson “naye,” it was ordered that the clerk give notice in the next issue of the *Wisconsin Pinery* “that sealed proposals will be received . . . for a site in the city of Stevens Point for county buildings [of] not less than one acre nor more than three. . .”<sup>2</sup> At a meeting held Oct. 13, the clerk entered a remonstrance signed by Samuelson who gave his reasons for voting “naye” on the bids for a lot in Stevens Point, to wit:

“That Stevens Point had commenced proceedings in the Supreme Court to compel the Board to remove the county offices to Stevens Point and the case is yet undecided [and] until a decision is in fact made the board are acting upon assumption and without authority, He therefore votes *no* as a matter of propriety and self-respect.”<sup>3</sup>

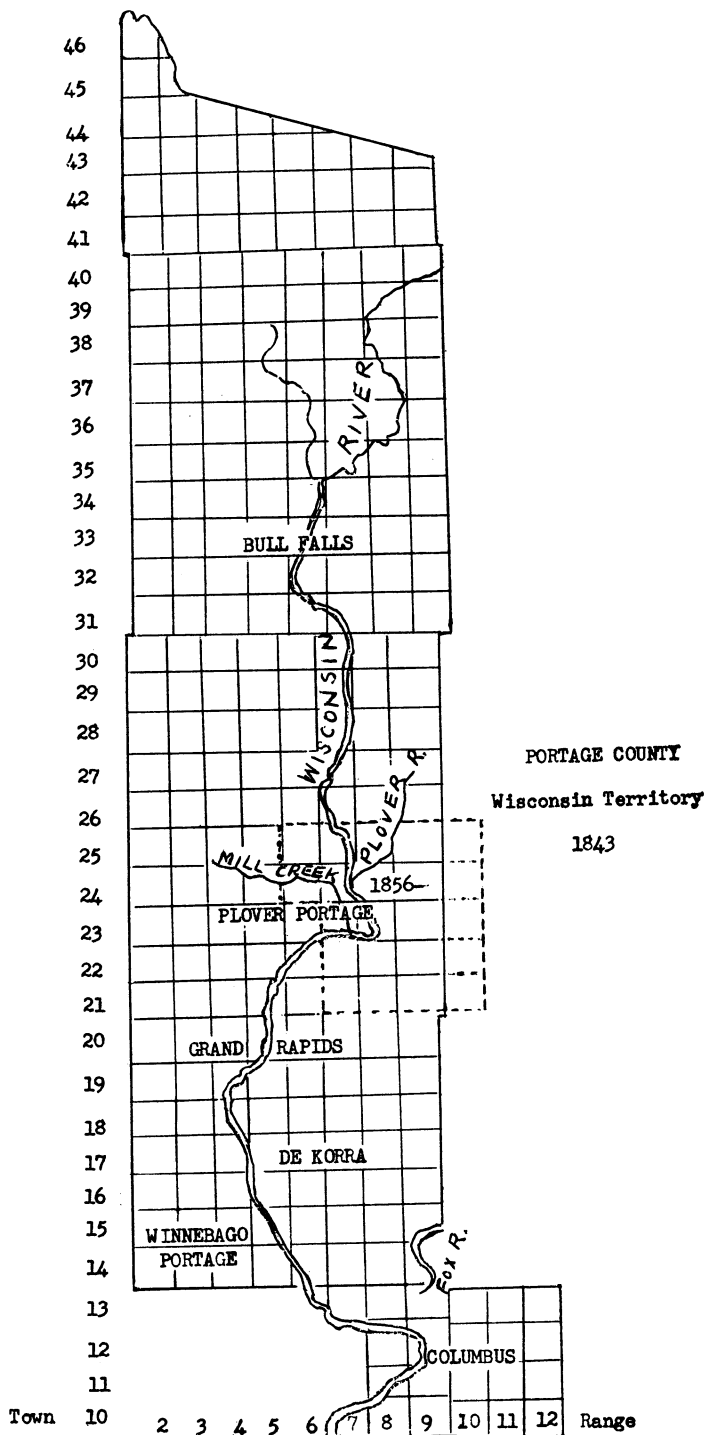
Despite this regard for the propriety of things, Samuelson did not resign and on Oct. 15 joined the other two on the board in forming a committee to visit other court houses in the state. The members allowed themselves \$2 per diem and expenses which, by prevailing standards, was quite handsome.

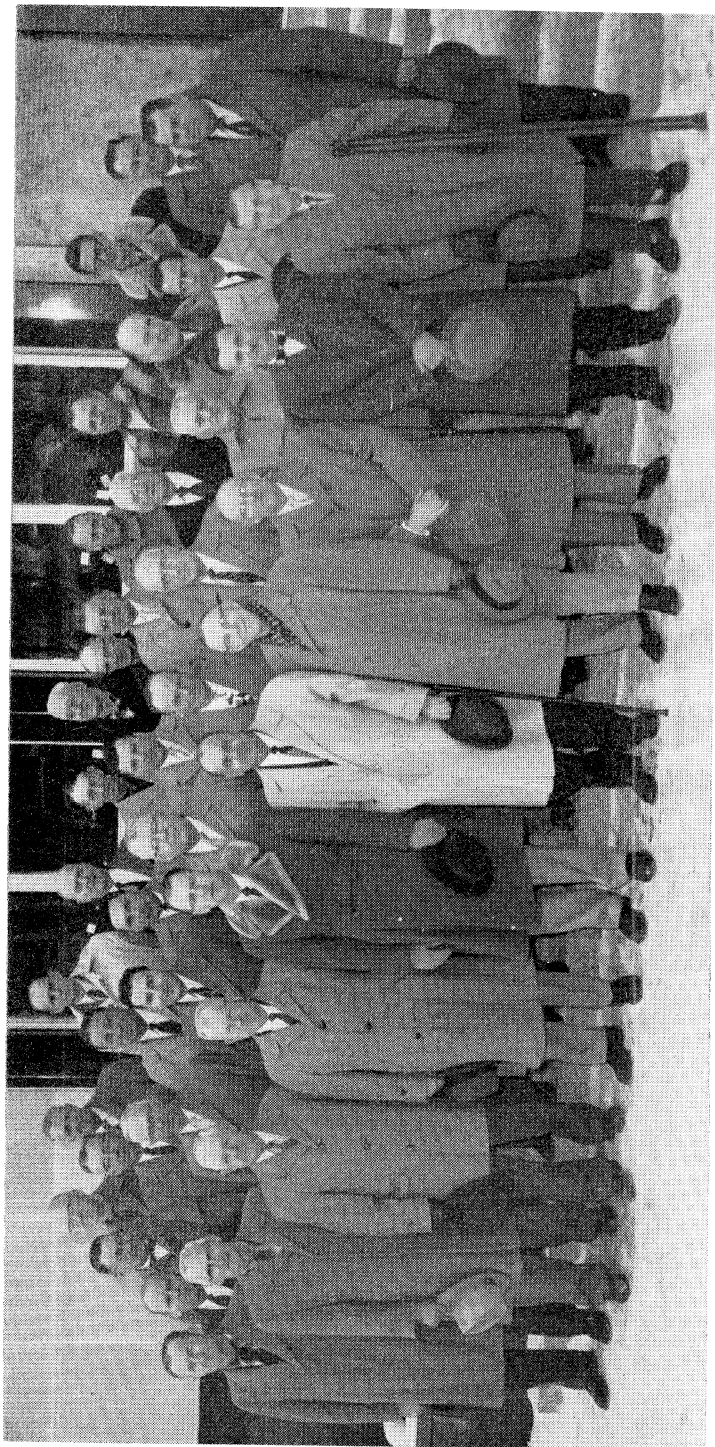
Meanwhile, the county offices were still in Plover but on Nov. 9 the board ordered, on the basis of a writ of mandamus issued to it by the Supreme Court on Nov. 1 that all county offices would be removed thenceforth to Stevens Point where the N. F. Bliss Store Building had been taken over as temporary quarters. The board itself had taken over Bliss’ private office and on Nov. 11 assembled for the first time in Stevens Point to vote on the purchase of a number of lots owned by Marcus Warren in Block 33 between Strongs Avenue and Church Street. On the following day the board agreed

<sup>1</sup> *Plover Times*, July 25, 1868.

<sup>2</sup> *Proceedings*, Board of Supervisors, Vol. III, p. 257.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 258.





## PORTAGE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

First photograph taken at east entrance of new Court House, Jan. 20, 1959. Front row (l. to r.): Leo Mallek (substitute), Henry W. Stinson, C. E. Nebel, Harold P. Anderson (chairman), Charles A. Anderson (vice chairman), Chester J. Kulas (clerk), Frank J. Steckel, Henry Doehr, Edward R. Zurawski, and Paul B. Kitowski. Second row (l. to r.): Frank Beck, Milvern Jacklin, Craig Corbett, Joe Sroda, William Petrusky, Henry Swenson, George Fisher, C. Stratton Martin, and

Stanley Kirschling. Third row (l. to r.): A. P. Dobbe, Leo Feit, Harold Mehne, Edward Losinski, Ted Burant, George Fletcher, Vincent G. Jurgella, Harold Frost, and Thomas Morgan. Fourth row (l. to r.): Guy D. Love, Thomas A. Guyant, Ernest P. Marchel, Ray Clark, Russell Krogwold, Nat Kinney, Arleigh Hetzel, Joseph T. Hannon, Theodore Schulfer, and Allen Barrows. Not present: Joseph Wojcik and Vilas Behr.

— Photo by Phillips Studio

## ETHNIC GROUPS OF PORTAGE COUNTY



John Week  
(Scandinavian)



Gilbert L. Park  
(Yankee-English)



Michael Kozickowski  
(Pole)

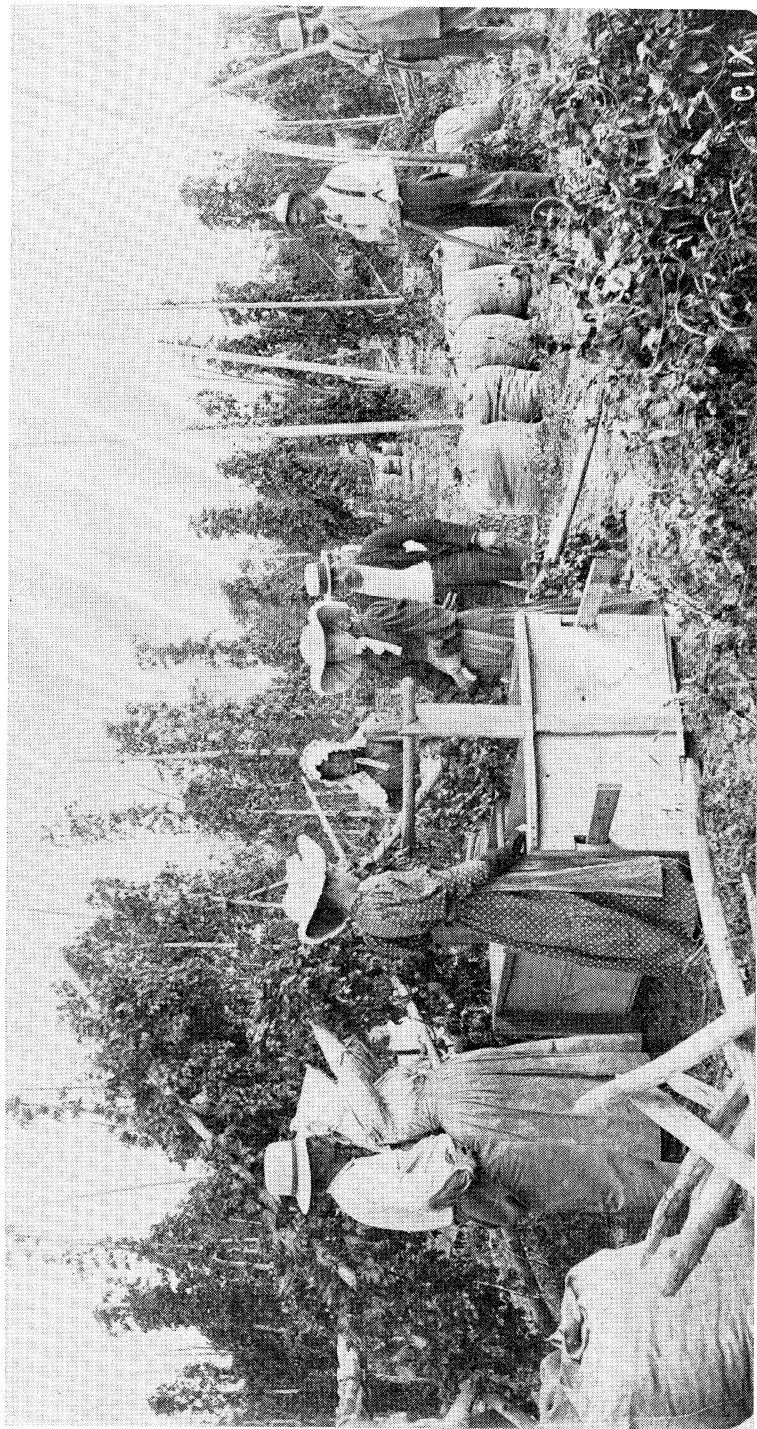


John Boursier  
(French-Canadian)



Geo. F. Schilling  
(German)

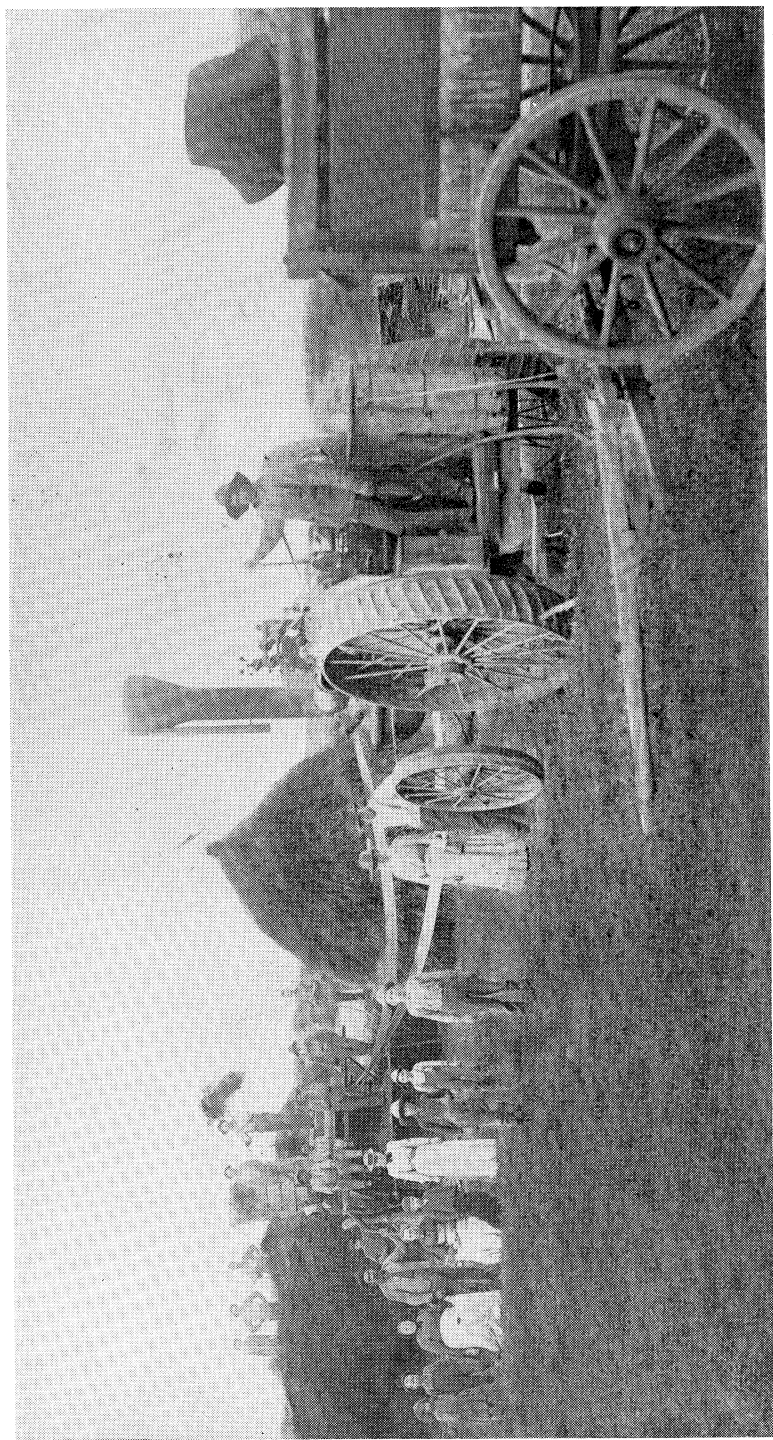




HOP PICKING IN TOWN OF BELMONT (ca. 1895)

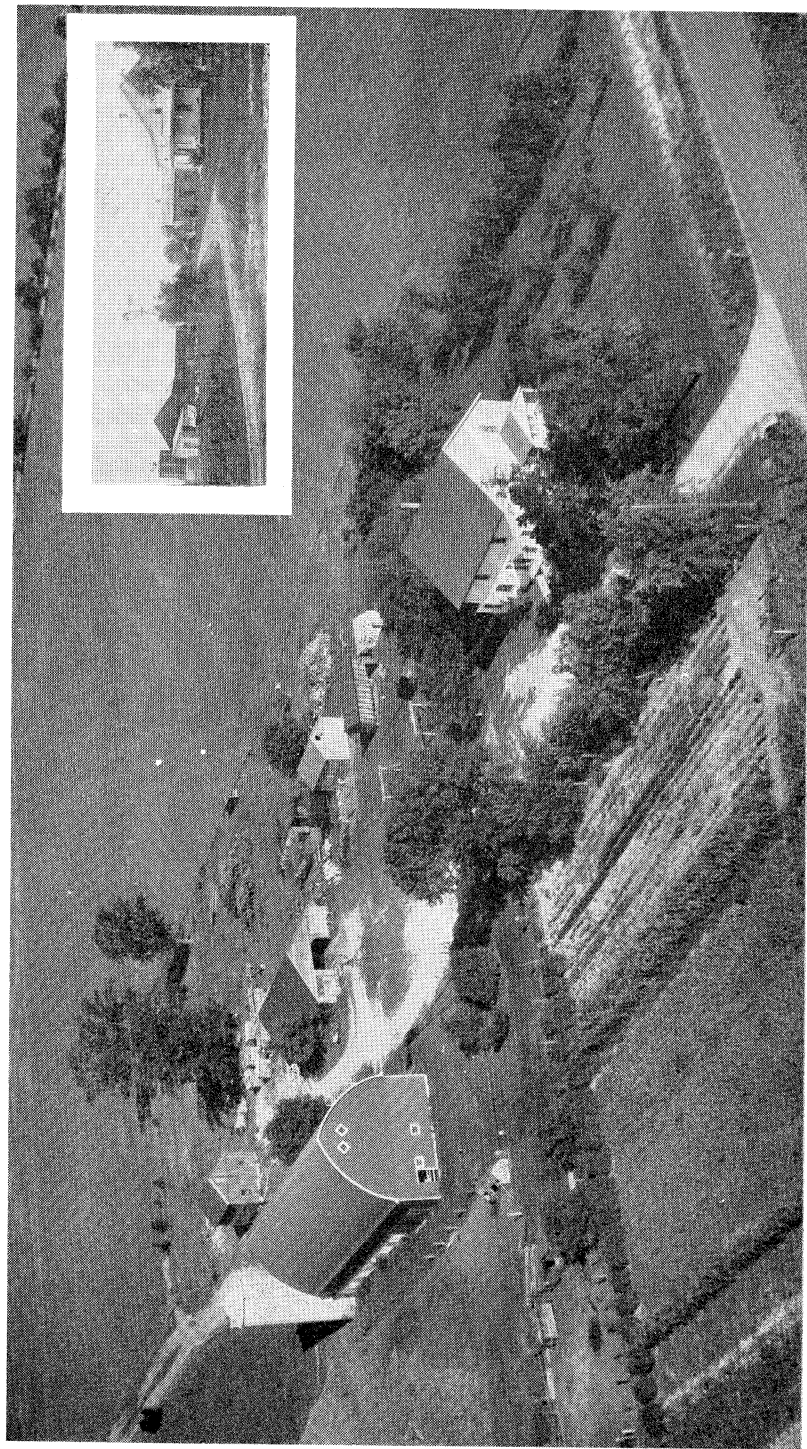
Photo taken on Frank Guyant farm. Standing (l. to r.): Orlando Bills, Mrs. Mary Guyant, Merrill Guyant hidden behind vines), Mrs. Alma Lyons, Mrs. William

Hewitt, Nellie Hewitt, A. D. ("Appletree") Barnes, and Ed Guyant. Stranger at far right probably hop buyer.



THRESHING TIME IN BUENA VISTA EARLY 1890s

Threshing rig of Lyman Precourt includes water stacker (left). Precourt (holding pitchfork) stands next wagon (right), Springfield steam traction engine (center) beside son Claude, standing, and American Agitator, i.e. separator, with straw



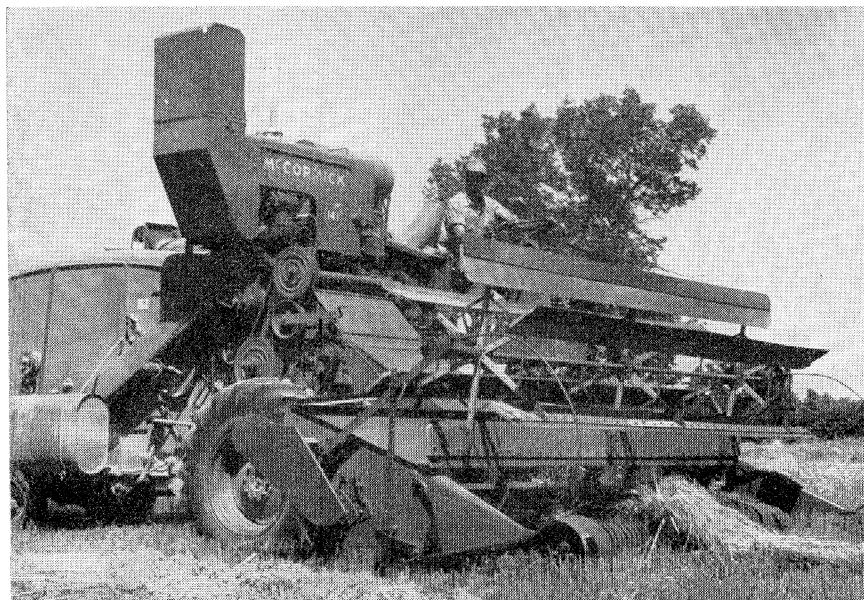
DAIRY FARM IN TOWN OF STOCKTON 1954

Land originally purchased from government by Dr. John Phillips 1855, first farmed by Mathew Heffron who got title 1863, later passed to son Martin Heffron and sold by Ellen Heffron (widow) to Dominic Bembenek

1928. Barn holds 30 milking cows. Insert shows farm buildings around 1910.

— Photo by Calberne Studio, De Pere, Wis.





SELF-PROPELLED COMBINE IN TOWN OF NEW HOPE 1957



NELSONVILLE CO-OP CREAMERY (ca. 1905)



RUNKLE SCHOOL, TOWN OF EAU PLEINE, 1899



TORUN SCHOOL, TOWN OF DEWEY, 1955

that stone would be used for the new building and two weeks later it asked for bids in advertisements appearing in the *Oshkosh Northwestern*, *Milwaukee Sentinel*, *Milwaukee News*, *Madison Journal*, *Banner and Folks-friend*, *Wisconsin Pinery*, and *Plover Times*. T. D. Cook of Waukesha finally got the contract to complete the entire program, including jail, for \$28,560 and construction commenced probably early in 1870. According to hearsay accounts, the builders went into the woods in the northern part of the county and cut timber footings, 60 feet long, and floated them down the Wisconsin River. As none of the saw mills were equipped to saw these timbers, they were hewed by hand.

The stone for the building came from a quarry on the West Side in Stevens Point and Henry Vetter superintended the stone work. The foreman was Melvin T. Olin of Waukesha, father of Mrs. John Mainland of Stevens Point.

With the spring election of 1870, the county returned to the township-village-city supervisor system. In 1874 one of the supervisors was authorized to sell the county jail and lot in Plover on which the old court house stood. The best he could get was \$200 which is some indication how real estate values had slumped in the former county seat. But nothing is mentioned about selling the court house building. Actually, it had been moved to the southeast corner of First and Willow Streets in Plover, apparently without the consent of the County Board, where it was used as a Masonic Lodge. This was Plover's answer to the removal of the county seat — an enmity which continued to cloud the relations of the two populations for many years to come and probably hampered the economic development of both. The main reason why nothing was said about selling the court house or putting a claim in for it when the county jail was sold was that the building had already been destroyed in a fire of 1871.

The business of county government went on apace. An inordinate amount of time in the 1860s and 1870s appears to have been consumed with illegal assess-

ments, double assessments, tax lands for sale and equalization. The numerous references in the proceedings to illegal and double assessments reflects, no doubt, not only haphazard bookkeeping in the townships, but the difficulties which local assessors encountered in identifying title as well as descriptions of land held by the new settlers, not to mention the complicated grants made to the railroad and canal companies, school lands, swamp lands, and, after 1862, homestead entries.

After 1870 and for the next decade or more, the board proceedings are marked by numerous entries, some page-long, referring to action taken on the bonding of the county for the building of the Wisconsin Central Railroad from Portage city to Stevens Point.

In 1871 the County Board also agreed to raise \$10,000 to aid in the construction of a state normal school on the condition that it be located in the county and that the city of Stevens Point contribute an equal or greater amount. It was not until 1894 that the dream was realized.

Up to 1877 the County Board had aided the several townships in the building of roads and bridges, but that year saw the first move in the direction of taking over township functions when it was resolved that the distinction between county poor and town poor be abolished. Three "superintendents of the poor" were elected by ballot of the County Board, namely, J. D. McLean, Charles Couch and J. C. Harvey, and the county apparently was divided into three districts for purposes of administration. Some time later one of the superintendents entered a dissenting opinion on this system and held that people in the townships, who otherwise would have hesitated to ask for help when it came out of the taxes of their neighbors, were not hesitant about asking for help from the county. Thus the age of rugged individualism was passing and despite this remonstrance, the County Board considered pauperism a responsibility of everyone, although the township records reveal that the town boards continued to shoulder much of the burden. In 1900 the county poor farm was established

where indigenous members of the county might be cared for in old age. But as the American dream of success became associated more and more with what is right and what is wrong — the man with the “mostest” being the most right — the popularity of the poor farm dwindled through the years and the few who needed help did not entirely welcome the thought of being cared for in an institution called a “poor” farm which to most people spelled failure in life. After social security legislation and state welfare agencies were expanded in the 1930s by a Democrat-controlled Congress, the poor farm was eventually replaced by an institution called an infirmary where the aged could pay their own way or, if circumstances prevented, be given county support without social stigma. In this manner America came of age and the shibboleth of a people condemned to poverty was shattered. Every American was now his brother’s keeper.

Shortly after the termination of the Korean War in 1953, a brief recession in the nation’s economy was felt. Many feared another Depression. In an effort to meet a possible crisis, county officials, most of whom could still remember the confusion in economic planning during the days of the WPA, began laying plans for a work relief program which might take up the slack in the event of a real slump. Supervisor C. E. Nebel of the 6th Ward was one of the leaders in this movement and suggested that the building of a new court house for the county would be in line not only with the purpose of the plan, but would also fill a sore need in the county-city community. The subject first came up at a meeting of the County Board held July 6, 1954 when an estimate was heard on the cost of painting the woodwork and repairing windows in the old court house. This discussion led into the larger problem of building a new court house and “Supervisor Nebel stated that he proposed a committee be appointed to look into the possibility of securing funds from the Government for the erection of a New Court House. This information to be secured for future reference.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, Board of Supervisors, (1954), p. 28.



A motion was then made by Charles A. Anderson of Nelsonville and seconded by John Jakusz, supervisor from the 4th Ward, that a "Committee be appointed to look into the facts of cost, etc., just for future reference. Motion carried." Less than a year later on April 20, 1955 a special court house committee was appointed by Henry Stinson, then chairman of the County Board, consisting of C. E. Nebel, Harold Frost, supervisor from the 2nd Ward, and Charles A. Anderson. This committee was later expanded to include Harold P. Anderson of Alban, Henry Stinson of Belmont, Gilbert T. Kirby, supervisor from the 3rd Ward, and Edward Losinski of Dewey.

Meanwhile, Committee Chairman Nebel, now popularly known as "Mr. Court House," approached Mayor Leonard Sorenson of Stevens Point who privately approved of the joint county-city building and agreed to lay the matter before the Common Council. The latter also agreed but after some delay occasioned by a demand on the part of a small group of citizens for a referendum on the building question — which later passed by a big majority of the electors of Stevens Point — the County Board on Nov. 9, 1955 authorized the committee to "either individually or jointly with the building committee of Stevens Point to prepare preliminary plans to negotiate and select an architect for the construction of a combination court house and city hall for Portage County. . . ." With the referendum in its favor, the Common Council now joined with the County Board in one of the most unique demonstrations of county-city cooperation in the history of Wisconsin and, outside of the metropolitan areas, the new court house is the only county-city building in the state.

The architects were Ray R. Gauger & Company, St. Paul, Minnesota, and Gage Taylor of Stevens Point, associate architect. The general construction contract was let to Orville Madsen & Sons, Inc. of St. Paul for \$1,056,200; heating and ventilation to August Winter & Sons, Appleton, \$124,000; lighting and fixtures to

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, Board of Supervisors, (1955), p. 124.

Otto Lind & Sons of Stevens Point, \$97,287; plumbing to Robert Soik of Stevens Point, \$60,998; fixed and movable furniture to Emmons Stationery and Office Supply Company of Stevens Point, \$61,029.55; and elevators to F. Rosenberg Elevator Company of Milwaukee, \$33,772. These figures do not include jail equipment and landscaping. It is estimated that with the costs of the latter items and architects' fees that the new court house will have cost slightly more than \$1,500,000.

Under a sub-contract with the Madsen company, the Ellis Stone & Construction Company of Stevens Point agreed to do all masonry work, including granite and interior work. The majority of the stone was quarried north of Ellis and is often referred to as "Ellis stone," a hard sandstone. A portion of the sandstone also came from a quarry west of Rudolph in Wood County, and all told some 18,000 square feet weighing approximately 600 tons was included in the building.

Polished red granite from a quarry near Wausau, Wisconsin, and veined dark granite from Cold Spring, Minnesota, was used around the north and south entrances, and on the east and west elevations. The dolomitic gray limestone for the smooth sawed, buff-colored panels on the east elevation was quarried at Mankato, Minnesota, and the gray granite at Rockville, Minnesota. Both Nils E. Anderson and Helge Carlson, present owners of Ellis Stone & Construction who immigrated from Sweden in their youth, personally supervised the masonry work.

In the architectural conception of the building, two major problems presented themselves. The first was to devise a form of plan which would express the two separate functions of the project, that is, those pertaining to purely municipal affairs, and those to county affairs; secondly, to place the two parts of the building in proper relationship by combining them in a basic plan which would express the purpose and functions of the political entities. A building in the form of an "H" was finally selected as best serving these needs. A ramp serving the ground floor under the connecting leg of

the "H" provides private and easy access to the county and city policy departments.

An associate of Ray R. Gauger at the time the plans were being worked out for the new building was Eugene Nolden, a Polish 'emigre' architect, born in the Ukraine and graduate of the University of Kiev, who had already won several architectural awards in Europe before coming to the United States. His training is reflected in the exterior of the new court house which has somewhat of a European modern character. Harmoniously conceived, it at once reflects an outer harmony which combines traditional form with unconventional design. It is by all means one of the most beautiful public buildings in Wisconsin.

The old court house, once the pride of the county, where a favorite amusement in the 1870s and 1880s was to climb the stairs to the cupola and survey the city below, was sold for scrap and razed in the spring of 1957. Construction on the new building was begun on the same site in August 1957 and completed in the spring of 1959 to mark a new landmark and the beginning of a new chapter in the exciting history of Portage County.

Aside from the board of supervisors, other elective officers serving the county in 1957-58 were Chester J. ("Scoop") Kulas, clerk; Stephen F. Molski, treasurer; Alfred Levandowski, clerk of courts; Edward D. Haka, register of deeds; Herbert J. Wanserski, sheriff; Florian A. Krutza, coroner; John J. Haka, Jr., district attorney; the Hon. James H. Levi, county judge; Ronald Piekarski, county superintendent of schools; John T. Kostuck, member of assembly; William W. Clark, state senator from the 24th District; the Hon. Melvin R. Laird, representative in Congress from the 7th Congressional District; the Hon. Herbert A. Bunde, circuit judge of the 7th District; the Hon. Vernon W. Thomson, governor of Wisconsin; United States Senators Alexander Wiley and William Proxmire; and the President of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower.

## ALBAN, The Township of

Alban is the only township in Portage County which can point its finger at the first settler with reasonable certainty. One of the main reasons for this lies in the fact that it was the last to be settled and for more than two decades was administered as part of New Hope. Thus through the New Hope proceedings it is possible to detect at once each new settler who paid taxes in the unnamed township which the Scandinavian pioneers referred to simply as "*bien fem og tieve*" (literally: Town Twenty-five).

Named after a post office first located near Peru in New Hope, the township honors the Civil War regimental commander, James S. Alban, mortally wounded at Shiloh in the battle of Pittsburgh Landing April 6, 1862.

The circumstances of its location was largely responsible for the township's late development. Lying in the extreme northeast of the county, away from the larger rivers which helped to write the early history of the county, and away from the railroads which pushed their way into the county in the 1870s, Alban was further handicapped by the heavy growth of timber which covered most of the township. The big lumber companies of the 1850s and 1860s were cutting the timber closer to hand along the main river systems of the Plover and Wisconsin and it was not until the lumber companies of Oshkosh began to exhaust their supply of easy-to-reach timber along the Wolf River that they began reaching up the tributaries of the Wolf, especially the Embarrass, and the Little Wolf which flows through the northeast corner of Alban into Waupaca County to join the "big" Wolf near New London.

The subdivision of modern Alban was begun Sept. 28, 1852 and finished Oct. 16, 1852 by Wm. P. Huntington, deputy surveyor.

Huntington mentions a "sugar orchard", actually a camp in the woods, more often referred to locally as a "sugar bush", where the sap of the hard maple is tapped and boiled down for maple sirup or for sugar. In the 19th Century, particularly after the Civil War, sugar was expensive and at times even difficult to buy. Many pioneers boiled maple sirup into sugar and sold it or exchanged for groceries. The sugar camp mentioned by Huntington, almost certainly operated by the Indians, was probably located south and east of Lions Lake.

The town of Alban is probably the most favored of glacial lakes and streams in the county. Slicing through the northeast corner in Sec 1 runs the Little Wolf, favorite of trout fishermen, which drains the Holt Creek originating in Marathon County, and Bailey Creek which flows out of spring-fed Lions Lake. The Holt Creek has also been known as the North Branch of the Little Wolf, a name used until well after the turn of the century but which was subtly changed to Holt Creek after a saw mill community located in the early 1900s across the county line. Some maps refer to Bailey Creek as Bradley, a name seldom heard locally. The origin of either name is uncertain.

A third well-known stream, originating in Sharon and Marathon County, is known as the South Branch of the Little Wolf, in opposition to the North Branch, which runs through the entire township, north to southeast, via the village of Rosholt. A mill pond was created on this river in the 1870s by Jens Rasmussen, later taken over by J. G. Rosholt, and along the west end of this pond the stumps of the pine that once stood here may still be noted above and below the water level which add a nostalgic touch to the natural beauty of the pond.

The largest lake in the township, identified on both the 1895 and 1915 plats as Helen, in the *Historical Atlas of Wisconsin* (1878) is called Hunt Lake, probably after Huntington. In fact it was known locally after 1900 down to World War II as Lake Huntington, but since that time has mysteriously reverted to the name, Helen, probably after a tavern-bar established by Ambrose Stanislawski on the north shore. The origin of the name Helen is uncer-

tain. According to local legend, a woman by that name served as a cook in one of the logging camps of Conley or Ripley & Mead in the 1880s, died, and was buried nearby. Later, the lumberjacks heard a voice wailing in the wind along the shores of the lake and recognized it as Helen!

The second largest lake is identified on both the 1895 and 1915 plats as Three Lakes. It lies in Sec 3 and was originally known as Gutho Lake after the first family to settle in the northeast of the township in the late 1860s. Later plats mistakenly referred to it as "Tree Lake", probably because the Norwegians pronounced it "t'ree" and the Polish "tree" (for three) and in 1958 it officially became Tree Lake by action of the County Board. To the west of Tree Lake a few rods, connected by a small stream, lies Mud Lake, favorite of mallards and bluebills every fall; and to the southeast of Tree Lake, probably connected by an underground stream, lies Penny Lake, allegedly named after a dog called Penny owned by Andrew Nelson who operates a cabin resort on the east shore of Tree Lake.

In the middle of the township lies Lions Lake, known locally under several names in the past, but longest as Kiolbassa, after Peter Kiolbassa, one-time city treasurer of Chicago who built a summer home on the south shore in the early 1890s. The lake property was acquired in 1956 by the Wisconsin Lions Foundation and is now known as Lions Lake where a summer camp has been established for visually handicapped children.

Collins Lake, the fourth largest in the township, lies in the southwest in Sec 31 with the west shore extending across the range line into Sharon. While it was called Fish Lake from the 1870s down to World War II, it often came to be referred to as Collins Lake after a county park was established on the north shore and named in honor of W. F. Collins of Arnott, one-time County Board chairman. In 1958 the County Board officially adopted the name Collins Lake.

One lake which retains much of its primeval charm lies in the northwest corner of the township in Sec 6 but

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings, Board of Supervisors, Vol. IV, p. 35.*

has no name, and, as most of the shore line is rimmed by swamp, is not easy to reach.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Schritzmeier (or Sckreckzmeier), Danes from the island of Lolland, were the first settlers in Alban and were given title to a forty in Sec 35 (the James Berge place) on Sept. 24, 1857. Several coins dated in the 1840s and 1850s as well as sherds have been picked up near this site. In the late 1860s family differences separated this pioneer couple and while Schritzmeier returned to Denmark, his wife moved out West.

The first permanent settler in the township of Alban was either Hans Larson or Hans Klinge (more commonly Klincke), also Danes. The Klincke cabin stood on the hillside northeast of the bridge now on Trunk T. Sam Loken, who eventually acquired this property, found horseradish still growing near the site when he cultivated this field. The early Danes were fond of horseradish.

The first Norseman in Alban was probably Ole P. Klope who is mentioned in the 1865 tax roll as paying taxes on a forty in the western part of the township. Whether he had an improvement here or not is uncertain, but it is known that he built a house, only recently demolished, which was located in Sec 33 in the southern part of the township.

The first Polish settler in Alban was Gottlieb Joseph Liebe who made an entry on three forties in Sec 31 on Dec. 21, 1863, and paid his first taxes in 1867, one of the few in the township who acquired land under the Homestead Act of 1862.

Originally a part of the town of Stevens Point from 1852 to 1856 and from 1856 to 1878 a part of the town of New Hope, Alban made its first attempt at incorporation in November 1870 which the County Board rejected. The matter came up again in November 1877 when the board voted to constitute a new township to be known "as the town of Alban, provided that the tax levied upon said town . . . for the year 1877 shall be levied and collected by the proper officers of the town of New Hope." This is the only time this clause appears in a like order by the County Board.

The first town meeting and election of officers of Alban was held April 2, 1878, at School District No. 5, actually a log schoolhouse which stood less than a half a mile south of Alban Corners (SE-SE, Sec 21). Andrew A. Brekke was elected chairman; Anton Kirsling and Jens Rasmussen, supervisors; Martin O. Wrolstad, clerk; Ole J. Aass (later Oas), assessor; J. P. Hanson, Jr., treasurer; C. C. Gilbert, J. H. Bigler, Simen Stenerson, and Andrew Brekke, justices of the peace; and A. Rasmussen, A. J. Aass and J. Mortenson, constables.

The 1878 assessment roll, the first in Alban as a township on its own, includes the names listed below. However, owing to the fact that Alban was one of the last townships to be settled, it has been possible, through family association, to identify, if not all, at least most of the families which were actually resident in the township in 1878. These will be italicized as opposed to the others who presumably represented investors in Alban real estate, timber or cedar holdings. The taxpayers were: F. C. Peters, F. R. Land (Fox River Land), Nils R. Bestul, *Andrew A. Brakke*, *Berte J. Fjelbo*, *Aunun A. Brakke*, S. S. Chandler, *Ole A. Brakke*, Mark Sutsen, B. H. Wellington, *Olve Ingebretson*, Ole C. Seter (probably Sether), David Boe, John O. Wraalstad, Andrew Anderson, *Ole P. Linland*, Ole G. Flom, Johanes F. Kankrud, Christian Elingson, Johan O. Ekkern, Knudt Sakariasan, Margaret Peterson, Hans O. Lee, Peter Eiden, *John O. Daabu* (later spelled Dobbe), Gilbert & Christenson, John J. Svanholt, *Peter E. Gutu*, *Thomas O. Listul*, Louis Smith, Ole P. Hoijord, Edvard Helgesen, Thomas O. Onland, Johan C. Kalrud, Hans P. Woldingen, Johan O. Woldingen, Nels G. Serkland, *Ole P. Kvisla* (later Quisla), Hans G. Frogne, *Ole P. Daabu*, *Gunder J. Lia*, And (?) Mathison, *Peder O. Daabu*, Ole Paulson, *Jacob Semonus* (later Simonis), Amund O. Hole, Louis H. Foss, Peder O. Ekeren, *Jens P. Hanson, Sr.*, Hellek O. Foss, Ole A. Moe, Ole D. Moe, John Walendalen, Nels Stianson, *Jorgen O. Wraalstad*, *Ole P. Klope*, *Joseph Liba* (later Liebe), *Joseph Plaska* (later Pliska), Frank Lauska, *Jens Rasmuson*, John P. Pederson, *Joseph Sabarösky*, *Joseph Clammens*, Hans G. Hanson, *Hans J. Fredrikson*, *Ras-*



*mus Jorgenson, Jens P. Hanson, Jr., Anders J. Oas, Ole J. Oas, Jens Haralson, (later Haroldson), Peder Kystolson, Charly Pederson, Knudt Erickson, Karen Pederson, Johanes M. Omadt, Cysskleba, Emma Jorgenson, Knudt Thorson Fure, Erik Bentzel, Charly Buck, Halvor O. Wraalstad, Martin O. Wrallstad, F. Reinharth, Simon Stenerson, George Laubienten, Andrew Rasmuson, Thor Knudtson, Abraham J. Fjelbo, A. H. Bancroft, C. C. Gilbert, Hans P. Anderson, Elling Johaneson, Jens Mortenson, Paul Anderson, Jacob Jensen, Martin Sarak, Frank Goytowski, Peder Jorgenson, N. Boyington, Ole G. Bank, John Zaulauski, Peter Kustus, Joseph Glodauski, Anton Kirsling, Apasto Ganyak (?), Jacob Kirsling, Anton Witbrot, Peder Benson, Frank Gruna, Johanes O. Byseth, Wilam Bergen, Hans P. Klinke, Hans Larson, Nelson & Thomson, Isak Skougen, Janeka N. Smaadal, Johan G. Skigestad, Peder Johaneson, Henry Wentzel, John H. Hagemon, Nels O. Brathovde, John O. Brathovde, Sven O. Hagen, Peder K. Heller, Andre N. Hotvedt, and Thor Amundson.*

The post office called Alban, which earlier was located south of Peru in New Hope, was moved into the town of Alban in 1880 to the home of Charles C. Gilbert who lived about half a mile south of Alban Corners (the Frank Knitter place). Gilbert served as postmaster and later built and operated a store on his property. The post office was discontinued in 1905.

Three of the names listed in the 1878 tax roll are mill owners; namely, Bancroft, Bigler and Wrolstad. All three mills were located on the south Branch of the Little Wolf on a three-mile stretch of the river and, from the evidence of road statements, all appear to have been built in 1867 on the right bank of the river, the farthest upstream in Sec 33 by Hans O. Lee & Ole Iverson, later taken over by James Bigler; the second downstream by Ole O. Wrolstad in Sec 34; and a third less than a mile farther down by Willard W. Sherwin, later taken over by the Fleming and Bancroft families of Amherst who eventually sold out to Simon Stenerson. The Wrolstad mill was taken over by son George (Jorgen) in 1881 and later sold to Hans

Johnson who operated it until 1903 when the mill burned.

Between 1875 and 1900 there were probably more logging operations in Alban than in any township of similar size in the county. Up from Fond du Lac came Moore and Galloway's top woodsman, Jack Hunter, to look over the rapids on the Little Wolf. Owing to the nature of the rock formations in the river, apparently no one but Hunter considered the river navigable enough to float a log. But Hunter brought in ox teams, long power booms that went with a sweep, and worked the boulders to one side and those he could not pry out, he blasted with black powder and piled up along the river bank where they may still be seen below the Middle Dam in Sec 1. Hunter built the Middle Dam and a series dams all the way to New London in Waupaca County. None was used for power sites, but rather to create ponds where the logs could be stored until a "head" had been built up and then released, sending the logs pell-mell over the difficult rapids to the next pond farther down.

And up from Oshkosh came cruisers for the Conlee Lumber Company and Ripley & Mead to establish logging camps in the east half of the township, eyeing the yellow gold in the white pine. All told it is believed that between 1880 and 1900 Conlee, or "Corn-le" as the Norwegians pronounced it, had logging camps at Lake Helen, on the Bailey Creek in Secs 13, 15 and 16, and between Russell Marsh and Round Marsh in Sec 5, and on the Little Wolf in Sec 12 not far from the "Improvement Rapids", more often referred to the "Rips." All these sites may still be located. The logs from these camps were hauled by sleigh over swamp roads leading to the banks of the Little Wolf where they were piled on skidways pending the spring thaw and then rolled into the icy water.

Serving the town of Alban, with a population of 682, in 1957-58, were Harold P. Anderson, chairman; Nick Wanta and Ed Dziedzik, supervisors; Donald P. Danielson, clerk; Earl L. Olson, treasurer; Stanley Pliska, assessor; Donald P. Danielson, justice of the peace; Ambrose Stanislawski, constable; and Dr. V. A. Benn, health officer.

## ALMOND, The Township of

The finest collection of township records in the county is held by the town of Almond which also seems to have a fairly continuous account of its elections from the beginning down to the modern period. Not only are most of these records remarkably well preserved, but the general level of literacy throughout is no doubt the highest in the county, marked by fewer misspellings, the least number of grammatical errors and most legible penmanship.

Off hand this rather high degree of proficiency suggests that Almond had fewer newcomers, i.e., foreign-born, than any other township, that most of its original settlers were native Americans from the East where they or their fathers had attended schools in the English language and had been nurtured in an atmosphere of intellectual curiosity and political ferment. Other townships had strong elements of the same Yankee strains, but mixed with communities of newcomers from the Old World who, even if they happened to be Irish, were apt to be lacking in the correct nomenclature of the American idiom. Where the newcomers were actually the predominating ethnic group, such as the Norwegians in New Hope, the difficulty of spelling and grammar is at once apparent.

Almond township was set off by the County Board which ordered Towns 21 in Range 9 and Town 21 in Range 10 (later Belmont) to hold its first election "at the public house of James F. Moore on the first Tuesday of April, 1852, for the election of town officers."<sup>1</sup> Apparently the freeholders of the township were unable to meet this deadline, as the order was amended and the place of election changed to the house Elijah Wood although nothing is mentioned about changing the date of election.

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, Board of Supervisors, Vol. I, p. 187.

In 1854 the town of Almond was enlarged to include all of modern Pine Grove (Town 21, Range 8) and one section (36) in Town 21, Range 9, later a part of Grant. This was all detached from what was then a part of the town of Grand Rapids, Portage County. In 1856 two tiers of sections in the north third of Town 21, Range 8 (Pine Grove) were detached from Almond and attached to the town of Buena Vista. On Nov. 28, 1856 Town 21, Range 10, was set off from Almond to constitute the new town of Belmont. The south two-thirds of Town 21, Range 8, and Sec 36 in Town 21, Range 7, were detached from Almond in 1856 by the incorporation of the new town of Pine Grove, which, with Belmont constituting another new township on the east, left Almond within the constitutional limit of 36 sections. This has remained unchanged.

The subdivision of Almond township was begun July 9 and completed July 22, 1851. In the general description of this township, the surveyor noted: "The Prairie in S(outh) part of Tp. is settling fast. The Tp. contains 15 families, about 70 souls, and there is nearly 300 acres under cultivation."

The field notes also mention a "farm of Mr. Miller" which, from the description, was situated east of the modern village of Almond; on a random line north between Secs 26 and 27 mention is made of "Grimm's House," a "field east of D. B. Frost," and a farm of "Mr. Moulton" of which "20 acres fenced," all located east of the village. On a line between Secs 33 and 34, i.e., south of the village, the surveyor encountered a field of Mr. Welcome, a field of Mr. Hix, and a house of Mr. Moore. Still another field note states that Moore's house, (probably James F.) stood in the southeast corner of Sec 28 which places this on the northwest angle of the intersection of Main and First Street in Almond village. Finally, the survey makes reference to a "Mr. Beggs farm" which, from the description, was near Spirit Land Corners.

The first instance of wild-life conservation on the township level in the county may have been observed in 1866 when the Almond town board resolved that "any per-

son who shall catch any fish within three years from this date (except suckers) out of the lake lying partly in Secs 31 and 32. . . commonly known as Gordon's Lake, shall be liable to pay a fine of five dollars for each offense. . ." The lake was probably being stocked with pan fish or pike. From this it is learned that the lake later called Washburn, after the several members of the Washburn family on nearby farms, was first known as Gordon's Lake, probably after Robert D. Gordon, a justice of the peace on the first town board. While the new plat (1957) refers to this lake as Washburn, a sign on the highway today calls it "Twin Lakes" as there are actually two lakes here, once connected by a small stream, since dried up, while Washburn itself in 1958 was practically a dry lake bottom. The 1895 and 1915 plats both refer to the west lake as Washburn and the one on the east as Clauds Lake. The east lake was also known as Palmer in the 1870s and 1880s after the several members of the Palmer family, but the origin of the name "Claude" is uncertain.

Almond has other small lakes, including East Lake in Sec 25 and Wolf Lake in Sec 1, a name which has only recently become familiar and where some 16,000 walleye fingerlings were planted in 1958 by Conservation Department Warden Herb Schneider. Almond township has no rivers, the only one in the county which has none.

Meanwhile, the first town election of Almond was held in 1852 and on Page 1 in the proceedings of the town board the following entry is made:

1852. The town of Almond was organized the eighth day of May A. D. 1852.

Meeting organized by appointing Elijah Wood chairman, John D. Beggs clerk and Daniel B. Frost & Archibald Beggs inspectors. The officers were sworn according to law and proceeded to business.

1st A motion was made to elect town officers by ballot. Carried. Three supervisors, one town clerk, one treasurer, one superintendent of schools, one assessor, two justices of the peace and two constables were nominated. Asa Cowles received ten votes for chairman and was elected; Archibland Beggs and Solomon C. Wellcome received twelve votes each and were elected supervisors; John D. Beggs received twelve votes and was

elected town clerk; Elijah Wood received twelve votes and was elected treasurer; Asa Cowles received twelve votes and was elected school superintendent; Hiram Frost received eleven votes and was elected assessor; Robert D. Gordon received twelve votes and was elected justice of the peace; Archibald Beggs received eleven votes and was elected justice of the peace, and Aaron Moore & John D. Beggs received twelve and *was* (were) elected constable. A. Moore did not qualify.

In addition to the first post office established in Almond village in 1850, a second post office in the township, called Lone Pine, was established Feb. 22, 1856, Josiah E. Farmington serving as postmaster, and a third, called Hetzel, was established on Oct. 17, 1896, in the northeast, John Hetzel serving as postmaster. The Lone Pine was discontinued in 1865, re-established in 1866 with George McMulkin the next postmaster and was discontinued in 1904, while the Hetzel post office was discontinued in 1902.

The original Lone Pine post office was probably located in the farm house of Farmington near the intersection of modern H-51 and Trunk W, where a store later came to be built also known as the Lone Pine. Sherman states that he was associated with the naming of the community which took its name from a big pine tree, alone and aloof, which stood in an open field several rods to the west of the cemetery, also called Lone Pine. The cemetery appears to have been laid out on or before 1856, as one of the earliest headstones reveals that Sara Melissa White, aged five, died in 1856. The Lone Pine School, the foundation of which is still visible, stood on a lot which separates the cemetery from H-51.

An alumnae association called the Lone Pine celebrated annual reunions for a number of years, elected officers and talked about the "good ol' days" — good because the people who remembered them were young then and filled with the joy of life. One of the last reunions was held at the Plainfield Community Hall in 1937. Among those attending were W. D. Corrigan of Milwaukee, a noted horticulturist, Bert White, E. C. Schilling, Fred Young, John Fisher and Elmer Soule. Several elderly ladies, their gray hair pertly waved and combed, dressed in polka-

dot cotton materials, had their photo taken. On the basis of the caption below the picture which appeared in the *Stevens Point Daily Journal*, it is clear from their names that most of the women were sweethearts of neighborhood boys, viz: Mrs. Sarah (McCallum) Wood, Mrs. Lina (Dickson) Radcliffe, Mrs. Ella (Kollack) Pratt, Mrs. Emma (Achilles) Soule, Mrs. Addie (Dickson) Anthony, Mrs. Helen (Dickson) Corrigan, and Mrs. Cora (Kollack) Brady.

A number of the older headstones in the Lone Pine Cemetery are shattered and while some have been repaired, others have not. This followed one of the worst, if not the worst, cyclones in the history of Portage County in October 1903. The storm gathered strength in the town of Pine Grove where a number of farms were damaged, particularly around Mosquito Bluffs, and swept eastward toward the Lone Pine district where houses and barns were leveled or damaged, including the Lone Pine store, which also housed the post office, and the Lone Pine school immediately east of the cemetery. The cyclone continued east into Pleasant Valley of Buena Vista, Lanark and Belmont, where more damage was caused, leaving a number of dead and injured in its wake across the length of the county.

Spirit Land Corners at the intersection of H-51 and Trunk D probably got its name in the 1860s when a number of followers of the new spiritualist cult became active in the community. There appears to be some connection between this cult and a meeting conducted in Stevens Point by a speaker come to explain the mysteries of spiritualism. One of the mediums chosen by the leader was a (name deleted) from the town of Almond who asked to be put in touch with his first wife. (He had been married two times.) After a series of rappings and tappings he failed to make contact with wife No. 1 and the medium urged him to communicate with wife No. 2. When this also failed, someone in the audience allegedly spoke up and said, "Call wife No. 3, she'll answer."

A town of Almond citizen who achieved world fame was Henry Wellcome, son of Solomon C. Wellcome, an

early town chairman. Son Henry was born either south of Almond village or just across the county line and presumably spent his boyhood in the neighborhood. He later studied pharmacy and also became interested in archaeology, but after university training concentrated on research, especially on quinine. In 1880 he moved to London, England, which he considered more advantageous as a manufacturing and distribution center for his products. In England he won not only fortune but fame and at one stage of his career is said to have helped to make the Egyptian Sudan safe against fevers which had been badgering the white man's conquest (presumably Lord Kitchener's) of north Africa. He was reputedly the first civilian to enter the Sudan after its reconquest by Kitchener a decade or so after the death of General Charles ("Chinese") Gordon at the hands of Mahdi tribesmen at Khartum in 1885. For his outstanding service to humanity, (not to mention British imperial interests in Africa) Henry Wellcome was knighted by King George V in 1932. He returned to Almond the same year with the intention of purchasing a 13-acre tract of land near the county line where he wished to erect a marker at his birthplace. Apparently nothing came of this and he returned to London where he died in 1936, aged 82.<sup>1</sup>

The earliest assessment roll available in the county covers the year 1854 for the town of Almond in which the following names appear as resident owners: George Beamish, Hiram Frost, George Newton, Timothy Welcom, Solomon C. Welcom, Elijah Wood, James Densmore, James F. Moor, Aaron Moor, Sylvanus Baker, Asa Cowles, John D. Beggs, Crowell & White, Lucy O. Moss, John Downing, William Bell, Daniel B. Frost, William Sleichir, Ellis Wicks, James Dunagan, Elias (?) Robinson, George W. Robinson, Heatherly R. Robinson, William D. Dopp, and David Kijor (or Risor). Non-resident owners are given as John Miller, Daniel Stewart, Orvel Sluzzer, William F. Hale, Jr., Isiah L. Frost, Charles McBerry, Richard Norton, Mary W. Wellcome, Palmer Daniels, George Daniels, Mart T. Tisdale, Wilson, Wilson E. King, Lucas M. Miller, and Walter Dickson.

<sup>1</sup> Obituary, *The Times* (London), July 27, 1936.



Serving the town of Almond, with a population of 538 in 1957-58, were Arleigh Hetzel, chairman; John Hetzel, and Hugh Brady, supervisors; R. G. Tess, clerk; Ruth Kollock, treasurer; Leland Young, assessor; Ora Vroman, justice of the peace; Kenneth Mehne, constable; and Thomas Brady, health officer.

## ALMOND, The Village of

Almond village, one of the earliest settlements in the county, did not incorporate until 1905. The application for incorporation to Circuit Court in session March 13, 1905 was made by B. J. Walker, John Hynek, Fred Grosse, M. A. Morey, C. E. Webster, F. A. Wood and J. A. Bowden. The village was to include 647.19 acres or slightly more than a section of land.

The records of the first election were not available in 1958, but from an audit made in the treasurer's book it is known that O. A. Crowell was elected president and J. Tice, clerk. From the assessor's roll it is learned that W. H. Borst was elected assessor, and from the treasurer's book, that A.W. Skinner was treasurer. C. V. Pierce was probably justice of the peace.

The assessment roll for Almond village after it was incorporated lists the following names for the year of 1905: M. Entzenminger, Fred Grosse, N. A. Rice, J. A. Bowden, Christian Yohn, J. A. Davidson, Will Hotze, John Jenerk, F. Langbaner, G. G. Crowell Store, O. A. Crowell Store, Dr. E. S. Cooper, G. Hill, A. McIntee, W. C. Fisher, M. A. Morey, A. Cizinsky, G. Yeager, A. J. Aplin, C. Cobb, G. Hoaglin, Mrs. V. (ictoria) Rath, P. Fisher, A. W. Skinner, Portage County Real Estate Company, G. Walters, Mrs. Julia Coffett, D. Hicks Potato House, A. Yohn, C. Fess, A. Krohn, Kellog Bros. (Lumber Co.), F. A. Wood, R. D. Bursell, Aug. Boelter, J. Milins, H. Karnopp, Dr. Casey, Wm. Paap, Martha H. Pierce, Baptist Church (exempt), J. C. Boelter, J. H. Droske, A. W. Adams, Almond Milling, N. Rader, E. D. Plank, D. Shaffer, C. A. Pickard, D. Mehne, F. J. Frost, Miss Phillips, Clara Thompson, J. W. Dunegan, M. R. Hetzel, C. E. Webster, W. C. Stevens, B. J. Walker, J. S. Cowan, Frank Beggs, S. D. Scott, G. Hawes, G. Mehne, Mrs. Ella

Frost, Mrs. C. A. Wilcox, Miss Carpenter, Beggs Bros., Josaphine Kent, Frost Bros. & Roberts, Almond Land Company, J. H. Johnson, Bryan True, Sid Palmer, O. F. Brown, F. W. Keffner, Margurite Borst, R. P. Carson, F. S. Rawsen, O. A. Crowell, Frank Poll, Northern Grain Company, Louis Adams, N. Piper, W. Tess, J. P. Coon, Borst & Tvill, Mrs. F. Duley, J. H. Hynek, F. Mathe, Albertina Tess, C. Wellwood, F. P. King, Daisy Pufts, E. D. Plank, Thomas Galland, W. H. Plank, G. G. Crowell, John Martin, A. W. Guernsey, H. H. Matha, J. Fredrick, Fred Stevens, and Daniel Crocker.

Personal property in the village, also subject to taxation in 1905, included the following items: bank stock valued at \$4,000; 113 horses valued at \$6,525; 68 head of cattle valued at \$1,455; 175 head of sheep valued at \$350; 14 swine valued at \$74; 94 carriages valued at \$1,594; nine pianos, \$545; 18 organs, \$195; ten bicycles, \$55, in addition to merchant's stocks valued at \$41,130, notes at \$2,565 and lumber at \$8,500. The majority of taxpayers resident in the village had one or more horses, most of them presumably drivers.

The total valuation of real estate in the village in 1905 was \$160,315 and personal property \$78,658 which together made \$238,973.

One of the first business places in the future village of Almond was a tavern-house operated by Isaiah Felker, referred to in the town proceedings of 1857. Probably the first store was built by I. (for Isador) Samuelson, an immigrant from Prussia, and perhaps the first of the Jewish faith to settle in the county. He applied for naturalization at Plover on Feb. 21, 1860 and there is reason to believe he opened his store in Almond the same year. A road statement of 1863 takes a bearing "in the middle of the Berlin road between the tavern of I. Felker & the store of I. Samuelson." This fails to explain the side of the street either was located on, but a later tax roll suggests that Felker's tavern stood on the northwest corner of Sec 34, i.e., on the east side of lower Main Street in the original plat of Almond village. The 1876 plat carries an advertisement of A. Frost who operated "National

House" in the northwest corner of Sec 34. It appears that Frost had taken over the building of Felker after the latter's death in the early 1870s.

One of the sales girls who worked for Samuelson in the early 1860s was Caroline Young who, in 1861, became the second wife of Geo. F. Schilling. According to Mrs. Lauretta Zimmer, nee Schilling, it was in Samuelson's store that her father met and courted Caroline Young. She recalls her mother saying that Samuelson was "a very considerate man" to work for. He later served on the County Board.

From the 1876 plat is also learned that Smart & Crowell were operating a general store and hardware; Bowden & Miller were general blacksmiths manufacturing wagons, carriages and sleighs; and Frank Fredericks, Jr. was a shoemaker, all located in Sec 28, which places these establishments on the west side of modern Main Street, probably north of Samuelson's store. Somewhere nearby in Sec 28 A. W. Guernsey had an office as physician & surgeon.

W. H. Else also carries an advertisement on the 1876 plat as the owner of a general store and hardware in Sec 7, probably in the southwest angle of the intersection of modern H-51 and Trunk W. This later came to be known as the Lone Pine store.

The first 100 years of postal service in Almond was observed July 8, 1950. The post office was the fourth to be established in the county, but ranks third in continuous service. The third post office was established at Shawrette (Conant Rapids) in 1849, but was discontinued in February 1850 before the one in Almond was established. James F. Moore was the first postmaster at Almond.

With the coming of the Chicago & North Western Railroad on Aug. 2, 1901, connecting Almond with Fond du Lac and Wisconsin Rapids, Messrs. W. M. Smart and Richard Davis foresaw a spurt in village development and hurried to establish a weekly newspaper to attract advertisers and job printing. Called the *Portage County Press*, Vol. I, no. 1, issued on Saturday, Aug. 3, 1901, and edited by T. R. Cunningham, carried eight pages of local and

national news and advertising.<sup>1</sup> Most of the paper, however, was "boiler plate," that is, stories of national interest which could be sold by the sheet, already printed, to smaller papers like the *Press*. Local items in this first issue are pointed, aside from Almond, at the communities to the south in Waushara and Winnebago Counties which suggests that the people of Almond were more closely related, both economically and ethnically, to the families of Wautoma, Pine River and the town of Oasis than to the communities to the north of the township in Portage County. A close relationship also existed between families of Almond and Plainfield.

From the "Home News" column of this first issue it is learned, *inter alia*, that "Geo. Hill of Bancroft was transacting business in town Wednesday"; that "landlord Rich is having a windmill placed on the hotel grounds"; that "Mrs. J. H. Hetzel of Stevens Point called on friends in the village Wednesday"; that "C. D. Wood was in town Wednesday with his fine English Morgan stallion"; and that Josh Lebrick "slipped and fell from a hayrack and sprained one of his limbs."

The *Portage County Press* was taken over by Lillian G. Phillips in 1902, by David E. Thompson in 1908, and by Ernest E. Ingle in 1913 who probably continued until 1924, when it was discontinued. A second paper called the *Almond Press* was established by J. Leonard Moberg of Amherst in 1924 and continued until 1931 when it passed to E. J. Scott who ceased publication the same year.

Among the ordinances passed by the early village board of Almond was one regulating the movement of vehicles and traffic on the streets. The coming of the automotive age had brought new problems and obviously the need for their solution had become apparent some time before the ordinance was passed on May 7, 1918. Among other things, this ordinance held that if the driver of an automobile noted that the driver of a horse or team of horses was having trouble, the automobile driver "upon request," was to "stop all motor power until such horse,

<sup>1</sup> In collection of Harold Calkins, Almond, Wis.

or horses, shall be under control and shall assist such person, or persons, to pass such automobile or other vehicle in safety."

The importance of radio to the people of the county in 1939 may be judged from an ordinance adopted in Almond on Aug. 1 when it was declared unlawful "for any person to operate, within the village, any electrical apparatus, device, machine, or equipment which needlessly and unnecessarily interferes with radio reception. . ."

The Portage County Bank, main credit institution in the village, was organized July 15, 1901 as a private bank with a capital stock of \$1,000 and opened for business the same day. In 1903 the bank was incorporated as a state bank in which the following held shares: J. W. Dunnegan, five; O. W. Crowell, 25; E. G. Crowell, five; David Hicks, five, and C. E. Webster, ten. On Dec. 31, 1957 the Portage County Bank had \$1,385,550.42 in deposits, and \$100,319.95 in capital structure. None of the original board of directors was present at the last meeting. Death had taken some and the others had disposed of their stock. The new officers of the bank are Darwin Follett, chairman of the board; Milton Busse, president; Kenyon Follett, vice president; Howard Newby, cashier; and Ronald Abbott, assistant cashier.

The Almond bank was robbed in October 1902. The bank's cash and securities at this time were kept in a big safe standing behind the service counter and from the evidence of a photo taken the morning after the robbery, the door of the safe had been blown open with demolitions. Debris was scattered over the floor, papers and books on the service counter were tossed about, and a stove pipe from a small stove was lying at an angle across the stove, disconnected from the ceiling. The burglars got only \$48 in nickels, about \$100 in silver and a few pennies.

The noise of the explosion awakened Mrs. C. E. Webster who warned neighbors. Several men armed themselves and proceeded in the darkness toward the bank. Apparently a man posting on Main Street spotted them

and warned the others to hurry. The robbers, probably three in all, after scooping up the small change, jumped into a rig stolen from A. O. Crowell, and drove east toward Amherst. No attempt appears to have been made to follow them in the darkness. Days later — most accounts differ on the exact number — a gaunt, half-crazed horse was discovered tied to a tree in a woods not far from Amherst. Discovery of the horse created almost as much of a sensation as the original crime. The bandits had apparently walked into Amherst from the woods and boarded a train, and this was one robbery never solved. The horse recovered.

Serving Almond village with a population of 434, in 1957-58, were Howard Newby, president; Merle Pagel, Leon Trickey, Milton Abbott, Arden Pohl, Irving Bartels and Victor Hardell, trustees; Ronald Abbott, clerk; Louis Prochnow, treasurer; George Hilgendorf, assessor; George Hilgendorf and D. D. Thompson, justices of the peace; Harold Fix, constable; Martin Johnson, health officer; and Harold Mehne, supervisor.

## AMHERST, The Township of

The land of Amherst township is part of a watershed which drains into the Fox River Valley through the Tomorrow-Waupaca River via the Wolf River, and the township itself is divided roughly east and west by the Tomorrow River which flows out of Sharon and New Hope, through Amherst, across the corner of Lanark, into the county of Waupaca. The river takes its name from an Indian word *Waubuck se-pee*, meaning "Tomorrow River," or, a river of "pale water."<sup>1</sup> Whether this is a Menominee word or not, the Chippewa word for the idea of "tomorrow" is *warbunk*.<sup>2</sup>

One of the first occasions, if not the first, in which the Indian term *Waubuck*, from which came *Waupaca*, is used in the English translation as "tomorrow" appears in a news dispatch of the *Wisconsin Pinery* which is dated "Tomorrow River, Grover's Farm, January 22, 1853."<sup>3</sup> This suggests that the English translation was already well established, although the Indian *Waubuck* or Waupaca River was used alternately for the next several decades in both Amherst and Sharon townships. Today, the English term "Tomorrow River" usually applies to that section of the river in Portage County while the lower stream in Waupaca County is called the Waupaca River.

More interesting is the legend which tells of Indians canoeing up the Waupaca River from the mouth of the Wolf, stopping for the night on the banks of the river below the modern village of Amherst, confident that "tomorrow" they would reach the 'father of waters', meaning the

<sup>1</sup> *Collections*, Vol. VIII, p. 487.

<sup>2</sup> Reuben Gold Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*, (Cleveland, Ohio, The Arthur H. Clark Company), Vol. II, p. 267.

<sup>3</sup> *Pinery*, Jan. 20, 1853.



Mississippi, actually the Wisconsin, but part of the Mississippi River system. If true, it was only natural that this staging area should be associated with the idea of the future and from this may have come "Tomorrow River," one of the most meaningful place names in Wisconsin, symbol of unfilled dreams and expectancy of things to come.

Aside from the main stream of the Tomorrow River, Amherst township is drained in the southern sections by a feeder which originates in Adams Lake of Stockton and enters the Tomorrow below Amherst village. A recent map of the county identifies this as Bear Creek, a name seldom heard along its banks. Locally it has had several names, the most prominent on the upper river called Peterson Creek after A. G. Peterson who once owned land on both banks in Sec 25 (R. 9). A short stretch of the middle river near Fountain Grove School was once known as Een Creek after John ("Jim John") Een, a noted fiddler in his time who, according to Harry Pomeroy of Amherst, "played for an ungodly number of dances." The lower river is called Leary Creek after William ("Billy") P. Leary, and the stream as a whole is more often referred to as Leary Creek than by any other name. A small feeder from Ebert Lake in Sec 30 runs into the Een section of this creek called Makusky Creek after John Makusky, and the lake is named after John Ebert.

The township has several other lakes, the most historic in point of time being Lime Lake in Sec 31, referred to in the town proceedings as early as 1854, no doubt after the lime deposits which were discovered in the lake bed. A lime kiln was established on the north shore of the lake by the Een Brothers who furnished the lime for the construction of the court house built in Stevens Point in 1870.

But the largest natural lake in the county with the longest train of memories, community picnics and summer cottages is Emily. Two years after the Portage County Old Settlers Club was organized in Stevens Point, the members held their annual picnic at Emily on June 20, 1894. In his minutes of the meeting, Sherman records

that the lake was named by Luther Hanchett in honor of Emily Cole, wife of Cyrus Cole who settled near the lake "in an early day."<sup>1</sup> As Hanchett, a Plover lawyer and congressman, died in 1862, the naming of the lake antedates the Civil War.

West of Lake Emily lies Mud Lake, Mud Lily Lake, and Lake Ell, the latter probably after its resemblance at one time to the letter 'L'. A short distance southwest of Emily the 1876 plat identifies Lake Julia, but like the others, is either dried up or now a pot hole.

Northeast of Amherst in Sec 15 lies Myers Lake, a name believed to be a corruption of Moyers, after Monroe Moyers, a pioneer of the township. West of Nelsonville lies a lake which after the turn of the century was known as Stoltenburg Lake (1915 plat) no doubt after Andrew Stoltenburg, and today called Lake Elaine after the wife of Welton Alm who in 1947 established a popular summer camp for boys on the west shore known as Camp Mikquano, a Menominee word meaning "turtle." Half a mile to the west lies a smaller lake which none of the plats identifies but which around the turn of the century may have been known as Gifeski Lake after John Gifeski, and today better known as Ostrowski after a local family of the same name. In the southeast corner of the township in Sec 36 lies Thorn Lake, after Alex Thorn, a local resident around the turn of the century.

While the township boundaries were surveyed earlier in the summer of 1851, the survey or subdivision of section lines was begun Nov. 29 and completed Dec. 9, 1851.

The original town of Amherst covered two townships in Range 10, namely, Town 22 (Lanark) and Town 23, modern Amherst less six sections in Range 9. The first town meetings and elections were held "at the house of Edw. Wright in said town until further ordered."<sup>2</sup> Neither the town nor County Board proceedings give the date of the first election, nor are the members of the town board listed in available records, although from other bits of evidence it is known that Wright became the first town

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, Old Settlers Club, p. 86.

<sup>2</sup> *Proceedings*, Board of Supervisors, Vol. I, p. 195.

chairman. And from the sequence of events in the County Board proceedings it appears that the incorporation took place in 1852.

The origin of the name for Amherst township is uncertain, but local legend holds that Gilbert Park, then a young lawyer in Plover, suggested to Adam Urline (who settled first in Plover and later in Lanark) that the new township should be named after Amherst, Nova Scotia, reputedly the native place of Urline before he moved to the county in the mid-1840s. If true, this is the only township in the county which can trace its baptismal record to a former enemy of the American Revolution, namely, General Sir Jeffrey Amherst, British army commander who later become governor of Canada.

In 1856 the town of Lanark was set off from Amherst and for the next two decades or more Amherst remained a township of 36 sections. In the fall of 1875, Amherst got the County Board to go along with the annexation of six eastern sections of Stockton, namely sections 1, 12, 13, 24, 25 and 36 in Town 23, Range 9. In 1885, a petition was presented to the County Board by residents of the towns of Amherst and Stockton asking that these same sections be returned to Stockton. A week later the county clerk read a remonstrance from a number of people against the prayers of the petitioners. But the County Board turned down the petition to return these six sections to Stockton. In 1895, by another turn in local affairs, Stockton got back these six sections while Sharon got 18 sections detached from Stockton.

Meanwhile, in 1897, a movement led by A. G. Cate, O. K. Heath, H. Heath and 157 others sought to have these six sections returned to Amherst. This at once brought forth a petition of protest signed by John, Carl and Anton Loberg and eleven others which begged the County Board to keep these six sections out of Amherst, charging that this move had been brought about by "self-interest of a few persons individually interested. . ."

According to local legend, the reason the petitioners sought to recover these six sections for Amherst was that

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings, Board of Supervisors, Vol. VI, p. 485.*

the vote was predominantly Polish and "wet" and that by restoring these six sections to Amherst, those interested in keeping Amherst from voting "dry" were more sure of keeping it "wet." Despite the opposition, these six sections were returned to Amherst effective April 1, 1898, at the same time that the south half of Town 24, Range 9, was returned to Sharon. The six sections in dispute have remained a part of Amherst since 1898.

The earliest record available in the Amherst proceedings is a road statement at the beginning of the clerk's book made out June 24, 1854. A second page of this record is mutilated but on the third page it is possible to determine that on July 29, 1854 a road was ordered by E. Wright, chairman, and John L. Phelps and William D. Spurr, supervisors. From the description, this road was laid through the east sections of Amherst in a southwesterly direction to intersect the "Waupaca and Plover Road" and still farther on "to intersect the Lime Lake Road."

Two years later on April 2, 1856, the following entry appears:

"At an annual town meeting held at the house of Peter Grovers on *tuesday* (Tuesday) the first day of April 1856 J. W. Townsend and A. T. Ryerson Supervisors acted as inspectors and Enoch Webster chosen to make the third Being duly sworn the meeting *proseeded* (proceeded) to *buisniss* (business). At the conclusion of said meeting the votes being *canvessed* (canvassed) the following people *receavd* (received) the greatest number of votes and were declared duly elected:

Wm. V. Fleming, chairman of board of supervisors and Peter Grover and Jerome Nelson as associates; for justices of the Peace, A. P. (?) Ryerson and Enoch Webster. For superintendent of schools Wm. V. Fleming. For town clerk J. W. Townsend. For assessor Charles Buck, for town treasurer Jackson Calkins, for constables Robert Wilson and Isaac Grover.

As a vote was taken and carried that a tax of sixty six dollars should be raised to pay *expences* (expenses) of said Town for the year 1855 also a tax of \$75 be raised for school purposes.

One office mentioned for the first time in 1860 in Amherst township is that of "sealer of weights and mea-

sure" which W. V. Fleming was elected to in the spring. It was his duty to see that the scales were balanced and when the clerk at the local store measured a yard of calico by the length of his arm that said arm was at least 36 inches long.

Peter Grover and his wife Celia, nee Loing, may have been the first to settle in what later came to be the village of Amherst. They had first located at Stevens Point and in November 1851<sup>1</sup> pre-empted land on the Tomorrow River at the north end of what is today Main Street. Legend says they built a frame shanty, not a log cabin. A cellar of a residence, probably built later, can still be viewed under the grove of trees where the highway turns west. Grover selected this spot on the bank of the river probably because the teamsters, on the long haul from Weyauwega to Stevens Point, had already made a practice of fording the river at this point, not farther downstream as they were to do later. If nothing else he may have liked the view across the river bottom and he had water close at hand for himself and his draft animals. This was an important consideration when pumps were considered one of the items a man could do without.

On Sunday, Sept. 13, 1858 some 2,000 people gathered under the grove of trees near Grover's house to attend a meeting<sup>2</sup>, apparently a religious revival. This was a phenomenon of the 19th Century, particularly in the new settlements of the Middle West and along the Ohio River when people came from miles around, pitched their tents and spent several days listening to evangelists and preachers, often indulging in rites of rolling, jumping and dancing. Although the figure of 2,000 people may be an exaggeration for the number attending the one-day affair in Amherst, even half that number would represent a remarkable crowd. As far as it is known, this was the only meeting of its kind in the country. Religious meetings were conducted on the Public Square in Stevens Point, but these were not

<sup>1</sup> Obituary, Mrs. Peter Grover, *Stevens Point Journal*, March 27, 1909.

<sup>2</sup> *Pinery*, Sept. 17, 1858.

camp meetings nor did they attract more than local interest.

The founders of the township in the early 1850s were mostly of Yankee-English stock who had originally settled in or had business interests in the townships of Stevens Point, Eau Pleine, Hull, and Plover and moved to the eastern part of the county to take advantage of the cheap government land after it was surveyed in 1851. But the Scandinavians arrived before them and by 1860 were the dominant ethnic group in the township. They settled chiefly in the east and north of the township and also dominated the east half of the early village of Amherst where a Lutheran church came to be built on "Norwegian Hill" in 1877.

The town of Amherst, with only scattered hardwood, was not noted for saw mills. However, an early mill is referred in 1873 as the "Olive Branch flouring mill" located in Sec 34 and owned by D. R. Clements, later believed converted to a saw mill and known as the "Red Mill." The race which supplied the power for this mill is still visible. In the 1890s, after the mill ceased operations, the dam became a favorite swimming hole. Morris Carey, keen student of things past in Amherst, recalls sunny afternoons when the youths of the village marched down the sandy road, barefooted, swam in the pool, hunted for frogs, and played hide-and-seek in the abandoned mill.

The earliest available tax roll on Amherst township is dated 1863 and these are the taxpayers: Almond Steanson, Ole Oleson, J. P. Micallson (?), G. Abrahamson, Halver Bardson, Andrew Anderson, Andrew Auleson, Hoyan (?) Johnson, John Blaski, David Boe, Nels Oleson, K. Peterson, Amelia Endlich, C. Joseph, Ole Aslocksens, John Hoffman, August Adler, Ole Fredricksen, Storku (?) Erickson, A. Matison, Evan Hendricksen, N. McEthain, M. Matison, C. Stoltenburg, M. Firstocker, Marrilla Nelson, J. W. Townsend, Levi Bishop, Henry Tuphorn (?), Mat Slutz, Oscar Mitcham, Chas. Couch, E. Welty, C. B. Coburn, R. Harrington, Stephan

<sup>1</sup> *Pinery*, April 10, 1873.

Harrington, Gard Harvey, David Sands, Adam Peterson, A. H. Roe, Harriet Willse (?), Knudt Larson, John Nelson, Henry Lysne, Jacob Isaacson, Even Nelson, Claus Peterson, Torston Thorstonson, Lars Isaacson, Knudt Nelson, Nels Jacobson, A. Thompsen, Eric Oleson, Nels Nelson, Ole Iverson, C. Emonson (Amundson?), Chris Anderson, J. R. Grover, Jack Calkins, A. L. Ball, George Bickel, Rufus Crippen, A. L. Bath (?), Casper Bickel, John Bickel, Nick Hahn, C. P. Spianyu (?), Aelain Eliot, Mary Fiest, M. Goldchmidt, Peter Grover, Marian Phillips, Enoch Webster, R. Willson, James Willson, N. B. Vanskiver, Chas E. Buck, Harmon Ellis, Calvin Darling, Ira Stone, Peter Post, Ed Bobba, Chas. Darling, Annie L. Beebee, Wm. Bobbie, Ed Bobbie, James Nelson, Tron Tronson, Evan Johnson, Gulic Gulicson, Torbin Gunderson, Knudt Salverson, R. Hartman, S. D. Wright, Henry Orcult, G. W. Penny, S. G. Welty, W. V. Fleming, Benj. Fleming, S. Brimhall, A. M. Shannon, R. Thompson, A. L. Ryerson, W. C. Holly, G. Gasman, J. F. Hillstrom, David Wilmot, C. E. Gasman, John Hermis (?), Ole Peterson, Chas. Eien, T. O. Eien, Hans Hillstrom, J. W. Wilmot, Ed Scott, Elijah Scott, Samuel Miller, Wm. G. Rice, G. S. Wilmot, E. Wright, P. D. Bangle, Orrin Maybee, Hiram Clinton, Goodman Martinson, Evan Johnson, M. Adams, Eben (?) Penny, Jacob Child, Buck Williamson, A. H. Bancroft, G. W. Cate, E. Foote, and Fleming & Foote.

Taxpayers listed under "village of Amherst" for 1863 were R. Crippen, John Stickert (?), Wm. Williamson, N. E. Gasman, D. J. Ellis, Robert Wilson, Buck Williamson, A. Gorden, Wm. Loing, A. H. Guernsey, Andrew Anderson, John Stontain (?), Wm. Ball, Julius Czeskleba, A. L. Ball, Horace Martin, Nathan Harvey, L. Meeks, M. D. Warnier, A. H. Bancroft, Bancroft & Grover (mill), C. Abrahamson, J. Aldrich, David Allen, P. D. Bangle, John Bickel, Levi Bishop, S. Brimhall, Jack Calkins, G. W. Cate, C. Couch, Horace Comm (?), Amelia Endlich, Harmon Ellis, T. O. Eien, Chas. Eien, Mary Feist, W. V. Fleming, M. Firstocke, Ben Fleming, E. Foote, C. E. Gasman, Peter Grover, Godfried

Gasman, Nathan Harvey, Gard Harvey, John F. Hillstrom, Nick Hahn, R. Hartman, John Hoffman, Nans Hilstrom, J. P. Mickelson, J. M. Moyers, Orrin Maybee, Marrilla Nelson, Claus Peterson, Ole Peterson, Wm. G. Rice, A. M. Shannon, H. P. Simpson, Chas. Stoltenberg, Rufus Fors, George Turner, E. N. Turner, Robert Willson, David Willmot, Enoch Webster, James Willson, Wm. Willson, G. S. Wilmot, Ed Wright, and S. V. Wilmot.

While a few of these taxpayers were probably non-residents, such as Orrin Maybee and Matt Slutts, from what is known of the others there is reason to believe that the vast majority were residents of the township or village. The large number also suggests that Amherst township in 1863 was probably the most heavily populated, per square mile, of any in the county.

Serving the town of Amherst, with a population of 851, in 1957-58, were Henry Swenson, chairman; Martin Glodowski and Ernest Leppen, supervisors; Peter Mrochinski, clerk; William J. Stoltenberg, treasurer; Herbert Allen, assessor; Lawrence Krogwold, justice of the peace; and Frank T. Glodowski, constable.



## AMHERST, The Village of

The village of Amherst was not incorporated until some 50 years after the first pioneers arrived. From the original proceedings of the village board it is learned that the petition for incorporation was to be presented in Circuit Court on Nov. 20, 1899 at the request of Carl Haertel, C. J. Iverson, A. H. Guernsey, Geo. W. Smith and A. J. Smith. The resident population was said to be 556 persons and the entire incorporation area was to be 640 acres or one section, more or less.

The first election was held in the village Jan. 25, 1900 when the following were elected: A. J. Smith, president; Carl Haertel, S. J. Foxen, George W. Smith, F. E. Webster, C. H. Vancott, and C. N. Fenton, trustees; and C. J. Iverson, clerk. From the oaths of office in the village records it is revealed that Foxen was named supervisor, John Webster, assessor, and T. B. Fryar and M. S. Murat, justices of the peace. No mention is made of the treasurer.

At a later meeting the village board met with the Amherst town board and straightened out mutual problems. One of these was the matter of joint property which was inventoried as follows: shovels, picks and small tools, \$15; wheel scrapers (old and worn) \$16; other scrapers, \$24; road machine, \$100; plows, \$15; safe in clerk's office, \$25; and stove in town hall, \$5, for a total of \$200.

The people of the village, now that they had incorporated a political organization of their own, could no longer expect help in road upkeep from the town board, but, as taxpayers who had helped to pay for the equipment, were reimbursed for their proportional share, or about \$40.56. This pattern was followed throughout the county in the new villages, all of which, with the ex-

ception of Plover, were incorporated shortly after the turn of century. In reaching an agreement between Amherst village and township, the two entities even agreed to divide the chairs in the town hall, one-fifth going to the village and four-fifths to the township.

In June 1900 the village board heard a petition "to sprinkle streets" and another petition "remonstrating against sprinkling streets." However, those remonstrating were not opposed in principle to sprinkling the streets but wanted to know first how much it was going to cost. These are the delicate matters a village board faces and no slight to the intelligence of the American electorate can ever be tolerated.

The first attempt at a newspaper in Amherst was made by Henry Nelson on March 22, 1884. Called the *Pioneer*, it measured less than six inches by five and in the "locals" column admitted it was "undoubtedly the smallest printed."<sup>1</sup> Two years later on Saturday, Dec. 25, the sixth number appeared although enlarged to a four-page paper. Among the advertisers were R. R. Fryar who sold "Fine Groceries, glassware, perfumes, Holiday Goods, Pickles in bottles and bulk, Confectionary, Nuts, Crackers and cakes, Fruits, and Oysters"; N. Rollefson, who had a "Well Selected Stock of Gents' Ladies' and Childrens' boots and shoes;" John Severtson was a general blacksmith; C. W. Westley, a dealer in furniture; G. F. Rinehart, a photographer with "reduced prices for family groups;" Mrs. D. Gawthrop, owner of the Commercial House where "suppers [were] gotten up on short notice for dances and parties;" A. P. Anderson, a boot and shoe store on Mill Street; Jerome Nelson, operator of Excelsior & Rising Star Flouring Mills (the latter in Nelsonville); John Mallison, a sale and livery stable with "good horses, comfortable rigs and careful drivers and where horses could be boarded by the day or week;" Mrs. A. Ervin, a millinery with a "full line kept constantly on hand;" O. H. Bakke, a tailoring establishment; M. Kent, a carriage and wagon shop; Hartman & Czeskleba, a hard-

<sup>1</sup> In collection of village clerk.

ware store; Benson & Johnson, a meat market; J. A. Salscheider, the Central Hotel with "bus to all trains and a bar in connection;" Issac Olson, a "liveryman with good rigs;" W. C. Madson, a blacksmith; and Ole Iverson, a contractor and builder selling sash, doors, blinds, mouldings, lumber and iron.

Under a "professional" column appear the names of A. J. Smith, attorney-at-law; A. H. Guernsey, physician & surgeon; G. E. Dusenburg, physician & surgeon; and A. H. Guernsey, dealer in drugs & medicines, toilet articles and wall paper. Mrs. Z. A. Een was the owner of a Summit House in Amherst Junction where "excellent accommodations for the traveling public" were provided; Coleman, Jaskson & Co. operated the Amherst Flouring Mill; W. C. Holly was a dealer in "household furniture, mattresses, picture frames and undertaking a specialty;" A. Thum was a specialist in teas and assured customers that he advertised "only what I mean [and] no humbug;" Moberg's harness shop advertised "Merry Christmas Bells! chime bells, string bells, shaft bells, team bells and Norway bells;" Isaac Simcock dealt in hardware, stoves and did repairing; John Iverson dealt in general merchandise and agricultural implements; and P. L. Thorson, an agent for the Thingvalla steamship line between the U.S. and Scandinavian countries, was ready to sell tickets to and from the "Old Country at lowest rates."

The *Pioneer* was shortly discontinued. On Feb. 22, 1893 the first issue of the *Amherst Advocate* appeared under the joint editorship of Mrs. Harriet ("Hattie") Bumpus, nee Moberg, and Spencer Haven, a local school teacher. The weekly was taken over in July 1903 by J. L. Moberg, a brother of Mrs. Bumpus, who has an unbroken record of 55 years of news reporting and service to the community, the longest of any in the county.

At the annual meeting of the Amherst town board held in 1859 "at the house of Peter Grover" the town board found the place inconvenient and the meeting was adjourned "to the store near Bencrafts and Grover's

Mill where the chairman stated the order of business and the polls were duly opened..." This store is not identified, while reference to "Bencraft's and Grover's Mill" is the first mention of the grist mill which Asa H. Bencraft (later spelled Bancroft) and Peter Grover built on the left bank of the Tomorrow River where the shell of the original building is still standing a hundred years later, and, with new additions, machinery and dam, still operating at full capacity under the firm name of Johnson Feed Mill & Elevator. The mill was actually under construction in the fall of 1858 and is referred to in a news report as a "four story building."<sup>1</sup>

As often happened in pioneer days, men who were first to claim land in a district where a village appeared in the making were anxious to plat streets on their own land for the purpose of selling lots. The Flemings controlled considerable land in Secs 27 & 20 and, noting that most of the new arrivals were building further upstream, made an effort to attract settlers to the village in "lower town," also called "Lower Amherst." John Endlick (*ca.* 1860) built a store and house near the B. Fleming place as well as a warehouse to deal in wheat. Nils Gasman had a store on the section line between Secs 27 & 28, at least as early as 1859 when a bearing was taken on "Gasman's store" for a road survey.

The first dam of which there is evidence was built on the Tomorrow River in Sec 28 below modern Amherst village. The land along the river was purchased by Alexander M. Shannon on July 3, 1858 from Seth Thompson and wife Dina and the transaction stipulated that the river could overflow both banks "by building a dam to raise eight head..." meaning, no doubt, a head of eight feet. It was on the site of this dam that Thompson and Shannon appear to have built or intended to build a grist mill. This led to trouble. The Bancroft & Grover dam was probably under construction earlier the same year, and the partners allegedly brought civil action on the grounds that the lower dam

<sup>1</sup> *Pinery*, Sept. 17, 1858.

was backing water and reducing power facilities. Whatever the outcome, it appears that the lower dam was forced to discontinue. Later a second mill and dam was built in "lower town" farther downstream at a place later known as the "Red Mill."

Probably the earliest reference to the "village of Amherst" appears in the *Pinery* which on Jan. 24, 1860 heard this report from a stringer correspondent:

Dear Pinery:

Having promised to write respecting the new and enterprising village of Amherst, I now proceed to redeem my pledge.

A new store has been opened near Bancroft's & Grover's mill under the supervision of Rev. Crawford. A new school house has been built where the young may be taught and where also the worship of God is performed by different denominations. We have in town two flouring mills, three blacksmith shops, one shoe shop, one harness making shop, two stores and expect soon to have a new hotel. But we regret the fact that one appendage to western villages called a "saloon" is in prospect. Yet it remains to be seen whether the town supervisors will license such a nuisance.

In the late 1860s the business men of the village took steps to launch a fair. An act to legalize the returns of the "Portage County Agricultural Society" was approved by the legislature on March 21, 1871.<sup>1</sup> Mention of the "fair grounds," located west of the village, appears in a road statement of 1872, but the first fair, most likely a picnic, was held in the summer of 1869, two years before incorporation. Two fair receipts which survive this period show that Thomas Pipe served as president in 1878 and 1879. Later known as the Portage County Fair, it continued for the next several decades to attract wide interest. Finally, in 1918, owing to the exigencies of World War I, it was decided to postpone the fair a year and as a result state aids in 1919 were withdrawn, which killed it. In 1949 the Amherst Lions Club revived the idea and helped organize the new Portage County Fair and, up to 1958, had succeeded in maintaining it.

<sup>1</sup> *Private & Local Laws*, (1871), Chap. 383, p. 872.

The Wisconsin Central came into the village in the summer of 1871, and the Green Bay line passed about a mile to the north of the village in 1872. A railway spur, known as "Virgin Spur," was located a few miles northeast of the village on the Green Bay line to accommodate the potato growers.

As a result of the two railways, Amherst in the 1880s and 1890s and even after the turn of the century, became an important center in the potato buying and shipping business. Old settlers in both Alban and New Hope townships have mentioned hauling potatoes by wagon or sleigh to Amherst before the railway came to Rosholt. It usually meant leaving the home farm early in the morning and returning late at night.

The International Bank of Amherst was established in 1893 with a capitalization of \$25,000 and the first board of directors, elected Feb. 23, were Benjamin Burr, president; A. M. Nelson, vice-president; Emmons Burr, F. B. Lamoreux, G. W. Fleming, and J. O. Foxen. The latter also served as cashier. At the close of business on Dec. 31, 1957, the International Bank had total deposits of \$915,189.56, with a capital structure of \$132,367.44. Directors of the bank were Harry B. Pomeroy, president; Otto L. Dusel, vice president; Louis A. Pomeroy, secretary & cashier; and Alden Hanes, Roman Jungers, Felix Sroda, and Leslie Borgen.

The International Bank of Amherst was entered by burglars on the night of March 10, 1899 and robbed of a little more than \$5,000. One thousand dollars in silver was not taken and there were ten to 15 dollars in change scattered about the floor which the burglars left behind. The safe had been blown up with nitroglycerin. The directors of the bank, led by Harry Pomeroy, cashier, promptly offered a \$500 reward for the arrest and conviction of the burglars. A few days later two of the men were apprehended in Wausau with \$1,801.25 in bills pinned to their undershirts, and coins in nearly every pocket; and about three weeks later two others, nabbed in Schofield, had around \$400 on their persons. Later in the summer two bonds worth \$2000 or more were found in a woods near Wausau.

Electric lighting came to Amherst village around 1900 when Bertram Dwinnell and Frederick C. Schidel established the Amherst Electric Service Company and installed a dynamo which operated off the water power of the Red Mill in lower Amherst.

A form of telephone service may have been established in Amherst and Nelsonville in 1892 when Jerome Nelson ran a line between the flour & feed mills he operated in both villages. Community-wide telephone service was begun in 1903 with the incorporation on July 3 of the Amherst Telephone Company. There were 62 stockholders, mostly merchants and farmers. The original officers were Charles J. Iverson, president; Casper A. Smith, vice-president; J. O. Foxen, treasurer; H. N. Nelson, secretary; and H. H. Hoffman, T. Tronson, Thomas Anderson, T. Riley, and George B. Allen, directors. The present officers of the company include Charles O. Iverson, president, a son of the first president; Inez M. Iverson, vice-president, widow of founding president; Ruth Bohman, secretary-treasurer, daughter of the founding president; in addition to directors Charles O. Iverson Jr., and A. H. Bowden of Almond.

Serving the village of Amherst, with a population of 604, in 1957-58, were Chester V. Lepak, president; Florian Fleming, Gerald Guyant, Henry Zimmerman, Elmer Benson, Welton Johnson, and Gerald Yokers, trustees; Alfred S. Smith, clerk; Roman M. Jungers, treasurer; Walter Konkol, assessor; Otis Toftum, justice of the peace; Pat W. Riley, constable; and Thomas A. Guyant, supervisor.

## AMHERST JUNCTION, The Village of

The village of Amherst Junction did not grow out of saw mill community, but developed after a junction was formed by the Wisconsin Central and Green Bay and Lake Pepin railroads. In a road statement dated Oct. 28, 1876 it is referred to as "Groverburg," presumably after the Grover family which held considerable property in the vicinity. The original plat also refers to it as the "village of Groverburg" although when a post office was established here on March 23, 1875, it was called Amherst Junction.

The village was incorporated in 1911 although the date of the first election is not recorded. From the oaths of office, however, it is learned that Henry N. Nelson was elected president; Fred A. Ellinger, Herman J. Steinke, Chas. H. Rickman, Ambrose H. Glisczynski, George Starks and George E. Larson, trustees; Herman H. Hoffman, supervisor; and Martin P. Kjer, assessor. The Helgeson account confirms the above but in addition lists the names of L. L. Nelson as treasurer, H. J. Fletcher and Felix Dreyfka, constables, and M. P. Kjaer and Hoffmann as justices of the peace.<sup>1</sup>

At one of the early meetings of the board held in 1912 the members voted to negotiate with John Een "for the rent of the calaboose for one year" and also to accept a street lamp already on hand and to purchase one additional lamp. These were probably gas lamps as there are periodic payments made to the American Gas Machine Co., and in 1915 the board purchased five new lamps from this company and returned the old ones. These lamps appear to have been replaced in 1918 when electric lighting was brought into the village by the Amherst Electric Service Company.

<sup>1</sup> *Fra Indianernes Lande*, p. 117.



In agreeing to a split with the assets of the town of Amherst in 1912 the village of Amherst Junction accepted 10% as its share of town-owned property. This included the following items:

Town hall and lot	\$625.00
Tool house	50.00
Calaboose	50.00
Lot in the village of Haakins (?)	40.00
Wilmott Gravel Pit	25.00
Hoffman Gravel Pit	15.00
Three road graders	275.00
2 plows	24.00
1 wheel scraper	12.00
1 wheel scraper	5.00
2 drag scrapers	8.00
5 drag scrapers	5.00
20 shovels	8.00
3 steel bars	3.00
other small tools	12.15
safe in town clerk's office	25.00
1 stove in town hall	5.00
cash in hand of town treasurer	
Feb, 6, 1912	1512.11
	<hr/>
	\$2699.26

In addition to 10% of this amount, the village was to have the Hoffman gravel pit at the inventory price of \$15. The gravel pit was needed to surface the village roads and was an important asset after the turn of the century when the automotive age demanded a hard-surfaced road.

A contract was also let to G. M. Harwood in 1913 to lay concrete sidewalks to replace the wood, or board, sidewalks then in use. The costs listed in the Harwood bid were nine and three-quarters cents per square foot and 14 cents per square foot for five-inch traverse crossings.

Meanwhile, a creamery had been in business in Amherst Junction for some time although it apparently was discontinued in 1914 as a vote was taken at a board

meeting that year to "see Miss J. Calkins in regard to purchasing a lot and the *creamary* (creamery) building for a dwelling house." By this time the village had also become an important potato buying and shipping center and a number of warehouses were spotted along sidings built by the railway companies.

At this same meeting the board voted to post five speed limit signs in the village with the speed not to exceed ten miles per hour. The first gasoline tank and curb stone pump was authorized by the board in July 1915 when the Louis Hardware Company was given permission to install the equipment needed but only on condition that the village was to bear no responsibility if the pump interfered with traffic on the sidewalk.

The leading hotel in the village was Summit House which in 1876 may have been known as "Junction House." It stood in the east angle between the two railway tracks, a few feet east of the depot. Both have been removed.

Before and after the turn of the century new settlers and travelers to the town of New Hope, Alban and Stockton used the two railways to Amherst Junction where they de-trained and were either met by friends or hired rigs to drive them to their destination. Salesmen and drummers stopped here and hired rigs to the several stores and villages in the area. A livery from Rosholt to Amherst Junction on July 24, 1906 cost \$2.50.<sup>1</sup>

The village also has a record of its justice proceedings beginning June 23, 1916, which carries entries made down to the latter part of 1935. From these records it is clear that the most serious problem facing the board in its first years was the liquor traffic. After the United States entered World War I, the evidence of this justice docket and others in the county suggests greater restraint in public places. The passing of the National Prohibition Act on Oct. 19, 1919, which banned the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages, may have been a mistake in the light of the rackets which flour-

<sup>1</sup> Malcolm Rosholt, *Town 25 North*, (1948), p. 200.

ished in the "Roaring Twenties," but there can be no question that the old-time saloon had become a menace, difficult to control and overbearing in its influence on local politics.

After 1920 a new institution known as the soft drink or ice cream parlor replaced the old-time saloon, and ordinances were passed in the various villages and townships of the county to govern it. The village board of Amherst Junction on Feb. 18, 1922, passed ordinance No. 18 which declared it unlawful for anyone to operate a soft drink parlor or ice cream parlor without a license. The license, Class A costing \$100, made it possible for the licensee to serve "near beer, pop, ginger ale, ice cream and other soft drinks." A Class B license, costing \$50, covered only pop, ginger ale, ice cream and other soft drinks. The licensing in Wisconsin of "near beer," a beverage with an alcoholic content of less than one-half per cent, was the opening wedge which helped pave the way for the defeat of the Prohibition, or Volstead Act, in 1933.

Appearing in the 1912 tax roll of Amherst Junction are the following names: H. N. Nelson, Mrs. C. M. Dwinell, Nels Docka, John Somers, Julius Pidle, R. Miller, Mrs. P. Simonoe, L. Lubetski, L. Basinski, C. H. Richman, Security Bank, A. Skalitzky Estate, A. H. Glisczinski, Joe Dulek, Frank Dulek, John Kirshling, J. A. Werachowski, J. J. Henjum, A. H. Pidde, Fred Ellinger, H. H. Hoffman, Mrs. Ida Vesley, H. J. Stenke, Earl Smart (probably for Geo. Starks,) Joe Weaver, Mrs. N. Bazinski, A. Wysniak, Julius Gledoski, Joe Jurasek, N. Grover, Wm. Packard Estate, Aug. Kostuck, John Koziczkowski, L. E. Freeman, L. A. Calkins, and Frank Koziczkowski. The 1912 roll does not carry the entries of business establishments which may have been recorded separately. In 1922 there were 51 taxpayers in Amherst Junction and among company names listed are the S. H. Bowman Lumber Co., Glisczinski & Bros., Jackson Milling Co., Lewis Hardware, and Zynda Bros. & Co. Of the 46 individuals paying taxes in 1922, all but 14 were assessed against an automobile, or other motor vehicle, the lowest being \$50, probably a motor-

cycle, second-hand, while the highest, a vehicle owned by Nick Theis, was valued at \$1,050. The majority owned vehicles valued at \$100 to \$450.

The Security State Bank of Amherst Junction, mentioned in the 1912 tax roll, was organized Sept. 9, 1903. The original stockholders were Henry N. Nelson, Carl Een, John Lutz, August Suchert, Albert G. Cate, Adolph Skalitzky, Charles L. Duswell, Andrew Johnson, Matt Wadleigh, E. W. Czeskleba, Albert G. Guyant, Elmer J. Carley, L. L. Nelson, J. W. Dunegan, Luce C. Cate, George J. Thiele, N. J. Loberg, F. C. Walton, C. D. McFarland, T. H. Hanna, J. A. Week, E. M. Rice, and Charles E. Kanute. The capital of the Security State Bank was \$8,500 at the time of its incorporation.<sup>1</sup>

The first officers of the bank were Charles Buswell, president; Carl Een, vice president and J. W. Dunegan, second vice president; and Henry Nelson, cashier. On Saturday, Nov. 24, 1928 a reception was held in Amherst Junction to celebrate the formal opening of a new home of the Security State Bank, located on the west side of Main Street. Meanwhile, on May 1, 1918, Olaf Nelson had been made cashier and continued as cashier and president until Nov. 15, 1956 when he sold his interest in the bank to Joseph Migas. The capital stock was increased to \$12,500 in 1929 and in 1944 to \$25,000. At the close of 1957 the bank had total deposits of \$592,727.29 and a capital structure of \$51,619.31. The officers were: Joseph Migas, president; Julian Lila, vice president; Chester V. Lepak, cashier; and Shirley Barden, assistant cashier.

A successful home industry was begun at Amherst Junction in 1945 by George Sroda who has a turkey farm and processing plant located in the village off H-10. The family-owned industry specializes in a meat-type bird of special flavor where all processing is done by hand to retain this flavor. Nothing is wasted

<sup>1</sup> Correspondence from O. A. Nelson, Jan. 28, 1958: (In the personal property assessment of 1912, the bank had 22 stockholders with 85 shares valued at \$85 each, for a total of \$7,225, less than the original capitalization, which is probably an error.)

in the by-products; in fact Sroda is probably the only turkey raiser in the United States who finds a market for "everything including the gobble" (tape recorded for advertising purposes). In 1958 he sold 3,000 cellophane wrapped, oven ready, boxed turkeys to buyers in 28 states.

Serving the village of Amherst Junction, with a population of 186, in 1957-58, were Grant Lutz, president; Edwin H. Carr and Joseph Migas, trustees; LeRoy Docka, clerk; O. A. Nelson, treasurer; Julian H. Lila, assessor; Albert Hinkle, justice of the peace; Theodore Konkol, constable; E. H. Carr, health officer; and Joseph Sroda, supervisor.

## BELMONT, The Township of

The town of Belmont was set off from the town of Almond in 1856 and in the process the County Board detached Town 22 (Lanark) from Amherst and attached it to Belmont. The first election of officers was to be held on the first Monday in October "and the place for holding town meetings and other elections shall be at the tavern house of Alexander Gray."<sup>1</sup> Thus the first town meeting of Belmont was held not in the township as it known today, but in modern Lanark where Gray's tavern-house was located in Sec 36. A few months later, however, Town 22 was detached from Belmont to constitute the town of Lanark which left Belmont within the constitutional limit of 36 sections.

As a number of the pioneers of this township originated in New York state, it is quite possible that it took its name after Belmont, New York.

The work of surveying the section lines was begun Sept. 29, and completed Oct. 4, 1851.

Three small streams originate in the east sections of Belmont and flow into Waupaca County. A bridge was authorized on the northernmost stream in 1871, then referred to as "Robinson's Creek," no doubt after one of the Robinson family (1876 plat). This stream originates at Fountain Lake in Sec 10 and runs into Long (or Big) Lake in Waupaca County; it is also called Emmons Creek, probably after the family of the same name in the town of Dayton.

The central stream draining Belmont originates in Sec 22 and since early times has been known as McInroe Creek, no doubt after the pioneer family of the same name. It joins the South Fork of the Waupaca River in the town of Dayton. The lower stream in Belmont, originating in Sec 26, flows southeasterly

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, Board of Supervisors, Vol. I, p. 261.

through Sec 36 where it is generally known as Dopp Creek, after the pioneer family of the same name, and runs into the town of Dayton where it is identified on 1889 plat of Waupaca County as Pearl Creek which joins McInroe Creek to form the South Fork of the Waupaca River.

Because of its splendid isolation, Fountain Lake, set like a star sapphire against a mounting of tree-covered hills, retains a sense of wild beauty probably unmatched in the county. It is approached over a town road where the trees reach across the road to form a natural arbor.

In the northwest of the township lie the three lakes, Pickerel, Pine, and Pleasant, all identified on the 1915 plat. A summer camp known as Asbury Acres has been established on the east shore of Pickerel Lake by the Wisconsin Conference of the Methodist Church which controls the land around the lake although access is permitted at a public landing on the east shore.

The movement of settlement into Belmont appeared to be a step behind Lanark which is to say that the "York staters," many of whom had spent a few years in Winnebago County in the 1840s, first filled up the oak openings of Lanark, and when the movement into Belmont began it flowed south from Gray's tavern into the northeast sections of the township, gradually farther south, and west along the plateau of modern Trunk D to the flats around modern Blaine. Some of the most hilly, yet picturesque countryside in the county may be found in Belmont and from one vantage point in the very corner of the township it is possible on a clear day to view many miles of Portage County to the northwest.

Many of the families that settled in both Lanark and Belmont were related and a close bond of togetherness has existed between the two townships to this day.

The first post office, called Blaine, was established June 12, 1876 with Charles McMillan serving as postmaster. The origin of this name is uncertain but it was probably named after James G. Blaine, a member of Congress from Maine and a leading Republican, later secretary of state. The post office was discontinued

in 1903. Whether McMillan operated a store in connection with the post office is uncertain, but according to hearsay evidence, a country store was established on a lot just south of the Methodist church by John H. ("Johnny") Johnson. However, the earliest store of which there is memory, located on the northwest corner of the intersection at Blaine, was operated by Looman Taylor, identified on the 1895 plat as L. Taylor.

The foundation of the modern store at Blaine operated by Clarence George was built on the northeast corner of the intersection by D. A. Day which, by 1909, according to a post card photo, had been taken over by J. C. F. Fletcher & Co.

After the turn of the century, a creamery was located on the road west of the store, and a blacksmith shop north on modern Trunk A. The Grange Hall which stands to the west of Trunk A, north of Blaine, was built by the Maccabee Lodge, an insurance organization similar to Woodmans.

Blaine Post No. 115 of the G.A.R. held its meetings in a hall located about a mile south of Blaine on the farm of Luke Scott (the Henry Stinson place). In the early 1900s, after taps had been blown for most of the G.A.R. veterans, the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War met at Scott's Hall for meetings and social events.

A second post office was established in Belmont on Aug. 31, 1876 known as Sherman,<sup>1</sup> probably after William Tecumseh Sherman, which may have been located in Sec 11. Veterans of the township recall that Johnathan Brown (mentioned in 1863 tax roll) and Luke Scott served as postmasters — probably before it was moved to the north side of the road to the farm house of Don Sawyer. It was temporarily discontinued in 1887, re-established in 1888, but the date of its final closing is uncertain although it was still a post office address in 1896.

A third post office in Belmont, called Towne, pre-

<sup>1</sup> Correspondence, U.S. Post Office Department, May 13, 1958. (There is no entry on the Sherman P.O. in the Index.)



sumably after Cyrus Towne, was established April 18, 1884, with Joseph L. Dopp serving as postmaster. The post office, which was discontinued in 1903, was located about a quarter of a mile west of the intersection of modern H-22 and Trunk AA, or west of the Methodist Church often called the "Dopp Church" after the several families of Dopps who settled in the neighborhood.

A fourth post office, called Heffron, probably after John J. Heffron of Stevens Point, was established near the Waushara County line on Jan. 30, 1901 with Frank Wiora serving as the first, and apparently the only postmaster as the post office was closed in 1903.

Cyrus Towne died in 1899 and is buried in the Green Vale Cemetery south of Dopp Church. His wife, Martha, preceded him in death by 19 years, aged 40, and at the bottom of her headstone appears this epitaph:

Mother thou has left thy babes  
Thine was an early tomb,  
Tis God who has bereft  
And filled our home with gloom.

There are three other cemeteries in Belmont, one called Elmwood, formerly Sherman and later Oak Wood, about two miles east of Blaine; another south of Blaine called the South Belmont and often referred to as the "Kent Cemetery," and the last at Heffron at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church. Quite a number of veterans of the Civil War are buried in Elmwood, not to mention veterans of later wars.

Around 1870 the town of Belmont, as with other townships in the eastern part of the county, became deeply involved with the matter of bonding the county to bring a railway into Stevens Point. At a special meeting held in 1871 a resolution was introduced to authorize the town chairman to take such legal action as he deemed advisable to prevent the "issuing or delivering to any person or corporation of the bonds of said County (being One hundred thousand dollars) voted by said County in the year 1870 to the Portage, Winnebago and

Superior Rail Road company, now the Wisconsin Central Railroad Company in exchange for the capital stock of said company. . ." The resolution was passed unanimously.

Obviously, the proposed railroad between Portage and Stevens Point had become a matter of deep irritation to the farmers of eastern Portage County. Some 15 years earlier several thousand investors, many of them farmers, had to satisfy mortgages against railroad bonds or lose their farms, including a number around Plover and Buena Vista, in the great "Horicon Swindle" of 1856-57. Another reason for opposing the railroads, extraordinary to a later generation, is made evident in the following entry made after a meeting held April 2, 1872 "in and for the town of Belmont":

Proposition

"Whereas, The facilities afforded by the Wisconsin Central Rail Road for bringing into Portage County feed, flour &c has greatly reduced the price of the farmers' produce and thereby crippled his resources: And whereas, By illegal procedure, by deception and fraud, Portage County bonds have been issued to said company, and unless appropriate legal proceedings are maintained against said R.R. Corporation, the payment of said bonds will be enforced, imposing upon the taxpayers of Portage County a heavy burden which they will be illy prepared to bear.

Therefore, be it Resolved, by the town of Belmont that our Supervisors be and hereby are instructed to unite with the towns of Lanark, Amherst, Stockton, New Hope, Linwood, Sharon and such other towns as may see fit to associate themselves together for the purpose of maintaining an action or actions to prevent said R.R. Co. from obtaining possession of or collecting said bonds: and for the furtherance of said object our Chairman be and hereby is instructed to meet with the Chairman of Supervisors of the several towns above named at the house of H. H. Felch of Stockton, on Tuesday, April 9 at 1 o'clock P.M. . . ."

The earliest tax roll of Belmont is dated 1863 when the following paid taxes: John Gray, Wm. Handell, Wm. E. Sanders, Charles Hewitt, Milo Clark, John (actually Johnathan) Brown, Charles Halfhide, A. S. Gould, Richard Lea, John Bishop, Lewis Charles, Terry Mc-

Bride, Merritt Curtiss, Edwin Curtiss, Richard Dolling, Patrick Stinson, Alvin Pike, James Smith, Charles Taylor, Albert Taylor, David Taylor, Joseph Polley, Henry Downing, Starr Polley, Ebenever Olds, Elijah Clark, Charles T. Clark, Celia Welby, Sarah Strong, William Olds, Luke D. Scott, John Turner, Luman Taylor, Loren Buck, Charles Lewis, James Garter, Wm. Grant, Elizabeth Polley, Charles Sanders, Elder Ashmurn, J. C. Stringham, S. H. Sawyer, J. C. Devoin, G. W. Robinson, H. R. Robinson, Alpheus Austin, Ed Derigan, Henry Dean, James Youngs, Hiram Hooglan, Thomas Collier, A. D. Freeman, James Edminister, Estate of Reuben Edminister, David Spurbeck, John Collier, John Fletcher, Stephen Fletcher, Joseph Graham, James Sutherland, Mary C. Chaplin, L. L. Hawes, Alonzo Lomas, Warren Lincoln, Stephen Smith, Edward Kent, John Coon, David Kent, Samuel Whitney, Peter Dunigan, D. R. Morgan, James McInroe, Nelson King, L. A. McInroe, Robert Parks, H. P. Kelsey, Edward Dunigan, Jesse Tibbitts, N. D. Tibbitts, Cyrus Fairbank, Orange Randall, John Rice, H. H. Dopp, Wm. D. Dopp, Willard Dearing, E. Y. Smith, Arthur Collier, Robert Collier, Theodore Lincoln, Jonas White, Peter Turner, Joe A. Wiora, Henry Turner, S. H. Turner, Thomas Bacon, David N. Town, Howard P. Towne, Edward Y. Smith, and George Drysdale.

Several of the taxpayers mentioned above actually lived in Lanark or Waupaca County. It would also appear from the list above that Joe A. Wiora was the first Polish settler in the township.

An elm tree of historical interest in Belmont stands in front of the house on the farm of Steve Nenadovich in Sec 11. This house, one of the oldest in the county, was built by William Grant. Shortly before he was called into service during the Civil War, Grant decided to cut this elm down and began by cutting off the roots on the west side. By night fall he had the tree leaning at an angle to the east. Apparently he was called up for duty shortly after and never completed the job. When he returned from the Civil War he found the tree still growing and for sentimental reasons decided

not to cut it down. It is still growing, bent slightly east, and already local legend has it that a treaty with the Indians was signed here.

One of the leading citizens of Belmont in the early 1900s was Frank P. Guyant who in 1907 was elected sheriff of Portage County and again in 1911. His son, Merrill, served as under-sheriff to Anton Kubisiak, and in 1915 was elected sheriff for one term.

Owing to the paucity of pine timber, and the nature of the hard woods, there is no record of any saw mill in the township. The 1895 plat identifies a mill at the outlet of Fountain Lake. This, according to hearsay evidence, was a grist mill, operated by James Grant, which served the neighborhood down to World War I. The foundation of this dam or mill apparently was extinguished when the modern concrete dam was built here to regulate the flow of the water. Under the old mill dam, it is said, the suckers in spring were so thick they could be scooped up with a potato fork.

Serving the town of Belmont, with a population of 471, in 1957-58, were Henry W. Stinson, chairman; Earl Towne and Arnold Rassmussen, supervisors; Walter E. Wied, clerk; Hazel Frater, treasurer; Bert Wied, assessor; Albert Potts, justice of the peace; Dick Vaughn and Fred Butolph, constables; and Earl Towne, health officer.

## BUENA VISTA, The Township of

Just why a Spanish name like Buena Vista was allowed to creep into Portage County, surrounded by French-English and Indian names, is a moot question. In one of his frequent articles to the press, Sherman in 1881 wrote, *inter alia*, that,

"I found Mitchel and Brown, who were keeping a hotel at Stevens Point, had made a claim at Buena Vista and erected a board shanty . . . There being so much strife about hotel keeping, and just after the battle of Buena Vista, we named Mitchell and Browns first shanties Buena Vista, and the place has gone by that name ever since."<sup>1</sup>

But Sherman did not arrive in Stevens Point until the latter part of 1848, more than a year and a half after Zachary Taylor's famed force of 5,000 defeated Santa Anna's 20,000. It is more likely that this shanty, which apparently served as a tavern-house, was named after a tavern called "Buena Vista" near East Troy, Wisconsin, which, in fact, was completed soon after the battle of Buena Vista and "the proprietor named his hotel in honor of the victory of American troops."<sup>2</sup>

There is reason to believe that the Mitchell and Brown shanty was the predecessor of a tavern-house called Buena Vista built in 1850-51 by Wellington Kollock and William Wigginton on the Air Line Road. The fact that there was a hotel here by that name in 1851 is confirmed in the surveyor's field notes on Town 22, Range 9. From the description it was located 10 chains (about 40 rods) south of the west random line between sections 19 & 30 which places it about in the middle of Lot 2, Sec 30 south of Buena Vista Creek, or about 30 rods east of the present Keene Store. This

<sup>1</sup> *Stevens Point Journal*, Aug. 27, 1881.

<sup>2</sup> *Stagecoach and Tavern Tales of the Old Northwest*, p. 319.

had a spring dance floor even as the one at East Troy and it is quite possible that either Kollock or Wigginton spent the night in East Troy en route to Portage County. Whatever, it is clear that the naming of the tavern-house preceded the organization of the township and from which it, as well as the creek, got its name.

Around this tavern-house developed the community known as Buena Vista where a post office of the same name was established Sept. 25, 1850. Kollock served as the first postmaster. Thus the first Buena Vista post office was located not around Liberty Corners, where it was later located and where the 1895 plat places it, but south of Buena Vista Creek.

The Buena Vista tavern apparently was the center of the community. A few years later the editors of the *Pinery* reported that on Friday, Aug. 20, 1863, one of the most "terrific tornadoes that we have ever been called upon to record" passed through the county. The worst damage was suffered in "the village of Buena Vista" which was "entirely destroyed," and the "residence of Kollock and Wigginton riddled, killing Mr. Kollock, Mr. Wigginton and Miss Hill."<sup>1</sup> The news report goes on to explain that Mrs. Kollock and Mrs. Wigginton and six children were extricated from the ruins, all injured. Ever after, this tornado was referred to locally as "the big blow."

In 1870, probably after the Buena Vista post office had been moved to Liberty Corners, a post office called Keen was established a short distance west of the community once known as Buena Vista. The origin of this name is uncertain and, while the modern spelling is Keene, a watermark on a letter of the period reveals that the spelling was *Keen*. William Carver served as the first postmaster, later followed by Thomas Newby, a local store keeper. The post office was discontinued in 1904.

The subdivision of Buena Vista in Range 9, as al-

<sup>1</sup> *Pinery*, Aug. 26, 1863.

ready noted, was undertaken in 1851. In his summing up, the surveyor made this notation:

“The Township contains 26 families and about 100 souls all engaged in farming. The waters of the Township flow into Buena Vista creek on the W(est) and into a stream which runs eastwardly into the Waupaca. Water clear and cold.”

The stream referred to is no doubt Spring Creek which originates in the eastern sections of the township in Range 9 and flows into Lanark. Aside from this and Buena Vista Creek there are no other streams in the township in Range 9, although Duck Creek flows through the length of Buena Vista in Range 8. The surveyors make no reference to the small lakes in Range 9 today known as Silver Lake in Sec 26, Tamarack and Patterson Lakes in Sec 33, and Riley, once known as Roth's Lake, in Sec 27.

Buena Vista was originally organized as one township of 36 sections (T. 22, R. 9) by the County Board which in March 1853 ordered that a town meeting be held the first Monday in May “at the house of Kollock and Wigginton.”<sup>1</sup> In 1856, a total of 24 sections in Town 22, Range 8, were taken from the town of Plover and annexed to Buena Vista. In 1858 Pine Grove petitioned that the two tiers of sections in the north of Town 21, Range 8, hitherto under Buena Vista, be included in its own jurisdiction. Buena Vista protested this action and a compromise was reached whereby the latter was allowed to keep the northern tier of sections 1 to 6, while Pine Grove got sections 7 to 12. In 1869 Buena Vista lost sections 13 to 18 in Town 22, Range 8, to Plover, but on May 4, 1870, sections 13, 14, & 15 in Town 22, Range 8, were taken from Plover and handed back to Buena Vista. In 1878 Sec 13 and the south half of Sec 12, Town 22, Range 8 were detached from Plover and attached to Buena Vista.

Before automobile traffic became rampant and men still had time to drive around a stone or stump in the

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, Board of Supervisors, Vol. I, p. 205.

middle of the road, chiefly because they were not traveling faster than four miles an hour, one of the important community centers of the township developed at a cross roads known as Liberty Corners between sections 7 & 8. A flag pole stood in the center of the four corners which was displayed on election days and holidays. As the flag pole on the Public Square in Stevens Point was called the "Liberty Pole," it appears that the association of ideas between the two flag poles prompted the name Liberty Corners.

There were two well-known pioneer stores in this area, one called the Liberty Corners Store, and another a mile or so to the south called the "South Side" Store. The Hon. Frederick Huntley, one-time assemblyman, operated the store at Liberty Corners for many years before the turn of the century, and also held the postmastership here. Schuyler Whittaker took over the store after Huntley. Part of the original building is still visible south of the Methodist Church.

The South Side Store was probably operated by Scott Clark before the century mark. According to local legend, Frederick Huntley was a staunch Republican and Clark an avid Democrat and as long as the Republicans were in office, the Buena Vista post office remained at Liberty Corners, but when the Democrats went in, the post office moved to the "South Side." The *Portage County Directory* lists Clark as a postmaster in 1896.

The 1876 plat identifies both a church and a school at Liberty Corners. The 1895 plat identifies two blacksmith shops, one on the north side and one on the south side of a road (Trunk JJ) next to the Liberty Corners School. Mrs. Theresa Scribner, nee Precourt of Stevens Point, a pupil at the school in the 1880s and '90s, fondly recalls the "wonderful teachers" she had here and vows that Liberty Corners always got the best because the school board paid the highest.

The intersection farther south where Trunk J today runs into H-54 came to be called Maynard's Corners after Ashley Maynard who operated a small tavern-inn on the northwest corner.



A third community to develop in Buena Vista in the 1870s was at Keene in Sec 30 and so identified on the 1876 plat. Buena Vista Creek, fed by springs, carried enough water at the time to form a fair sized pond here for boomage. The embankment for the dam is still visible from H-51, although the first saw mill & foundry built by Albert B. Mathewson is believed to have operated on steam. A road survey of 1869 refers to Lots 3 & 4 "on the south bank of the creek near the mill (next word illegible) being built on the Buena Vista Creek." As these lots conform to the site since known as the Mathewson mill, it may be that the mill was actually built in 1869. It stood a few rods east of where Keene Store is today situated.

The old road to Keene ran straight south along Trunk BB, crossed the creek, and continued south over the hillside and then swung southeast to join the Portage road, today part of H-51. The first Keene Store stood on this road on the northeast corner of a "T" intersection formed by the north-south road, and another running east from the store along the north slope of the hill to Mathewson's mill. A few rods north of the store, but south of the bridge, a road was built west to the Wisconsin Central Railway which terminated in the southeast corner of Sec 22 (Range 8), where Buena Vista Station was established after 1875. The foundation of the first Keene store may still be seen, but the building was moved east a few rods to its present location when H-51 was re-routed across Buena Vista Creek in the 1930s.

On the southeast corner of the "T" intersection stood a "hotel" identified as such on the 1876 plat, known as "Mathewson House", built by Albert Mathewson to cater to his mill hands as well as the traveling public. In the early 1870s the stage to Portage stopped here. South of the hotel farther up the hillside stood the Methodist Church, dedicated July 11, 1875. On the west side of the road (Trunk BB) near the intersection stood two horse barns of the Mathewson mill crews who were cutting the timber on the marsh to the west. One veteran of the county who remembers Mathewson as well as these

barns is Fred Uptagrove, 88, of Stevens Point, who as a youth was hired to do the chores. Mathewson had become ill and called Uptagrove to his bedside and allegedly said: "Fred, you take care of the chores for me now, and when I get on my feet again I'll pay you well." But he never recovered.

South of the barns, according to Uptagrove, stood a shoemaker shop operated by Melvin Uptagrove, a blacksmith shop run by John Hazel, and a jewelry and photograph gallery operated by George Rosengrant. (The 1876 plat identifies a blacksmith shop north, not south of the bridge, on the east side of the road.)

The 1876 plat carries an advertisement of O. D. Barber, general store, in Sec 30, which may have been the same store located on the corner referred to above. The same plat also carries an advertisement of M. O. Reynolds, proprietor of a general store in Sec 30. As it is unlikely that two country stores were located this close together, it may be that either Barber or Reynolds was located farther east on the Air Line Road.

The 1876 plat carries an advertisement of A. F. Else as the owner of a grist mill and saw mill in Sec 29, while Mathewson is advertised as the owner of a grist mill and foundry in Sec 30. This appears to be an error, as both establishments were in Sec 29. It appears fairly certain that Mathewson was running a saw mill, at least in the early 1870s, and it seems unlikely that two grist mills would operate this close together. Abraham ("Abe") Else probably operated a grist mill after Mathewson ceased operations and which may have been taken over around 1880 by Alvey Mathewson, son of Albert, who lost his life in an accident in the mill while shelling corn.

Social life around Keene, aside from church and school activities, was enlivened by occasional cock fights in which the roosters were equipped with steel spurs. To the southeast of Keene, Walter Alexander owned land where he was raising horses and had built a race track. This may have been part of the sportman's playground situated near the village of Buena Vista of which the edi-

tor of the *Pinery* writes that “for the number of inhabitants there is no city in the west that can compare with Buena Vista in amount of business transacted or fun got up. At any time upon 10 minutes notice a horse race, in five minutes a foot race, or two minutes a dog fight can be started.”<sup>1</sup>

A fourth community in Buena Vista township which developed with great hopes but failed the test of time was at Coddington. Its founder, W. (“Wallie”) B. Coddington platted a village here. The 1915 plat reveals that this village was to be known as “Pine Island”, presumably after several forties of higher ground in the marsh where the pine outgrew the tamarack. However, when a post office was established here in 1912, it was called Coddington, not Pine Island, with Lewis A. Kyers serving as postmaster. In a few years it is doubtful whether anyone will be able to recognize either, as the only evidence of a village here in 1958 was one abandoned store building and a number of foundations for buildings long overgrown with weeds.

Finally, several veterans of the township recall the small store operated by George Nugent, one of the “Delaware Irish,” on his farm in Sec 31 (The Roman Brychell place). Nugent served as town chairman in the 1870s.

Driving east on H-54 today from Moore Barn corner in an automobile — which the modern generation seldom refers to except as a “car,” a term once reserved for railway coaches — there is a sense of gliding through the countryside. This comes of the gentle slope of the terrain which eases away from the west Bluffs through a district long identified as Pleasant Valley, one of the most softly outlined landscapes in Wisconsin. Into this valley came some of the pioneer settlers of Portage County, and to serve this community a post office, called Surry, was established July 31, 1863 on the south side of the road (H-54) in Sec 15 (the Raymond Holtz farm). Both the 1876 plat and 1878 *Atlas* use the spelling “Surry” although the Postal Index uses Surrey, which suggests that it is of English or Yankee origin. George W. Hulce serv-

<sup>1</sup> *Pinery*, Dec. 2, 1859.

ed as the first postmaster. The post office was discontinued in 1891 and not even a spec of memory in Pleasant Valley recalls anything about it.

The earliest tax roll of Buena Vista, in which the ink has faded perceptibly, is dated 1857. The following paid taxes: (first name illegible) Thomas (last name illegible); (?) H. Spaulding, B. F. Vandervoort, John Newby, (?) Webster, B. F. Cooper, (?) Shelburn, Clinton Moss, Erastus Crofoot, Isaac Moss, O. M. Moss, Amos Courtright, Antoine Precourt, (next illegible), George Ainsworth, Ely Beers, Bait (?) (probably Bartholomew) Mahany (spelled Mahannah in 1872 tax roll), Jacob Moore, Phillip Yates, Thomas Newby, William Eckels, (next illegible), S. Bennett, Willard Grattan, L. Porter, J. Lombard, Samuel Galland, William Gilchrist, E. Grooves, John Galland, William Beeby, John Holaday, Willmot, Phelps, Bachelor (?) Brown, Hanibal Lombard, Allen Carpenter, Halbert Lombard, E. Bennett, A. B. Gilchrist, (?) Roberts, Brooks, N. Carpenter, G. Smith, W. Alberty, (next illegible); J. S. Myres, William Wigginton, Henry Kollock, (?) Henderson, W. Dickson (who is listed as having 50 acres in Town 21, apparently a mistaken entry as Buena Vista lies in Town 22), Mackendoo (probably McIndoe), (?) Brick, H. Bown) (next two illegible), W. Ainsworth, (?) Rice, G. Wood, (next illegible), S. Lamphere, V. Durkee, Joseph Mulkins, John Uptgrove, I. Uptgrove, Aaron (?), William Walton, William Dean, (?) Pines, David Tracy, Patterson, J. E. Benson, B. Berry, G. W. Mitchell, F. Huntley, Albert Mathewson, W. M. Hortshorn, Isah Goodrich, John O. Storm, William Bedent, William Benson, Ebe (?) Dannon, Mary Dickinson, Charles G. Wilcox, Robert (?), Almond R. Cole, Mathew A. Siely, Timothy S. Robinson, George W. Anstin, P. J. Burges, John Adams, John Smith, Daniel Driscoll, Thomas Yoggin, Miss Homes, Petter F. Goure, William Holbrook, William Gallight, Jesse B. Roberts, Jerome Adams, Henry Robinson, Anna Stone, (next illegible), B. Sharpstein, William Gray, Davis Moore, John Phillips, Elias Durphy, Gates, Rebecca Beebe, John Dallas, Hirim Wood, John (?), Asaph (?)

Carpenter, Lorenzo Stuard, N. Blodgett, Ambler, and S. W. Strong.

The 1857 assessment was signed by William Albertie, town clerk, and attested by Wellington Kollock and Serrano Gates. Stephen Allen was town treasurer.

Serving the town of Buena Vista, with a population of 706, in 1957-58, were George Fletcher, chairman; John Guth and Charles Rusch, supervisors; Frank Dernbach, clerk; Edward Simcakoski, treasurer; Clair Eckels, assessor; J. K. Albertie and Frank Dernbach, justices of the peace; Eli P. Scribner, constable; and H. C. Steinke, health officer.

## CARSON, The Township of

The first specific reference to Town 24, Range 6, today part of the town of Carson, occurs in 1856 when a new township consisting of Towns 23 & 24 in Range 6 was organized as the town of Scott. But when Wood County was set off from Portage County that same year, Town 23 in Range 6 went to Wood, and Town 24 to Portage County. To give Town 24 a place in township government it was therefore necessary to include it in a township in the newly-constituted county of Portage and this was done in November when it was annexed to the town of Stevens Point from whence it had been separated only a few months earlier in the creation of the town of Scott.

At the fall meeting of the County Board in 1878, a petition asking for the incorporation of a new township to be called Carson was heard from F. Aldridge, John Landers and "38 other petitioners"<sup>1</sup> and a few days later on Nov. 27, all of Town 24, Range 6, and the south half of Town 25, Range 6, were detached from the town of Stevens Point to constitute the new town of Carson. This created a township of 54 sections in the western part of the county, probably named after Samuel Carson, an Irish pioneer who entered the United States at Portland, Maine, in 1865 and applied for naturalization at Circuit Court in Stevens Point in 1872.

The first town meeting was to be held at Junction City, presumably April 1, 1879, when the above changes were to become effective. On Nov. 27, 1888 Carson also annexed most of the sections in the northwest corner of the county, namely, sections 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18 in Town 25, Range 6, which had been part of Eau Pleine for the past several years. The petition for this move came from a majority of the resident

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, Board of Supervisors, Vol. IV, p. 107.

freeholders of these sections, probably because of the inconvenience of being part of a township (Eau Pleine) which was divided by the Wisconsin River. Effective April 1, 1899 all of Town 25, Range 6, excepting sections 1 and 12, were taken back from Carson and attached to Eau Pleine. But Carson absorbed from the town of Stevens Point, sections 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30 and those parts of sections 2, 3, 10, 14, 15, 23, and 25 lying west of the Wisconsin River in Town 24, Range 7. By this action, modern Carson as it is known today was established.

Much of Carson and Hull were subdivided in the Indian Survey of 1839-40. A fractional subdivision of Town 24, Range 7, was begun Dec. 16, and completed Dec. 18, 1854 by A. G. & F. S. Ellis. This survey included only the westernmost sections in Range 7, i.e., about half way between Stevens Point and Junction City.

The subdivision of a part of Carson in Range 6 was made by the Ellis' who began Sept. 24, and finished on Oct. 1, 1851.

Many of the early records of Carson are woven into the proceedings of the town of Stevens Point and no clear picture of the township can be drawn without extensive cross-reference. From the town books available, it is known that on Apr. 9, 1890 the town board included George E. Oster, chairman, and Walter Campbell and John Pheet, supervisors.

On Page 24 of the town of Stevens Point proceedings held by Carson appears a list of voters, the only one available, of an election "held in and for the town of Stevens Point Apr. 2, 1875" which was concerned with a railroad matter, unidentified. The 67 men who went to the polls that day, presumably all residents of the township west of the Wisconsin River in modern Carson, were Joseph Aldridge, Wm. Tester, Johan Peski, John Miller, Albert Makusate, Thomas Zanekowski, Herman Masefield, Geor Weston, Antone Green, Newman Hoag, A. Hamilton, John Case, Thomas Kelly, Charles Golehan, George Kickland, Frank Kickland, Thomas Lansen, John Manning, Thomas Clements, A. Speasman, D. McDonnel, Nathan Nason, Thomas Stoke, John Clements, Samuel Sascon,

F. Patterson, James Galiges, John G. Kenedy, John Keofer, James Sneening, A. Sameson, A. Fassitt, C. B. Fountain, John Meehan, Thomas Mathews, H. W. Grant, Geo. Clark, J. G. Clark, Eschas Hilie, John Newton, Olie Anderson, Arik Peeterson, Alax Johnson, Thomas Nason, Geor Bean, David Stephens, Daniel Fosson, Stanton Nessitt, T. Conners, M. O. Conners, J. A. Mostin, J. T. Wines, Andrew Fosior, Henry Hill, W. D. Campbell, Geor McConnac, Andrew Nessitt, Alison Wilber, H. Philbrick, Michael Sweeney, Sr., Michael Sweeney, Jr., F. Aldridge, James Anderson, G. W. Holingshead, Lewis Famere, Wm. Plumer, and Wm. Coburn.

This election was followed by the annual meeting of the town board held "at the school house," when it was voted to raise \$500 for town expenses and to hold the next meeting of the board at "Junction City," the first time this name is mentioned.

George Runkel took much of the white pine off the western sections of Town 25 in Range 6, while Scott & Clark Lumber Company, who operated a big mill north of Rudolph in Wood County, logged off much of the pine in the southwest sections of Carson. The Wisconsin Valley Railroad came through this pine country in 1874 and eventually a siding was created about a mile and a half north of the Wood-Portage County line, where Trunk G runs into the railway tracks, known as "Log Hill." The road bed of a spur which extended either from this siding or was built from the Scott & Clark mill is still visible in the center of Sec 27.

Much of the timber in Carson was floated to saw mills located either on lower Mill Creek, or on the Wisconsin River near the mouth of the creek. It is reasonable to assume that the first jobbers floating their logs to mill did not stray too far from the banks of the creek, but continued to work their way upstream along either bank where the timber could be skidded directly unto landings along the banks. By the time Scott & Clark began operations, they were cutting timber some distance removed both from Mill Creek and the Wisconsin. Run-



kel was in the middle of modern Eau Pleine quite removed from any significant stream.

A saw mill is believed to have been situated near the present bridge on Trunk G where it crosses Mill Creek, but the 1876 plat fails to show any mill at this point. Instead, it lists a "Lester's Mill" on Mill Creek where modern Trunk M crosses the stream.

As far as it is known the only private siding in the county was built on the property of L. M. Nash (the Roegge farm) and popularly known as "Nashburg."

There are several references in road statements in the town of Stevens Point books to Webster Station located on the section line between 22 and 23 in Range 7, and identified both on the 1895 and 1903 plats. A siding was built from the Wisconsin Central to the Webster saw mill on the Wisconsin River, probably in the 1880s, and a sizeable community developed around the mill before it burned in 1883. It was never rebuilt and there is no trace of Webster Station today.

Probably the first community to develop in Carson was called "Mohawk." In 1858 the editors of the *Pinery* had this to say of it:

"Mohawk. Where is that? About six miles west of Stevens Point on Mill Creek. There is a post office there. The point is known as Cook's mill. There are 150 inhabitants in the vicinity and settlers going in rapidly. Mohawk will be a name to be heard of after this. Success to it."<sup>1</sup>

The news item is rather typical of the period, full of optimism and the willingness to believe almost anything concerning a new development. From the description, it may be that Cornelius Cook operated a saw mill here which, according to legend, was located on Mill Creek at modern Trunk G, although this would place it considerably farther away than six miles from Stevens Point. A post office called Mohawk was established on Nov. 24, 1858 with Cornelius Cook as postmaster. It was discontinued Oct. 20, 1860 which suggests that the mill had burned and the community moved away.

<sup>1</sup> *Pinery*, Dec. 31, 1858.

For a time it appeared that southwest Carson was going to develop into a cranberry-growing center. Evidence of ditches and a dam which were probably built in the 1860s are still visible. Patrick Sullivan of Stevens Point was the supervisor of these operations. However, there was no dearth of cranberries in the county. A big yield was being harvested in 1854 either in or just outside the village limits of Stevens Point and berries were selling at \$1.25 a bushel.<sup>1</sup>

In 1872 it appears that a road was re-established along what was previously known as the "Black River Road." From the description this seems to be roughly modern Trunk M and probably followed the Chippewa Indian trail referred to in the Indian Survey of 1839-40.

When the Wisconsin Central began laying tracks west of Stevens Point in the spring of 1872, the town board of Stevens Point decided to improve the highway into the western part of the county by, 1) following a course northwest from Stevens Point for a couple of miles along the tracks laid down by the railway, then west across the tracks roughly along modern Trunk M; and, 2) by making it four rods wide, which suggests that earlier this road had only been three rods wide. When the town board re-established this northwest road in 1872 it is quite evident that the timber, at least along the Wisconsin River over the two-mile stretch or so to Trunk M, had been cut, as bearings were taken on four pine stumps, one red oak 24 inches in diameter, one red oak stump, also 24 inches, and one black oak stump. This suggests that the log jobbers near the river had cut not only the pine but also hardwood, presumably because it could be hauled directly to a local mill.

After the log jobbers moved out and the farmers began moving in, many made cash money through the winter months by cutting cord wood for the pulp mills in Wisconsin Rapids, as well as kiln wood (pronounced "kill wood" by most) for other markets. Considerable

<sup>1</sup> *Pinery*, Oct. 3, 1854.

timber was still being cut after 1900 in Carson by smaller jobbers with "pony" mills, or by farmers cutting for themselves and hauling logs to mill or selling on the stump. Before 1900 many of the farmers who had only recently settled on the cut-over land were scarcely able to afford a team of horses, and local buyers in Junction City sent their own teams out to the farms after the logs and hauled them to the railway.

Today, most of the cut-over land in Carson, which after the turn of the century appeared to be an unbroken vista of pine stumps, has been cleared and some of the finest dairy farms in the county are located south of H-10 to the Wood County line. What remains of forest land is mostly poplar, while the balance of the land not under cultivation, some of it on low ground, is largely used for pasture.

The town of Carson in 1958 was devoted chiefly to dairying with scattered acreage of potatoes. In the early 1900s there were at least four potato warehouses in Junction City catering to the growers. Today there are none in operation. The few that grow potatoes wait for truckers or truck themselves.

Serving the town of Carson with a population of 1,197, in 1957-58, were Robert Bobrowski, chairman; Henry Doeher and Archie Olds, supervisors; Carl O. Olsen, clerk; William H. Peters, treasurer; Thomas Klawikowski, assessor; and Walter Joosten, health officer. Martin ("Can we afford it?") Poliwoda, several times town chairman and highly respected member of the Carson community, was tragically killed near his home in 1956 at a grade crossing of the Milwaukee Road.

## DEWEY, The Township of

The town of Dewey is the youngest in Portage County, but in point of contact with the past is heavy with age, its river banks littered with Indian arrowheads and forgotten graves, rusty oxen shoes, abandoned mill sites and old tote roads running to the logging camps farther back. It was here that the Wisconsin River could be forded on foot or by Indian pony across the ripples caused by the under-water ledge which extends across the river. It was here that Louis DuBay, probably the first white man in Portage County, may have spent the winter of 1790 trading with the Indians.

The township was created by the County Board in November 1898 by detaching Town 25, Range 8, from the town of Hull, and all that portion of Town 25, Range 7, of the town of Eau Pleine lying east of the Wisconsin River. The first town meeting was to be held at the school house of District No. 1 near the section lines between 25 and 26, Town 25, Range 7, on April 4, 1899.

Three years after the ordinance constituting the town of Dewey became effective, the town board was finding difficulty in maintaining itself because "the land in said town is of small value and the inhabitants of said town are mostly new settlers who are in debt and own little personal property. . .<sup>1</sup> A petition to the County Board in 1902 requested that Dewey be enlarged to include part of Sharon east of the Plover River or else to abolish Dewey and split it up between Hull and Sharon. While the minutes state that the report was moved and seconded, no action apparently was taken to implement this motion and Dewey carried on

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, Board of Supervisors, Vol. VII, pp. 373-374.

and has continued to this day without change from its original establishment in 1899.

The government survey of Town 25, Range 7, was completed by Hathaway in the Indian Survey, Oct. 18, 1839 to Jan. 20, 1840. He surveyed the left bank of the Wisconsin River first, i.e. part of modern Dewey, but left no general description except to note that despite a great variety of trees, there were few pines in this part of the township.

On a random line south between sections 1 & 2 Hathaway encountered "Girchlahu's Creek," which, from the description, is the Little Eau Claire where he noted there were good mill sites all along the river. In fact, it was on this very random line that Peter Le Meux later built a saw mill, probably after studying these field notes. Thus sometime between 1840 and the early 1850s, "Girchlahu's Creek" became known as the Little Eau Claire probably in contrast to the Big Eau Claire farther north in Marathon County. The name "Girchlahu" fails to appear in any other record associated with this area.

The subdivision of Town 25, Range 8, which takes in most of modern Dewey, was begun March 9, and completed March 20, 1853. It was surveyed by Samuel Hicks, assisted by Murry Smith, compassman, Horatio Hinkley and Peter P. Smith, chainmen, and Nelson Ulderson, axeman. The field notes mention that Ulderson quit work on March 17 and his place was taken by Daniel P. Denine (probably Dineen). Axeman Ulderson, whose name appears to be of Norse origin, may have taken employment with John Week, another Norwegian, who was operating a mill on the Big Eau Pleine.

In his summing up of the township, Hicks writes:

"This Township contains several marshes & some large Tamc (tamarack) swamps. They are all unfit for cultivation. Altho some of the marshes are good for hay. The surface is level, a small part is upland where the soil is 2nd & 3rd rate. The upland in the N(orth) part is timbered with Aspen, W(hite) Birch, W(hite) Pine & Hemlock. In the S(outh) part J(ack) & N(orway) Pines and J(ack) Oak are scattered here & there."

"There are no improvements in this township."

This last statement means that up to March 20, 1853 no one had settled in this township, but it should be borne in mind that the sections surveyed do not lie along the Wisconsin River and at only one point touch on the Plover.

It is not certain who suggested the name Dewey for this township, but there can be little doubt who it was named after. Less than a year earlier, Admiral George Dewey destroyed what there was of a Spanish fleet at Manila Bay and became a national hero overnight. It was the time of America's 'Manifest Destiny' and patriotism ran high — too high in fact for the nature of the victory won, but it suited the tempo of the times as well as the budding newspaper chains like the Hearst enterprises which were trying to build up circulation and create an illusion of glory.

Elected to the first town board of Dewey were Julius Fierek, chairman; John Yach, Jr. and Felix Bruske, supervisors; Stephen Tetzloff, clerk; John Wasnicki, treasurer; and Thomas Dumares, assessor.

The first election attracted a heavy vote and most were Polish voters. Only a year before, the voters were mixed and the town board was still dominated by Yankee and French names. The reason for the change lay in the fact that by adding a part of Hull and taking in only part of the old town of Eau Pleine, the new town of Dewey had inherited the heavy Polish element of part of Hull as well as the Polish people who had settled in old Eau Pleine, east of the river.

The voters who went to the polls in the first election of Dewey in 1899 were: Albert Stanczik, Stanislaus Griszinski, Leo Kutchta, Peter Stanczik, John Rochawiak, Albett Shimanski, Andrew Kuntny, August Literiski, Anton Blashkowski, Thomas Shulfer, Martin Schultz, John Literiski, Stan Polash, Jacob Danchik, Josef Przybylski, August Stoltz, Pavel Danchik, Martin Osniski, Jas Stoltz, Andrew Zaromski, Stephen Burzinski, John Stanchik, Albert Lisewski, Steve Viciniski, Michkel Shivrshakowski, Anton Yach, Valentine Keene, Mike Seeaski, Nick Barzinski, John Simanski, George

Wladarski, Matias Baker, Jos Coback, Wladislaw Vicinski, Andrew Helminak, Andrew Kurzinski, Mike Drewa, Steve Nitka, Ed Burk, Benney Burk, B. F. Meone (?), Frank Richmond, John Ligman, Valentine Helminak, Mike Ostrowski, John Hintz, Steve Petta, S. D. Knows (?), Pavel Biesik, Jos. Skupniewicz, Frank Pavelski, Simon Nitkia, John Ostrowski, John Pawelski, Martin Helminiak, Ed Ostrowski, Mike Stanchik, Ignathis Gardian, Thomas Wlodarski, John Eggen, Math Zaromski, Thomas Negowski, Frank Yach, Thomas Hoffman, Thomas McHugh, Frank Hintz, Anton Dudgit, John Yach, Jr., George Roshat, Jos. Zaromski, Lawrence Keene, Thomas Dumares, Andrew Levandowski, George Trual, Mike Levandowski, Albert Silka, John McHugh, Math McHugh, Jacob Yach, Peter Hintz, Nick Keene, Frank Waldock, Anton Petrowski, Jos. Stanchik, Jos. Yach, Stanislavs Zelinski, August Olbrantz, George Waldock, Ed Shimanski, Jos. Kurczewski, Andrew Dulski, August Yetka, Frank Yaszewski, Valentine Przekurat, John Lakiski, Frank Krayechi, Frank Hoffman, John Kieliszewski, Sebastian Frunchowiak, Valentine Kielszewski, Victor Bella, August Yunski, George Adamiski, D. A. Crocker, Henry Redantz, Ernest Crocker, Teodor Kieliszewski, Felix Baker, John Wladarski, Robert Schuelenburg, Frank Shimanski, Felix Bruski, Ed Sigman, Frank Kieliszewski, Jacob Lake, James McHugh, Julius Fierek, George Wladarski, Jos. Printz, Frank Tetzloff, Anton Printz, Robert Brace, Martin Tetzloff, S. G. H. Crocker, Stephen Tetzloff, John Wosnicki, Jos. Baker, Ed Dunning and Alfanso Phillipp.

Only one voter who cast his ballot in 1870 from this area was at the polls in 1899; namely, S. G. H. ("Vet") Crocker. John Kieliszewski, who voted in 1872 and became the first Polish supervisor in old Eau Pleine township, voted in 1899 in the new town of Dewey, and Martin Tetzloff (spelled Totsloff in early records) who voted in 1874 also voted in 1899.

The town of Dewey displayed a marked apathy toward an election held Sept. 2, 1919 on the "referen-

dum." No identification is made of this referendum, but it was probably concerned with the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution on woman suffrage which was given to the states to vote on after June 1919 and became law Aug. 26, 1920. Only 25 voters turned out as compared to 124 in the general election.

The records suggest, however, that fewer voters were going to the polls in this and other townships as the years advanced. Farms were being evacuated as the progress in modern farming advanced and interest in township politics was not as keen as it was in the early days. Another reason for this lay in the fact that more and more affairs of the townships were being taken over by the county as well as state and federal governments. The nation was maturing.

In August 1957 a petition to the town board was circulated by 15 taxpayers in Dewey to declare an assessment emergency on the grounds that property in the town was not equitably assessed, chiefly in the matter of residential and mercantile property as compared to farm and wild lands. The assessed valuation of the township in 1956 was \$390,805 with an equalized value of \$903,980.

Serving the town of Dewey, with a population of 525, in 1957-58, were Edward Losinski, chairman; Albert Lewandowski and Anton Adamski, supervisors; Felix Danczyk, clerk; Gregory Stroik, treasurer; Jacob Cy-chosz, assessor; Bernice Laskowski, justice of the peace; Ted Adamski, constable; and Stanley Rucinski, health officer.



## EAU PLEINE, The Township of

No township in the county has had its face lifted as many times, yet none brings sharper memories of the Wisconsin Pinery with its legends and stories of *voyageurs*, Indian traders and lumbermen than the town of Eau Pleine. Even the name has a hint of romance in it for it has been written "Aux Pleines" in some texts, although all town records refer to it as Eau Pleine (correctly *plein*,) meaning "full water."<sup>1</sup> It takes its name after the Little Eau Pleine which the Indians, presumably Chippewas, allegedly referred to as "*Ma-nomin-a-kung-a-quay-se-be*, meaning 'Rice Stalks River,'"<sup>2</sup>

The township is intimately connected with the epoch of river rafting and log running, for in the early period it was not a corner township as it is now, but one that straddled the Wisconsin River, 54 sections all told, with slightly fewer on the right bank than on the left. Both the Little Eau Pleine and the Little Eau Claire flow into the Wisconsin just below the county line where the Wisconsin once began a big lazy "S" curve. It was a natural place to create a dam too and many years after the last Indian had camped in the bend of the river it was made into a lake and power site named after John B. DuBay who once operated a trading post nearby.

The subdivision of modern Eau Pleine in Range 6 was begun Sept. 24 and completed Oct. 18, 1852.

Most of the eastern sections of modern Eau Pleine, i.e., in Range 7, were mapped in the Indian Survey which Hathaway completed in 1840. In his survey of the exterior lines, Hathaway refers to the "lower Aux

<sup>1</sup> *Collections*, Vol. I, p. 120.

<sup>2</sup> *Loc. cit.*

Pleines" and at one point to the "east bank of Bayou connected with little Aux Pleines. . ." Thus some time between 1840 and 1852, the name had changed from the Little Aux Pleines to the Little Eau Pleine.

As most of Town 25 in Range 7 was included in the Indian Survey, what was left to survey lay in Sec 31 and this was begun Sept. 25 and completed the same day in 1852. Here the surveyors encountered "a cabin & shingled shanty on the N.E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the N.W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Sec 31."

The 1863 tax roll for Eau Pleine gives the following names: O. C. Wheelock, R. B. Whitehouse, Peter Le Meux, Peter Le Meux's Mill, Edward Pollard, A. H. Hutchinson, M. Wylie, Alexander Young Mill, Louis Blow, James McEnanny, Wm. Wheaton, D. S. Bullock, McIndoe, Ellis & Co., A. G. Ellis, Mrs. Ann Mead, R. B. Whitehouse Mill, Alfred Savy, Patrick McGuire, Bozil Dubay, R. Dawney, Henry Sergeant, Bozil Mauric, F. M. Wylie, M. Wylie Tavern, Joseph Paupon, D. C. Hall, Jas Scott, Thomas Lyons, Danl Waterman, Martha Helms, Edward McHugh, W. Wood, W. Paul, F. H. Taber, Wm. Taber, Robert Elcock, J. G. Clements, Patrick Sullivan, John Driscoll, Elisha Fowler, W. W. Hutchinson, H. O. Leary, John Altenburgh, Jas McEnanny & Paupon, C. Creed, Edward Nolan, John B. Cook, Michael Shannon, Dennis Dayley, Wm. Welch, Dennis Welch, Timothy Sullivan, John Cordon, and Wing.

A closer look of the actual residents of the township appears in the poll list of 1870 when the following, in the order of their voting, attended the spring election: John B. DuBay, Perry Philips, Oley Hanson, Frank Wylie, Louis Duranso, Maxmilion Batty, Frank Cotchey, Eluzer Hibbard, Douglas Dinwoodie, A. K. Ryant, Medrick Beaudreau, Smith Lewis, S. (?) P. Green, W. D. Tucker, D. C. Hall, Edward McHughs, Wm. Hall, Sylvister Crocker, James Hall, Cyris Hutchinson, Sam Welland, Boziel DuBay, Deris Giles, Augustis Tusch, George Powel, Robert Wheaton, James Beesley, Charles Colston, Henry Weed, E. A. Redford, Robert Sheels, M. Wylie, Joseph Welland, and Ed Shurman.

Many of the town board meetings and elections through the 1860s and '70s were held "at the house of M. Wylie," who operated the tavern-house on the stage road between Stevens Point and Wausau.

Sylvister Crocker, mentioned in the poll list, served in the Union Army and after mustering out settled on a piece of land about a mile or so south of Wylie's on the left bank of the Wisconsin River in Sec 11. This came to be called "Crocker's Landing" and where a sign welcomed travelers with the legend "Crocker's Landing — Make It Yours." The 1876 plat shows that two buildings were located on the east side of the Stevens Point-Wausau Road, one of which was a blacksmith shop; an unidentified building also stood to the west of the road, that is, between the road and the river bank. When H-51 was rerouted in 1956, the road at this point was moved east about 100 feet. A wayside with tables is located about 100 yards to the south of this pioneer site which, owing to changes made in the road, has completely vanished. Crocker's was the only so-called "landing" in Portage County, meaning a place to land passengers from a river boat. A post office was established here on April 17, 1882 called Crocker's Landing with "Vet" Crocker serving as postmaster. It was finally discontinued in 1907. Crocker, blacksmith and miller by profession, doubled as a local veterinarian and from this became known as "Vet." He was also a strong temperance man and refused to have anyone use indecent language in his establishment and once clobbered a customer with an iron bar for singing a lewd song.

Before the post office at Crocker's was established, people in the northern part of the township got their mail at the DuBay Trading Post at a post office called Eau Pleine established April 1, 1851 with John DuBay serving as postmaster. It was discontinued in 1875.

About a mile and a half south of Crocker's in Sec 23 stood a saw mill on or near the bank of the Wisconsin River operated in the 1870s by William Hall. A tavern-house may also have stood here called Eau Pleine House which was operated by one of the Hall

family. Don Carlos Hall, who was born here, the son of William Hall, became a noted showman around the turn of the century and traveled in a private railroad car with his stock company. Both he and his wife are buried in Union Cemetery and the headstone bears a cameo-sized photograph of the couple, the only one of its kind in the county — showmen to the last.

Not listed in the first tax roll is Andrew Mullarky who, with his brother Henry, may have operated a trading post in the early 1840s located in Sec 5 (T. 25, R. 7) about half a mile west of the ford on the Wisconsin River on the left (north) bank of the Little Eau Pleine. The indenture on this tract of land is not clear, but it appears that both Andrew Dunn and Andrew Mullarky had made entries on portions of this quarter section, and, after a complicated series of transfers, it became the property of Henry Clinton and Mathias Mitchell on Nov. 11, 1846 which the indenture refers to as a "saw mill site. . .".<sup>1</sup> The saw mill, however, according to the Sherman account, was actually built by Mullarky and Mitchell.<sup>2</sup>

The mill appears to have been operated only a few months by the firm of Mitchell & Clinton as the indentures on this property carry transfers in 1847 to 1849 to Mitchell & Daniel Brown, and to Mitchell & James Bloomer, and in 1849 apparently passed to Abraham & Richard Whitehouse. It was located immediately east of the iron bridge in Sec 5 where a dam was built across the Little Eau Pleine to create water power and a pond to the west on the river.

Some idea of the crew employed at this mill is provided in the 1847 census of DuBay precinct which lists "Mitchell & Brown" as heads of a household of 35 of which five were females. This was a large crew at the time and probably included loggers.

Some time before 1872 this mill passed to the brothers M. W. & A. H. Hutchinson. In the late 1870s

<sup>1</sup> *Deeds*, Vol. A, p. 195.

<sup>2</sup> *Note Book*, no. 13.

A. H. Hutchinson was joined in partnership by A. D. Daniels, and in the 1880s the mill was taken over by George Altenburg, later joined by Augustus ("Gus") Stoddard. The mill was destroyed by fire in 1889 and rebuilt and probably discontinued in 1910-11. Some time after the Wisconsin Valley Railroad came through from the south, a spur was built from Dancy which came directly up to the lumber yard north of the mill. A sizeable community developed here which included a planing mill, two stores, a dance hall, a boarding house, horse barns and more than 20 residences for permanent personnel. Most of the houses were located east along the left bank of the river on the road known as the "Wicks (Week) Road." This same road continued east to the ferry operated by John DuBay in the 1870s on the Wisconsin River. Northwest of the Altenburg mill it ran on to the Big Eau Pleine to the John Week Lumber Company in Marathon County.

Several relics of the mill site and boarding house are still visible near the river bank. The Juleson post office established here on Feb. 25, 1875, Samuel H. Hutchinson serving as postmaster, was located in one of the stores which stood near the mill. It was later moved to Dancy.

E. A. Redford, mentioned in the poll list of 1870, was the partner of Robert G. Wallace in a saw mill located on the left bank of the Little Eau Claire immediately west of the bridge where H-51 today crosses the DuBay flowage near the Antlers Restaurant. This mill was founded by Alexander Young, probably in the late 1850s, and in the beginning was operated by water power. It was later converted to a steam mill, probably the first of its kind in the northern part of the county. The date of this conversion is uncertain, but an old account book, apparently kept by Young, records the total amount of logs "got in and delivered at the Steam Mill on the Little Eauclair (Eau Claire) in winter of 1862-63 by Mr. Lewis Blow for Mr. Alexander Young."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In collection of Alex Wallace, Stevens Point, Wis.

Another entry records the date in 1866 when Robert G. Wallace went to work for Young. An immigrant from County Armagh, Ireland, Wallace was given a difficult job in the mill by Young and because he accomplished a task in which others had failed, he became a favorite of Young and a warm friendship developed between the older man and the newcomer from Ireland. Later, when Wallace married Ann Elizabeth, daughter of George Whitney across the county line, he honored his old friend by naming his first-born Alexander, known in years to come to his many friends and readers of "Stevens Point Through the Years" as Alex Wallace.

The exact date when Robert Wallace took over the mill from Young, and when the partnership between Wallace and Redford materialized, is uncertain, but an account kept of merchandise purchased by the firm of Wallace & Redford at the store of Hoeffler & Andrae of Stevens Point opens on Sept. 21, 1870. The partnership of E. (for Erwin) A. Redford and Wallace continued down to the turn of the century when the mill became obsolete and the machinery was disposed of. This represents, probably, the longest partnership of any saw mill firm in the county and in strong contrast to the frequent dissolutions of partnerships elsewhere.

Another early mill owner on the Little Eau Claire was Peter La Meux who was located about two miles east of Wallace & Redford, also on the left bank. In 1863 this mill had an evaluation of \$1,200, and in 1864 the mill, house and barn burned.<sup>1</sup> Although reference is made to it in the town proceedings of 1876, which means it was rebuilt, the 1895 plat does not identify a mill any longer on this site.

The 1876 plat identifies "Brickley & Reed" saw mill at the south end of the bridge where the Milwaukee Road crosses the Little Eau Pleine in Sec 1, T. 25, R. 6. A road survey of 1878 took a bearing on this mill and referred to it as the "Brickley & Otto Mills," which appears to have been taken over that same year

<sup>1</sup> *Pinery*, June 2, 1864.

by Segelke, Petty & Co. who in 1888 were asking the board of review to reduce their assessment from \$4,000 to \$3,000. Sec 1, where this mill stood, in addition to Sec 12 in Range 6, were never detached from the town of Eau Pleine in the several changes made by the County Board and it is reasonable to assume that the main reason for this was the desire of the town board to keep this assessment property within the township. The mill was still in operation under Segelke & Petty in 1896 when the assessment was lowered from \$3,500 to \$3,000, which suggests that the end of an era in saw milling on the Little Eau Pleine was approaching.

John Marion, several times town chairman in the 1870s and '80s, operated a store during this period which was located half way between Wylie's and DuBay's trading post on the opposite (right bank) side of the Wisconsin River. He presented several bills to the town board for groceries furnished town paupers.

In 1875 the County Board detached all of Town 25 in Range 6 from the town of Eau Pleine and annexed it to the town of Stevens Point. The town of Eau Pleine was manifestly displeased and Frank Wylie was appointed "to go to *Warsaw* (Wausau) to get legal opinion on the action of the County Board *deviding* (dividing) the town and the board agreed to pay the *expences* (expenses)." But this mission to "Warsaw" failed.

A bridge across the Little Eau Claire where H-51 crosses the DuBay flowage today was patently built long before 1870, but it appears to have been rebuilt shortly after 1870. The town clerk writes that in 1873, without identifying which bridge, that the board "*excepted* (accepted) the bridge and paid George Whitney two hundred and *ninty* (ninety) five Doll(ars) for Said bridge and pier..." Wallace & Redford furnished 1728 feet of plank at a cost of \$13.82 which suggests that this was a bridge across the Little Eau Claire near their mill.

An idea of wages of the period is given in an order allowed by the town board March 12, 1877:

Wallace & Redford, to team and <i>waggon</i>	
(wagon) $3\frac{1}{2}$ days .....	\$12.25
Four men $3\frac{1}{2}$ days .....	21.00
Frank Wylie nine days on the road .....	13.50
four days with team .....	8.00

Apparently some of the bridges were in need of repair long before this. In 1879 the town board allowed D. D. Wilmott \$10 "for damage to himself and team for falling through a bridge."

The first attempt in 1857 to organize a township to be called Eau Pleine in Town 25, Range 6, i.e., in the northwest corner of the county, was tabled by the County Board. The question came up again in 1858 when the committee on town organization recommended that Eau Pleine be set off from the town of Stevens Point to be composed of Towns 25 in Ranges 6 & 7, and the west one half of Town 25 in Range 8. In other words, it ran along the county line on the north boundary east and west from Wood County to the town of Hull, with the Wisconsin River dividing it somewhat in the middle. The first town meeting was to be held at the house of M. (for Melanchthon) Wylie on the first Tuesday in March 1859.

Effective April 1, 1876, Town 25, Range 6, of Eau Pleine in the northwest corner of the county was annexed to the town of Stevens Point. Before the year ended, Eau Pleine won back the north one half of Town 25, and three years later sections 31, 32, 33, 34 and that part of Sec 35 west of the Wisconsin River in Town 25, Range 7, were annexed to the town of Stevens Point. Eau Pleine attempted to retrieve this lost territory in 1886 when a petition was signed by Carl Thomander and 29 others. but the board denied the petition on the grounds that only one of the signers was a resident of the sections described and the law requires "at least one-third of the signers to be residents or freeholders on said lands."<sup>1</sup>

In 1887-88, a determined effort was made among Eau Pleine, Carson and Stevens Point townships either

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, Board of Supervisors, Vol. V, p. 123.



to keep territory already in hand, or to annex territory from the other two. The debate apparently became so spirited it was taken out of committee and discussed by the County Board as a committee of the whole. Finally on Nov. 27, 1888 the board agreed that sections 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18 in Town 25, Range 6, that is, the northwest corner of the county, be detached from Eau Pleine and made part of Carson. This left sections 1 & 12 in Range 6, still part of Eau Pleine. In November 1898 Eau Pleine gave up all that portion of Town 25, Range 7, lying east of the Wisconsin River to the newly-constituted town of Dewey, while Town 25, Range 6, excepting sections 1 & 12 were detached from the town of Carson and attached to the town of Eau Pleine. In addition, sections 31, 32, 33, 34 and that part of Sec 35 lying west of the Wisconsin River in Town 25, Range 7, were detached from the town of Stevens Point and attached to the town of Eau Pleine. These actions all became effective April 1, 1899 and there have been no changes in the township since that time.

In 1893 the towns of Eau Pleine and Carson became alive with rumors of hidden minerals. According to legendary accounts, Mrs. John Kneic, living on a farm in Sec 36, had found a mineral in her cellar which she used to blacken or polish her stove. Word of this got around. It was analysed as graphite which has many uses, but is especially sought after for foundry facing, pipe joint paste and structural iron paints. Frank E. Taggart, who apparently had the assay made, took the lead in 1896 in organizing the Portage County Graphite and Mineral Paint Manufacturing Company. This first venture failed, but in 1898-99, Taggart, one of the principal stockholders, organized a new company known as Wisconsin Graphite. By 1900 the company was turning out several tons of the finished paint and paste product per day. But control of the stock had passed to a Pittsburg syndicate which operated the old plant for a year and then installed a new plant on the site of the McDill mill dam where the graphite was processed. On Jan. 31, 1900 the company suffered a

severe loss in a fire that destroyed the Masonic Hall Block in Stevens Point. Another company, known as Pioneer Graphite Company, was then incorporated Dec. 20, 1902 by John R. McDonald, F. E. Taggart, R. K. McDonald and Herman Vetter, all of Stevens Point. By the end of 1903, a crushing mill had been established in Sec 34 of Eau Pleine, about a mile northwest of Junction City, where the mineral was pulverized and processed for paste and paint. Stock was sold in Pioneer Graphite throughout the state, and as far west as the West Coast. A photograph of operations at the Pioneer Mine located in Sec 34 reveals a derrick operated on a windlass, hoisting a bucket from the main mine shaft. The miners used the same bucket to reach the entrance of the latter shafts below. William Holbrook of the town of Eau Pleine recalls a visit (*ca.* 1908) he made into the Pioneer Mine. The main shaft was around 70 feet deep, while latterals, high enough for men to work with picks and shovels, had been extended east and west some 35 to 40 feet.

In 1908 a cyclone swept through the area which badly damaged the crushing mill. The mill was rebuilt but the following year it burned. These two catastrophes coming on the heels of one another, apparently were too much for the stockholders to bear and operations were discontinued. On Feb. 19, 1921 the Pioneer Graphite Company was dissolved.<sup>1</sup>

Serving the town of Eau Pleine, with a population of 891, in 1957-58, were Frank Beck, chairman; Carl Grestad and Wm. F. Schultz, supervisors; Otto Paetsch, clerk; Catherine Marchel, treasurer; Clarence Bernhagen, assessor; Edwin Kawlewski, constable; and Otto Paetsch, health officer.

<sup>1</sup> Documents in collection of Webster Taggart, Stevens Point, Wis.

## GRANT, The Township of

From the first day of April, 1864, the County Board ordered all that portion of territory, then part of the town of Linwood on the left bank of the Wisconsin River, to be known as the town of Grant, and the first town meeting was to be held in the school house "near the residence of Ruel Robins."<sup>1</sup> C. H. Halladay, Ruel Robins, and Martin Smith were appointed inspectors of election. Simultaneously, the County Board ordered "that for the more perfect organization of the town of Grant . . . all that territory known as township No. 21 north of Range No. 7 east, except Sections No. 25, 35, and 36, be and the same is hereby annexed to the town of Grant for all purposes whatever. . ."<sup>2</sup> Thus when Grant was constituted it covered everything south of the Wisconsin River in Range 7 to the Waushara County line less three sections in the southeast corner of Town 21 which were a part of Pine Grove. Apparently this met with opposition from Pine Grove, because two months later the board decided to let the latter keep all the three lower tiers of sections of Town 21 in Range 7. But in 1869 these sections were again taken from Pine Grove and attached to Grant. A year later Grant petitioned for a new division of the township and while the nature of this proposal is not explained, the petition was denied.

Under the 1869 order, Grant took in all of two townships, 21 & 22, Range 7, in addition to all or parts of 12 more sections in Range 7 below the Wisconsin River, which made it the largest in the county. In 1870 the final demarcation of Grant was made when the north half of Sec 1 of Town 22, Range 7, and all that

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, Board of Supervisors, Vol. II, pp. 420-421.

<sup>2</sup> *Loc. cit.*

part of sections 23, 24, lying south of the Wisconsin River, and all of sections 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, and 36 in Town 23, Range 7, were detached from Grant and attached to Plover. This district covers the stretch along H-54 between Plover and Wood County. Grant has since been an incorporation of two townships, less half a section. As it was organized at the height of fame achieved by General Ulysses S. Grant, it is reasonable to assume the township was named in his honor.

Erskine Stansbury commenced surveying lower Grant (Town 21) on Aug. 29, 1851 and finished Jan. 29, 1852. This was much longer than the time required by most survey teams. In his field notes, Stansbury explains the reason: "My men as well as myself having become poisoned by the Ivy abounding in the swamps, I leave the town until winter."

Three rivers reach all the way across the town of Grant, east to west, and drain into the Wisconsin in Wood County. These are Buena Vista Creek, the northernmost, Duck Creek, the central stream, no doubt named after at least two other Duck Creeks in early Wisconsin, and Ten Mile Creek, so named, allegedly, because the pioneers of Grand Rapids referred to the mouth as being ten miles south of the rapids. In the original subdivision of Grant made in 1851-52 the surveyors refer to Ten Mile as "iron creek," no doubt after the bog iron deposits in the river bed.

A fourth important stream, known as Four Mile Creek, so-named, because it once drained into the Wisconsin four miles below the rapids, originates in the central sections of Town 22 of Grant and today joins Buena Vista Creek above Kellner at Lake Wazeecha, an Indian word allegedly meaning "the land of the pine and cedar." Most of the lake lies across the range line in Wood County. Below Four Mile Creek runs another shorter stream known, at least since 1898, as "Bloody Run" and still referred to by this name, probably after a river near early Detroit.

In addition to the named rivers of Grant, there are at

least ten artificial streams, or ditches, which were created mostly by the Portage County Drainage District in the early decades of this century, and which drain into the above rivers. Ditch No. 3 is often referred to as "Paint Creek" owing to the reddish hue of the bog iron. Duck Creek forms part of Ditch No. 4 and both run together with Ditch No. 8 at the Elmer Timm farm in Sec 27 (Town 22). Trout abound in most of the ditches as well as rivers of Grant.

A number of sections of Portage County were deeded to the State of Wisconsin by the federal government under the Swamp Land Grants approved on Sept. 28, 1850. One of these swamp lands was in Grant township, known as the Buena Vista Marsh, because it lies along Buena Vista Creek, and often referred to merely as "the marsh." In 1898 the state legislature approved the establishment of a drainage district to be known as the Portage County Drainage District which began operations in 1905. The officers of the organization are responsible to the Circuit Court and assessments in the past have been levied among the property owners of the marsh for the purpose of draining and creating the ditches referred to in the above. The biggest private development was undertaken by the Bradley Polytechnic Institute, Inc., of Peoria, Illinois, which purchased several thousands of acres on the marsh most of which was considered worthless. Some idea of the increase in value of this land after it had been drained is reflected in one quarter section ( $NE\frac{1}{4}$  -  $NE\frac{1}{4}$ ) in Sec 23 (Town 22, Range 8,) which in 1911 was sold to the Bradley Polytechnic Institute for \$1, today held by Harry Isherwood, and which in 1956 had an assessed valuation of \$680.

The surveyor who mapped upper Grant (Town 22) failed to enter the commencement date of survey, only that the job was completed Feb. 10, 1852. Five sections along the north tier of Town 22 were actually mapped under the Indian Survey of 1839-40 by Hathaway who refers to these five sections in his field notes as "no good land . . . mostly sandy. Aspen & pitch Pine barrens, bushy & wet in places."

In the 1852 survey of the other sections of Town 22 the surveyor makes several references to "Yellow Pine." This tree is not indigenous to Wisconsin and it probably refers to Red pine, more commonly known in this part of the state as Norway (*Pinus resinosa Ait.*).

At the first town meeting held in the new township of Grant on April 5, 1864, the following officers were elected: Wales R. Lamberton, chairman; Martin Smith and Wm. Witt, supervisors; Joseph Seamans, clerk; E. B. Clussman, treasurer; Reuel Robbins, assessor; Martin Smith and Wm. Goldbar, justices of the peace; and Cornelius Halladay, constable.

At a meeting held in December 1865 the town board voted \$125 "for fencing burying ground." This was an important consideration in pioneer times for unless the graveyard was located on private property, it was apt to be desecrated by stray cattle.

The town of Grant was divided into three school districts shortly after its organization in 1864. In April 1867 it was voted to hold the next annual town meeting at the school house in District No. 2 "and also the fall election at the half way house." The identity of this "half way house" has not been determined. It was probably a tavern-inn on a stage road and, as the center of population of Grant at this time lay in the northern part of the township — along the left bank of the Wisconsin River — it is reasonable to assume that the election was held at a half-way house located on the road between Plover and Grand Rapids. It may have been the Jockey Tavern which was located northeast of modern Meehan Station on the stage road about 20 rods south of the Wisconsin River.

The early proceedings of the town of Grant end abruptly in some 75 pages of text snipped out of the ledger. Apparently the last part of the book was left unused until 1898 when the minutes of a number of meetings held in connection with several town-supported drainage projects are recorded. While these attempts at community drainage of the marsh appear

insignificant compared to what was to be done later by the Portage County Drainage District, they no doubt served as pilot projects for the more extensive developments later which, had the first surveyors been privileged to see, would probably have revised their estimates of the land.

The first ditch of any length was ordered laid in April 1898 by Supervisors Wm. Gaulke, Chas. Eberhardt and Theo. Steinke. This began near the section corner of 9, 10, 15 and 16 and ran westerly through sections 9, 8 & 7 for a distance of not quite three miles. The swamp through which this ditch passed was commonly known as the "railroad slough," and as it concerned Wood County, two members from Wood participated in the application for the ditch. In fact, owing to the drainage of the three main rivers into Wood County, the town of Grant has usually had to deal with its neighbors across the county line, as well as its neighbors to the east in Pine Grove and Buena Vista where the rivers originate.

Several other ditches were laid down in 1898 and 1899 when this record ends. These descriptions appear to be the only evidence of town-sponsored drainage on a fairly extensive scale. The cost of digging the ditches depended on the circumstance of the terrain, depth and width of the ditch, but it ran from five cents a rod to 40 cents a rod.

The earliest tax roll of Grant, dated 1864, includes these names from Town 21, which, for convenience, may be referred to as Lower Grant: Robt. Stuart, Lucy Long, E. M. Senton, George Knowles, A. D. Aber, H. McCormick, G. Jackson, G. L. Dunning, George Signor, Christian Beaumer, George Lyner, Set Barker, Louisa Johnson, Chancy Barker, and Rufus Barker. In Town 22, Upper Grant, the following names appear: Martin Smith, M. H. Morgan, Obadiah Jones, Almond Stone, J. H. Morgan, John Hoyden, George Osterman, H. Hartwell, John Witterman, E. M. Phillips, Charles Portigal, Christy Timm, Fred Portigal, August Clavene, Wm. Witt, Charles Witt, Wm. Goldbar, James Love, and Wm. Calkins.

In addition, Grant in 1864 took in everything on the left bank of the Wisconsin River in Range 7. The first name in this portion of the 1864 tax roll of Town 23 is Wm. Calkins and a description of his land in Sec 24 includes the word "island." Since there was a large island at this time in the Wisconsin River about four miles west of Plover, it may be that Calkins owned this island. Other taxpayers in this part of Town 23 were Cornelius Halladay, J. R. Halladay, Wm. Ward, James S. Alban (no doubt the estate of), R. W. Walker, Silas Webb, Shubal Simonds, C. H. Simons, E. B. Clusman, J. B. Carpenter, O. W. Mitcheltree, Wm. Watterman, Hamptson Stevens, Henderson Winans, J. Wood, Joshua Gray, Homer Drake, J. J. Bachelar, Joseph Seaman, T. W. Mitcheltree, Luther Hanchett (no doubt the estate of), Geo. Knowles, Ruel Robbins, Richard Gillett, Sherman, James Pierce, W. R. Lamberton, B. P. Hough, J. S. Marshall, and J. B. Hough.

The paucity of population is suggested by the fact that only 11 men paid any personal property tax and among these the highest valuation was \$190 which was assessed against both John F. Aber and C. (for Cornelius) Halladay on which the former paid a tax of \$7.33, including collector's fee of \$.35, and the latter paid \$7.03, including collector's fee of \$.33. Just how Aber came to pay 30c more on the same valuation, in addition to two cents more to the collector, may be explained by the fact that his district school tax was \$1.90 and Halladay's \$1.62 and, with the collector's fee being two cents more to Aber, the difference was 30c.

The only community to develop in the extensive territory of Grant is at Kellner, located on the range line between Wood and Portage Counties, but never incorporated. Several buildings are located on the Wood County side off Trunk W which runs north and south through the community. The village developed after the Chicago & North Western Railroad came through the town of Grant in 1901 at which time a passenger depot and a siding for freight cars were located here. Both were discontinued after World War II.



The 1895 plat identifies "J. Timm & Co.," probably a country store, situated in the northeast corner of the intersection at Trunk WW & U, later operated by O. D. Billings and G. H. Monroe. Herbert L. Ward operated a creamery at Kellner after the turn of the century which appears to have burned around 1917. John Boles allegedly operated the first saloon. There is no post office here or anywhere else in the double-township and most of the farmers and part-time farmers — many working in the mills at Wisconsin Rapids — are served by R.F.D.

When the first settlers arrived they found the township moderately forested with jack pine, white pine and tamarack, with jack pine mostly on the high ground. Much of the jack pine has been cut for pulp since 1901 and shipped by railroad to the paper mills in Wood County and the pine has been logged and cut by several small mills, all within a few miles of the railway siding at Kellner.

Many of the grandchildren of the original pioneers of Grant have given up farming and either moved to Wisconsin Rapids, or continue to live on the home place and commute to the paper mills and factories in Wood County. The struggle against nature here has been an uneven one; the great drainage project initiated in 1905 by the Portage County Drainage District failed to provide the amount of reclaimed land expected, as well as quality of land. Special assessments were levied against the farmers in the area to help maintain the drainage system and build new dams, but the last assessment, made in 1934, at the height of the Depression, brought the farmers into open revolt and up to 1958 no new assessment had been made. In the early years of the project, after the main ditches had been dug, the land in many places was supposed to be drained but remained water-logged. It was found necessary to dig lateral ditches to the main ditches, and to build more bridges not to mention smaller bridges, known as "bulkheads," all at considerable expense to the township.

As there is a dearth of rock formation in the township, foundation materials for early barns and houses had to be hauled either from the quarry in Sec 21 Town 21, or Sec 19, Town 22. Most townships of the county were not bothered by this problem.

One of the pioneer amenities of the town of Grant was a public watering trough for horses maintained, at town expense, on what was known in pioneer times as the "Plainfield road" in the southeast corner of Sec 34, Town 21. The family which kept the trough filled with water was allegedly paid \$5 a year for this service and the last to collect before World War II was probably George Palek.

Sand Island Tower, the only fire tower in Portage County, is located in Sec 22 of Grant township (Town 21) on County Trunk F. It takes its name from the slightly higher elevation on the marsh while the tower itself stands 90 feet in the air. Sightings on fires can be taken on any point in Portage County and, on a clear day, as far away as Fremont in Waupaca County and Camp Douglas in Juneau County. This is under the forest protection service of the state conservation department with headquarters in Friendship. Danish-born Rasmus Nielsen has been in charge of this tower since 1943. During the war it was closed to visitors, but today is open although the high climb apparently discourages most.

Serving the town of Grant, with a population of 639, in 1957-58, were Craig C. Corbett, chairman; Edgar J. Auclair and Martin Goldberg, supervisors; Fred Steinke, clerk; Emil Kruger, treasurer; Kenneth Arndt, assessor; Emil Kruger, justice of the peace; Gilbert Timm, constable; and Ralph Anderson, health officer.

## HULL, The Township of

On Nov. 11, 1858 the committee on town organization, (the first time this committee is mentioned in the proceedings of the County Board), approved the organization of the town of Hull which was to include all that part of the county formerly under the town of Stevens Point in Towns 24 & 25 in Range 9 (part of future Sharon) and the east one-half of Towns 24 & 25 in Range 8. The board recommended that the first town meeting be held at the house of Hugh McGreer on the first Tuesday in April 1859, (later changed to read "March" instead of April). There were nine 'yeas' and one 'nay' on this motion.

Before the election was held the County Board amended its earlier action and gave Hull three more sections, 1, 2 and 3 in Town 23, Range 8. Apparently this was done following the incorporation of the city of Stevens Point in 1858 which left three sections to the east of the city more or less in a corner between Hull and the town of Plover. It would have been equally as logical, if not more so, to include these three sections in Plover as they lie in the same constitutional township, i.e., Town 23, and apparently Plover felt the same way, for in 1859 the board reversed itself and gave these three sections to Plover.

In 1859 a big part of Hull was set off to constitute the new town of Sharon. This led to a petition from the citizens of Hull in February 1860 urging the County Board to rescind this action and "the matter was taken up and debated at some length..."<sup>1</sup> In fact, Hull requested that the whole town of Sharon be handed back to it. A vote was taken and the petition lost by a vote

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, Board of Supervisors, Vol. I, p. 58.

of six to eight. At a meeting held the following day, the matter came up again and this time it lost nine to six.

Hull, by this time an odd-shaped township, narrow in the middle and seemingly perched on one leg, continued agitation for more territory and in November 1860 a number of sections to the north and east of the city of Stevens Point were taken from the town of Stevens Point and attached to Hull. A few days later Hull was also given the north one-half of Sec 1, Town 23, Range 8, east of Plover River which was detached from the town of Plover. This half section is still retained by Hull.

Effective April 1, 1899 the board ordered sections 6, 7, 18, 19 and the west half of 30 and 31 in Town 25, Range 9, detached from Hull and attached to Sharon. In the same motion it detached Town 25, Range 8, from Hull and all that portion of Town 25, Range 7, which lay east of the Wisconsin River, formerly part of Eau Pleine, to form the new town of Dewey. However, Hull was compensated by annexing sections 2, 3, 10, 14, 23, and 25, east of the Wisconsin River in Town 24, Range 7, formerly part of the town of Stevens Point which had been vacated.

The subdivision of the town of Hull in Town 24, Range 8, not included in the Indian Survey of 1839-40, was begun March 22 and completed March 29, 1853.

The first election in Hull was "held agreeable to the law" at School House No. 9 which stood about a quarter of a mile northwest of Jordan bridge. Elected were Samuel Brown, chairman; Joseph Oesterly and Michael Dawson, supervisors; Alexander Jack, clerk; Timothy Leary, treasurer; James Moore, town superintendent of schools; James Delany, assessor; James Moore, Michael Sweeney, Samuel Brown and Alonzo Streeter, justices of the peace; Michael Finneran, Archy Sievwright and William Carver, constables; and Richard Keaff, sealer of weights and measures.

School House No. 9 was the scene of many town meetings in the first years of Hull. It was later moved to

where Pulaski School is located in 1958. Modern H-66 cuts through the southeast corner of the forty on which the earlier school house stood. In the very southeast corner of this forty, that is, on the south side of H-66, there once stood a grocery store operated by Frank W. Muzzy who was also the first postmaster here in 1864 of a post office called Hull. The township may have been named after Hull, England, probably to favor the Englishmen, not the Irish. On the other hand a D. B. Hull voted in the 3rd Ward of Stevens Point in 1860. The post office was discontinued in 1903 and the last postmaster was Chryst Marchel whose son, Severen, still lives on this forty.

A direct road between Jordan, (pronounced "Jer-dan" by the early settlers) and the village of Stevens Point developed in the early 1850s. Previous to this, Hugh McGreer had been using a road developed along the left (east) bank of the Plover River all the way into Plover village. By 1857 the village of New Jordan had been laid out on the left bank of the Plover near McGreer's saw mill. It may have been known as "McGreer's Rapids" before this time. The fact that it was platted as "New Jordan" suggests that it was named after another community of the same name, probably Jordan, New York, where Robert Maine, an Englishman, stopped for a time before coming to work in the mills on the Plover. A plat of four village blocks was laid out with streets called Main, Wells, Clinton, Mason and St. Louis, with 12 lots in each of the four blocks. Here someone risked a dollar and probably lost it, for it proved to be a boom town founded on one economic fact — the timber business, and when the timber ran out, the boom went out with the timber. It happened all over northern Wisconsin.

Meanwhile the village of New Jordan was moving ahead. In 1860 Sunday School classes were being conducted by Ansolm Vaughn and Alonzo Streeter.<sup>1</sup> In 1862 a "war meeting"<sup>2</sup> was held here with Wilson

<sup>1</sup> *Pinery*, Aug. 31, 1860.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Aug. 30, 1862.

Muzzy not only presiding but delivering the main address. A year later, despite the war, someone in Jordan found time to arrange a prize fight between F. L. Floyd, better known as "Buffalo Pete," and Joseph Griffith of Berlin, both employees of Thurston, Bowden & Co., lumbermen on the Plover. Interest in the fight must have been fairly keen as the editor of the *Pinery* covered the match for his newspaper. The event lasted 54 minutes and was said to be the "best fight we have ever witnessed." While this early-day sports writer goes on to explain that Floyd succeeded in closing Griffith's "two shutters" with a "beautiful righthander," the battle ended in a TKO, as the writer explains that Griffith's second and friends "in spite of his earnest entreaties, forced him from the fight."<sup>1</sup> These were the days when men fought without gloves and the number of rounds was practically unlimited. A fight lasting only 54 minutes was short compared to some of the later classics of John L. Sullivan.

Meanwhile, tragedy had struck one of the pioneer families of Hull. Michael Finneran, one of the first of three constables elected to the new town board in 1859, had been in Stevens Point where he was "kicked by an ox, directly in front of Grant's store last week, by which internal injuries were received so that he died in two or three days."<sup>2</sup> The *Pinery* account identifies him as "an Irishman," which reflects the ethnic consciousness of the pioneers and which Americans are not entirely over yet.

On June 1, 1863 John Ryan handed the town clerk of Hull a petition with 16 names which respectfully requested a special town meeting "for the purpose of taking into consideration the subject of allowing cattle and hogs to run at large in said town." It was signed by Ryan, Patrick Leary, Joseph Roberts, James Barry, Edward Langenburg, Wm. Walters, Wm. Lynch, Patrick Mirau, John Leahey, Jeremiah Banker, August Schultze, Geo. Miller, Solomon O. Andrews, Mich Carmody, John Welsch and John Quin. The petitioners lost. It is doubtful whether many of these were

<sup>1</sup> *Pinery*, March 20, 1863.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Jan. 24, 1860.

farmers, or they would have known that building a rail fence around a quarter section was beyond the capability of the average free-holder, and, if a cow strayed through the woods to a neighbor's farm or garden, the owner took evasive action, logically, by building a rail fence around the garden, not the quarter section. Barbed wire did not come to Portage County much before 1900. In the 1880s and '90s, fencing was done, when necessary, by felling trees in a line and filling in the holes with brush, or by building a row of stumps, or by cutting cedar rails, or by tacking up cheap lumber culls to posts. Here and there stone fences were built up from nearby fields.

The town of Hull was sparsely settled in the first three decades of its incorporation. In the 1866 tax roll nearly 700 forties or portions thereof are listed as unknown. While the first tax roll is missing, the town treasurer's book is available which gives the taxpayers beginning Dec. 24, 1860 through Jan. 29, 1861, presumably the final day for payment. The biggest taxpayer was a B. Vanstyle (by S. Campbell) who on Jan. 19, 1861 paid \$154.11 and the smallest was "Jos Plato" (probably Platta) who paid 23 cents. Platta's is also the only Polish name in this book. Others who paid taxes were Hugh McGreer (\$34.47), Matthew Wadleigh (\$56.83), Barney Cassidy, Murt Burns, Patrick Moore, Am (?) Hirst, Archibald Sievwright (by S. Campbell), Adam Welch (by S. Campbell), Anslem Vaughan, William Reading, Charles Van Order, E. D. Brown, Alonzo Streeter, George Wilson, George Senger (?), Isaac Vanseter, Peter Fisher, Henry Pool, Richard Nugent, Lawrence Nugent, John Quim, John White, W. E. Cole, Andre Otis, A. B. Redfield, Patrick Griffith, Michael Freil, B. Bender, Francis Bender, N. F. Bliss, A. B. Crosy, John Cinsoll (?), James Delaney, Mary Flynn, Michael Flynn, Patrick Gallagher, James Hollingsworth, Wilson P. Muzzy, William Walton (on estate of Masterson), John Murphy, Daniel (?), Los Schlegel, Thomas Venner (?), Thomas Welsh, John Patterson, Francis Shelly, Chas. Treebou (?), John Welsh, Eliza Wilas, Nathan Corniff, A. J. Aldrich, W. G. Campbell,

Timothy Sweeny, P. H. Buckley, and Smith & Henry Rogers.

The village of Jordan began to peter out in the mid-1880s. While there is no evidence of a village in Jordan today, the view of the Jordan pond from H-66, the rapids below the bridge, the race and power dam are all fascinating, and a new beauty has replaced the old. But who can guess at the manner of men who tamed the river and cleared the forest around?

Aside from the Wisconsin and Plover Rivers, which both drain the town of Hull on the left and right banks, one river runs into the township which originates in Marathon County and flows through the town of Dewey into Hull and on to the Wisconsin above Stevens Point known as Hay Meadow Creek. This appears to have been known as Willow Creek before 1844, but in a division of road districts made by the county that year it is referred to in parenthesis as "Sheritts Hay Meadow Creek..." There are no natural lakes in the township but the flowages formed by the three dams on the Plover at the Jordan, Van Order, and Bentley mills have partially filled this need.

Serving the town of Hull, with a population of 1,524, in 1957-58, were Joseph Wojcik, chairman; Ray Bernas and August Firkus, supervisors; Joseph Bonowski, clerk; Joseph Daczyk, treasurer; Joseph Brillowski, assessor; Lawrence Miller, justice of the peace; Robert S. Coats, constable, and Joseph Bonowski, health officer.

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings, County Commissioners Sessions*, Vol. I, p. 54.



## JUNCTION CITY, The Village of

When the Wisconsin Valley Railroad (Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul) intersected the Wisconsin Central (Soo) tracks in 1874, a village was almost a certainty at this point and it was also reasonable to assume that it would be called a "junction." In the proceedings of the town of Stevens Point, under whose jurisdiction this area fell before 1879, there are several references to town meetings held in "Junction City." But when the post office was established here on July 20, 1874, with George E. Oster serving as postmaster, it was officially called Junction. The bank of the village still uses this designation, i.e., Junction State Bank.

But the citizens of the community liked the appellation Junction City better. When it was decided to incorporate, the original petition, sponsored by Joseph Skibba and four others, prayed that the territory described be incorporated "as the village of Junction City." The election to incorporate was held May 9, 1911 with 38 votes cast of which 32 were for incorporation and six against.

Between 1879 and 1911 Junction City was administered by the town of Carson. The first election of village officers was held in the village hall June 6, 1911 when 23 voters went to the polls. Elected to office were Jacob Skibba, president; A. B. Ferkey, O. Voyer, Henry Rux, Frank Dix, August Piekarski, and Dave Heise, trustees; S. S. Leith, clerk; John Slota, treasurer; Wm. Arians, assessor; E. J. Heun, justice; Anton Zivney, constable; and H. G. Grashorn, supervisor.

The first taxpayers listed in the Junction City assessment roll were Frank Kania, Martin Jagodsinski, John Gurskey, Valentine Kocejz, N. S. Durst, Aug. Mallek, Albert Gurskey, Peter Selinski, Frank Robek, Henry

Rux, Henry Voyer, John Columba, H. G. Grashorn, Joseph Gingle, A. B. Ferkey, Wm. Klimont, Joe Zivney, Aug. Piekarski, Frank Dix, Anton Zivney, John Skibba, Frank Zelinski, Frank Gingle, L. Leshavick, Mrs. Lena Voyer, A. L. Voyer, Jacob Skibba, Mrs. J. E. Burns, A. Arians, Wm. Vertheim, Junction State Bank, David Heise, Joe Dix, and Joe Chyplewski. The personal property roll reveals there were eight horses in the village and 12 neat cattle of which Jacob Skibba owned four of the horses and all of the cattle. Five persons were raising swine and, while there were nine wagons, carriages and sleighs, there were no automobile owners in Junction City in 1911.

One of the early restaurants in Junction City is referred to in 1877 when an auction was held on "a certain two story frame building" situated on the northwest angle of the Wisconsin Central and Wisconsin Valley Railways and "being the same building erected therein as a eating house..." It was sold to H. Lefebure, the highest bidder, for \$604 who "further saith that said sale was made in the day time and in all respects honestly, faithfully and legally..." Later this may have been the combined hotel-depot which was situated east-west along the Soo Line tracks in the northwest angle and, according to the *Portage County Directory* of 1896, known as "Russel House," operated by Frank Russel. Either before or later, it may also have been known as "Rosebud House."

Perhaps the first store in Junction was operated as a company store by one of the local saw mill firms. The 1876 plat carries an advertisement of Thomas Mathews, manufacturer and dealer in shingles, whose mill was being built in the early spring of 1876. Either a saw mill or shingle mill was already in operation,<sup>1</sup> which was probably built by a Williams & Russell. The 1876 plat also carries an advertisement of E. Farrond, operator of the Junction City Hotel & Billiard Hall. This may have been the same building bought at auction in 1877 by H. Lefebure. On March 6, 1876 the *Stevens Point*

<sup>1</sup> *Stevens Point Journal*, Feb. 9, 1876.

*Journal* reported that one year earlier there were only two log shanties here and "now there are two depots, two saw mills, one hotel, one boarding house, one saloon, three dwelling houses and school house..."

George Oster, who became the first postmaster in 1874, operated a store, believed to have been a saw mill company store at the start, but which was later taken over by himself. The 1876 plat also reveals that Oster was station agent of the Wisconsin Valley Railroad.

Charles Holbrook had a store on Main Street, north of the depot, which is identified on the 1895 plat. This plat also reveals that the post office was then located in the southeast angle of the tracks, across from a saloon operated by William Arians in the southwest angle. The *Portage County Directory* of 1896 reveals that F. E. Foubare operated a saloon and restaurant; Henry Grashorn was a merchant; Jacob Skibba, Jr., was a merchant; and Mrs. Lena Voyer was the proprietor of Voyer House.

Behind Russel House, north a few rods, stood a saloon, also operated by Russel, later a cafe owned by Carl Wallengh. A few yards beyond the saloon towards Main Street stood the CM&SP depot, known as the "Red depot." The Soo Line ticket and telegraph office was eventually taken out of Russel House, the Red depot demolished and a combined depot serving both railways was constructed directly within the northwest angle of the tracks where it still stands, probably one of the most colorful of the old style railway depots in Portage County.

Across the CM&SP tracks, i.e., in the northeast angle, stood Voyer House, built by Oswald Voyer. The original Voyer was built as a two-story, one-directional frame building but later enlarged to its present size, now a part tavern and residence. Here, in this dining room, big enough for at least four tables with six places each, the early residents of Junction met for masquerade parties, wedding affairs and dances. A postcard of 1909 shows the dining room furnished with wide-backed wooden chairs, heavy-legged tables covered with fresh

linen and place settings, each table crowned in the center with a bowl of fruit. There was no rug on the floor — the easier to mop before linoleum was invented.

In 1909, when a postcard photo was taken of the hotel across the tracks, ex-Russel House, it was called Hotel Voyer Annex, which had been taken over by son Arthur. During the night of Oct. 6, 1939 the annex, then operated as a restaurant and soda fountain, burned, as well as the former saloon converted to a cafe by Carl Wallengh. Neither was rebuilt, leaving a long train of memories to those who could still remember, but only a barren spot to those who could not.

In 1921, three men from Junction City, A. L. Voyer, Peter Layman and George Tencler won considerable publicity both for themselves and the village when they held the winning tickets in a lottery in which the first prize was the Northern Hotel at Chippewa Falls. However, there were several others who shared the same block of tickets in the lottery, mostly employees of the Soo Line. Before leaving to claim the prize, the three men went to Stevens Point and engaged an attorney, W. E. Fisher, who was taken in as one of the winners on share basis. When the trio from Junction City arrived in Chippewa Falls on July 5, the *Chippewa Herald* described them as "well attired in Palm Beach suits, silk shirts and straw hats, in reality three good looking men. No wonder the ladies fell for them. And such luck! Nothing like it ever heard of in Chippewa Falls, Eau Claire, the Northwest, or the whole country [and a] greater reception than if President Harding was in town trying to get acquainted."<sup>1</sup> The hotel was eventually disposed of and the winners divided the profits.

A document of interest concerns the first volunteer fire department of Junction City organized Feb. 6, 1923. Elected to head the new organization were Paul Bernhagen, fire chief; R. I. Grover, assistant chief and inspector; August Piekarski, Jr., captain (both crews);

<sup>1</sup> *Chippewa Herald*, July 6, 1921.

William Skibba, lieutenant of engine crew; Barney Skibba, 1st fireman; Henry Martens, 2nd fireman; Fritz Jingle, 3rd; Geo. Stertz, 4th; Edward Lasacage, 5th; and Edwin Lasavage, 6th fireman. Willard St. John was named 1st sub-lieutenant and Frank Strykowski, 2nd sub-lieutenant; Barnet Berg, 3rd sub; Carl Wollengh, 4th, and Gustave Burge, 5th sub-lieutenant. Frank Pekarski was made captain of the ladder crew, Daniel Skibba, 1st lieutenant, and Frank Skibba, James Skibba, John Marten, Wm. Bernhagen and Joe Beck 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th ladderman.

Serving with the fire department appeared to be more important in this early period than it is now and more fun, too. From a photo, probably taken in 1923, the fire department possessed one two-wheeled cart pulled by hand, equipped with chemical pressure tanks. As antiquated as this equipment appears today, from the reports of fires extinguished by the department it is obvious that it served its purpose in a small village still unable to afford the luxury of a fire engine, but dissatisfied with the old-time bucket-brigade. What the volunteers lacked in equipment they made up for in the pride they took in answering an alarm, most of which were answered, according to their own records, within ten minutes.

In 1926 the Junction City fire department began to file a quarterly report to the state industrial commission on various premises inspected by a member of the department. And with the increase in the use of electricity, it was found that more and more fires were being caused by short-circuits and faulty wiring. Accordingly, the Wisconsin state electrical code was adopted and the village board of Junction City fell in line by passing ordinances relating to electrical construction, repair and extension work, effective Jan. 1, 1930. Under this ordinance a permit was required from an authorized member of the department to construct or repair any electrical installation and, once finished, it had to pass inspection. This was not a law; it was a code issued by the state for the cities to follow if desirable and each was responsible for enforcing the code by passing or-

dinances according to local circumstances. In this manner the pattern of life in the village was being changed, not by man, but by the instruments of man himself. The more he made for himself in the way of creature comforts, the more freedom he lost because each new technical advance required a new regulation. A man could not clutter up his own basement any longer.

By 1930 the Junction City fire department was paying \$1 to each officer attending a fire and \$1 for attendance at monthly meetings. It was also found necessary to issue regulations governing the responsibilities of each member of the crews. These new regulations hint at another facet of life in the village, no matter how small, namely, definition of responsibility. In the early period everyone ran to a fire and fought the flames with water buckets. If one building burned it was not always a threat to the entire village because a neighbor's house was usually separated by at least a lot or two. But as more and more homes crowded together, a fire in one could mean a fire in all. The element of chance had to be eliminated, individual initiative restricted and duplication of effort avoided. Everything had to be directed from a higher source and each man in the department had to limit himself to one assignment in order to avoid the common fault of having "too many chiefs and not enough Indians."

In addition to several general stores, filling stations and garages, Junction City in 1958 was served by the Junction State Bank and a weekly newspaper known as the *Community Press*, the only other English weekly in the county in 1958 aside from the *Amherst Advocate*. Established on Sept. 26, 1946, it is owned and edited by Irwin M. Denkmann under the firm name of Press Printing Company. The weekly is published every Thursday, has four pages and a circulation of about 410.

The Junction State Bank was organized Oct. 2, 1909 with a capitalization of \$10,000. The original 23 stockholders were all from outside the county with the exception of H. G. Grashorn, who was made the first president, and John Slota and T. J. Pitt of Junction

City. The capitalization was increased in 1946 to \$30,000. The statement of condition at the close of business Dec. 31, 1957 revealed that the bank had total deposits of \$1,279,833.38 and a capital structure of \$178,528.63. Directors were W. B. Greateon, president; Jacob Hertel, vice president; and John Perziak, Lloyd Dickrell and Louis Joosten, while LeRoy Wanta served as cashier.

Serving on the village board of Junction City, with a population of 329, in 1957-58, were Paul B. Kitowski, president; Joseph Kabot and Edward Lesavich, trustees; Martha Martens, clerk; LeRoy Wanta, treasurer; Eiolf Hanson, assessor; Irwin Denkmann, justice; Edward Panko, constable; and Paul Kitowski, supervisor.

## LANARK, The Township of

Town 22 (Lanark), like the other five townships in Range 10 before 1851, was still part of Brown County, and in 1851 made part of Portage County. From 1852 to 1856 it was administered as part of the town of Amherst, and for a short time in 1856 as part of the town of Belmont until finally on Nov. 12, 1856 the County Board ordered Town 22 set off from Belmont to constitute the town of Lanark. The first election was to be held the first Monday in December 1856 "and the place for holding town meetings and other elections in said town shall be at Spurr's Mill."<sup>1</sup>

While George Spurr sponsored the original petition to the County Board for incorporation of Lanark, the indentures on the mill forty suggest that the William Spurr, supervisor on the joint Amherst-Lanark town board before 1856, began building a saw mill here before 1854 and apparently was unable or unwilling to finish it, as the property was mortgaged to Luke V. Spurr in 1855 for a sum of \$2,000, and when the latter sold several forties of land to George A. Spurr and John L. Spurr in 1855 they agreed "to finish the Saw Mill now being erected on said premises and put the same in running order. . ."<sup>2</sup>

The mill site was located on the right bank of the Tomorrow River about two rods south of the bridge where Trunk DD today crosses the river in Sec 14. The old road bed down to the dam and part of the race is still visible.

The name Lanark was probably given to the township by the Minto and Swan families who are believed to have originated in Lanark, Scotland.

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings, Board of Supervisors, Vol. I, p. 276.*

<sup>2</sup> *Deeds, Vol. E, pp. 224-225.*



The government survey of the section lines was begun Aug. 5 and completed Aug. 18, 1851. An entry in the field notes states that the township contained six families of about 24 persons.

Lanark is drained by the Tomorrow River and Spring Creek which flows into the Tomorrow in Sec 10. A small stream, fed by springs, originates in Sec 35 and runs into Waupaca County through Sec 36 but is not identified by name on any plat.

In the west of the township lies Spring Lake, fed by Spring Creek which originates in Buena Vista, and a short distance down from the lake is a mill pond which in 1958 was nearly dry. A short distance east of the former Howard mill on Spring Creek lies Bingo Lake in Sec 16, identified as such on both the 1895 and 1915 plats, but the origin of the name is uncertain. In the southeast in Sec 30 lies a small lake, partially dried up, which in pioneer times was known as Merryfield after the family of the same name.

The earliest tax roll of Lanark available is dated 1861 when the following paid taxes: H. Dewey, John G. Severance, George Hutchinson, Robert Blair, Hiram Clinton, Chas. Fenlan, M. Clinton, Peter Ciperlie, Edwin Turner, Thos. Godfrey, Walter Ciperlie, A. B. Gilchrist, M. E. Spears, Joseph McKeen, R. P. White, Brown and Silverthern, P. L. McMilan, Enoch Lea, James Lombard, Louis Lombard, Elijah Scott, Leanidus Lombard, James McCall, Bradley Rice, Wm. D. Spurr, Asa Gould, John Lea, Chessa (probably Jesse) Lea, Benjamin Huntly, A. W. Urline, Lydea H. Baldwin, Leonese J. Urline, H. Steadman, John L. Spurr, Wm. Kemp, G. A. Spurr, M. McGregor, George Sherman, H. D. Boswick, Julius Jeffres, A. Foster, H. M. Ciperlie, Wm. House, John Bussard, Wm. H. Ciperlie, Thos. S. Blair, Samuel Zimmerly, Robert Morrison, Wm. Boss, Asahel Humiston, Ansle Gower, F. L. King, Michael Hopkins, John Gordon, William West, H. McFall, M. D. Lane, A. Timlan, Patrick Ryan, N. P. Judson, J. F. Phelps, Jacob Vaughan, E. Olus (?), Walter White, James Barr, Patrick Donovan, Ellen Osborn,

E. Cooney, Michael Lang, James Cary, Thos. Wait, Rich Kemp, James Eskret, John B. Kemp, Geo. I. Smith, C. B. Pasco, James Hutton, Chas. Hewitt, Arthur Minto, James Stanfield, Abe Rait, A. R. Gray, Thos. Swan, John Swan, G. R. Furjusen (probably Fergeson), Jessp Yate, James Evens, Sarah Nash, D. McLalden (?), Andrew McLaldin, C. W. Peaver, C. Granfloe, G. W. Fletcher, P. McDonough, Tarry McBridge, Patrick Nelsen, Peter Hanley, C. Cowlan, John Lorvin, John Gray, Jobe Humphrey, J. H. Doswell, Benj. Huntley, M. Heran, J. Butterfield, N. P. Judson, R. Haywood, Cael Patten, Robert Fletcher, Bela Strong, Jas. Smith, Lewis Collier, C. W. Pierce, Jane Tyler, Robt. Vickery, C. Franfler, Truman Carpenter, M. D. Womer and H. G. & A. Stedson.

The first entry in the town proceedings is a transcript from the Amherst records dated June 24, 1854 relative to a road already laid in Town 22 (Lanark). This is modern Trunk D with variations over the years. It is not only one of the oldest roads in the county, but one of the most interesting, bridging both the Tomorrow and Spring Rivers, up and down, over and around tree-covered hills and valleys, one of which is rimmed by a range of hills on the south known since times past as Bluejay Bluffs.

The first road order issued by the newly-incorporated township itself is dated July 6, 1857 and deals with a dispute over a fence line and right-of-way in Sec 1 which involved Eli West, J. G. Severance and Horace Dewey as parties of the first part and Levi Bishop and Merick Adams, parties of the second part. Disputes over fences and right-of-ways appear to have been the most common source of friction in the formative period of settlement, probably because the pioneers, most of whom had never owned their own land before, had not yet learned, as the poet Robert Frost was to write, that "good fences make good neighbors."

Between 1870 and 1880 the name "Badger" appears several times in the town proceedings, but one entry actually refers to a special election in 1871 held at "the

Badger Hotel.” This was the tavern-house of Alexander Gray where the first town meeting of the combined townships of Towns 21 & 22 was held in 1856 (see *Stopping Places Along the Road*).

The 1876 plat identifies the Badger post office in Sec 26 of Lanark, located on the north side of modern H-54 about half a mile west of the intersection with Trunk D. The Postal Index of 1855 lists a post office by this name with Robert Fletcher serving as postmaster. It was discontinued in 1901.

The pioneer post office of the township, called Madely, was established May 9, 1855, John F. Phelps serving as postmaster, and located in a building in Sec 29 on the south side of a road (now H-54) opposite from Phelps tavern-house. It was discontinued in 1900. A third post office called Lanark was established Sept. 24, 1883 near the present site of St. Patrick's Church in Sec 19, less than two miles northwest of Madely. It was discontinued in 1899.

Probably the first country store in Lanark, located a few rods west of Gray's tavern-house, i.e., the Badger Hotel, was operated by H. G. & A. Stedson. The 1861 tax roll reveals that the Stedsons paid taxes on one acre of land in NE $\frac{1}{4}$ -NW $\frac{1}{4}$  of Sec 36 while their personal property valuation was \$855, most likely representing merchandise. The store passed to Theodore (“Ted”) Minton who later rented to George (“Pegleg”) Corriگان. The latter lost a leg allegedly as an Indian fighter in the West, and even as a storekeeper in Lanark affected the attire and beard of one of Buffalo Bill's riders. The store probably closed in the early 1890s.

A road order of 1859 refers to “Spring Lake Creek” which carries approximately the same name today, i.e., Spring Creek. Spring Lake lies a short distance to the west of Howard's Pond. Older residents of Lanark recall that Nathan (“Nate”) Howard had a grist mill on Spring Creek. He is not mentioned in the tax roll of 1861, but a road order of 1866 refers to “the highway near Howard's mill on the Sec. line between Secs. 8 & 9...” This places the mill squarely on Spring Creek

near the bridge which today crosses the river on Trunk A. The foundation of the old dam is still visible about a hundred feet west of the bridge. Howard was not the first on this site as the indentures on it reveal that when this forty was deeded to Mary Jane Lombard in 1856, she had the "privilege of raising the water by dam for hydraulic purposes so that the water may be 10 feet deep on the East line..." The following year it passed to Dr. James Lombard who was granted the same privilege. This suggests that the Lombards had erected a dam for a mill site, but whether a saw mill or grist mill is uncertain.

Before the turn of the century Howard converted his mill into a small factory where he turned out wooden pumps on a turning lathe by squaring a small pine log and boring a hole through the middle for the suction chamber. These pumps, noted for the great gulps of water, bridged the gap between the old oaken bucket and the iron pump. Howard's pumps were sold throughout central Wisconsin and Julian Maxfield recalls that his father installed one outside the house in Plover village.

Earl Lea, town clerk of Lanark, recalls "Nate" Howard ("a heavy bearded man") who one day got to talking about life in southern Wisconsin before moving to Portage County. In his youth he had once carried a sack of corn over a considerable distance to a grist mill and when he arrived at the mill the owner laughed at him and said "he'd be damned if he'd start up his mill for a little sack of corn." Howard swore that if he ever had a mill of his own he would take in any amount of grain to be ground. And he did.

Around 1910 Frederick Norlan took over the mill site, did custom feed grinding and also manufactured surgical instruments, but probably discontinued around 1920. Meanwhile, Charles Hammon and Michael Tobin built a saw mill (*ca.* 1910) near the site of the feed mill which was operated by steam. This was taken over a decade or so later by Henry Schlichting who

<sup>1</sup> *Deeds*, Vol. D, p. 408.

ground feed and also operated a saw mill on water power, apparently during the spring freshet. Schlichting was a tall, slim man, but described as "only a shadow to Rosie," his wife, who was equally adept at canting logs into the mill or tossing feed sacks into a lumber wagon.

The "H. Steadman" mentioned in the 1861 tax roll appears to have acquired the mill site of the Spurrs' in 1858. The water power was probably uneven for it is known that Steadman later built a steam mill west of his house located on the hillside overlooking the ravine of the Tomorrow River and where the 1895 plat also confirms a saw mill site. Whether this mill burned or outgrew its usefulness, son Robert Steadman is known to have built another saw mill on the north side of modern Trunk D which was probably destroyed in the great cyclone of 1903. His brother, Leeman, in turn built a grist mill on the site of the original Spurr mill which was operated by water-power and continued to do custom grinding on a small scale down to World War I.

Herbert Steadman, Sr., also operated a brickyard farther west of his place in Sec 8, the only brick kiln in Lanark. General Irwin School was built of this brick.

The modern tavern at the intersection of H-54 and Trunk A got its name "Little Chicago" during the Prohibition Era. Moonshine was allegedly being sold at or near the corner and as a result acquired a reputation for defying the law after the manner of Al Capone.

No record of Lanark would be complete without mention of John Castle who immigrated from Ireland in the early 1860s. According to local legend, Castle was apprehended in New York by Union counter-intelligence and charged with spying for the Confederacy and was sentenced to be shot. While waiting execution, he allegedly became mentally unbalanced and instead of shooting him, the court allowed him to go free. Somehow or other he made his way in 1862 to the Irish settlement of Lanark in the western part of the town-

ship when he was described as being "crazy as a bed-bug" but quite harmless. He was adopted by the community and became the unofficial courier and errand boy for many of the pioneer families. All he asked for his service was a cup of coffee and a piece of bread, but preferred to eat out on the steps. When he was on an errand, or for the mail, he often retraced his steps, walking backward a short distance while repeating a rhyme which seemed to run through his head "best a man beat a man, best a man beat a man. . ." which does not appear to have any connection with recognized poetry and may have been a thought which developed as a result of past experience. His antics and habits became so widely publicized that in 1872 a movement got under way in Lanark to run him for circuit judge, probably as a protest against the incumbent. (The proceedings of Belmont township reveal that in the judicial election of April 1872 Castle — spelled Castel in the proceedings — received one vote as against 26 for W. H. Richmond and seven for G. W. Cate.) After that, when asked his name, Castle referred to himself as the "Judge of the Judge's Society." In his old age he was taken to the county poor farm where he died in 1906 and was brought back to St. Patrick's Cemetery. A collection was taken in the community and a headstone erected because, as Harry Whipple explains it, "everyone respected him, *but* even depended upon him."

A woman to remember was Mrs. Mary E. Holman, beloved by an entire generation of Lanarkians, who served as midwife to most of the families of the township from the time she arrived, probably during the Civil War, down to the 1890s.

Serving the town of Lanark, with a population of 645, in 1957-58, were Thomas Morgan, chairman; Carroll Peterson and Lloyd Krutza, supervisors; Earl C. Lea, clerk; Agnes Lucht, treasurer; Anthony Riley, assessor; and Henry Cain, health officer.

## LINWOOD, The Township of

The town of Linwood was first known as Linden, a tree of soft white wood with cordate leaves and cream-colored flowers, more commonly referred to in Portage County as basswood (*Tilia americana* L.)

Part of the township was taken from the town of Stevens Point, namely that part which lay inside the elbow of the Wisconsin River on the right (west) bank and extending to the town line of Town 23, Range 7. The other part was taken from the town of Plover in Range 6 below the river, which H-54 traverses, in addition to all of Town 22, today upper Grant. In other words, Linden was composed of two constitutional townships of 36 sections each, but cut in two by the Wisconsin River with the majority of sections on the left bank which, owing to the bend in the river, actually lay south of the river.

The first town meeting was to be held the second Monday in December 1856 and "the place for holding town meetings and other elections shall be at the house of Rior-din Waikes."<sup>1</sup> The 1858 tax roll fails to include this name which also may be a misspelling. A year later on May 15, 1857, the town of Linden petitioned the County Board to change its name to Linwood which was granted.<sup>2</sup>

As much of modern Linwood is bounded by the Wisconsin River, most of the township was included in the Indian Survey made by Hathaway in 1839-40. What remained to be surveyed was completed in two days by A. G. and Frederick S. Ellis on Sept. 16-17, 1851.

In the Indian Survey of 1839-40, Mill Creek is referred to by Hathaway as "Weepeat Seepee." A few

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, Board of Supervisors, Vol. I, p. 278.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 285.

years later in 1849, in an account written on Indian names, Hathaway changes the spelling to *Wau-pee-ty-seepe*, meaning Tooth River, probably of Chippewa origin.<sup>1</sup> In 1854 Hiram Calkins, writing on *Indian Nomenclature, and the Chippewas*, spells it *Wau-pee-tee-Se-be*,<sup>2</sup> but both agree on the meaning, i.e. Tooth River. Sometime between 1840 and 1842, this became known as Mill Creek.

The other main river in the township is Rocky Run, referred to in early records as "Rock Run," while two lesser streams are Bear Creek in the northwest and Skalling Creek (plat of 1915) in the southwest corner of the township. A small feeder stream which runs into Rocky Run some distance south of the Red Rooster Tavern is known locally as "Clothespin Creek" because it was rumored in the neighborhood that Henry H. Cook was about to establish a clothespin factory near the bridge (Trunk P) but never did.

Linwood became prominent in the early history of Portage County because one of the first saw and/or shingle mills in the county was located on Mill Creek, a creek which might better have been referred to as a river in the Wisconsin sense of the word. The township in pioneer times was covered with timber running all the way north into Carson and, with a navigable stream (defined as capable of floating a log) running directly through this timber, it was natural that it should attract the cruiser's eye. Moreover, the lower river runs through a canyon-like formation where the water passes over rapids created by prominent rock formations. It was apparently a simple matter to build a dam across this pseudo canyon and it was also possible to build "improvement" or "splash" dams, farther upstream to raise the water for floating logs across the more difficult stretches.

The 1876 plat identifies a saw mill of Milo S. Wood in Sec 22, a shingle mill of Brown & Preston in Sec 15, and several miles farther upstream in modern Carson, W. Lester's mill in Sec 21 on the north side of modern

<sup>1</sup> *Collections*, Vol. I, p. 118.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120.



Trunk M, just west of the highway bridge. Little is known about the latter which the 1876 plat refers to as "Lester's." One source states that it sawed 1,000,000 feet of lumber in 1874.<sup>1</sup>

But these mill owners were comparatively late arrivals on Mill Creek. (See *Those Who Came First*.) Milo S. Wood, who eventually acquired the Brawley dam and mill site, was a river driver on Mill Creek in his youth and at one time worked with William Diver. But reference to the Wood mill in the available town proceedings does not appear until 1875 when the town board met to consider the costs of rebuilding two bridges "at Wood's Shingle mill and also across Mill Creek at Meehan's Mill." This indicates that Wood began as a shingle mill and later branched into saw mill operations. In the 1890s the mill passed to son Walter Wood who operated it until past the turn of the century when the machinery was moved to the South Side of Stevens Point.

In the 1870s and early 1880s when both the Meehan and Wood mills were in operation, a series of cribs, connected with a continuous log chain-boom on either side, were erected in the middle of the river some distance above the Wood dam in Sec 22. The logs coming downstream were separated as they approached the head of this crib boom and the ones for the Meehan mill were pushed into the channel on one side and the Wood-owned logs into the other. The logs for the Meehans, of course, were floated to the mouth of Mill Creek and caught in a boom on the Wisconsin River as the Meehan mill was not on Mill Creek.

A blacksmith shop, boarding house and store were operated by the firm of Milo Wood & Sons. Two account books survive the store, the first entry of one dated June 16, 1892 was a carry-over from a previous ledger. In April 1892 the charge accounts include, *inter alia*, these entries:

G. Barden (for piling wood) 10# <i>sugear</i> (sugar)	.50
M. S. Wood & Sons, 10# tea	3.50

<sup>1</sup> *History of Northern Wisconsin*, (Chicago: The Western Historical Company, 1881), p. 744.

W. A. Ferdon, 4# prunes @ 10¢	.40
G. Bean, 5# ev (evaporated) apples	.50
Andrew Pascavis, 1 time book	.10
Adolph Shurrett, 11# pork @ .08	.88
John Durfee, 1 pair overalls	.90
1 jacket	.75
Son (Sun?) Stoddard, smoking (tobacco)	.07
and plug (tobacco)	.10
E. Clendenning, 1 broom	.30
Walter Spencer, 1/2 bbl flour	2.50
Sid Parks, 1# coffee	.25

Later entries made in May 1892 reveal that the store also handled white fish, oil, nails, salt, matches, feed, soap, pepper, lard, peaches, coffee, lantern globes, middlings, saleratus (baking soda), syrup, and wire. Among the most-frequently purchased items: evaporated (dried) apples and plug chewing tobacco.

Another comparatively early saw mill in Linwood was built by the Meehan Brothers, Patrick and James, on the right (north) bank of the Wisconsin River about 40 rods west of the mouth of Mill Creek. (The site is today under water created by the Biron flowage.) The abstract on this forty reveals that the Meehans leased this land (NW-SW, Sec 23) for five years on Aug. 20, 1866 to erect "certain dams on the slough on a portion of said lands of given size and height and erect piers and booms for holding logs etc. . ."

After the Green Bay & Western Railroad came through from Plover to Grand Rapids in the 1870s, a spur was laid north to the bank of the Wisconsin River opposite the Meehan mill. Manufactured lumber was ferried across the river and loaded on cars and shipped out. Up to that time most of the lumber had been rafted to market down the Wisconsin River.

When the railway spur, long since removed, was laid down, a depot was established at the junction of modern H-54 and Trunk F which became identified with the Meehan interests, and when a post office was established here on March 14, 1876, it was called Meehan and Leonard Niles Anson served as postmaster. It was discontinued in 1892, reopened in 1893 with Joseph W.

Pettis as postmaster, and discontinued in 1907.

But the main Meehan community was around the saw mill, north of the river. Mrs. Sara Ferdon, granddaughter of Enos Stoddard (listed in 1863 tax roll) remembers the Meehan store and boarding house which stood on the hillside, as well as the brick oven deeply embedded in the ground where the baking was done for the mill crews. "My father, Merrit Stoddard," she said, "was called 'Sun' after the sun in the sky — by the Indians — and he always went by that name — Sun Stoddard — now what was I going to say? Oh yes, my father always wanted to have a good team of horses — had to look nice you know because we used them to Point — and mother would pack a big tub full of food for us kids and then the whole family would drive down in the wagon to the river and cross over on old Fuller's ferry. And there we'd pick blueberries and gooseberries. My, there were so many gooseberries! Then we'd invite Fuller to come have lunch with us — an old batch — and he enjoyed it. Yes, they was better days. . . . not all the fighting and trouble in the world there is now."

Another Linwoodian who remembers the Meehans is John Pascavic, one-time town chairman, who was born in Sec 22. He recalls his mother telling about the time she carried eggs down to the Meehan store (*ca.* 1885) to barter for groceries. "Pat" Meehan picked up the egg basket and was about to demonstrate how to whirl around in the middle of the floor with the basket of eggs on his head. The demonstration failed and everyone laughed over the fun. "But he paid mother all she had comin'," said Pascavic. "Them Meehans was good people. I remember Pat used to give me a stick of candy when I come to the store. (Pause). Yep, them was great times then. A piece of candy meant a great lot. That store and boarding house, that's where we used to dance. The Kenneys played. Two violins was all, and we'd take up a collection. Didn't do much square dancing any more, mostly waltzes and lot of the time they played *Jeszcze Polska Nie Zginela* (literally, "Yet Poland Not Lost," the Polish national anthem).

Aside from the Wood and Meehan mill sites in lower

Linwood the 1876 plat identifies the shingle mill of Brown & Preston in Sec 22. The mill was in operation under this firm name at least as early as 1868. No legend survives Brown but a headstone in Linwood Union Cemetery reads: "Capt. Frank Preston who was drowned while crossing the Wisconsin River Sept. 20, 1880."

Local legend associates a shingle mill in Sec 15 on Mill Creek operated in the 1870s by one of the Bean family. This was probably D. V. Bean. Local legend also associates the Wood mill site in Sec 22 as the "Brawley dam." Oddly, before the Biron flowage was created, a rapids about three quarters of a mile below the Meehan mill on the Wisconsin River was known as "Brawley Rapids." The association with Brawley is uncertain, although he may have been one of the first to cross the river at this point in the late 1830s.

Several landmarks are referred to in entries of the town proceedings. One was called "Sugar bush Eddie", which refers to an eddy on the Wisconsin River opposite the Yellow Banks where Amasa and George Warner had a sugar bush before the 1900s. They were not the first to tap these trees. In 1839 Hathaway encountered a "sugar camp" in the same area, no doubt worked by the Chippewas.

A prominent alumnus of Linwood in the 1890s was William Goldsmith Brown who was known as a composer of lyric poetry which dramatized the life of the pioneers, the girls of Linwood, the lumberjacks, and is especially remembered for the melodramatic version of the burning of the St. James Hotel at Stevens Point in 1889.

Hosea Fuller, mentioned in the 1863 tax roll, operated a ferry across the Wisconsin River near the mouth of Mill Creek from 1877 into the late 1890s, the longest anyone held this franchise. This was the ferry point originally known as "Alban's ferry," presumably established by James S. Alban. There is reason to believe that Alban's ferry was the first on the Upper Wisconsin, and, if he still owned it after 1850, he was probably allowed to maintain it by right of pre-emption or some

other understanding with the County Board as there is no record that he was ever granted a license for it. It is also doubtful whether Alban actually operated the ferry himself.

The first to be licensed to operate a ferry at this point was Joseph Seamans in 1862, and on Nov. 21, 1865 the County Board approved a petition of E. R. Clussman to operate it. Ferriage charges allowed by the charter were 10¢ for each passenger, 50¢ for a two-horse team and wagon, 37½¢ for a one-horse team and wagon, 25¢ per head of cattle, 6¢ per head of hogs and sheep, and freight was 25¢ per hundred weight. Clussman apparently carried on until Dec. 21, 1868, and on the following day, Jan 1, 1869 "O. E. Bean & Bro" began operating it. Apparently the latter defaulted on their obligations, for on April 8, 1869 Joseph Seamans was again given a license to operate the ferry. The rates of ferriage had also changed. Passengers were charged only 5¢ and hogs 5¢ per head, freight 10¢ per hundred, a two-horse team and wagon, loaded or unloaded, 35¢, and a single horse team and wagon 25¢. While cattle per head were still costing 25¢, there was a discount on two or more at 15¢ per head. One provision was added, namely, that carriages of any description without a team cost 25¢ each.

On Nov. 19, 1873 a charter was approved for Daniel Bean to "keep a rope and boat ferry"<sup>1</sup> for a period of three years. The rates of ferriage were about the same. Bean apparently carried on until Fuller took over early in 1877. The latter had many friends who were anxious to see him get the ferry, as the petition to the County Board was headed by Lloyd Jones, W. H. Packard, Wm. W. Mitchell and 20 others.

The importance of this ferry in the early economy of the county is reflected in the petition which suggests that it was a key link on the road to the Black River country.

Early in 1859 the town of Linwood, by action of the County Board, annexed Secs 19, 30, and 31 from Plover. Later that year the north one half of Sec 7 and Lots

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, Board of Supervisors, Vol. VIII, p. 475.

5 and 6 of Sec 8, Town 23, Range 8, were taken from the town of Plover and added to Linwood.

Effective April 1, 1864 the town of Linwood was reduced to that portion "lying on the north and west side of the Wisconsin River. . ."<sup>1</sup> The board failed to say how far north, but from other evidence it is learned that it ran to the north line of Town 23. In 1889 the township acquired one forty (SE-SE) in Sec 36, Town 24, Range 7, which lies next to the west limits of the city of Stevens Point. The petition to include this forty followed a refusal by the town board of Stevens Point to aid in laying out a road through it to connect with the "state road" running into Linwood.

On April 1, 1899 sections 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, and 36 in Town 24, Range 7, were detached from the town of Stevens Point and attached to the town of Linwood. By this action the County Board abolished the last of the town of Stevens Point. It also built up Linwood almost to a constitutional township of 36 sections, but made difficult by the turning and twisting of the Wisconsin River.

The earliest tax roll of Linwood is dated 1858 and, included under "amt. brot over" — a term which is not clear — it is learned that the following paid taxes in Town 22, Range 7: Stone W. B. Dodge & Geo. Huffman. In Town 23, Range 7: H. W. Mitchell, Wm. Harkness, Ward, M. G. Poatt, A. Franklin, A. Hayden, George Atwood, Oliver James, L(?) Mitchell, Joel S. Beadle, H. H. Young, Hiram Stupan (?), J. G. Webb, Humbert Willett, Chas. Braux, Loui Shepreau, Joseph Sylvester, R. W. Walker, J. S. Alban, Silas Webb, Jos. Wright, John Burr, Nancy Beadle, Thimothy Spencer, Christopher Oulet, Solomon Story, I. Ferris, H. Riker, and the remainder are listed as unknown. On the last page of this apparently incomplete document appears the name William Termy (or Fermy).

In Town 23, lying both above and below the Wisconsin River, these names appear in the tax roll of 1863: John Hogden, Enoch Bailey, Henry Morgan, Blake, Wm. Coleman, Andrew Carroll, Albert Morel, Hosea

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, Board of Supervisors, Vol. II, pp. 420-421.

Fuller, A. Franklin, C. B. Jackson, Ely James, John Robinson, Oliver James, Louis Shepreau, T. F. Batcheler, George Tubbs, Ephraim Lamphere, Peter Grant, Seth Barden, M. Clark, Stephen Coleman, J. H. Ormsby, H. A. Sherill, John Callow, J. R. Lumbert, Hiram Slusser, Washburn, (?) Sylvester, Dennis Hebert, Hosea Tubbs, Charles Pereu (?), Herbert Ouellet, Wm. Calkins, Enos Stoddard, Cornelius Halladay, John R. Halladay, James S. Alban (probably the estate), R. W. Walker, Silas Webb, Shubael Simonds, C. H. Simonds, Wm. Ward, C. H. Stone, Wm. Waterman, Hampson Stevens, Henderson Winans, J. Wood, Joshua Gray, Homer Drake, Joseph Seamans, T. W. Mitcheltree, Wm. Mitcheltree, Luther Hanchett, Geo. Knowles, Richard Gillett, Sherman, Reuel Robins, James Pierce, W. R. Lamberton, B. P. Haugh, F. S. Marshall, Joel S. Beadle, Milo Wells, Alfred Bates, Isaac Ferris (probably the estate), James Scott, and Paul Andrews. Only a handful of the above people paid any personal property tax in 1863 which suggests that the majority were land speculators or brokers for logging companies.

Serving the town of Linwood, with a population of 633, in 1957-58, were Edward R. Zurawski, chairman; Leo Niemczyk and Steve Polum, supervisors; Theodore Pascavis, clerk; Claude Frost, treasurer; Arthur Bartz, assessor; Esther Hansen, constable; and John Swiander, health officer.

## NELSONVILLE, The Village of

The village of Nelsonville, like so many in northern Wisconsin, probably owes its location to a beaver dam, in this instance, on the Tomorrow River where pioneer Jerome Nelson, an Englishman, saw an opportunity to build a dam higher than the beavers and create power for a saw mill. The forty on which the mill stood in Sec 5 of Amherst township was purchased by Nelson from the government on Nov. 28, 1854 and on Sept. 10, 1855 he arranged with Charles Stoltenberg and wife Anna, for the sum of \$1, for "the right to erect construct & maintain a mill dam across the Waupaca River at any point where sd river crosses the N $\frac{1}{2}$  SE Sec 5 23-10 to the height of 6 ft. above the surface of the water & the right to flow as much of the E $\frac{1}{2}$  SW & S $\frac{1}{2}$  of SENW in Sec, T & R aforesaid as shall be necessary to keep & maintain sd dam to the height aforesaid." In other words, for the sum of \$1, Nelson arranged with the Stoltenbergs to create a pond on part of their land along the Tomorrow River.

Whether a saw mill was built here in 1855 or 1856 is uncertain, but it was probably the first in the town of Amherst. A flour and grist mill was built later. John Koziczkowski of Amherst Junction recalls a visit he made with his father to Nelsonville in the early 1880s, and also remembers Nelson ("a nice fella, very sociable"). The saw mill stood on the right bank of the river and the flour mill on the left bank where it is still situated. While the saw mill has long since been discontinued, the flour & feed mill was probably built after Nelson returned from service in the Civil War. He volunteered Oct. 15, 1861, rose from NCO to 2nd

<sup>1</sup> *Deeds*, Vol. I, p. 225.



lieutenant and on March 9, 1865 to 1st lieutenant, Company A, 3rd Cavalry.

An advertisement in the *Pinery* of 1870 refers to the "Rising Star Flouring Mills three miles northwest of Amherst, Jerome Nelson, proprietor . . . all work done . . . warranted to give satisfaction."<sup>1</sup> The advertisement also advised that he was prepared to do custom grinding or "exchange with farmers." Actually, there was little custom grinding for cash either here or in any other mill before the turn of the century. Most common was the barter agreement whereby a farmer with wheat or rye gave a percentage of grain to be ground to the miller in exchange for grinding the balance.

In 1893 Nelson, only a few years before he died, arranged to have the dam on the pond raised another three feet, i.e., to nine feet, which suggests that he needed more power either for the saw mill or flour mill or both. The flour mill passed through several hands after his death and is presently owned by John Kozickowski, a grandson of Michael Kozickowski, and operated by son Barney.

When a post office was established here on Apr. 24, 1871, it was called Nelsonville, Edmund Creed served as the first postmaster. Aside from the mill interests of Nelson, at least two other business places were established here before 1876, as the plat carries an advertisement of Nelson & Loberg, who operated a general store, and August Peterson, a "manufacturer and dealer in Boots and Shoes."

Between 1876 and 1895 a number of additional business places and residences were established, in addition to the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1888. In 1913 the community decided to form its own political organization as apart from the township.

In order to incorporate a village, a group of petitioners has to band together to initiate action towards incorporation. This involves considerable spadework. A census of each family has to be taken and a detailed description of the territory to be included has to be

<sup>1</sup> *Pinery*, March 18, 1870.

made with the aid of a professional surveyor. Public notices have to be published and an election held. This rather involved procedure is aptly described in the incorporation of the village of Nelsonville whose petitioners addressed their communications to the Circuit Court in Stevens Point. The petitioners, all of them qualified residents and taxpayers in the territory to be described, were Carl O. Doxrud, O. L. Gordon, L. H. Johnson, M. L. Gordon, George S. Diver, O. S. Swenson, and Dr. Halfdan Raasoch. The petitioners explained that the territory "is not more than one half square mile in area and is not included in any village. And is all lying in the town of Amherst in county of Portage, in the state of Wisconsin, and contains a resident population of not less than one hundred and fifty persons."

These petitioners had caused an accurate survey and map to be made of the territory to be bounded by the village. The census of the people included in the territory had to be taken not more than ten weeks previous to the time of making the application for incorporation, and a detailed report had to be taken of each lot or quarter section of land. An affidavit had to be signed by the person who took this census.

The survey and map, plus the census figures on people and lands, were then left at the State Bank of Nelsonville for five consecutive weeks from the first publication and posting of the notices of application for incorporation. This was done so that any citizen could examine "at all reasonable hours" the survey and census figures if he wished. The actual population of the territory at the time of the census was 177 and actual territory covered 320 acres.

This detailed description of the territory and the census figures were then submitted to Circuit Court to approve the incorporation "if the electors thereof shall assent thereto as provided by law."

In other words, after the Court was satisfied that the incorporation was legal, the people themselves had to vote on it before it became final. This petition was dated Jan. 31, 1913.

When the petitioners forwarded their description and census figures to Circuit Court they also made known that the village would be called *Nelsonville*. The matter came up before Judge Byron B. Park at the Stevens Point Court House on Feb. 3, 1913. The petitioners were represented by Nelson and Murat, their attorneys. After the Court, that is, Judge Park, was satisfied that all the requirements of the statutes had been complied with by the petitioners, that the survey and census figures were correct, that the lands embraced in the territory "ought justly to be included in the proposed village, and that the interest of the inhabitants would be promoted by such incorporation", that the territory to be included in the proposed village contained at the time of the census was taken was in proportion to the population, he ordered the incorporation. This was followed in the village records by still another complete repetition of the description of the territory.

L. L. Loberg, John S. Loberg and Henry Stoltenberg were directed by the Court to perform the duties of inspectors of election to determine whether the electors of the territory described would agree to the incorporation. Notices of the upcoming election were posted in three public places; one on the front of Jacobson and Swenson's Furniture Store; one on the front door of J. S. Loberg Company's Mill, and one on the front door of the Nelsonville Creamery. These notices were posted Feb. 17, 1913, which was at least three weeks before the time specified in the notice for the holding of the election on March 11, 1913. The notice of election again described the territory to be included and explained where the election would take place, in this case at the Johnson Hall situated over the State Bank of Nelsonville.

The whole number of ballots cast at the election was 29, all in favor of incorporation.

With this step accomplished, the next and final step was the election of officers. As there was no newspaper printed in the village of Nelsonville, which on oath Carl O. Doxrud swore to, public notices were posted on

March 17 in the same places listed above, announcing a village election to be held Tuesday, April 8, 1913. The polls were opened at 10 o'clock and closed at 4 o'clock with one hour off for lunch. The following village officers were probably elected: Carl O. Doxrud, president; Ludwig H. Johnson, treasurer; Henry Stoltenberg, clerk; Ole Roe, assessor; Hans Berg, constable; Ole L. Gordon and Gilbert Gullickson, justice of the peace; Theodore T. Loberg, police justice; Dr. Halfdan Raasoch, George Diver, Carl Loberg, L. E. Gordon, Jr., Nils Loberg and Ole Swendson, trustees; and John Loberg, supervisor.<sup>1</sup> The results of the election itself were not recorded except that Doxrud and Stoltenberg signed the ordinance with their new titles.

As soon as a village is incorporated and officers elected, it passes ordinances to police itself. Ordinance No. 1 in Nelsonville banned anyone from bringing any device, wheel, dice, contrivance or thing to the village for purposes of gambling. Violations of this ordinance were liable to imprisonment in the county jail of not more than six months or a fine not exceeding \$100. In Ordinance No. 2, the playing of pool, billiards or bowling on Sunday was banned, and Ordinance No. 3 declared it unlawful for any person or persons to pasture any stock on the streets of the village.

The first assessment roll in the newly-incorporated village of Nelsonville in 1913 included L. L. Loberg, State Bank of Nelsonville, August Peterson, H. H. Waller, L. H. Johnson, William T. Waller Estate, Mrs. J. Nelson Estate, O. L. Gordon, Joseph Diver, N. J. Loberg, Theodore Johnson, Dr. Halfdan Raasoch, G. O. Gullickson, Mrs. C. Loberg, N. Grayson, G. I. Diver, Soren Solie, H. Stoltenberg, Mrs. L. Anderson Estate, C. O. Doxrud, Gullickson Bros., Olaf Swenson, Halvor Nelson, George E. Larson, O. F. Peterson, Carl Loberg, Ole Roe, Nelsonville Creamery Company, C. J. Reton, E. W. Stoltenberg, August Peterson, T. T. Loberg, Ole J. Omodt, L. E. Gordon, Jr., H. A. Wimme, M. L. Gordon, Joe Wevera, John Christenson, Ole Iverson,

<sup>1</sup> *Fra Indianernes Lande*, p. 117.

and Andrew Stoltenberg.

Stock in the State Bank of Nelsonville was held by Hans Johnson, 40 shares; Theodore Johnson, 30 shares; and L. H. Johnson, 30 shares, a par value of \$100 per share, with a total value, as fixed by the assessor for tax purposes of \$8,225. This bank is now closed.

Serving the village of Nelsonville with a population of 188, in 1957-58, were Welton Alm, president; Charles A. Anderson, Louis Loberg and Orbet Waller, trustees; LeRoy W. Gordon, clerk; Walter Leppen, treasurer; Llewelyn Henke, assessor; and Charles A. Anderson, supervisor.

## NEW HOPE, The Township of

In a document written in long hand by a deputy clerk of Portage County on a rather ordinary piece of writing paper, it was announced that the County Board, at a meeting held Nov. 11, 1856 had determined "that all that portion of the county of Portage composed of Township twenty four (24) and twenty five (25) of Range ten (10) be and hereby is set off and shall for the purpose of town government constitute the town of New Hope and shall hold its first town meeting on the first Monday of December next at the house of Johann Oleson Hole."

The circumstances of this document and the timing of the election for December rather than the following spring suggests that an extraordinary situation had arisen in eastern Portage County. A township of 72 sections known as Peru (still pronounced "pee-roo" by some) had already been organized on April 1, 1856 at an election held at Frederick Reinhardt's house. Ole Olsen Wrolstad had been elected town chairman; Sondre Gunderson (Loberg) and Leonard Perry, supervisors; Ole O. Wogsland, clerk; and Peder Halvorson (Houen), treasurer. But some question had arisen which caused this election to be considered, if not illegal, at least irregular. Probably this explains why the deputy clerk, who forgot to attach the County Board seal to the document, was in such a hurry when he sent out the notice of a special election. The new name of New Hope, replacing Peru, was allegedly suggested by Frederick Reinhardt, a German, and two Norwegians. Reinhardt was from Saxony. He entered the United States at New York on Aug. 23, 1849 and applied for naturalization at Plover on Dec. 27, 1853. It is quite possible that enroute to Portage County he spent

a short time with German acquaintances in or near New Hope, Pennsylvania, and from this experience suggested the same name for the township which he helped to organize.

At the new election of the township, which fell on Dec. 12, 1856, Leonard Perry replaced Wrolstad as chairman while Wrolstad and Simon Iverson were elected supervisors. John O. Hole became town clerk as well as one of the assessors; Nils Stiansen the second assessor; Ole O. Wogsland, John O. Hole, Sondre Gunderson and George R. Lawton, justices of the peace; and Peter Peterson Kjaerra, treasurer. Apparently Kjaerra did not qualify as a later entry reveals that Wrolstad had been appointed treasurer.

The survey of the section lines was begun Jan. 24 and completed Jan. 30, 1852.

The glacial period dotted the town of New Hope with more lakes and pot holes than any other in the county, most of them in the east and southern sections where the rolling terrain aptly reflects the uneven struggle with nature. In fact, a town road between sections 35 & 36 runs into a kettle hole which the Norwegians since pioneer times have referred to as *vrang hule*, "the mean hole," not quite so noticeable today but still a hazard in winter driving.

Sunset Lake, one of the most beautiful in central Wisconsin, is situated in Sec 22 of New Hope. None of the early plats ascribes a name to it and it was first identified as Sunset in the mid-1920s when a portion of the east shore was acquired by the Boy Scouts of America and since developed as Camp Chickagami ("Where camping is King,") playground of the Samoset Council with membership from all or part of 11 Wisconsin counties. And here a special Boy Scout order known as the Order of the Arrow has been established. Later, as if to confirm the mystic rites associated with the Order of the Arrow, it was discovered that at a certain time of day towards sunset, when the water mirrors the sky, that a person standing on the southeast shore, looking north, may discern a great arrow lying along the

north shore — an illusion created by the sandy beach which makes up the feathers, and the shore line which makes up the shaft, while the head of the arrow, lying to the east, is created both by the shore line and the reflection of the trees on a nearby hill.

To the southeast of Sunset lies a small lake. The parsonage of the North New Hope Church was originally located on the same forty of land and the lake came to be called *Praeste Laken* (the preacher's lake) and is officially known today as Minister Lake.

Farther east a few rods on the line between sections 22 & 23 lies a lake identified on recent plats as Skunk Lake, once known as "Valders Lake" after a man referred to by the early Norwegians as "Henrick Valders" who took the name of Larson in America.

In sections 28 & 29 lies Reton Lake, no doubt after the J. O. Reton family who later moved to Stevens Point. This lake also may have been known as Dutchman Lake in the 1870s, a name no longer used and while none of the early county plats, including 1915, designate it by any name, the 1957 plat calls it Reton which means that it has recaptured its first name. In 1958 the lake was to all purposes dry.

At the corner stake of sections 13, 14, 23 & 24 lies a lake which was once known as Horton, probably after Cyrus Horton (mentioned in 1857 tax roll). The property nearby was later acquired by Peter Budsberg and the 1895 plat identifies this as Budsberg Lake, a name still used.

Lying across the section line of 27 & 34 is a lake which in pioneer times was called Reinhardt, no doubt after Frederick Reinhardt. Although it still retains its original name, it is often referred to locally as "Wolding Lake" after a nearby family. A short distance west in Sec 27 lies Onland Lake, after T. O. Onland (or Onneland), also a pioneer of New Hope. One other named lake in the township lies in Sec 24 and is called Kankrud, after Hans P. Kankrud, but in 1958 was nearly dry. The western sections of the township are drained by the Tomorrow River and a feeder stream which



originates in the north of the township and is usually referred to as Mitcheltree Creek after the family of the same name living at the end of the town road. Eske Lodge, rendezvous of the Hot Shot Club from Stevens Point, is situated at the fork of Mitcheltree Creek where it joins the main stream of the Tomorrow River.

When the water level in the township is up to normal, a small stream also drains Reinhardt Lake and runs through sections 35 & 36 into the South Branch of the Little Wolf in the town of Iola.

Although Town 25 (Alban) was under the jurisdiction of New Hope until 1878, only six men in 1857 paid taxes on land in Town 25 and none of them lived there. The following taxpayers are listed in the New Hope assessment of 1857: Peder Pedrsen Kieara, Nils Stiansen, Leonard Perry, Ole Olsen Hole, Amund Olsen Hole, Simen Blihovde, Rasmus Andersen, Oluf Pedersen, Svenning Andersen, Knudt Hansen, Thor Amunsen, Lars Nilsen, Andrew Olsen, Benjamin P. Pattersen, Anders Johnsen, Edward Pattersen, Giarul Gunstensen, Johan Olesen Reton, Gunder Olsen, Edward Halgesen, David J. Sanders, Wasington Sanders, Handrick Nilsen, Hans Kankrud, Lars Iversen, Ole Gaarden, Helik O. Foss, Ole O. Foss, Amund Mortensen, Endre Nilsen, Wiliem Barger, Amun Torgersen, Aslak Olsen, Ole Aslaksen, Knudt Sakariasen, John Iversen, Simen Iversen, Ole Iversen, Lars Johansen, Ole Gundersen, Georg Lotow (probably Lawton), Olaves Lund, Ole O. Wogslan, Anloug Elefsen, Claus Gundersen, Gunder Nilsen, Gulbran Larssen, Hans Olsen, Ole Olsen Wrolstad, Peder Knudtsen, Halvor Borsen, Thomas Osmusen, Lars Andersen, Frederick Reinhardt, Handry (probably Henry) Wentsted, Ole Guliksen, Jorgen Pedersen, Cyas (probably Cyrus) Horton, Andru J. Horton, Johanes M. Aamot, Jens Houen, Osmund Gundersen, Hans Danielsen, Matis Halvorsen, Ole Tolefsen, Rasmus Andersen, Halvor Rolefsen, Johan A. Johansen, Sondre Gundersen, Jens Johansen, Reiar Halvorsen, Jacob Jacobsen, Nils Even- sen, Peder Halvorsen, Ole Halvorsen, Thomas Nilsen,

Kjel Johanesen, Torsten Rasmusen, Hans Olsen Lee, Ole Ostensen, Nils Andersen and Ole Johanesen.

The majority of these taxpayers were probably residents of New Hope. Although New Hope became the most heavily populated Norwegian township in Portage County there were, in the beginning, a few English or Yankee settlers here such as the Pattersons and Sanders, in addition to Horton, Perry, and Lawton. Most of them left New Hope within a few years, probably to avoid being absorbed completely by Norse culture. Leonard Perry, for example, moved south to Lanark where he could be among Scotsmen and Englishmen who referred to "tea" as supper, not a mid-afternoon snack (*kaffe-tid*).

The first Polish settlers in New Hope were probably John Domaszek and John Gladowski. Both paid taxes in 1868 on land in Sec 7 and perhaps settled here before that time.

As there is no village in New Hope, several country stores became local landmarks. Probably the most noted was located in the southeast corner of the township at a place known before and after the turn of the century as Benson Corners (H-161) more recently referred to on a highway sign as "New Hope." That the highway department reverted in mid-1950 in its road legend to this name suggests that it may have been the original name of the community, even as the 1895 plat identifies it. When a post office was established here on Aug. 13, 1861, it was, in fact, called New Hope. Frederick Reinhardt served as the first postmaster. When it was discontinued in 1904 the name Benson Corners gradually replaced the name of New Hope, probably because of the confusion which arose over the two entities. Peer Benson operated a store here in the 1870s and advertised in the 1876 plat as a dealer in "dry goods, groceries, hats, caps, boots, shoes, clothing, notions, etc." The store site is first referred to at a meeting of the town board held "at the store of J. Endlick" on May 11, 1863. In 1958 it stood vacant after nearly a century of service.

In the 1930s a novel was written by George V. Martin called "For Our Vines Have Tender Grapes" which used the region around Benson Corners as the locale of the story. It was later made into a motion picture.

On April 11, 1865 the town board held a meeting in "(?) Store." The wording is illegible and the name could be Syverson or Evenson. Nils Evensen paid taxes in 1865 on \$800 of personal property and as this kind of money usually represented a store building, it may be that Evensen operated a store located north of On-land Lake in Sec 26.

Another early country store was operated by Ole O. Wogsland south of Peru on Trunk T. A post office, called Alban, in honor of James S. Alban of Plover, was established in northern New Hope on Jan. 29, 1873 with Ole O. Wogsland as postmaster. Veterans of the township agree that this was located south of Peru on what is still the Walter Wogsland farm. The post office, still calling itself Alban, was moved into the town of Alban in 1880. The first reference, however, to Wogsland's store appears in 1868 when the town board met there.

Another country store, noted in the early days for its pot-bellied stove, cracker barrel, spittoons and peanut-shucks-all-over-the-floor, was built in the early 1880s in the west of the township at the intersection of Trunks A & Z. The building may have been erected by Sgvart T. Foxen when he purchased the lot on the northeast corner in 1882, for it was here that a post office, called Garfield, no doubt after the president, was established on March 19, 1884 with Foxen serving as postmaster. While the post office was discontinued Oct. 15, 1907, the store has since been known as the Garfield Store. Foxen passed it on to Amund Mortensen in 1892. Whether he actually operated the store is uncertain. The heirs of Mortensen sold to John A. Hole in 1896 when the store was operated mostly by son John and later Edwin, probably down to 1914, when Martin Ingbretson took over for about a year. By this time the old building was quite dilapidated and the store was closed for several years. The property was sold in

1920 to Joseph Omernik who erected a new building. Around 1925 son Alex began operating the store for his father, in 1927 became the owner and has continued in business since that time.

The Peru Store, at the junction of Trunks T & Z, was started in the early 1880s by Oscar Wrolstad. This may have followed the establishment of a post office on Sept. 14, 1882, called Peru, in the home of Martin O. Wrolstad who lived a few rods northeast of the present store. The post office was temporarily discontinued Nov. 28, 1884, opened again Jan. 7, 1885 and continued down to Oct. 15, 1907 when it was closed. The Peru store, operated throughout this period by Oscar Wrolstad, was sold to Alfred M. Wrolstad in 1912. In 1947 it was taken over briefly by Elvin Wrolstad and later by a brother, Franklin Wrolstad. In June 1948 Allen Torbenson became the owner and has continued in business since that time.

A farmer's co-op creamery was established across the road (west) from the store around the turn of the century. It eventually became a cheese factory which was discontinued after World War II.

In 1958 what is considered to be one of the finest stands of second-growth white pine in northern Wisconsin is located east of Garfield on a forty owned by Joseph Ostrowski (NW $\frac{1}{4}$ -NW $\frac{1}{4}$ , Sec 10). It was probably logged off in the 1870s and, owing to the fact that it was and still is a "back forty," that is, removed from any town or county road, it became in a sense isolated and was allowed to re-seed itself. -Except for recent select cuttings, it has remained untouched for some 80 years. In this wood lot one can sense the great dignity and splendid isolation of the white pine — the tree that helped establish a new civilization in Portage County.

In the northeast corner of the township, J. Melvin Rustad also has a stand of timber which is among the finest in central Wisconsin. A white cedar located on this wood lot is the largest in the state. It was officially measured by State Forest Ranger William Peterson in 1958 and scaled ten feet and six inches in circumfer-

ence four and a half feet from the ground. One of the tallest white spruce trees in the state is also growing nearby.

Serving the town of New Hope, with a population of 608, in 1957-58, were Russell Krogwold, chairman; Sam Larson and Peter Hintz, supervisors; Arthur Stoltenberg, clerk; Alex Omernick, treasurer; Franklin Wrolstad, assessor; and Dr. V. A. Benn, health officer.

## PARK RIDGE, The Village of

Park Ridge, aptly named after the ridge that follows the west bank of the historic Plover River, voted for incorporation at an election held in Viertel's Garage on Jan. 25, 1938. The village lies wholly in Sec 34, Town 24, Range 8, originally a part of the town of Hull, and contains 133.4 acres, or less than one quarter section of land. The petition for incorporation was signed by Horace Coleman, Jr., George Lovejoy, Oscar Hofmeister, Joseph Johnson, and George Bacon. Apparently there was some thought of calling it "Plover Hills" as the document of incorporation was written with this name throughout but corrected in ink above the scratched name of Plover Hills to make it Park Ridge, which was also spelled in the early documents as one word, "Parkridge."

Family heads who are listed in the original census were Henry Ebel, Leo Hofmeister, Wm. A. Wolenschlager, Verne Somers, Ernst Viertel, Sr., Tully Richter, Ernst Viertel, Jr., Roger Emmons, John Schlessner, Arnold Anderson, Arthur Hetzel, Melvin Clarin, Wlfred Engbretson, Warren J. Broten, Charlie Engbretzen, Oscar Hofmeister, Jean Kitowski, George Haertel, George Lovejoy, Adolph Borski, Otto Viertel, Gretchen Viertel, Edward Cholewinski, Dorothy Newby, George Thorin, George Perrin, Alton Whitney, George Ressler, Ray M. Peabody, Horace Atkins, Arthur Olson, George Bacon, Horace W. Coleman, Jr., James Grubb, Joe Johnson, Edward Drefcinski, Mary Jane Drefcinski, Alois Razner, Joseph Sanks, Floyd Sage, Beatrice Clusman, Anton Krembs, Alex Mansavage, Fred Bablitch, Raymond Harrer, Ray Golla, Joe Turzinski, W. M. Tepp, Madaline Adams, and John A. Kalpinski, who with their families, made up a population of not less

than 150 to qualify for incorporation.

At the election for incorporation held January 25, the total number of votes cast was 56, of which 52 were for incorporation and four against. At the first election of officers held Feb. 18, 1938 the following members were named to the first village board: H. W. Coleman, Jr., president; J. C. Johnson and George Lovejoy, trustees; Elinor Bacon, clerk; Oscar Hofmeister, treasurer; A. A. Hetzel, assessor; Horace Atkins, supervisor; Joe Turzinski, constable; and Charles Engbretson, justice of the peace.

A few months after incorporation, a movement got under way to dissolve the incorporation and revert to the town of Hull. This petition, dated July 14, 1938, was acted upon at a special meeting of the village board held July 19, 1939. On a motion made by George Lovejoy and seconded by Joe Johnson, the resolution was tabled. The reason given for this action was that the village plan had not been given a fair trial.

In 1939 the village got help from the federal Works Project Administration to improve its streets, and at a meeting held Aug. 31, 1939, the board voted "to notify the City of Stevens Point to keep their two ton trucks (when loaded) off the streets of Park Ridge after they have been oiled."

The income for the 1940 budget was established at \$3,207.28, and the total valuation, according to the 1939 assessment roll, was \$111,650, fixing the tax rate of \$23 per \$1000 assessed valuation.

After Oct. 3, 1940 a new ordinance prohibited the "keeping of horses, cows and pigs in the village of Park Ridge. . ."

At the regular board meeting held Oct. 31, 1940 it was resolved that the plat of Plover Hills, a subdivision north of H-10 in the NE $\frac{1}{4}$  of Sec 34, be accepted, but no further action was taken to include this subdivision in Park Ridge. At the same meeting the village constable was authorized the purchase of a revolver and holster not to exceed \$18 in costs.

Action to build a new village hall was taken in

December 1940 when a special assessment of two mills was established to cover the increased taxes. The attractive new hall, constructed of Ellis stone, was completed the following year. The Park Ridge Garden Club, a women's civic organization, has also done much to landscape and beautify the village as well as the embankment along the Plover River.

Serving the village of Park Ridge, with a population of 312, in 1957-58, were H. R. Brezinski, president; H. D. Anderson and Mark Makhholm, trustees; Robert S. Lewis, clerk; Robert P. Steinbeck, treasurer; George Johnson, assessor; Clifford Swanson, justice of the peace; Paul Kirby, constable; Herman L. Toser, health officer; and Joseph T. Hannon, supervisor.



## PINE GROVE, The Township of

The town of Pine Grove, organized in 1856, was originally composed of all of Town 21, Range 7 (lower Grant) and the four lower tiers of sections in Town 21, Range 8, or the lower two-thirds of modern Pine Grove. This suggests at once that the sections nearest the Waushara County line, not far from Plainfield, were the first to be settled. The first town meeting was to be held on the first Monday in October "at Nelson Beckwith's Mill."<sup>1</sup> Apparently the boundaries decided on by the County Board were not satisfactory to the freeholders of Pine Grove for a petition was presented that same year to change the boundaries, which was denied. In 1858 a new petition was entered to include all of Town 21 in Range 8, but Buena Vista protested and a compromise was reached whereby Buena Vista kept sections 1 to 6 and Pine Grove got sections 7 to 12. On April 1, 1862 sections 1 to 6 were detached from Buena Vista and annexed to Pine Grove, making it a full-sized township, in addition to Town 21, Range 7, in the southeast corner of the county which Pine Grove still administered. This was changed in 1865 after the town of Grant was organized which gave Town 21, Range 7, less three sections (34, 35 & 36) to Grant. A short time later the entire south half of Town 21, Range 7, was returned to Pine Grove, but in 1869 all these sections were annexed to Grant where they have remained to this day.

The subdivision of Pine Grove in Town 21, Range 8, was begun Oct. 23 and completed Nov. 1, 1851.

The township appears to have taken its name after a prominent pine grove located in the central sections.

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, Board of Supervisors, Vol. I, p. 261.

Aside from this, a small timber belt was located in the southwest corner where it is believed that the firm of Patterson & Hover (or Haven) had a saw mill in Sec 31. The location of Beckwith's mill, the place of the first election, is also uncertain. From a description of a road ordered laid in 1869 in the southwest corner of the township it appears that the cream of the timber already had been harvested.

The first book of proceedings of Pine Grove was apparently damaged, as the town clerk has made a series of entries from it in a new ledger dated 1861. In the first entry, dated May 28, 1861, he certifies that the record of a meeting held Oct. 5, 1856 is a correct copy of those "entered in the old Town Book on pp. 1 & 2." The transcript he made for the town of Pine Grove is headed: "Those elected Oct. 6th, 1856 and failed to qualify." As this is not the usual time for a town election, it appears to have been a special meeting to name the first town board but, like the difficulty which arose over the first election in New Hope, some irregularity may have occurred which nullified the first election and a second one was held. On page 1 of the new book the clerk certified the following:

"At a special town meeting held at the store of Robert Webb on Monday, Nov. 24, 1856, the following persons were elected: For chairman: N. F. Beckwith in place of A. M. Harris. Supervisors: A. M. Harris & Wm. L. Freeland in place of Caleb Seely & Wm. L. Freeland.

Town clerk: Robert Webb in place of Wm. Hover (or Haven).

Assessor: Wm. Hover in place of A. M. Harris.

Town superintendent: Chas Foss in place of Chas Foss.

Treasurer: Thomas Baker in place of Thomas Baker.

Constables: Thomas Baker & Jefferson Ellis in place of Thomas Baker & Jefferson Ellis.

Sealer of Weights and measures: E. Patterson."

From this it is learned that while some new officers were elected in November, several who were named to posts in the first election managed to be reinstated.

Pine Grove was orientated towards Almond in this early period both by historical association and by the fact that a village was developing in Almond township.

On the other hand, Pine Grove, lying next to Waushara County, was also influenced by economic and cultural circumstances which had their origin in the town of Oasis and village of Plainfield. Many of the first settlers in Pine Grove were people who originally settled in or near Plainfield, or whose sons had moved from the "Big Prairie" into the township.

Most of the township is flat, bordering on lowland with some actual marsh land in the northern sections which have since been improved by the Portage County Drainage District established in 1905. The township has one outstanding physical feature in the east known as "the Bluff," or as "Mosquito Bluffs," a huge mound of earth which rises abruptly out of the plain with no attachments, ridges or spurs, allegedly the highest point in Portage County. It may be seen for several miles in all directions, and is referred to as the "Bluff" for the first time in a road order dated at Almond in July 1856. It is still called the Bluff, although an older generation seems to prefer the name "Mosquito Bluffs" because it once attracted swarms of mosquitoes.

One of the early saw mill operators in Pine Grove probably was T. A. Jewett, who, through his attorney, Thomas H. Walker, asked the board of equalizers in 1862 for a "reduction on the amount assessed on their manufactured lumber from \$3 per thousand to \$1.50 to which the board agreed."

In later years, Addie B. Else, included in the 1884 tax roll, operated a saw mill a short distance west of the Wisconsin Central depot where he owned a plot of 36 acres of land, part of which fronted on the railway right-of-way. Ezekiel ("Zeke") Bancroft, included in the 1857 tax roll but not the 1884 roll, allegedly operated a "pony" (slang for small) mill on the "ledge" south of Bancroft village where the Chicago & North Western tracks were later laid. The ledge is an outcropping of stone which the railway engineers had to blast through.

Another saw mill in Pine Grove may have been operated by the firm of B. & H. Radcliffe who paid taxes in 1884 on two forties in Sec 14, about two miles south

of Bancroft. John Lowe, a long-time resident of the township, believes that John Radcliff operated a mill in the 1890s about three-quarters of a mile south of Schenek School near the geographical center of the township, apparently logging off the stand of pine after which Pine Grove was named.

The only village in the township, Bancroft, has never been incorporated. It was named after the Rev. Warren Gamaliel Bancroft, a pioneer Methodist pastor after the Civil War, and after whom Warren Gamaliel Harding, later President of the United States, was named. The village grew chiefly as a result of the railroad, often referred to by the older generation as the "Pee Line" after "P" for Portage. In 1901 the Chicago & North Western passed half a mile to the south where the village of "New Bancroft" was platted. A depot, two potato warehouses and a stockyard were located on the north side of the tracks. All this is now farm and grazing land and the depot has been removed.

A post office called Bancroft was established May 17, 1876. Edwin L. Rich served as postmaster.

The Wisconsin Central depot once stood on the east side of the tracks above Main Street. The first hotel, located at the corner of Main & Klondyke Streets, was probably built by Henry Kellogg. The *Portage County Directory* of 1896 however, carries the name of Hill's Hotel, operated by Smith Hill, and the name of Ed McIntee, a merchant in the village. The first general store was probably built by Ralph Waterman. In 1908 a newspaper called the *Bancroft News* was published but probably ceased publication in 1909.

An interesting aspect of life in Bancroft around the turn of the century, not observed elsewhere in the county, was the visit of a religious chapel car, known as "Glad Tidings," in the autumn of 1902. This was a mobile railway chapel which made a circuit of Baptist congregations where no church had been built. Mr. C. H. Rush, apparently a lay preacher, was in charge of this home mission work. Meetings were held over a period of several weeks while the chapel car remained

on the siding, and contests were arranged for the children to participate in various religious activities. Mrs. Bertha C. Valentine, nee Hutchinson, treasures a Bible which was presented to her by Rush in November 1902 for correctly memorizing the names of all the books of the Bible.

Although only a small village, Bancroft, like others in the county around the turn of the century, was able to support a concert band as well as a ball team. A postcard photo of 1905 reveals that the Bancroft Concert Band had 19 musicians. On the reverse side of the card for address and message is a small engraving of an automobile and a legend which reads: "Run Down to Bancroft 'That Growing Town' Some Thursday night to the free concert."

Another postcard (*ca.* 1905) carries the picture of the local ball team which the legend identifies as Ben McIntee, center field; Paul Summers, manager; Fred ("Guy") Hutchinson, third base; Robert Lowe, left field; Will Felch, first base; Chas. Manley, umpire; Orange Culver, right field; Frank Felch, catcher; Frank Springer, pitcher; Clarence Hutchinson, second base; and Carl Hutchinson, short stop.

Between 1890 and 1935 Bancroft became a big potato center with several warehouses catering to local growers, but the Depression as well as depletion of virgin land both worked to defeat small-scale operations. Since World War II potato growing has been revived in Pine Grove by larger producers using irrigation and commercial fertilizers. Most of the crop is hauled out by private and commercial truckers.

John Lowe, son of William Lowe who bought Myron Hinckley's pioneer farm in sections 1 & 2 (*ca.* 1882), began attending Limerick School when his family settled in the township. Among the teachers he recalls in this pioneer school, located a short distance east of Bancroft, were Lizzie Nugent, Stella Luce of Stevens Point, Charles Hamilton of Plainfield, Nelson Beggs of Almond township, and Eva Strong of Pine Grove. Of Eva Strong he said: "One time a band of Indians — on

a big binge — came hollerin' and whoopin' it up past the school house. Eva was small and wiry, but she wasn't scared, and she got the kids inside and went to her desk and pulled out a revolver. 'Don't be alarmed now,' she said, and held up that gun, 'if one of them redskins sticks his head through that door I'll shoot him!' "

The Lowes immigrated from England. Asked if he had ever heard his father mention why he emigrated to America, John Lowe said: "No, but I know why grandpa came. They were having some sort of a church doings where we came from in England and the crowd was waiting outside for the bishop who was to be the guest that day. No one could go inside until he had gone in first, you know. So everyone was standing there waiting. But my grandpa, yes, I've heard my aunt tell the story a dozen times — my grandpa always liked to sit down whenever he had the opportunity, and so he sat down there on the curb and got to talking with a neighbor. But he didn't notice the bishop coming and when the bishop saw him sitting there with his hat on, he swung at the hat with his cane. Instead of knocking grandpa's hat off, he creased his skull. Grandpa jumped up and knocked the bishop into the street and of course got himself arrested. Then the judge said, 'If you'll get out of this country in 24 hours, I'll drop the charges,' and grandpa left for America in 12 hours and never went back. And me," Old John chuckled, "I've been a deputy sheriff in Portage County for 30 years."

Apparently the first assessor of Pine Grove was under some misapprehension about the tax rate as the first half of the assessment roll has been entered with all the names of the taxpayers and scratched, and a completely new entry made of the same people in the second half of the ledger with a new set of valuations. The names of these first taxpayers in the corrected version are: Wm. Rice, John Downing, Hicks & Bell, Pratt, Wiggington & Collick (probably Kollock), McGlaflin, George Swallow, James Sample, Knulan Abbot, Blen (?) Clark & Frost, Ephram Beaumont, Mathew Beaumont, Jacob

Ingerham, John Pierce, Nelson Havens, Wiley Fuller, Hamilton Dalrymple, Asa Tarbox, Gamelia Bancroft, Manan Bancroft, Ezeckial Bancroft, J. M. Roseberry, James Poetter, Wm. Sample, Bela Tarbox, James Beggs, Henry Davison, Shuble Patchon, Jesse Bentley, Abel Harris, Samuel Carrele (probably Carroll), White, Anthony Ostrander, A. A. Goodwin, Orrin Perry, Rufus Dutton, Lewis, Edward Smith, Wm. (?)iathman (probably Trotman), Caleb Sealey, John Ellis, Parks, E. Hill, Patterson & Hover, Asa Coles, Gernsey, Charles Foss, John Blake, Merrick Anderson, B. W. Gardner, George Kellogg, Wm. Smith, Lewis Carrele (?), Thomas Baker, Stillman Ellis, James Corzett, Estus Barker, G. W. Dutton, Oscar Dutton, John Youngman, Isah Berry, Samuel Dale, Ely Ostrander, Henry Dale, Wm. Studley, Dorman & Fields & Co., Benjamin Wiggins, and Lord.

Serving the business and farming community of Pine Grove is the Bancroft State Bank, founded Oct. 5, 1912 with a capitalization of \$10,000. The original stockholders were Albert W. Manley, Chas. A. Walker, Harold Ostrum, Eugene H. Strong, B. B. Baker, Buchanan Johnson, Elsie Meddaugh, Robert I. Roseberry, and Ed. J. Pfiffner. The first officers were A. W. Manley, president; Buchanan Johnson, vice-president; and Harold Ostrum, cashier. The bank has since increased its capitalization to \$25,000. At the close of business in 1957 the bank's total deposits were \$561,463.65 with a capital structure of \$60,647.33. Officers of the bank in 1957 were Jesse L. Judd, president; C. R. George, vice president; Alice Polley, cashier; and Jenney Hansen, assistant cashier.

The Bancroft State Bank has been the target of three robberies and/or holdups since it opened. The last was a hold-up when a man walked into the bank on Tuesday morning, Aug. 6, 1958 — the twelfth anniversary of the first atomic bomb over Hiroshima — and pretending that he was carrying a gun hidden in a piece of cloth — actually a mechanical pencil — demanded that the cashiers turn over the money. He took \$2,450 and drove away. Road blocks were established by the

sheriff's departments in the several counties and the bandit was captured less than two hours later by Wood County authorities south of Marshfield, the money still in his possession.

On Tuesday, April 3, 1956, the village of Bancroft was struck by a tornado which wrecked or damaged several buildings, killed and injured a number of people in private homes, while the school building, bulging with children, miraculously escaped the wrath of the winds. It came and went in less than 60 seconds and tore a path eastward through the countryside some 50 miles long.

Serving the town of Pine Grove, with a population of 667, in 1957-58, were William Petrusky, chairman; Rodney McIntee and Irle Dittburner, supervisors; Earnest Swiontek, clerk; Cecil R. Bender, treasurer; Lloyd Bovee, assessor; and Cecil Bender, health officer.



## PLOVER, The Township of

The town of Plover probably takes its English name from the Semipalmated Ring Plover, a shore-bird with long pointed wings and short tail similar to the Kildeer, but unlike the Kildeer, which frequents meadows and fields, prefers mud flats and beaches. According to family accounts handed down even unto the fourth generation, flocks of these birds, in their annual migration north, were attracted to the mouth of the Plover River just above the modern Whiting-Plover Paper Company. This might suggest that before the river was dammed up a short distance above the mouth, a mud flat or delta had formed here where the Plovers found good feeding. While this bird is seldom seen any more in this part of the state, its flight north more than a century ago apparently made a deep impression on the first timber cruisers because the name "Plover" was already being used in reference to an Indian treaty of 1837 and by Hathaway in 1839.

The first mention of the name "Plover Portage," upper case in both instances, appears in a transcript from the Mineral Point records when Enoch G. Bean, justice of the peace (acting), recorded a deed of Harrison K. Fay at "Plover Portage this sixteenth day of February A. D. 1843."<sup>1</sup> It was also used in 1843 when an election precinct was created at "Plover Portage" and the place of election "at the house of Gilbert Conant." When Hathaway surveyed the Indian strip he found Conant & Campbell's mill on the right bank of the Wisconsin River, that is, opposite the modern village of Whiting. This suggests that the property of Conant & Campbell was considered part of Plover Portage which

<sup>1</sup> *Deeds*, Vol. A, p. 65.

appears to confirm hearsay evidence that in the early 1840s the name referred to not only the several blocks of streets around Rushville but to an area which included the Wisconsin River to the north several miles on either bank.

The Indians designated this as *Mush-ko-da-ny*, meaning, in Chippewa, a "prairie." The trail dividing the Chippewa and Menominee lands ran through here and both tribes probably used it as a staging area for portaging canoes between the Wisconsin and the Wolf Rivers via the Tomorrow-Waupaca. The portage was allegedly known to the Chippewas as *Wah-bau-ga O-ning-ah-ming*, meaning "eastern portage."<sup>1</sup>

In the first division of Portage County, made by the County Board on Jan. 9, 1849, three townships were created; namely, Plover, Middletown, and Bull Falls. Plover took in all of Portage County "lying south of a line running east and west through said county one mile south of the north line of Town 23, Range Eight. . ."<sup>2</sup> And the first election of officers for the town of Plover was held at the "House of Geo. Neeves in Grand Rapids. . ."<sup>3</sup>

On March 1, 1850 a new division of townships was made in which the town of Grand Rapids was set off from Plover township and the latter included all of Portage County "north of the town of Grand Rapids and running to a line one and a half miles south of the north line of Town 23 in Ranges Six, Seven, and Eight [with the] seat of government at the Court House in Plover."<sup>4</sup> Apparently an error was made in this description as there is no mention of the townships in Range 9, while the townships in Range 10 were still part of Brown County.

The first change in this arrangement was made in the spring of 1852 when the town of Almond was set

<sup>1</sup> *Collections*, Vol. I, p. 120. (An account, written in 1854, by Hiram Calkins, Esq., of Wausau, states that the portage was "about eight miles" between the rivers, patently a miscalculation, for even the distance between the Wisconsin and Tomorrow River at Amherst would be around 15 miles.)

<sup>2</sup> *Proceedings*, Board of Supervisors, Vol. I, p. 148.

<sup>3</sup> *Loc. Cit.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165.

off from Plover and which was to include modern Pine Grove and most of the lower part of Grant. In the next several years, Buena Vista, the north half of modern Grant, Stockton, and Linwood were set off from former Plover territory which reduced the township to a little more than 40 sections, all on the left bank of the Wisconsin River.

In 1857 Amos Courtwright and others petitioned the County Board to annex the equivalent of six sections along the south line of Stevens Point township in Range 8 to the town of Plover. This was an extraordinary arrangement as the petitioners prayed that the north half of sections 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 and the south one-half of sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 in the same range be included. In other words, it extended Plover township one mile north from modern Elm Street in Whiting, but left six northern sections of Town 23 cut in two, the north half still a part of the town of Stevens Point. Apparently the board tabled this petition, for a month later Wellington Kollock presented an amendment to the board which returned the south half of sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7 to the town of Stevens Point. This arrangement isolated several sections lying within the elbow, i.e., on the right (west) bank of the Wisconsin River from the main part of the township on the left bank. In 1859 sections 1, 2 & 3 of Town 23, Range 8, which had been taken from the town of Stevens Point and annexed to Hull, were taken from Hull and attached to Plover.

Effective Dec. 15, 1869 sections 13 to 18, Town 22, Range 8 were detached from Buena Vista and attached to Plover. And on Nov. 23, 1870 Plover annexed all that part of the county that runs with H-54 west to the Wood County line between the Wisconsin River and town of Grant, plus three sections, 19, 30 and 31 in Town 23, Range 8, about three miles west of Plover village which 11 years earlier had been annexed to Linwood. In addition, it acquired the north one-half of Sec 1 in the northeast corner of Grant. This may have been done at the instigation of someone in Grant itself.

According to hearsay evidence, there was a movement on foot to have this part of Grant attached to the town of Grand Rapids in Wood County, but by attaching half a section to Plover, this township was reduced to less than the constitutional limit of 36 sections and kept Grant in Portage County.

On Nov. 19, 1908 a number of petitioners living in Lot 6, Sec 6, (T. 23, R. 8) and in the south half of Sec 4, (T. 23, R. 8) then part of the city of Stevens Point just north of modern Whiting, asked to be attached to the town of Plover "for the reason that we have got to pay, or are obliged to pay, enormous city tax and derive no benefit therefrom."<sup>1</sup> The County Board agreed. This appears to be the last change made in the boundary lines of the county aside from the creation of new villages within these lines of demarcation.

Most of modern Plover township was subdivided in the Indian Survey of 1839-40. The subdivision of part of Plover in Range 8 not affected by the Indian Survey, mainly in the southeast part of the modern township, was begun Feb. 18 and completed Feb. 19, 1852.

The subdivision of that part of Town 23, Range 8, within three miles of the Wisconsin River was made by Hathaway from June 5 to July 5, 1839. The subdivision of Town 22, Range 8, which today includes Plover in the north half, and western Buena Vista in the south half, was begun Nov. 3, 1851 and completed March 6, 1852. The sumach tree, rarely mentioned in any of the surveys of the county, is referred to in the field notes on this township. Today the sumach is quite common, particularly along neglected roads or clearings which have been abandoned.

The earliest entry in the available proceedings of the town of Plover is dated May 30, 1851 which ordered a road laid along what today appears to be a town road, about a mile southeast of Plover village.

There is reason to believe that the first church congregation in Portage County may have been organized

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, Board of Supervisors, Vol. VIII, p. 361.

in Plover in the mid-1840s by the followers of the Methodist faith, led by a home mission pastor, the Rev. J. Hurbert. Services were probably held in log cabins of the various members and in 1850 in the rooms of the county Court House. The county commissioner's proceedings state that the Court House was being used that year "for public meetings and public worship" but fail to mention the name of the people. It was not until 1861 that this congregation succeeded in building a church in Plover by which time a Presbyterian church had already been completed.

The earliest list of township taxpayers in the county is found in the town of Plover for the year 1854. From this it is possible to establish material evidence of resident owners, most of whom were located in Town 23, Ranges 7, 8 & 9, that is, modern Plover township (less southern Linwood and northern Grant) and southeast into Stockton and Buena Vista. A few are listed in Town 22. Resident owners listed in Town 23, Range 7, are H. H. Young (who also paid taxes in Ranges 8 & 9), James S. Alban (who also paid taxes in Range 8), Joseph L. Cotey (who also paid taxes in Range 8), Alfred Martin, and Wash (?) V. Wood.

Resident owners listed in Town 23, Range 8, which would include the township around Plover village itself, are: Hartwell & Franklin, J. D. Rogers, John W. Bachelor, Bachelor & Brown, Luke V. Spurr, H. & A. Drake, Samuel Drake (who also paid taxes in Range 9), Foster Mitchell, Miner Strobe (who also paid in T. 22, R. 8), Hoskins, N. Bumpus, John Eckels, F. Wolbridge, Royal Dimond (?), E. B. Clark, James Eckels, Wm. Albertie, A. M. Dunten, John Philips (who also paid in Range 9), J. Perdy (Purdy?) (whose land description also included "1/4 of Springville Mills", i.e., the grist mill on the Little Plover), D. V. Hubbard, George Sterling, Peck, Mathias Mitchell, Chas. Owen, Hiram Riker (who also paid in Range 9), W. J. Bates, Loyd Wakmen, D. J. Sanders, Joseph Hodgeson, Lenard (?) Wells, H. A. Bean, Johnathan Wyatt, Joseph Dow, S. A. Sher-

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings, County Commissioners Sessions, Vol. I, p. 166.*

man, A. Hayden, R. F. Rising, Geo. Bramer (who also paid in Range 9), D. H. Harroon, Jeramiah Haley, Lorin Crosby, G. S. Sales, Andrew A. Smawley, Hugh McGreer, Samuel Lawrance, Wm. Lamareux, Mrs. Ruthford, Thos. H. McDill (who also paid in Range 9), B. F. Cooper, J. W. Holland, G. W. Cate (who also paid in Range 9), Ethan Burdick, Jesse Anson (who also paid in Range 7), J. N. Ward, C. S. Ogden (who also paid in Range 9), "Wells at the Point" (meaning, no doubt, a taxpayer who probably lived in Stevens Point although listed under the column of resident owners), M. Strong (almost certainly not a resident), next name illegible, Vandervoort, Almond Maxfield (who also paid in Town 22, Range 8), and J. W. Hale (who also paid in Town 22, Range 8).

Resident owners in Town 23, Range 9, which would include all of modern Stockton south of Custer and all of Buena Vista in Range 9, roughly north of H-54, are O. D. Richmond, Oliver Richmond, S (?) Furgason, Henry Danforth, J. F. Webber, Lois (?) Moor, Heirs of J. L. Moor, Wm. Bramer, J. C. Maxfield, J. E. Litle, Peter Smith, Dayton Gilbert (who also paid in Range 7 & 8), G. W. Morrill, E. H. Buel, J. Gardner, Peter McMillen, James Lambert, Joseph Hewett, George Yorton, John Brinkley, Henry F. Clements, D. R. Clements, Horace Judd, Thos. H. McDill (who also paid on a forty in Sec. 21, Range 8, and several lots unidentified by section or range number), B. Phelps, Sarah Blodgett, John Ogden, Plat (?) N. Davis, Jeramiah Bennett, Louis Clark, Michael Shortell, John Bourcier, and John Shannon.

Others are listed as paying taxes on lots in "V.P." which probably stands for "village of Plover." These are C. B. Bacheller, Hoskins, John Eckels, F. Wolbridge, Heirs of J. L. Moor, James Eckels, Wm. H. Clark, L. M. Gregory, M. G. Pratt, Amos Courtright, Luther Hanchett, A. W. Bell, Wm. R. Ward, Catherin Marten, S. A. Sherman, J. E. Bacheller, D. B. Danforth, James S. Alban, G. W. Mitchell, Lorin Crosby, J. B. Scott, Thos. H. McDill, Mrs. England, J. W. Holland, Joseph

Code (Cotey?), John G. Hibbard, A. V. Glading (?), Wm. Harris, J. W. Harris, Wm. Croscier, E. G. Bean, and Wm. Eckles.

Those who paid taxes on land as resident owners in Town 22, Range 8, are E. W. Bell, A. W. Bell, Lyman Porter, James Aplin, and F. Wilmot. One other name, Michael Shea, appears in the roll with no description, while David Carpenter is listed as a non-resident owner of land in Town 22, Ranges 7 & 9.

On March 30, 1854 John Stumpf, clerk of the County Board, ordered that the following percentage "be and the same is hereby levied upon said assessment to wit: Six mills on the dollar valuation for State Tax, One and one fourth per cent for County purposes and one mill on the dollar valuation for the support of Common Schools, which makes the following Amount to be collected in the town of Plover, to wit: County Tax, \$687.78.07; State Tax, \$330.13.08; School Tax, \$55.02.03; Total Amt. \$1.072.94.8."

The tax roll reveals that G. M. Park was town clerk; Eli B. Clark, town treasurer; and Thomas H. McDill, assessor. Town Clerk Park ordered that the treasurer, after deducting his fees for collecting taxes, pay the treasurer of Portage County on or before the last Monday of May the sum of \$330.13.8 as state tax, to retain and pay out the sum of \$300 for town taxes, while the balance was to go to the county treasurer. It was signed May 16, 1854.

The village of Plover, not yet incorporated, was administered by the town board and hence the village tax roll is included in the same record in which the town assessments are found.

Quite a few of the names listed for both the town of and the village of Plover were later to become famous in the history of Portage County, while some of them turn up in other townships in the next few years which suggests that they settled near Plover first, and noting an opportunity to make money elsewhere, moved to a new village or township.

While Plover was developing into a "comely village"

in the 1850s, a small community in the township was also growing around the mouth of the Little Plover known as Springville, a name probably suggested by the river which is fed by springs. In Springville, apparently on the right bank of the river, west of modern H-51, John R. Mitchell built a flour and grist mill, allegedly the first in the Pinery. He purchased the forty from the government on May 3, 1849 and most accounts agree that the mill was in operation some time in 1850. Mitchell at first held only a half interest while the other half was held by Ira Purdy and Theo. Fisher who sold out to Mitchell in 1855. The importance of this mill to the pioneers of the county may be gauged by the fact that Leonidas Lombard, according to his diary, came all the way from Lanark to "Mitchell's Mill" on Jan. 8, 1858, presumably to have flour ground.

The mill property passed to other hands and the 1876 plat lists a grist mill on the site. This burned in the 1880s. In 1899 E. H. Rossier *et al* built a new mill under the name of Springville Milling. A snapshot photo (*ca.* 1920) reveals a mill which, with the turbine section on the ground floor, was four stories high. The overflow from the dam ran a rod or so to the south of the mill race. The property eventually became obsolete and passed to E. A. Oberweiser. While part of the stone foundation may still be viewed, a private swimming pool has since been created in the old mill race.

The Ellis account, in addition to the Mitchell flour mill at Springville in 1857, lists a saw mill, one store, a tavern-house, a blacksmith shop and some 12 dwellings.

The most important community to develop in the township, aside from Plover village, was at the mouth of the big Plover River where Thomas H. and Alexander S. McDill platted a village in 1873 (incorporated as part of the village of Whiting in 1947). The Original Town was laid out in the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ -NE $\frac{1}{4}$  of Sec 9 in four blocks intersected by Main Street (today H-51) running south-southeast, and three east-west streets, Pine Street, Washington Avenue, and Broadway. A post office was



established in Block 3 (opposite the modern residence of Ben Redfield) on the east side of Main Street Feb, 9, 1874 called McDill with Lemuel G. Rice serving as postmaster. It was discontinued Feb. 13, 1904.

The G. E. McDill Addition was platted in 1893 to the south of the original town on the west side of Main Street (H-51). This community developed as a result of the saw mill and flour milling interests established on the big Plover by the McDills who continued in business until 1902 when the two dam sites on Broadway passed to the Wisconsin Graphite Company and in 1916 to John Strange of Neenah who established a paper mill here, later known as the "stink mill" because of the sulphur fumes which were released from the stacks, and, according to the prevailing wind, could be sniffed in most parts of Portage County. The mill operated into the 1940s and was finally razed.

In its heyday, McDill boasted a public hall, hotel, and brewery operated for many years before the turn of the century by Andrew Lutz, all located on the crest of the hill northwest of McDill Pond. The stylish residence of the McDills was also located on the hillside with a commanding view of the saw mill and flour mill. There were at least two stores in McDill before the turn of the century, one operated by Truman Rice and one by John Norton.

To the west of McDill another would-be village was platted called Conant Rapids, after the rapids of the same name on the Wisconsin River. While it was divided into 84 blocks, it never developed into a residential area until after it was incorporated into the village of Whiting in 1947 and is still relatively unoccupied.

In his minutes of the Old Settlers Club, Sherman states that Plover Cemetery, lying about half way between the village and the Yellow Banks, is the oldest cemetery for the white man on the Upper Wisconsin River. While no headstones can be found standing which date earlier than 1851, there are a number of flat stones partially overgrown with sod and two of

these may be, according to the cemetery association records, the graves of Stephen Albin, who died Jan. 5, 1842 and lies buried in Block 2, Lot 29, and Melisa Morris, who died Oct. 11, 1845 and lies buried in Block 1, Lot 53. The oldest graves lie along the central entrance where the headstones of James S. Alban and Joseph Baker and wife Ellen may also be found.

Serving the town of Plover, with a population of 1,618 (which includes the unincorporated village of Plover) in 1957-58, were Milvern E. Jacklin, chairman; Carroll Dakins and Edward A. Sankey, supervisors; Cecil E. Allen, clerk; Guy E. Carley, treasurer; Ernest Rogers, assessor; Joseph Worzalla, justice of the peace; and Henry Eiden, constable.

## PLOVER, The Unincorporated Village of

The village of Plover was the first to be platted in the county one year after it was voted the county seat in the election of 1844. In his recollection of the event, George W. Mitchell, believed to be Plover's "first citizen," states that the name Plover was not used in the balloting but instead the voters indicated their preference by naming a "certain 80 acres of a section, town and range. . ." This strongly suggests that while the general area around the elbow of the Wisconsin River was being referred to as Plover Portage up to 1844, there was no established community here, only a few scattered log cabins to the south and southwest of the modern Plover located in a community known as Rushville.

In 1845 George Wyatt, acting as agent and attorney for Moses M. Strong and Frances Dunn, filed an affidavit with Charles Temple, notary public, presumably at Mineral Point, relative to laying out of the Original Town of Plover in the east half of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$  of Sec 22, Town 23, Range 8. The description states, *inter-alia*, that: "All streets are 60 ft. wide. Alleys 20 ft. wide. Full lots are 66 ft. front by 125 feet depth. The Public Square is 32 rods 14 ft., 2 inches, from North to South and 23 rods 10 feet 6 inches from East to West."<sup>2</sup>

The Original Town lay east of modern H-51 (platted as First Street) four blocks, and extended north from Union Street eight blocks and a fraction. The GB&W tracks later ran through the middle of this plat, dividing it fairly equal north and south. The Public Square, long since obliterated, lay in the center of the plat be-

<sup>1</sup> *Stevens Point Journal*, Feb. 11, 1905.

<sup>2</sup> *Deeds*, Vol. A, p. 165.

tween Wisconsin & Main north of Willow Street and covered five acres.

Although the plat is referred to as Plover, when a post office was established here on Jan. 14, 1845 it was called Plover Portage, with George Wyatt serving as postmaster. The name of the post office was changed to Plover on Jan. 14, 1850. In fact the village has had several names, reflecting, if nothing else, a high-spirited citizenry. In 1857 an act to incorporate Plover as the village of Algernon, probably named after Algernon B. Crosby, was approved by the legislature.<sup>1</sup> The following year an act to amend this to the village of Stanton was approved May 4.<sup>2</sup> It has been commonly assumed that the village was called Stanton during the Civil War to honor Lincoln's secretary of war, but the change was made before Lincoln became president, and up to 1858 Edwin M. Stanton had been known chiefly as a successful lawyer in Washington, D. C., not as a statesman. The village may have wished to honor Elizabeth Cady Stanton, a leading advocate in the 1840s and '50s of women's rights in New York state where many of the Plover pioneers originated. In 1864 the name Stanton was dropped in favor of the old name "Plover."

Thus the village has been known as Plover since 1864 and while incorporated during the early years, the incorporation was dissolved on or before 1870 and it has since been governed by the town board.

The first buildings in the community appear to have been located below Union Street in what was later known as H. H. Young's Addition. An indenture of Oct. 28, 1846 refers to a "store formally occupied by H. Stow & Co. and the tavern house now occupied by John K. & G. W. Mitchell. . ." both in Sec 27 in the west half of the NW $\frac{1}{4}$  which places these properties along the east side of modern H-51 near the intersection of H-54 and Trunk B. The store and tavern-house were sold to Samuel L. Keith and Smith Niles of Belvidere, Illinois,

<sup>1</sup> *Private and Local Laws* (1857), Chap. 278, p. 721.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, (1858), Chap. 203, p. 485.

who were "not to sell or allow any alcoholic liquors of any kind to be retailed on said premises" or the contract was null and void.

The indenture referred to earlier uses the term "store" in connection with Stow & Company. There is no record that a license to operate a store was ever issued to this company and apparently it was not required. On the other hand a license to operate a "grocery" in Plover was issued to Olaf E. Dreutzer in 1846. (See *Ethnic Groups of Portage County*.)

Sherman believes that John R. (K in the indenture) Mitchell, referred to earlier, was the first settler in Plover Portage, built the first house — no doubt a log cabin — and was the first man to be married in the present limits of the county. The *Historical Atlas of Wisconsin* (1878) states that Enoch G. Bean performed the ceremony which took place on Christmas day, 1842, when Mitchell married Fannie Luther, both of Plover Portage. (There is no record of this marriage in the office of Register of Deeds.)

While the indenture mentioned above refers to the "tavern house now occupied by John K. & G. W. Mitchell," the latter were probably not in business in Plover in 1846, but an application for a license "to keep a tavern at Plover Portage" made by John R. Mitchell and Thomas H. McDill, was approved by the county commissioners on Sept. 5, 1847.

When Sherman arrived at Plover from Milwaukee in October 1848, a trip by lumber wagon requiring eight days, he stopped in Plover at "Rice's Hotel which was then the most pretentious building in this part of the state, the only one that was plastered, painted or provided with brick chimneys."<sup>1</sup> This was probably the tavern-house of Charles P. Rice who was issued a license on April 10, 1845 which cost \$25 — the second tavern-house, after Houghton & Batten, in the present limits of the county.

The third licensed tavern-house in Plover was oper-

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, County Commissioners Sessions, Vol. I, p. 115.

<sup>2</sup> *Note Book* no. 9.

ated by John Curran, father of John and Henry Curran, later of Stevens Point, whose application was approved May 25, 1847. A year earlier on Sept. 14 John Curran paid \$5 for a peddler's license. Jesse Anson, an early river pilot, is said to have operated a tavern-house at Plover in the 1840s called the "Goose Horn"<sup>1</sup> but there is no record of a license ever issued to him, and, as legend associates Curran's place with the Goose Horn, it may be that Anson worked for Curran. According to one account, the Goose Horn was a noted gambling resort "where a sport from Galena named Curran prepared one of the rooms with lattice above the gambling table and a wire leading to his chair below. He had a son who looked through the lattices above and telegraphed important information to his tricky father through the secret wire."<sup>2</sup> The narrator of this story goes on to say that a gambler from Milwaukee lost \$40,000 to the father and son combination although it is unlikely that any stranger from Milwaukee in the 1840s would be carrying \$40,000. It may be that in the retelling of this story through the years, an extra zero was added.

After the incorporation of Plover township in 1849, the matter of local licensing was left up to the town board, but it is clear from the licenses issued up to 1849 that the most important institution in the county was the tavern-house, while the "grocery" or "store" was of secondary importance. This suggests that traffic along the Wisconsin River was brisk, no doubt frequented mostly by river drivers, mill hands, timber cruisers, and speculators who needed a place to eat, drink and sleep more than they needed a pair of shoes or a tailored suit.

The earliest tax roll available on the incorporated village of Stanton (Plover) is for 1861 when the following paid taxes: J. L. Myers, S. J. More, C. A. Loomis, A. S. McDill, J. E. Bachelor, C. A. Loomis, Jr., Atkins Steel & Co., J. R. Haladay, Rogers & Morison, Mrs. Mosier, O. H. P. Bigalow, E. S. Clark, J. D. Rogers, I. H. Morgan, C. Russell, O. Richmond, Mrs. Maston, J. O. Raymond,

<sup>1</sup> *Stagecoach and Tavern Tales of the Old Northwest*, p. 170.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 325.

T. H. McDill, Doctor Wylie, John Stumpf, A. O. Brown, Doc Secoy, James Scott, G. S. Brown, W. H. Packard, L. Hanchett, Truman Rice, Jesse Edwards, John Eckels, Minor Stope, J. D. Farr, P. Jones, C. D. Powers, Loren Crosby, H. G. Ingersoll, J. W. Bidell, James Eckels, R. Dunten, Charles Packard, G. R. Walbridge, D. Derby, G. Burk, Isaac Robins, Charles Beach, Joel Webber, G. W. Smith, Christian England, Homer Drake, M. C. Woodworth, J. T. Brands, Decker, M. Mitchel, O. Hannum, J. R. Burkett, G. P. Hibbard, A. N. Woodbury, S. C. Whiting, James Mullen, Ira Stone, M. H. Munger, L. M. Gregory, G. W. Dunsmore, A. M. Dunton, L. Wakeman, A. Pears, John Whitaker, Shink, J. H. Morgan & Co., S. A. Sherman, J. W. Aplin, Nathan Bumpas, John Beach, L. C. Beach, Smalley, S. D. Sherman, A. Smith, A. W. Bell, and D. Doods.

The *Plover Herald*, a weekly newspaper of four pages, published its first issue Thursday, Aug. 7, 1856. James S. Alban and Jervis W. Carter are listed as publishers and editors with H. G. Ingersoll as printer. Vol. I, No. 1 reserved most of the front page for a "true story" called "Marrying in the Dark," but in the editorial section on page two, the readers are advised that the editors wished to set forth their "avowal of principles", the most important of which hinged on the question of whether or not the institution of slavery was to be extended to the free states. James S. Alban lived and died as he believed, a casualty of the Civil War six years later. He was brought home and buried in Plover Cemetery while others went on to finish the task to which he had dedicated his life. Plover and Stockton appear to have had the highest enlistment record in the county and no doubt much of the credit for this goes to the impassioned stand taken against the slave states by Alban in the *Herald* from 1856 to 1861.

Under a column headed "Business Cards" in the first issue of the *Herald* are a number of brief advertisements which today would be called "classifieds." From these it is learned that James S. Alban, Hanchett & Raymond, and Miner Strobe were local attorneys; E. B. Clark & Charles Stone were merchants dealing in "dry goods,

groceries, hardware &c.”; J. D. Rogers had a dry goods store at the corner of Green & River Streets;<sup>1</sup> Wm. Mosier had a retail grocery store and dry goods and S. L. Carpenter, the postmaster, had his office in Mosier’s building, but later moved to the corner lot where the 1895 plat identifies it; Robert Dunteen was the local “Daugerrean artist”, as he billed himself, with rooms in the village hall which may have stood one lot removed from the northeast corner of Elm and Wisconsin; and Lorian Mitchell was a surveyor and general land agent.

Apparently the leading blacksmiths in the village in 1856 were Messrs. Bigelow (O.H.P.) and Hanum (Q.) who also had an “assortment of plows” on hand.

Brown and Bachelor carried a notice in the Aug. 14 issue of the *Herald* advising that they were dealers in dry goods and groceries and were located “2 doors below the American.” The “American House” appears to have been the the leading hostelry in 1856 and had recently been taken over by Calvin A. Loomis, formerly of Knowlton House.

Under marriages, the Aug. 14 issue of the *Herald* carries this notice:

“On Thursday, August 7, 1856, at the residence of J. S. Brown, Plover, by the Hon. Thos. H. McDill, David P. Bentley to Mary Jane Wiley, daughter of Melanchthon Wiley, Esq., all of Eau *Plaine* (Pleine).”

Divorce was also possible. The case of Harriet Farring vs. Pliny Farring was scheduled for Nov. 25, 1856 before Thos. H. McDill, county judge.<sup>3</sup>

The same issue carries a small notice of the Plover Lodge I.O.O.F. No. 80 which held regular meetings on Saturday each week. A cordial invitation extended to all members of the fraternity was signed by Thos. H. McDill, N. G., Loron Mitchell, V. G., and M. G. Pratt, R. S. The first lodge in the county was established in

<sup>1</sup> The 1895 plat of Plover carries no River Street, nor is the name mentioned in the plat of 1845. The 1861 tax roll indicates that J. D. Rogers was located on the northwest corner of Green & Wisconsin.

<sup>2</sup> *Plover Herald*, Aug. 21, 1856.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Sept. 4, 1856.



Plover and many of the head stones in Plover Cemetery bear the Masonic symbol.

On Saturday Aug. 2, 1856 the citizens of Plover went to the local race track, located southwest of the village above Hayden's Corners, to watch "Pinery Boy," alias Ben Franklin, run against "Duke D" Orleans."

An early business man in Plover who disliked having it said that he overcharged his customers was George W. Kollock, who apparently operated a hotel known as Empire House (formerly a tavern house of Sherman and Rice) and a livery stable in connection with the hotel. In the *Plover Times* of July 11, 1868 appears this notice:

"The man that reported he was charged one dollar for hay for his horse at the Empire House on this place on the 4th day of July, is informed that he either told a wilful lie, or was too drunk to know the difference between a dollar and a Hamburg cheese. . ."

The oldest personal letter written in Portage County of which there is contemporary evidence was penned in 1850 by R. W. McLaughlin and postmarked Plover, June 27. It was made in the form of a V-Mail, that is, the writing paper was folded and sealed with a red wax and a place left on the outside for the address. It was sent to "Mr. Jacob McLaughlin, China, Me." a small village in Maine lying northeast of Augusta where some one, no doubt, once had clipper connections with the China trade. Only a few years ago this letter was returned by an anonymous donor in Maine to the postmaster at Plover where it is now in the collection of George J. Sterling. The letter follows:

Plover, Portage Co Wisconsin, June 23d, 1850.

Dear friend

Sir I thought I would scribble few lines, to you and let you know, that I am kicking, with good health hope this will find you and the rest the same. I am to work in Wisconsin Pinery; here is considerable lumbering done for a small place; well, is good deal of pine here is about forty saws. lumber is the principal trade here; cant run it only when the water is high been verry dry this spring. rather hard times here no money; farmers was afraid that would not be any thing raised. and they liked to starved us out had number showers so I think

vegetation will do well now; I am not to work in a mill do not like them. I am making shingles for a Webber that was raised out there in Clinton (a village located about half way between Augusta and Bangor — M.R.) he worked a good deal on the Penobscot (no doubt a reference to the river in Maine which flows through Bangor into the Atlantic — M.R.). good fellow I guess. work for him eight months. Probaly shall work untill next spring if I dont leave the country. I shall work on my own work. I like the country very well. I dont know much about the farming here but I know they can farm with half the labour here that you can there, those that has farms near market make money by it. They people are coming evry day on the unsurveyed land making Claims all they have to do is to go right plowing and fencing by when the land is surveyed and comes in markt they have a good farm for dollar  $\frac{1}{4}$  per acer cheap farm Great many are going from here to California they had good news from there last winter. the (y) go oxen horses and on Jackasses backs and even on foot take there provisions blankets and tents with them. they go over crost the mountains throught the devils hole and over his hill where they have to take a tackle with them let themselves down with. I want you to write soon as you get this if they all went last fall that was talking about it and how they are makein of it ther I dont now (know?) what is going on there in China. I wrote few lines to Constant last fall guess they did not amount to much I did not hear from him. Tell Edgar I should like to hear from him. give my respects to the folks. Write soon as you get this, yours,

R.W. McLaughlin

## ROSHOLT, The Village of

Seemingly hidden at the bottom of the page in the 1858 tax roll of New Hope under a number of forties of land listed as “unkown” appears the single name “Steubli,” owner of 160 acres in Sec 20, Town 25. It is almost symbolical that this single freeholder, who is not even given a Christian name in the first tax roll, had come to live this far from any neighbor several miles to the south. He was Gottlieb Stanbly, or Steubli, or Stiple, or Stiply — the assessor never did get it straight — who was related to the Jacob Whipf family in Iola and probably through them had come to Wisconsin to make an entry on this quarter-section at the U. S. Land Office in Stevens Point on May 10, 1858.

Stanbly built a log cabin on the high bank overlooking the South Branch of the Little Wolf near the north end of modern Main Street in Rosholt village.

Apparently not a farmer by profession, Stanbly sold his land in 1861 to Theodor Stanbly, went off to war, rose to corporal in Company B, 14th Infantry Regiment, and died in service.<sup>1</sup> The land was purchased in 1867 by Jens Rasmussen who moved into the log cabin built by Stanbly. Thus Rasmussen, a Dane from the island of Lolland, came to be the first permanent settler in the village. Professionally, he preferred tinkering with machinery to farming. Noting the need for a grist mill in the neighborhood, he installed stone grinding wheels powered by a winch that went with a sweep, pulled by oxen walking in a circle around the main shaft connected to the stone wheel apparatus. It was slow work and probably having noticed the beaver dam a few rods to the west of the cabin, Rasmussen decided to build a

<sup>1</sup> Correspondence, National Archives and Records, Washington, D. C.

grist mill run by water power. Peter Rasmussen, a nephew, said that it had been in operation for several years before he arrived from Denmark in 1881.

Meanwhile, John Gilbert Rosholt of Waupaca County, and Albert ("Muskego") Anderson, began operating a threshing machine and at least on one occasion, probably in the early 1880s, brought their rig up as far as the Peer Dobbe farm, about a mile north of Alban Corners. Rosholt, a man in his late twenties, already owned a saw mill on Graham Lake in Waupaca County and probably through his venture in the threshing machine business in Alban came to note the great stand of white pine still standing in the northwest sections of the township. In 1881 he made his first purchase in the township by buying the timber rights on a forty owned by Hans J. Fredericksen in Sec 20. In 1884 he apparently made some arrangement with Rasmussen to share the water rights on the pond, tore down his saw mill on Graham Lake and moved the machinery to the new site on the South Branch of the Little Wolf. In the next decade or so Rosholt bought up more timber forties both in the northwest of the township, as well as across the town line in Marathon County. By 1902 he had acquired enough timber to interest the big combine of Brooks & Ross Lumber Company of Schofield and Chicago.

Many had speculated on the possibility of a railroad branch coming into Alban township, either from Eland Junction or from Norske. On Dec. 13, 1902 Rosholt signed a contract to sell the timber rights (except cedar) on his land to Brooks & Ross for \$125,000. In return the lumber company was to arrange with the Chicago & North Western Railroad to run a branch down from Elderon to ship out the logs. The first train arrived in mid-October 1903. On Sept. 2, 1956 the last train left Rosholt and the tracks were torn up, another casualty of the automotive age.

When it was definitely certain in the spring of 1903 that the track layers were coming to Rosholt, the village became a boom town and no other in the county devel-

oped quite as explosively. Business men with an eye to the future from Iola, Amherst, and New Hope hurried to build hotels, hardware stores, grocery stores, warehouses, and residences. Several families lived in the back rooms or above their own stores the first years.

Adolph Torgeson, a brother-in-law of J. G. Rosholt, operated the first store in the village in the mid-1880s. The store was in a log cabin located south of the pond. Around 1887 he built a frame building near the site of the present State Bank and continued in the business into the 1890s. Another store was built at the south end of Main Street in the early 1890s by Jens P. Hanson Jr., and here, on March 2, 1893, a post office was established called Rosholt with Hanson serving as postmaster.

The village, with a population of 382, was incorporated on Oct. 14, 1907 and, at an election held on Nov. 12, 1902, the whole number of votes cast was 47, all for incorporation. The first election of village officers was held on April 7, 1908 when the following were named: J. G. Rosholt, president; George C. Nelson, Oscar G. Olson, Carl Knutson, Tom Warner, James Hanson and Carl Rosholt, trustees; O. F. Meyer, clerk; Martin B. Wolding, treasurer; Ole Leklem, assessor; Charles Weller and Henry Goer, justices of the peace; John Himmes, police justice; George Philbrick, marshal; Peter Rasmussen, street commissioner, fire warden and pound-master; and John Gilbert, supervisor.

From the first assessment roll, the following paid taxes in the village in 1908: Jacob Simonis, Henry Simonis, Johnny Simonis, Thor Jacobsen, Haral Haraldsen, Karl Knutson, J. G. Rosholt, Fred Simonis, Jens P. Hansen, Taylor Bros, Martin Peterson, Tom Torgrimson, Gun-der Hansen, Andrewe Austin, P. N. Peterson, O. F. Mayer, Charles Weller, Peter Gulliksen, Nels Tosten-son, Alek Dahlinger, Stanislawsky & Guratski, J. Gil-mister, Nick Kluk, P. M. Olfen & Co., Alfred Olsen, Giszczinski & Dzwonkowski, John Dzwonkowski, George Wolding, Wolding Bros, John O. Aas, C. J. Gilbert, T. J. Warner, A. T. Singstock, Carl Nottelsen, J. Golden, Jens Rasmussen, State Bank of Rosholt, O. G. Olsen, Nottelsen & Sether, Rosholt Creamery Co., Alvin Sether,

Ole Wigen, Peter Rasmussen, John Rodomski, Joe Sabenas, Sr., Martha Lebee, Agnes Dahlinger, Albert S. Olsen, Martin Wolding, Tom Augustinak, A. Merde estate, J. L. Jensen, John Ezidor, Mike Gilmister, H. J. Fredriksen, Tom Windorf, J. C. Hansen, Chas. Winberg, Mike Cavanaugh, Rasmus Jensen (also known as "Black Rasmus"), Jacob J. Bakken, Emil Wrolstad, Isak Sather, Ole Leklem, Theodore Johnsen, Andrew Anderson, Halvor Bensen, Rasmus Jorgensen, Hans Lee, Torval Johnsen, George Philbrick, John Glodowski, Mike Domback, Jacob Dulac, Nick Simonis, Tom Mathisen, A. J. Torgerson, Joseph Whitcowski, J. O. Wrolstad, John Kurozcinko, and John Zerwinski. Not mentioned in the real assessment, but together with some of the above in the personal property assessment of 1908 were N. A. Anderson, Peter DeClark, W. J. Maxwell Lbr. Co., Herrington & Nelson, Lawrence Pettersen, Mrs. Clara Pettersen, Iola Hardware Co., Glentski & Sabienas, Jr., Mrs. A. E. Baumford, Jim Fogerty, C. E. Slocum, John Himmis, Nels Tostensen, Theodore Krostu, Frank Manning, L. Starks, Farmers Produce Co., and Lewis Hansen.

John Oas published a weekly newspaper, the *Rosholt Echo*, in the later part of 1905, and discontinued early in 1906. E. W. Look, a veteran of the Spanish-American War, edited the *Rosholt Record* probably from 1910 to 1913. Otto F. Meyer, owner of the local drug store, apparently purchased Look's printing equipment and on March 13, 1913, published the first edition of the *Rosholt Journal*.<sup>1</sup> In 1915 he sold or leased the equipment to Harry T. Ravelin. Type was set by hand in "sticks" and printed on a hand-operated press resembling the first printing press of Albert G. Ellis. The paper was probably discontinued in 1918. On Oct. 22, 1920 Ross C. Woodhead, a World War I. veteran, began publishing a weekly called the *Review* which used a rotary press, and continued in business until Oct. 31, 1924. He was followed by H. Y. Buchanan who on Nov. 25, 1926 began publishing the *Community Press*, later taken over by William M. Schwartz who passed it on to Frank

<sup>1</sup> In collection of Pioneer Museum, Rosholt, Wis.

Freimund. The latter discontinued in the early 1930s.

The first building of the State Bank of Rosholt, a frame structure, was built on the northwest corner of Main & Randolph Streets in the fall and winter of 1903-04, and the bank opened for business Feb. 6, 1904 with a capitalization of \$10,000. From the 1908 tax roll it is learned that J. G. Rosholt owned 70 shares, and sons Carl, Milton and Jens each had ten shares. In 1921 a modern brick structure was completed. The capitalization was increased in 1913 to \$25,000, in 1921 to \$40,000, in 1946 to \$55,000, and in 1955 to \$80,000. At the close of the business year of 1957 the bank had total deposits of \$2,850,192.10 and a capital structure of \$253,666.26. Directors in 1958 were Mrs. Carl Rosholt; Mrs. Tilda Rosholt, widow of Norman Rosholt; Lester Peterson, a grandson of J. G. Rosholt through his mother, Cally Juliana, only child of a first marriage; Vernon Rosholt, a grandson through Carl by a second marriage; and Malcolm Rosholt, a grandson through Milton by a second marriage. Carl Rosholt, who began as cashier in the bank the day it opened in 1904, continued uninterruptedly until 1937, and as president down to the beginning of 1958 when, owing to illness, he was replaced by Lester Peterson.

The State Bank of Rosholt made state-wide headlines the day following an attempted hold-up on Sept. 4, 1924 which was foiled by the daring of Carl Rosholt who, true to the frontier spirit in which he was nurtured, grabbed the pistol under the counter and exchanged several rounds of fire with the hold-up men. Under this barrage the two men who entered the bank, and a third man posting outside, retreated to a waiting automobile and were driven away by a captive chauffeur. A posse of local citizens under the village constable, Ingwald Hanson, was formed to follow the get-away car. Later in the day the men were trapped on a road near Bevent and when ordered to surrender, jumped out of their car and dashed into a nearby woods. One was shot and killed on the spot and the two others were captured a few days later, all by local men who also knew a thing or two about

guns. The captive chauffeur had given himself up on the Bevent road and was later exonerated.

In the summer of 1917, probably, a Guernsey Breeders' picnic was held under the white pines on the hill north of the village, (later donated to the village as Hill Park by J. G. Rosholt), and out of this picnic developed a community fair, organized in 1926 as the Free Community Fair Association, which has become a three-day event held each Labor Day weekend and annually attracts around 20,000 visitors. When the Great District Fair was suspended in Stevens Point in 1927, the Free Community Fair, on a petition to the County Board in 1929, was designated the official county fair for Portage County. State aids were extended for agricultural, livestock, floral and crafts exhibits in 1928. In 1948 on the occasion of the Wisconsin state centennial, the County Board appropriated \$500 to move a log cabin to Hill Park, since known as the Pioneer Museum, where several hundred exhibits and photographs of central Wisconsin pioneer life and culture have been assembled by Malcolm Rosholt, director of the museum. In 1955 a second log structure, once used as a granary in the town of New Hope, was purchased by the State Bank of Rosholt as a public service and moved to the museum site.

In 1948 a group of local businessmen, in an attempt to provide employment for seasonal labor and others, organized the Rosholt Box Factory. It began with the manufacture of cheese boxes, but shortly switched to the manufacture of wooden pallets used as platforms for fork lift trucks. The plant employs about 15 men the year around. The business has prospered and the stockholders have already realized their original investment. In 1954 Arthur Doede, one of the stockholders, withdrew from the firm and organized Doede Manufacturing Company which also makes pallets and employs about an equal number of men. Both of these small factories are excellent examples of home industry and the fruit of private initiative.

In 1958 a new village hall, beautifully faced with light brick, was completed on Main Street and which replaced the earlier frame structure located on the right



bank of the river on Randolph Street.

Serving the village of Rosholt, with a population of 511, in 1957-58, were Fred Dahlen, president; John Wanserski, Felix Kranski, Gerald Dobbe, William Czerwotka, Ralph Colrud, and Ben M. Johnson, trustees; Allan Gilbert, clerk; E. A. Depka, treasurer; Harry G. Hanson, assessor; Walter Oestreich, justice of the peace; P. Oliver Olson, constable; Dr. V. A. Benn, health officer; and A. P. Dobbe, supervisor.

## SHARON, The Township of

The County Board in December 1859 ordered that "from and after" April 1, 1860, Town 24, Range 9, in addition to 30 sections on the east side of the Town 25, Range 9 were to be taken from the town of Hull to constitute the town of Sharon "and the first meeting for said town be held at the house of James Moore."<sup>1</sup> The Biblical name of the township may have been adopted by someone who originated in or passed through the township of the same name in Walworth County. The survey of the sections line of Town 25 in Range 9 was begun by William Huntington on Feb. 5 and completed Feb. 24, 1853.

The Tomorrow River drains the township on the east and the Plover River on the west, the waters of the Tomorrow eventually flowing into Lake Michigan and the waters of the Plover into the Gulf of Mexico. This diversion is created by the terminal moraine running north-south through the central sections of the township. In fact the Plover forced its way through the terminal moraine in the north of Sharon, the only river in Wisconsin to accomplish this geological phenomenon.

Although not indicated on the 1957 plat, a small river originates in Sec 9 and flows west to the Plover across County Trunk J. About two miles to the south lies the headwaters of the Tomorrow River which flows east. Although it would be difficult to detect any unusual feature of the terrain between the headwaters of the unnamed stream and the Tomorrow, except swamp lands and lakes, somewhere between these two fountainheads lies the "great divide" in Portage County.

Lying between the fountainheads are two lakes in sections 16 & 21, never identified by name on any plat,

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, Board of Supervisors, Vol. II, p. 49.

but known as Twin Lakes. Early plats, however, identify Becker Lake in Sec 32, probably after William Becker; Oesterle Lake (now dried) in Sec 3 (T.25) after Joseph Oesterle; and Kranski Lake in Sec 35 after August Kranski, all pioneers of the township. The Sharon east range line also cuts through the west end of Collins Lake in Sec 36. (See *Alban, The Township of.*) Another small lake is located on the section line between sections 4 & 5 in the north of the township, never identified by name on any plat. An entry in a lumberman's field book kept by S. Y. Bentley in the 1870s refers to this as "South Lake" presumably because the lake lies south of Shantytown Lake in Marathon County. It was later called Glisezinski Lake after a pioneer family of the same name living nearby. Somehow, this became confused with the name Glesbiki, probably through a misspelling, and in 1958 the County Board adopted the name Glisezinski Lake.

The first election in Sharon was held April 3, 1860 and those elected to office were Samuel Brown, chairman; Joseph Oesterle and Michael Dawson, supervisors; Alexander V. A. Jack, clerk; Timothy Leary, treasurer; James Moore, superintendent of schools; Richard Keef, assessor; K. N. Abbott and P. D. Sanders, justices of the peace; Patrick Thely, Albert Richnaghel (?) and Williame Page, constables; and William Calkins, sealer of weights and measures.

At the April meeting of the town board in 1863 it was voted that "all boar hogs over three months old be prohibited from running at large."

It appears that the pioneers of Sharon, whether German, Polish or Scandinavian, had a more difficult time getting started than in other parts of the county. One reason for this, no doubt, was the isolation of the township and its remoteness from market. Another reason may have been the extra expense of the Jordan swamp road. Whatever, for three years running from 1866 to 1868 inclusive, the town board was forced to grant an extension of tax payments from Jan. 15 to Feb. 15 "in regard of hard times and application of the inhabitants

of said town. . .” This same wording is used three years running to justify the extension of the time limit.

In the spring election of 1868 August Kozicskowski became the first Polish side supervisor while Adam Goreski and John Kozicskowski were elected constables. Matias (also written Matthius) Gosch became the first town chairman of Polish origin in Sharon, and in Portage County, in the spring election of 1870.

During the 1860s and even into the 1870s the four corners at Ellis were known as “Poland Corners” although there appears to have been almost as many Germans here, particularly members of the Eiden family, as there were Polish residents. However, the name officially became Ellis, no doubt in honor of Albert G. Ellis then serving as mayor of Stevens Point, when a post office was established here on Feb. 26, 1867. Joseph Oesterle served as first postmaster.

The four corners at Ellis became the most strategic location in the northeast of the county in the 1860s and 1870s and for a time it appeared that a sizeable village would develop here, except for certain drawbacks. Being situated on the main road for logging operations between the mills and camps in Sharon and Shantytown and the mills on the Plover and in Stevens Point, it attracted more than its share of lumberjacks, teamsters, not to mention farmers driving to Stevens Point, most of whom were quite thirsty by the time they reached Ellis. But equally important, it was a frontier meeting place for a mixed group of European newcomers, the Germans, the Irish and the Poles in the order of their arrival. Two of these people were enjoying their first taste of freedom, the Irish from the rule of England, the Poles from the rule of Prussia. The Germans stood between them, confident that their own culture superseded either by the fact of a modern Germany under Bismarck.

Thus, while it has been said that “Irish whiskey and Polish beer did not mix,” the circumstances of the arrival of the Irish and Polish immigrants from a background of single exclusiveness into a community of

mixed exclusiveness was almost bound to result in a period of difficult adjustment, particularly in an environment which in itself was primitive. Although Ellis became noted for its frequent disturbances of the peace, no one was ever killed here.

Within two years after the first liquor license was issued in 1866 to George Halder, there were four saloons at Ellis operated by Nicholas Gross, Peter Eiden, Casemir Lukushewitz, and Halder.

Despite the facilities already available, the town board was having difficulty convincing some citizens that it had the authority to issue or withhold a liquor license. In 1870 one license was revoked because the owner was charged with maintaining "a disorderly and riotous house."

The plat of 1876 identifies two stores, two churches, a post office, and a hotel in addition to several unidentified buildings, probably residences or sheds where hops were being dried. Evidence of the hotel appears in an entry of 1873 which refers to Nicholas Gross "who keep a house of public entertainment at his tavern on the SW corner on a public highway in said town for the benefit and accommodation of travelers." Gross apparently had a commodious guest room as the town board met here more often than any other place in the 1860s and 1870s.

There were actually three, not two, churches in Ellis in the early 1870s. One was located on the east side of where Trunk J runs today, south of the corner where the plat places it, known as the First National Polish Church; one was located a forty or so west of the corners on the north side of the road (H-66) known as St. Martin's, a mixed German-Polish congregation; and a third stood a few rods east of the four corners known as St. Joseph's (opposite the Buckhorn Tavern). Additional stores, a blacksmith, and a skimming station were built later. Adam Bembennek operated one of the first stores at Ellis. Jacob Kirschling, Leon Narlock, and Anton Omernick & Bros. were store keepers in the 1890s.

Meanwhile, the community which came to be known

as Polonia developed as a result of a split in St. Joseph's church at Ellis in the early 1870s. (See *Ethnic Groups of Portage County*.) The first store at Polonia may have been built in 1876 by August L. Bischoff<sup>1</sup>, a name often slurred to "Bishop." His wife, Helena, nee Fuhring, could speak German and between them they were able to cater to the bi-lingual community. The village was never incorporated. One tavern located on H-66 on the north side of Polonia is known as "Konkolville" after Andrew Konkol who, in the 1940s, operated a portable saw mill nearby. From this experience in the lumber business he branched out to Orofino, Idaho, where he has since built an imposing saw mill installation.

The smallest community with a place name in Sharon but which no map or plat refers to is at North Star, located at the "T" intersection of Trunks J & CC in Sec 28, and probably named after a Polish weekly newspaper published in Stevens Point. The founders of the saloon-store at North Star were Frank & Katie Bembennek.

Aside from Ellis and Polonia, one other post office, called Boyington, was established in Sharon on July 28, 1881. It was named after Nathaniel Boyington who operated a saw mill in Sec 24 a short distance from the Alban-Sharon range line. Mrs. Rose Polak of Sharon recalls that the post office was located in the big square frame house, adorned with green shuttered windows ("Oh, it was such nice house") where the Boyington family resided. The post office was discontinued in 1895.

Sharon was not constituted in its present size until 1899, but in 1870 most of what is associated with the township of today had been set off. For this reason an exception is made and instead of quoting the first tax roll available on Sharon (1863), it seems more pertinent to quote the taxpayers of 1872 which is also available and which covers the township two years after its reorganization in 1870. These, then, are the taxpayers of Sharon for 1872 in Town 24: Joseph Woyack, Joseph Oesterle, Fox River Lands, Nicholas Woyack, Frank Woyack,

<sup>1</sup> Obituary, *Steven Point Daily Journal*, Oct. 29, 1904.

John Kluk, Albert Garien, John Gelbrusikowski, Joseph Norloff, Nickolas H. Kier, Peter H. Kier, Peter Konapaski, John Sominka, Martin Palbergh, Vincent Kluk, Joseph Miller, Frank Bender, John Zinda, Anton Lorbieski, John Sossong, Sr., Nicholas Sossong, Peter Smith, August Kluk, Frederick Mersch, Nicholas Nice, John Simonis, Sr., Jacob Goseh, Frederick Simonis, Balthasar Bender, Joseph Dootsigh, Peter Noll, Simon Felfskoski, Leonard Kluk, Joseph Sulfa, Sr., H. Lynder, Charles Muller, Andrew Kedrofski, Peter Nickels, D. R. Clemens, Spalden & Co., Patrick Higgins, Matthew Hefferon, John Parks, Peter Fisher, Patrick Stapleton, William Steffannus, Nicholas Eiden, Sr., Charles Dael, Louis Cotty, H. Jack, H. Milenoski, John Eiden, Sr., Nicholas Eiden, Jr., Patrick Wilson, Hugh McGreer, James H. Fianor (?), Smith Rodgers, Peter Eiden, John Eiden, Jr., Lina Kools, Henry Leibs, Matthew Eiden, Laurent Goodness, Andrew Isidor, Joseph (name illegible), Adam Lakie & (illegible), Ludwigh Jecefski, Michael Warrancka, Charles Denreker, Nicholas Gross, Casemir Lukachewicz, Matthew Goseh, George Halder, Rt. i.e., (Reverend) Joseph Melcher, Peter Bilawski, Peter Kedrefoski, Peter Damask, Simon Strelewicz, John Sobieski, Frank Sobieski, Andrew Sikorski, Gastaf Baranowski, John Mianke, Ignace Witzel, Joseph Milenoski, Frank Eigendorff, Theophile Kozit, Adam Grimatsch (?), Michael Kozits, Jacob Snarnofski, August Birna, Peter Lordbieski, Andrew Hinza, Martin Repinski, Michael Studinski, Leonard Ainslee, Frank Richter, Frank Birna, John Glodowski, Jacob Glodowski, Anton Glodowski, John Swiney, Thomas Shirka, Adam Goretski, Joseph Lordbieski, Michael Doyle, Peter Andriska, Joseph Schultz, Richard Keef, Joseph Smaghelick, Andrew Kanelefski, John Palupeski, Paul Cicefski, Frank Koliniski, Matthew Glinieski, Adam Welch, Joseph Lucorits, Charles Ghilmeister, John Ghilmeister, John Busa, Lucas Norloff, Peter Orligoski, August Bembergh, Thomas Lipski, Timothy Leary, Patrick Wilson, Roman Wisa, John Mitchel and "Vaughn or unknown."

In Town 25 of Sharon the following paid taxes in 1872: D. R. Clemens, N. Boyington, James Hinman,

Henry Lawson, Fox River Lands, Robert Maine, James Hinman, L. P. Miller, Wis. Lumber Co., D. Hulbert, August Flees, Leonard Ainslee, Alfred Earll, George W. Bentley & Co., Orlando Curtis, George William, David Foucher, John Phillips, Matthew Wadleigh & Co., Hungerford & Bro Co., Geo. M. D. Hubbert, N. T. Moore, Chs. FuMeir (?), Gherard Prell, Albert Ommernick, Blaise Steffanus, Frederick Mersch, H. S. McMillon, John W. Lind, John Simonis, Matthew Simonis, L. H. Patchin, Miles Lenit, Fred K. Simonis & Co., James Empey, John Nelson, Peter Peterson, D. H. McMillon, H. H. Hoggie, Matthew Daleki, John Janta, George J. Swain, James Sutherland, Louis Sheffer, J. M. Matson, John Jersefski, John Jacobs, H. Merchelkamp, John Zimmer, Frank Stroik, Frank Weisbergh, Frank Potinski, Peter Hanson, Amund Olsen, Casemier Ostrowski, H. Withney, Ole Simenson & Co., Alice M. Harris, Nicholas Zwamofkoski, Peter Kedrefski, Peter Konapaski, John Johnson, Michael Kozits, Joseph Liba, D. J. Sanders, Knut Halverson, John Zinda, John Kluk & Co., Konrad Wellner, Matth Thomson, Joseph Oesterle, Osten Ostinson, Thomas Thomson, John Olsen, John Kobinsinski, John Jacobs, Joseph Sulfa, Jr., Matthew Piekowski, Anton Stinka, John Stinka, John Simonis, Jr., Nicholas Dehlinger, John Platta, Joseph Platta, Michael Helbach, Peter Triba, Matthew Wasolefski, Anton Chygosh, Thomas Yach, Albert Strok, Frank Yach, Peter Fisher, Peter Barrewick, John Sossong, Jr., Jacob Sossong, X. Lynder, Peter Nicels, Peter Trierweiler, Nicholas Bender, Lucy Lay, Andrew Yach, N. R. Hall, H. Jack, Leonard Kluk, John Johnson, John Merunk, Frank Bender, Joseph Grogolsi, Anton Sobieski, Ignace Witzel, John Prins, Vincent Glinieski, John Brathovde, John Woyach, John Selbruzikowski, and Honifred Krinziski.

The following also paid taxes on "homestead entries" in Towns 24 & 25; Adam Kleinsmith, Joseph Dootsigh, Casemier Lukachewicz, George W. Bentley, John Jersefski, Peter Sullis, Knut Halverson, Michael Bronick, Joseph Holdman, John Merunk, Adam Goritski, Michael Helbach, Michael Worzalla, Martin Cygosh, Andrew Yach, Blaise Steffannus, and Vincent Glinieski.



Ostensibly there is an omission in this tax roll; namely, the whereabouts of the several members of the Koziczkowski family. However, by comparing the known location of their land and the same forties in the 1872 tax roll, it is revealed that either the town treasurer or members of the family had temporarily changed their name to "Kozits," a faint resemblance to the first part of the name Koziczkowski.

In the latter part of 1861 the east half of the double sections 30 & 31, Town 25, Range 9 were taken from Hull and annexed to Sharon and in 1864 a resolution was adopted by the County Board to create a new township of 30 sections in the southern part of modern Sharon called Bradford which took in modern Ellis and Polonia and extended south to the town of Stockton. This was never finalized as the board rescinded the resolution at its spring meeting in 1865. But in 1870, most of these sections, that is, the south one half of Town 24, were annexed to Stockton. (See *Stockton, The Township of.*)

Probably to compensate Sharon for the loss of the 18 sections in the south half of Town 24, the County Board in 1898 adopted a long recommendation on county reorganization which included a provision that sections 6, 7, 18, 19 and the west half of 30 and 31 in Town 25, Range 9, were to be detached from Hull and attached to Sharon, effective April 1, 1899. This made Sharon a township of 54 sections with no indentations but as it lies on the range line between 8 and 9, which covers government lots added to standard sections, modern Sharon is roughly equivalent to 63 sections.

In 1957-58 the town of Sharon, with a population of 1,310, was being served by Ted Burant, chairman; Vincent Lilla and Ambrose Konkol, supervisors; Walter Cychoosz, clerk; Francis X. Wysocki, treasurer; Joseph V. Platta, assessor; Henry Schulist, justice of the peace; Walter Stroik, Norbert Maslowski and Clements Konkol, constables; and Damian Omernick, health officer.

## STOCKTON, The Township of

Across the south half of Stockton into the north of Buena Vista runs the biggest prairie in Portage County. This has been known since pioneer times as "the Prairie" or as the "little Prairie," probably in contrast to the "big Prairie" around Plainfield. It has also been known as "Whig Prairie," a name mentioned for the first time in the subdivision of the town of Hull in 1853 when the surveyor refers to a "road from Whig Prairie to McGreer's Mill" (probably the north-south road east of Whiting Country Club). The appellation "Whig" to this prairie probably grew out of a legend about E. H. Metcalf and John Finch, pioneer settlers to the south of modern Arnott. Both had moved to the county from the New England states and were known to be strong supporters of the Whig movement. Metcalf was also an early river driver on the Wisconsin.

The Prairie covers, roughly, that part of Stockton which lies between two ranges of hills known as the "east bluffs" and the "west bluffs," actually parallel ranges of the terminal moraine. The bluffs are not particularly noticeable today because car travel and improved grades have diminished their former significance, but to a man driving a horse and buggy on a sandy road it was quite another matter.

The eastern fringe of the Prairie begins near the range line between Amherst township and Stockton; in the west it terminates at the "west bluffs" or the range of hills on County Trunk JJ (short-cut from Trunk J to Moore Barn corner). Driving in the opposite direction on this short-cut, that is, eastward, one may gaze from the top of the bluff in a straight line across the entire Prairie in one majestic sweep of color and country charm. A strange sensation is added by the tree line on

both sides of the road, cutting off the view to the south and north, which makes the horizon in the east seem farther away than it really is, like looking into the reverse end of a telescope.

The township, covered mostly by prairie and the watershed of the terminal moraine, has no important rivers, but the glacier left three lakes in the southeast, namely, Lake Thomas in Sec 15, probably named after Thomas Clements who owned land in Sec 10 (1895 plat); Bear Lake on the line between sections 27 & 34; and Adams Lake, probably after J. C. Adams (1895 plat) whose land took in the lake, although in the 1876 plat it is referred to as "Second Lake."

The derivation of the name Stockton is uncertain. Several men in American history bear this name, one of whom signed the Declaration of Independence. Sherman believes it was named after "Com. Stockton," presumably Robert F. Stockton, an American naval officer before the Civil War. It is more likely that the township was named after the city in Durham County, north England.

The subdivision of Stockton in Town 23 was begun Nov. 17 and completed Nov. 28, 1851. Numerous references are made to the Prairie where the surveyors were often forced to build mounds of earth around the corner posts in the absence of trees or stones for witnesses.

The subdivision of Town 24, Range 9, the lower half of which lies in modern Stockton, the upper one half in what later came to be part of Sharon, was begun Jan. 31 and completed Feb. 6, 1852. The field notes mention only one farm of about 40 acres which was situated about a mile northwest of modern Custer. In Town 23, the surveyors of 1851 came upon several farms and "improvements" west of Lombard Cemetery and around Prairie School to the south of Arnott.

Stockton, earlier a part of the town of Plover, was organized in 1855 as one township of 36 sections (T.23, R.9) and was ordered to hold its first meeting on Monday, May 28, at the house of John Shannon.

<sup>1</sup> *Note Book* no. 9.

Effective April 1, 1870 the south one half of Town 24, Range 9, was detached from Sharon and attached to Stockton. Five years later Amherst township annexed six sections off the east boundary of Stockton. In 1894 Sharon attempted to get back not only part of its own township from Stockton, but also to have six sections previously annexed by Amherst restored to Stockton on the plea that "this part of the town is never or seldom given a voice in the town board and in consequence are not justly dealt with."<sup>1</sup> Two days later a petition from 270 residents was read to the County Board remonstrating any division of the town of Stockton "as we deem any such division wholly unnecessary and would be more expensive to the taxpayers of said town."<sup>2</sup>

By 1895 another change of heart had taken place. Stockton submitted a petition to have sections 19 to 36 lying in its own territory in Town 24, Range 9, restored to Sharon "where it once belonged, and also restore to the town of Stockton the six sections that the town of Amherst has which originally belonged to Stockton."<sup>3</sup> This petition was approved and the six sections were again attached to Stockton and the south one-half of Town 24 to Sharon. A year and a half later in 1898 this action was rescinded and the old boundary lines were restored which have since remained unchanged.

At the first town meeting held in 1855 the whole number of votes cast was 56 with O. H. Lamoreux being elected town chairman against no opposition. Evelon (?) Crosby and Wm. Bremmer were elected side supervisors against no opposition, and Geo. W. Morrill defeated Wm. B. Wadsworth for town clerk. Morrill was also elected town superintendent of schools. Peter McMillan defeated Daniel Baker for assessor. O. H. Lamoreux, J. C. Maxfield, Wm. H. Richmond, and Wm. H. Nobles were elected justices of the peace. James Lytle was elected treasurer, Nelson Blodgett, Calvin Richmond and Henry Benson, constables, and O. D. Richmond, sealer

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, Board of Supervisors, Vol. VI, p. 142.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 283.

of weights and measures. These officers held their posts until the spring election of 1856 when a new town board was elected at which time Joel F. Webber was named town chairman.

Down to 1900 the Stockton town board continued to be dominated by Irishmen, but after 1900 by Polish settlers. In 1901, for the first time, Alex Kluck, descendant of one of the first Polish families in the county, was elected town chairman, together with M. W. Welch and August Lorebecki, side supervisors.

After the railroad from Green Bay came through Stockton in the early 1870s, a community developed around the junction of the railroad and the main north-south highway (Trunk J). In 1882 a railway station was established here called Arnott, no doubt after William L. Arnot, a former town chairman. The town records consistently spell this name with one 't' but when the post office was established here on Nov. 2, 1882 it was called Arnott. Joseph A. Bremmer served as postmaster.

Before the 1930s Arnott had a resident doctor, a bank, railway depot, potato warehouses and several stores and saloons. The bank closed in the Depression and the railway depot has since been discontinued. On Good Friday 1912 the east side of the business district south of the railway tracks was largely destroyed by fire. It was gradually rebuilt and today Arnott caters to a farming community with groceries, garage repairs, feed supplies and liquid refreshments. It was never incorporated.

The Custer post office, established on Dec. 12, 1876, Leonard Van Hecke postmaster, was probably named after Lt.-Col. George Armstrong Custer who, on June 25, 1876, was defeated at the battle of Little Big Horn and who in death became immortal in the folk lore of the American West not to mention in O. Besker's bar-room painting called "Custer's Last Stand" which shows him surrounded by the dead and dying of his command, pistol in one hand, sword upraised in the other, apparently unruffled by his impending doom.

A small community known as Stockton appears to have been the first in the county to develop east of Plover in sections 19, 30 and 31 which lie in the southwest cor-

ner of the township in the vicinity of Morrill Cemetery. The 1876 plat identifies a post office here, actually established Feb. 17, 1858, situated on the south side of the Air Line Road which ran southeast at this point in Sec 31. Nelson Blodgett served as the postmaster and the post office was probably located in his tavern-house known as "Stockton House." The 1876 plat also identifies a cheese factory about a mile to the north of the post office, also on the Air Line Road, not far from the farm of J. H. Morgan (1876 plat) who Sherman says was the first farmer in the town of Stockton (today part of the Leo Buza place).

Meanwhile, another post office called Grant was established Dec. 14, 1864 apparently in Sec 31, Town 24, of Stockton, near what is today called Stockton on the Soo Line Railroad. As this post office was established at the height of Ulysses S. Grant's fame, it is reasonable to assume that it was named after the general of the Army of the Potomac. Samuel Brown served as postmaster. The post office was discontinued in 1866, re-established a few weeks later, when Algernon Crosby was named postmaster, and was discontinued Aug. 7, 1874 when, there is reason to believe, the post office calling itself Stockton, east of Plover, was moved to the new location on the Wisconsin Central (Soo Line) east of Stevens Point. This post office was discontinued in 1886, re-established that same year, discontinued in 1905, re-established in 1911 and closed in the halcyon days of the New Deal. After the Stockton post office was moved over to the railroad, the former location around Morrill Cemetery was known until past the century as "Old Stockton."

"New Stockton" was created by the coming of the Wisconsin Central Railroad in 1871 and eventually a siding was provided on the south side of the tracks to accommodate the growing production of grain and potatoes in the area. In the early 1900s the main track was raised for several miles along this stretch of the line to bring it closer to the Custer hill grade at which time the siding was relocated on the north side of the track. The local depot was discontinued in 1957.

In the early 1900s, in addition to potato warehouses and post office, the village of Stockton probably had a grocery store, a blacksmith shop, a feed mill and three saloons, all on the south side of the tracks, all since discontinued. Two potato warehouses, in use up to early 1950s, were closed "since Truman," according to Stanley Finnessy who was referring to the termination of subsidies on potatoes inaugurated in World War II. A feed mill operated by George P. Breitenstein in 1958, north of the tracks, and a tavern-store on the south side of the viaduct, are all that remain, aside from several residences.

The smallest community in the town of Stockton lies in a valley to the southeast, once known as Fancher after the family of the same name, but more recently as "Smokie Spur." The community was created by the Green Bay & Western which, acceding to requests by farmers in the area, built a "Y" on the south side of the track. Two potato warehouses were built along the "Y" and at least one saloon and a blacksmith shop, later converted to a garage. The "Y" was removed in the early 1950s and since then Smokie Spur has reverted to a one-tavern, one-garage town with John Korlesky buying pickles in season. Korlesky, a Polish farmer in the neighborhood who grew up in a settlement of Welshmen east of Wild Rose, speaks with an unaffected Yankee accent. The fact that he has lived since youth in a predominantly Polish neighborhood without being influenced by his linguistic environment makes his case unique.

But none can suggest with certainty where the name Smokie Spur originated. To begin with it is a misnomer as there was no spur here, but a "Y", and there was no depot, only a flagstop. One veteran of the area, standing in the pickle shed on Sept. 5, 1957, said he had heard that it was called Smokie Spur because a man who lived near the track "smoked so much." Whatever the origin, when a post office was established here on Aug. 11, 1891, Orson Fancher postmaster, it was called Fancher. But the Fancher families on the male line have all died or moved away and the post office was discontinued in 1913. Thus as long as the Fanchers were living here,

and as long as mail was being addressed to Fancher, there was no reason to call it by any other name. But since the demise or departure of the Fanchers and the closing of the post office, the memory of the name has become less sharp with the passing of each year. Whether the legend of the man with the pipe who "smoked so much" is true or not, a local tavern has a beer sign on the road a short distance to the north with an arrow pointed south which refers to "Smokie Spur, 1/2 mile." A school about a quarter of a mile to the east (discontinued) was known as the Smokie Spur School and in 1958 people were even beginning to refer to St. Mary of Mt. Carmel Church, which overlooks the valley to the south, as the "Smokie Spur Church" instead of the more common "Fancher Church."

A business venture, organized mostly by farmers in the southern part of the county after the turn of the century, was called the Stockton Insurance Company. From documents issued in 1906-1909 the average assessment was \$4 per member. The company continued in business until the late 1920s when it failed.

Appearing in the 1858 tax roll of Stockton are these names: C. H. Allen, Gilbert Allen, J. C. Adams, Nelson Andrews, John Allen, J. Aldrich, W. K. Bartlett, E. D. Benson, Henry Benson, George Bickle, Gilbert Burns, Wm. Bush, W. N. Burrington, John Buckley, D. P. Bentley, Thomas Parker, Sarah Blodget, John Bousier, John Bachelor, Charles Barrows, Henry Betsinger, Daniel Baker, Wm. Bremmer, George Bremmer, Jeremiah Bennett, E. Burke, Joseph Boisely, J. G. Cummings, Joseph Crawford, John Crawford, A. B. Crosby, (?) Clark, Charles Coats, Charles Creed, Mathew Connough, Abner Coffin, E. H. Crosby, George W. Cate, Henry Clements, Norman Danforth, J. R. Danforth, Daniel Dean, John Dolan, Lidia Dawley, J. N. Davis, Samuel Drake, Davis Danforth, L. H. Dwinnell, J. W. Dwinnell, P. N. Davis, Alfred Earl, A. Felch, B. F. Felch, A. N. Fancher, Jacob Fancher, J. H. Fancher, John Finnisee, Dayton Gilbert, Nelson Gee, Joseph Hewit, Thomas Hunter, Thomas Higgins, Hiram Higgins, Jane Harkness, Thomas Harkness, Jr., S. B. Hulce, J. S. Howard, Luther Hunter,



Charles Huistit (?), Benjamin Hags (?), Hinds, Thomas Iverson, Mrs. Jackson, Horace Judd, John Kimball, Joel King, Patric O'Keefe (no land but personal property of \$120,) O. H. Lamoreaux, J. E. Lytle, G. H. Lombard, Washington Lombard, James Lombard, J. R. Lombart (probably Lambert,) Edward Moyer, Samuel Merrill, Louis Morre, Sarah J. Moore, E. H. Metcalf, Elias Maslett (or Marlett,) Herman Mitchels, McCapes, Peter McMellon, J. C. Maxfield, Geo. W. Morrell, W. P. McCormick, Owen McHugh, James McHugh, Joseph McHugh, James McCormick (personal property only,) Andrew Mathewson, Asa E. Mathewson, H. Morrison, Sally Morrison, W. H. Nobles, Freeman, Nelson, Henry Norris, Ira M. Norris (or Morris), John Ogden, Mr. Orbison, John Philips, J. C. Perkins, Belle Perkins, Wm. G. Packer (probably Packard,) E. B. Patterson, Oliver Richmond, C. D. Richmond, Mr. Roberts, H. M. Richmond, Hiram Riker, M. A. Rousseau, George Sterling, D. J. Sanders, Michael Shortell, Samuel Seaman, Nathaniel Shannon, John Shannon, H. C. Shervin, W. H. Sherwin, S. R. Sherwin, Joseph Seamen, B. S. Sharpstien, M. C. Slutts, Stafford Spalding, J. Sweet, T. Tompkins, J. Hooker, G. E. Upton, Benj. Vanvalkenburgh, Andrew Warren, Jr., Herbert Ward, James Woodbury, Wm. Walton, M. L. Winslow, J. B. Winslow, W. D. Worden, Stephen Worden, A. Worden, J. F. Webber, Mr. Wells, A. M. Woodbury, J. Nellen (or Kellen) Estate, George Yorton and James Young.

Serving the town of Stockton, with a population of 1,371, in 1957-58, were Stanley Kirchling, chairman; John Adamski and Frank Somers, supervisors; Leonard A. Groshek, clerk; Joseph Pliska, treasurer; Adolph Somers, assessor; Anton Kruzicki, justice of the peace; Ben Gladowski, constable; and Joseph Gosh, health officer.

## WHITING, The Village of

The village of Whiting, named after George A. Whiting, founder of the George A. Whiting Paper Company of Menasha, Wis., and the Whiting-Plover Paper Company of Whiting, was incorporated Nov. 13, 1947, the newest corporate entity in the county. It takes in all of Sec 9 in Town 23, Range 8, a tier of lots along the north line of Sec 16, and that part of Sec 8 lying on the left (east) bank of the Wisconsin River. In the process it absorbed the Original Town of McDill on the east of Sec 9 as well as McDill's Addition in the southeast corner, in addition to an area once known and platted as Conant Rapids which lay between sections 8 & 9 next to the river.

In the 1890s a district known as Whiting was located near the paper mill and it was probably from this that the citizens of Plover township revived the name for the new incorporation.

For about two years prior to the issuance of the Circuit Court order for incorporation, numerous meetings were held to discuss the proposition of setting aside a separate village in the town of Plover immediately to the south of the city of Stevens Point comprising an area of about one and one-half square miles. The proponents of incorporation felt that the fast developing industrial area, already with three paper mills, was better suited for municipal government than township government.

After several set-backs, in which figures as to population and other requirements were challenged in the courts, an order was issued permitting voters in the proposed area to express their preference and the final tally of the election held in the McDill School on Nov. 8, 1947 was 248 for and 44 against incorporation.

The first election for village officers was held Dec.

6, 1947 when the following were named: Thomas Leech, president; William Hopkins, Henry Glenzer, Eugene Cooper, Dr. Henry A. Anderson, Howard Cater and Allen B. Willard, trustees; Ben Redfield, clerk; Earl Gyrion, treasurer; Ray Hager, assessor; William Amsbaugh, justice of the peace; Mike Tylka, constable; and Barney Omernick, supervisor.

In the ten years which Whiting village has been in existence most of the hopes of the original incorporators have been realized. New streets have been laid and all have been given permanent surfacing. A park system has been established along the Plover River, and a volunteer fire department, equipped with two modern fire trucks, has been organized. An up-to-date street lighting system has been installed since 1949 and many of the lights are of the mercury vapor type. Despite these improvements, the village has never levied a special tax for local purposes.

Serving the village, with a population of 855, in 1957-58, were Dr. Henry A. Anderson, president; Roy Folz, Thomas Leech, Howard Cater, Henry Glenzer, Allen B. Willard and William W. Hopkins, trustees; Ben Redfield, clerk; Early A. Gyrion, treasurer; Raymond G. Hager, assessor; Joseph Tylka, justice of the peace; Glenn C. Pike, constable; Ray Sarnowski, health officer; and Albert Price, supervisor.

MIDDLETOWN, The Township of  
(Stevens Point, The Township of)

The township of Middletown, part of which later became the township of Stevens Point, was constituted by action of the county commissioners on Jan. 9, 1849 and included all of Portage County north of the township of Plover to the north line of township 27 (above modern Mosinee) where it joined the township of Bull Falls.

The first election of town officers was held at DuBay's Trading Post. A document in the Rogers Collection reveals that the polling place was in a tavern house operated by Freeman Keeler at DuBay's, while an entry in the town clerk's book states that it was held "at the house of J. B. DuBay." It is quite possible that Keeler was renting the tavern-house which DuBay was licensed to operate in the mid-1840s. Whatever, the polling place reflects a compromise between the electors of the village of Stevens Point and Little Bull Falls.

The first entry in the town proceedings, which is also the oldest town clerk's record in the county available, follows, although the clerk apparently forgot that Wisconsin was no longer a territory as the initials "W.T." suggest:

RECORD OF THE TOWN OF MIDDLETOWN,  
PORTAGE COUNTY, W.T.

On the 28th day of April A. D. 1849 the *qualified* (qualified) Electors of the town posted up notices of the first Election in town which agreeable to notice took place on the 13th day of May A.D. 1849<sup>1</sup> at the house of J. B. DuBay in said town of Middletown at which time and "place" the inspectors were chosen "*Viva voce*" According to Law Viz "L. D. Rollins, Elvin Barker" and Matthias Mitchell, were duly sworn and took their Seats as Inspectors of Said Election. Mc D Harkness was also chosen as clerk of the elec-

<sup>1</sup> This may be an error. An original document in the Rogers Collection carries May 20 as the date of this election.

tion and properly Sworn according to law. The Polls were opened between the hours of nine & ten O'clock A.M. of said day and closed at Sundown. The following list will show the No (number) of Votes polled at the election and names of each officers voted for and office. No (number) of Votes received by each person for the respective offices:

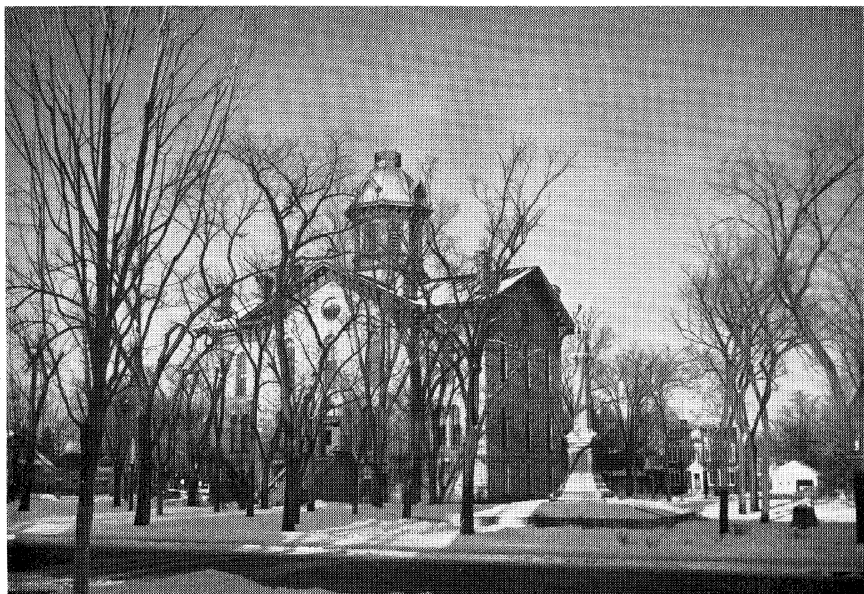
Names of officers	No.	Names of offices
B. W. Finch	21	Chairman Board Supervisor
Wm. V. Fleming	21	Supervisor
J. W. Winslow	18	Supervisor
Mc D. Harkness	20	Assessor
Mc D. Harkness	21	Town Clerk
John Campbell	21	Treasurer
N. F. Bliss	20	Justice of Peace
M. Mitchell	21	Justice of Peace
J. L. Moore	21	Justice of Peace
A. Brawley	21	Justice of Peace
L. D. Rollins	21	Constable
Geo. Kollock	20	Constable
A. Mc Kellep	21	Constable
R. B. Whitehouse	21	School Superintendent
N. F. Bliss	20	Road Supervisor
W. V. Fleming	21	Road Supervisor
J. L. Moore	21	Road Supervisor

From other documents available, it is learned that the given names of some of the above-mentioned officers were William Fleming, John Winslow, McDonald Harkness, Nathaniel Bliss, Mathias Mitchell, John Moore, Abraham Brawley, Archibald McKellep and Richard Whitehouse.

Apparently John Campbell later disqualified himself as treasurer as an affidavit signed Sept. 9, 1849 reveals that A. H. Bancroft had been appointed "collector & treasurer for the town of Middletown. . ."

The spring election for a new town board was held April 2, 1850 at the "house of Messrs Phelps & Hinton of Stevens Point. . ." (Joseph B. Phelps and Thomas Hinton,) actually a tavern-house located west of 144 Main Street.

Elected to office were A. Brawley, chairman, and O. Maybee and J. B. DuBay, supervisors; Enoch G. Bean, treasurer; James Holden, clerk and school superintendent; M. Mitchell, assessor; Zelotus Hopkins, Samuel Benedict and M. W. Fisk, constables; M. Mitchell, over-



PORTAGE COUNTY COURT HOUSE 1870-1957

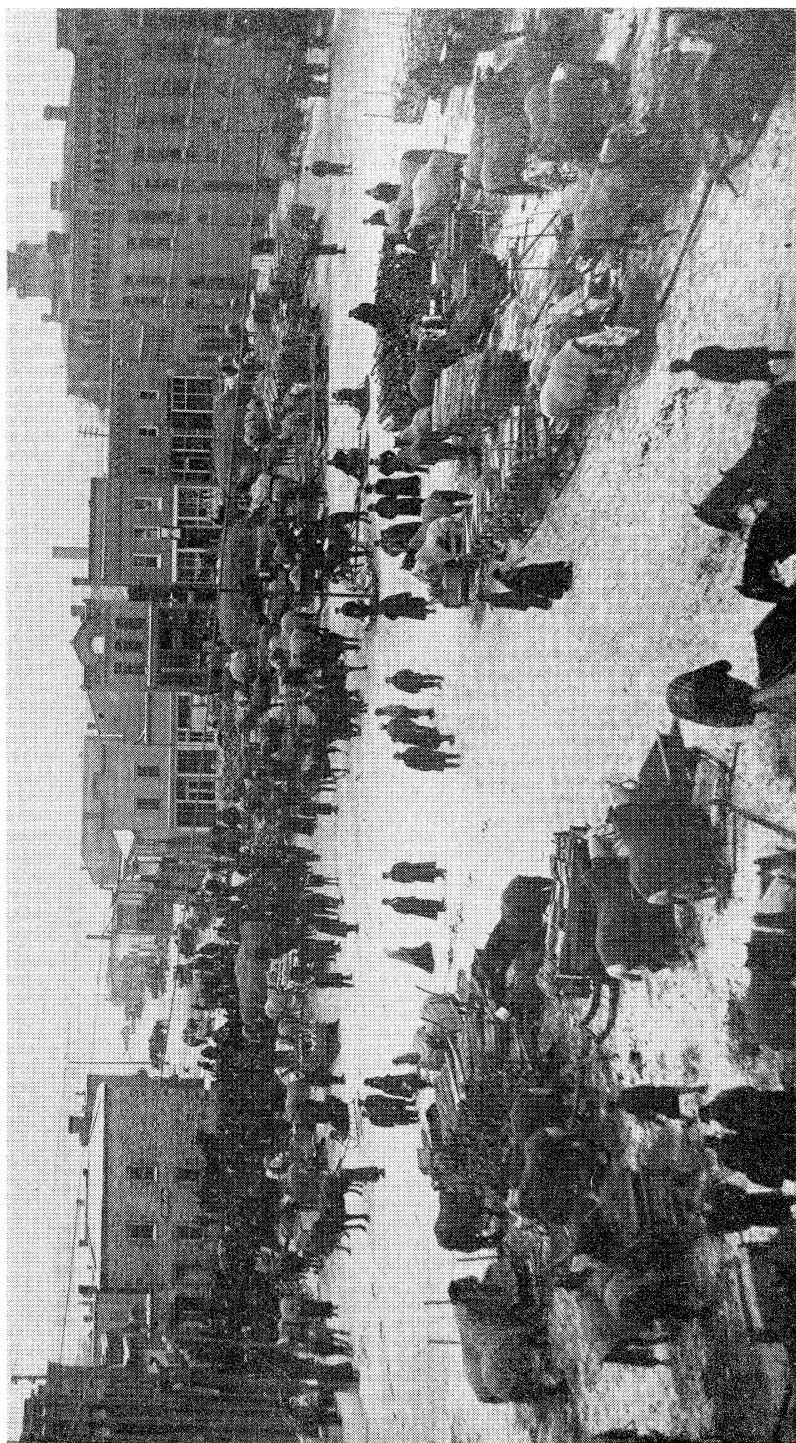


NEW COUNTY-CITY BUILDING, 1959

— Photos by Phillips Studio



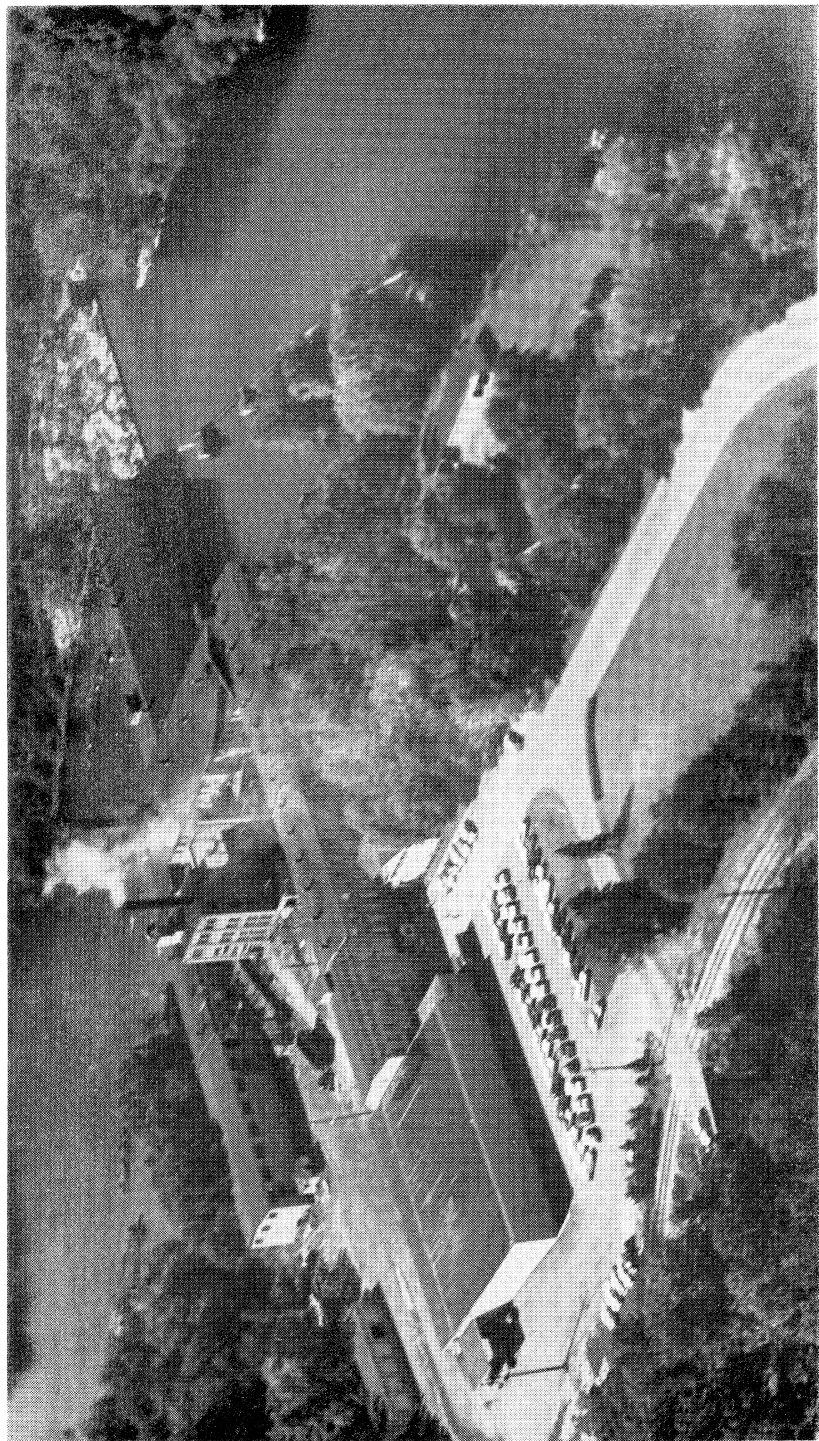
HARDWARE MUTUALS, HOME OFFICE, STEVENS POINT



STEVENS POINT PUBLIC SQUARE (ca. 1915)

Photo looks southwest across Wisconsin River ice. Note horse in center of Public Square drinking from water fountain, once site of Liberty Pole.

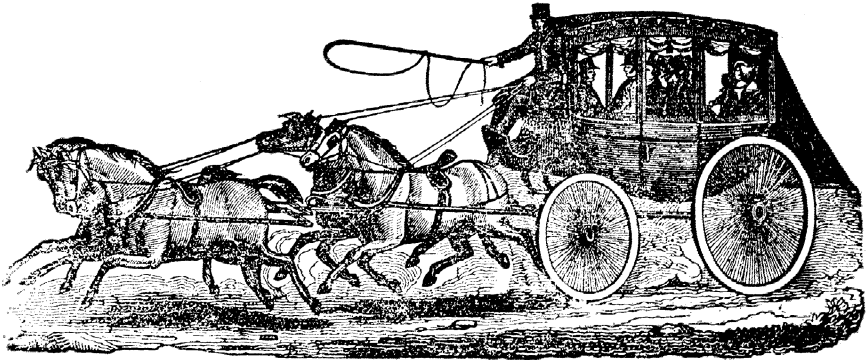




WHITING-PLOVER PAPER COMPANY ON WISCONSIN RIVER

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NEW AND DIRECT ROUTE  
—FROM—  
**STEVENS POINT, &C., TO CHICAGO,**  
AND ALL POINTS EAST OR SOUTH.

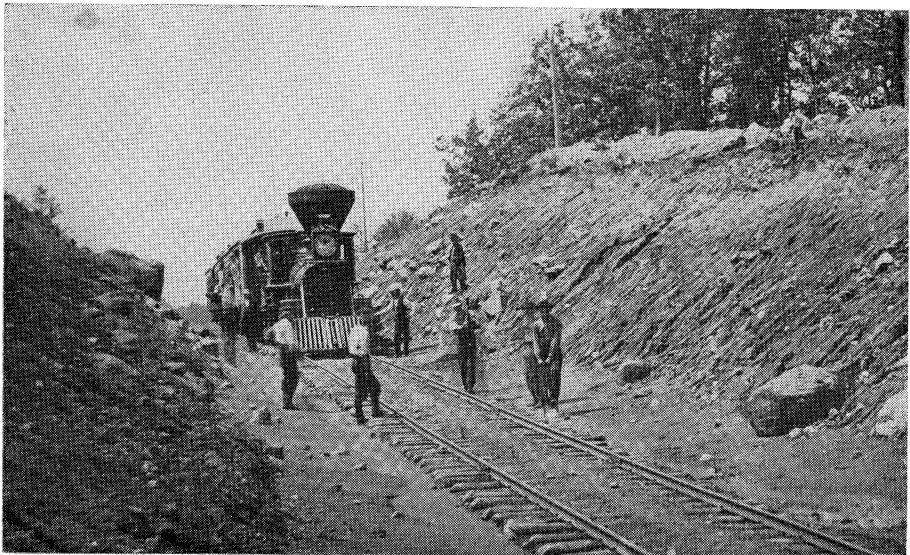


**Twelve Hours Quicker than by any other Line, and Fare always as Low as by Any Other Route.**

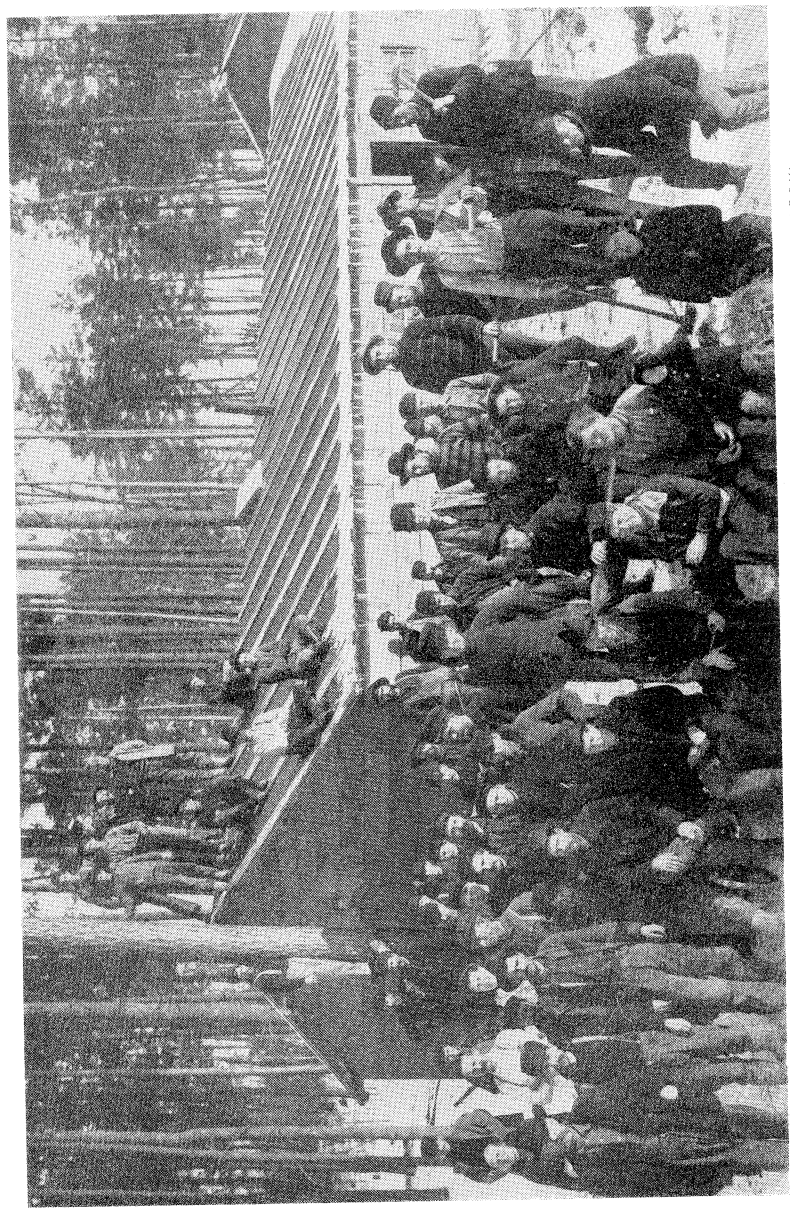
A new line of Daily U. S. Mail Stages has been established between Stevens Point and Gill's Landing, running viz., Leave STEVENS POINT, DAILY, at 4 o'clock A. M., arriving at GILL'S LANDING about noon CONNECTING DIRECT with steamers for OSHKOSH, arriving at Oshkosh at 3:30 P. M., and CHICAGO next morning, connecting with Trains, on all roads going east and south.

Returning, steamers leave OSHKOSH, Daily, at 8 A. M., arrive at GILL'S LANDING at noon, CONNECTING DIRECT with stages for STEVENS POINT, arriving same evening.

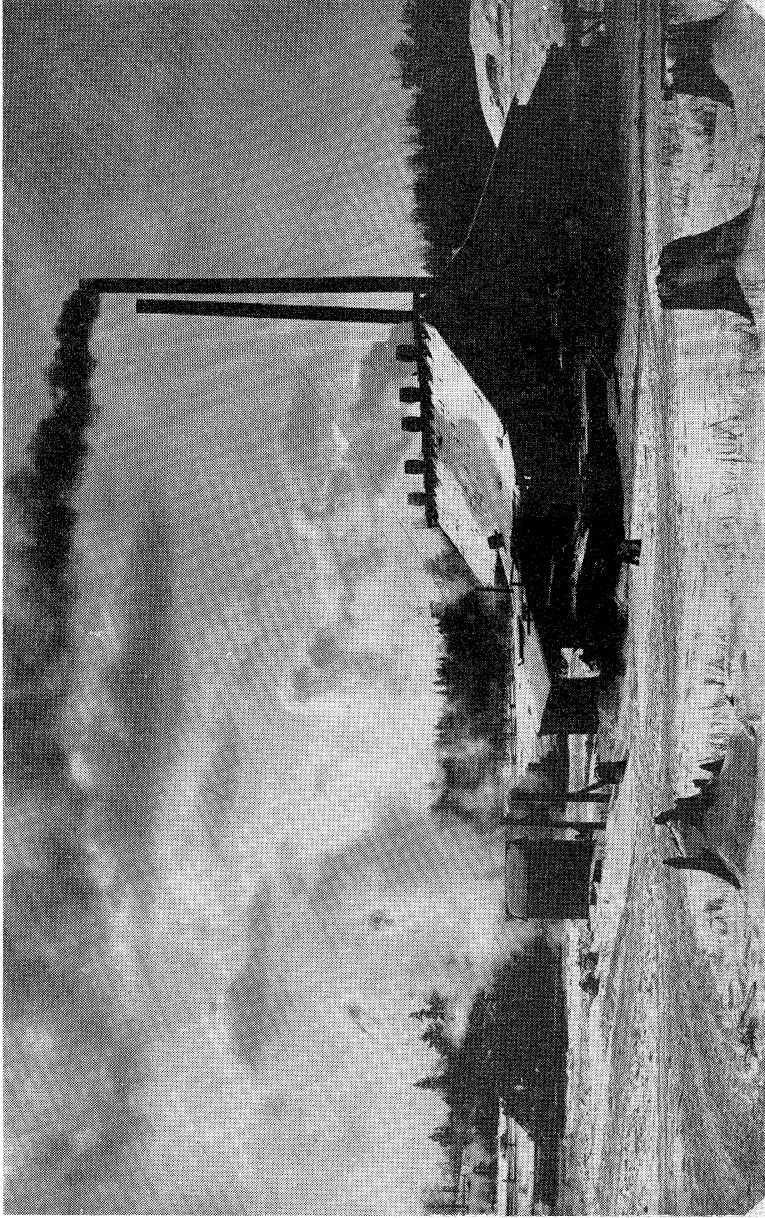
ADVERTISEMENT IN *WISCONSIN LUMBERMAN*,  
APRIL 20, 1864



GREEN BAY & WESTERN WOOD BURNER  
ON WEST BLUFF GRADE



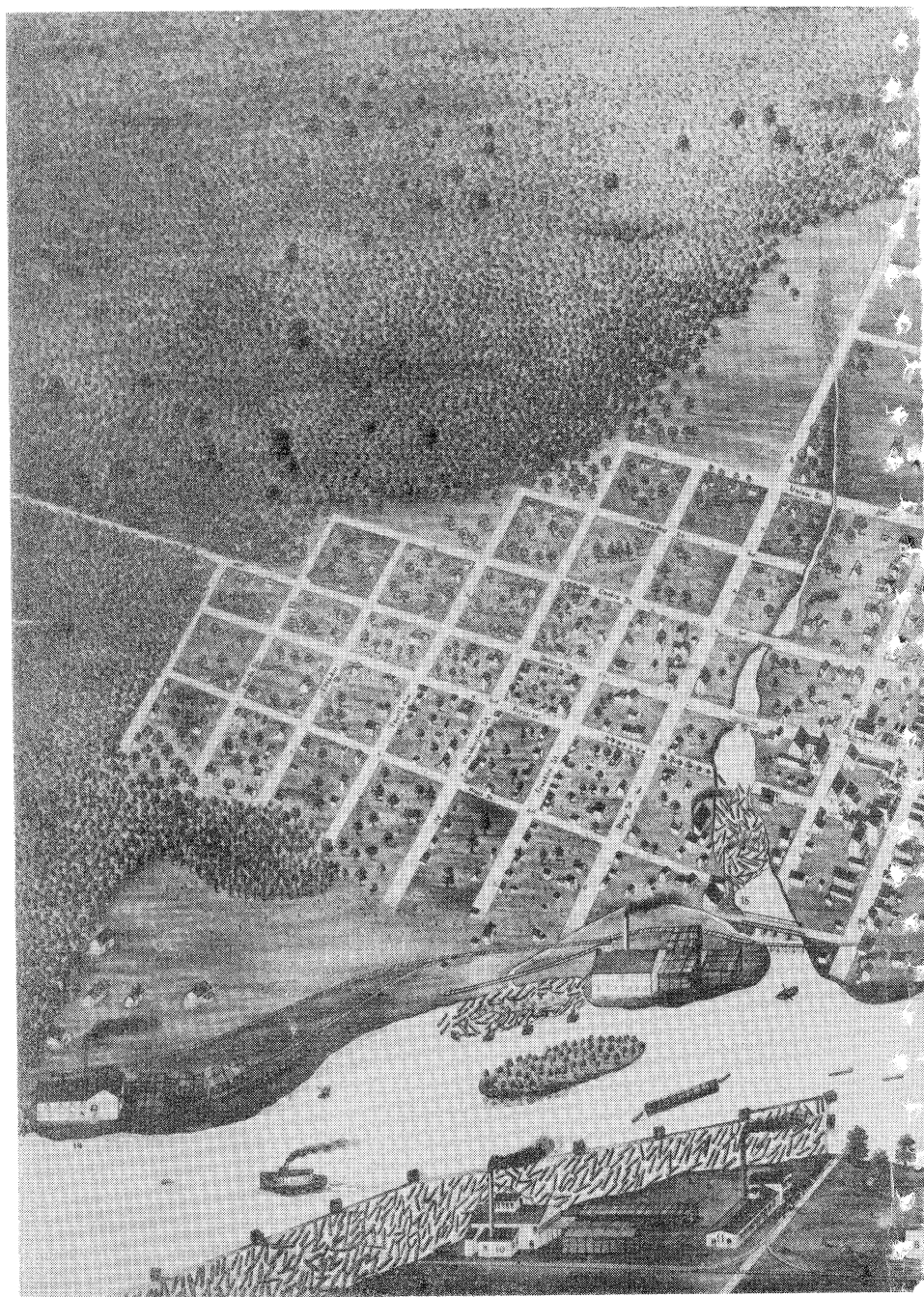
BROOKS & ROSS LOGGING CAMP, TOWN OF ALBAN (ca. 1905)

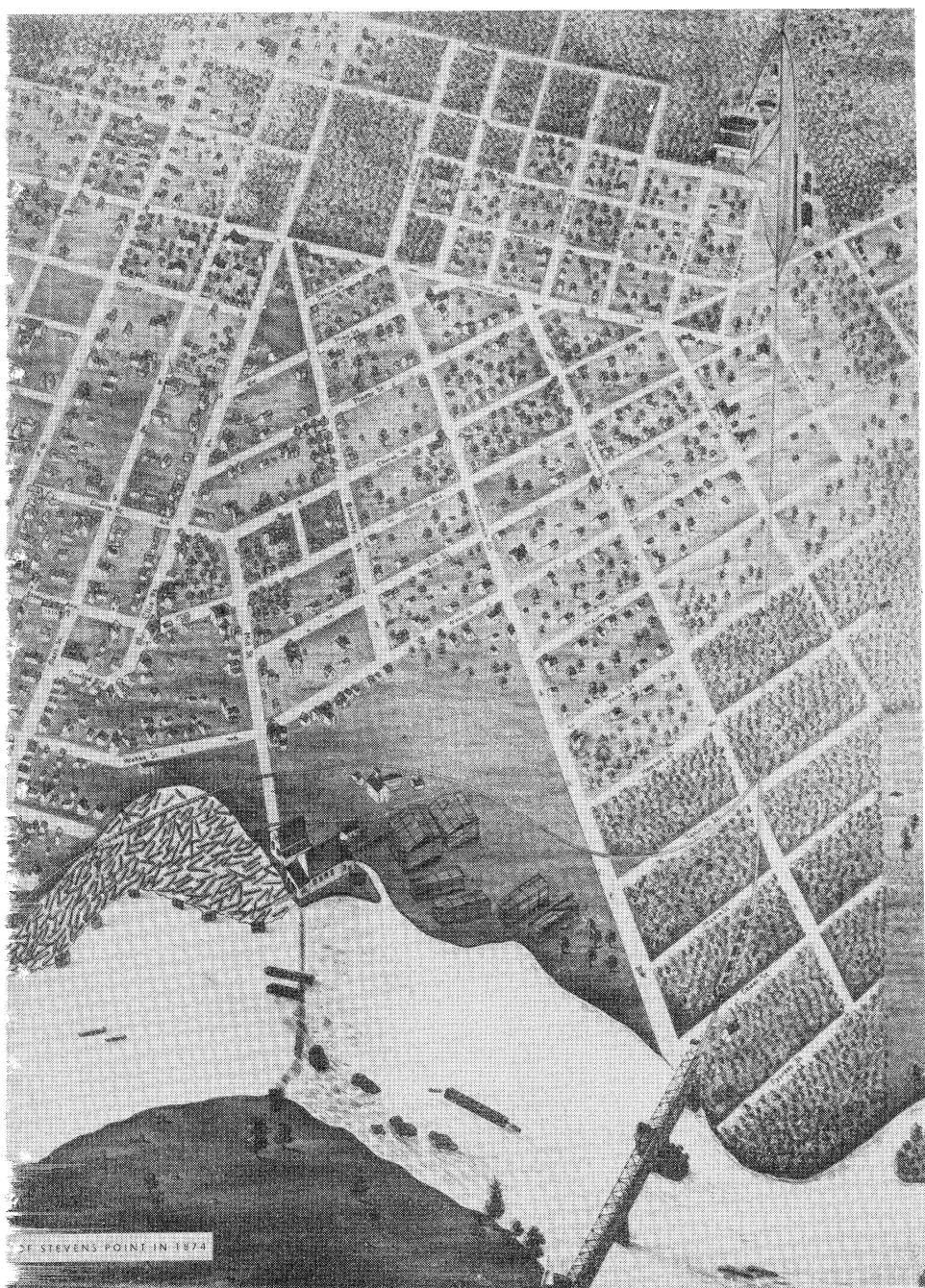


"SHANTYTOWN" SAW MILL IN TOWN OF SHARON (ca. 1900)

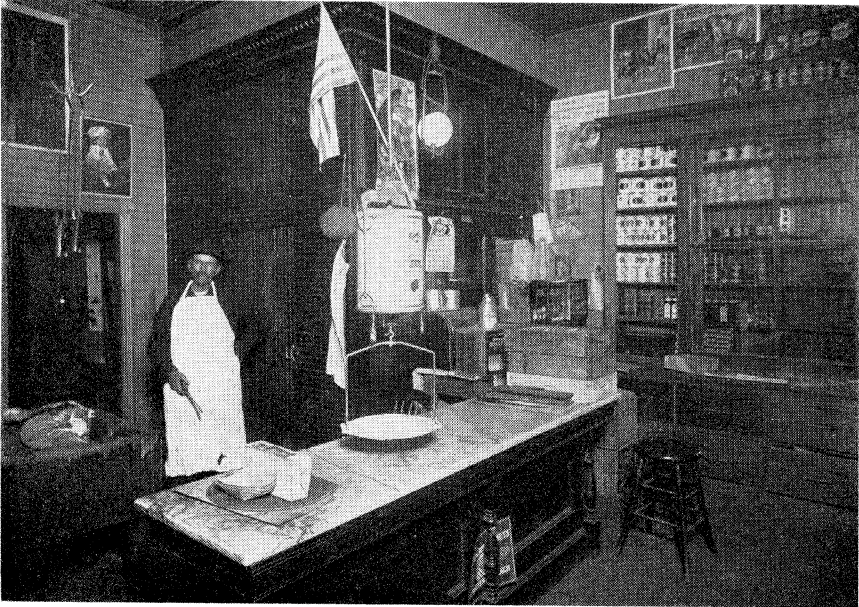
Logs on skidway (left). At extreme right, probably sawdust pile. Water barrels on roof for fighting fire.







ST STEVENS POINT IN 1974



BYRON ROGERS MEAT MARKET AT PLOVER (ca. 1900)



POLITICAL CAMPAIGN TOUR  
CROSSING PLOVER RIVER (ca. 1908)



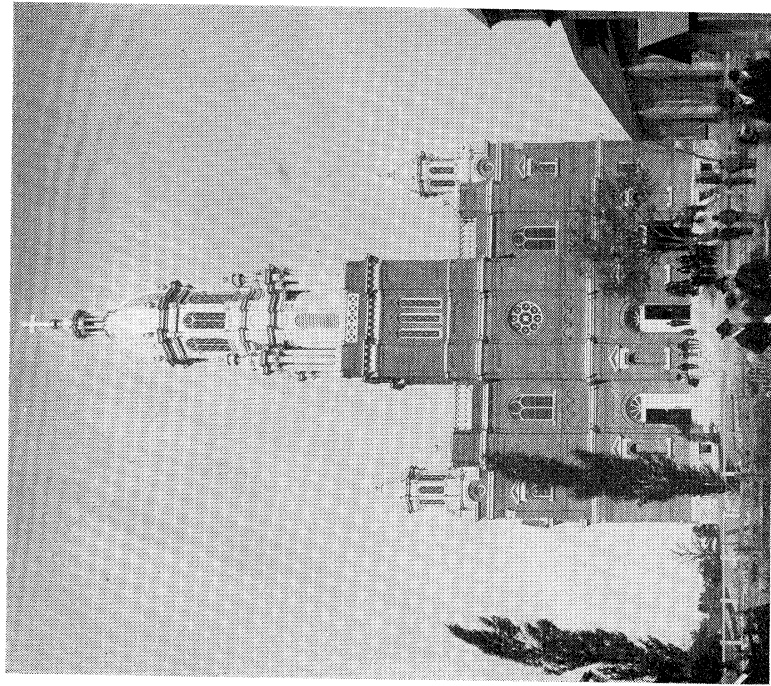


MAIN STREET IN BANCROFT



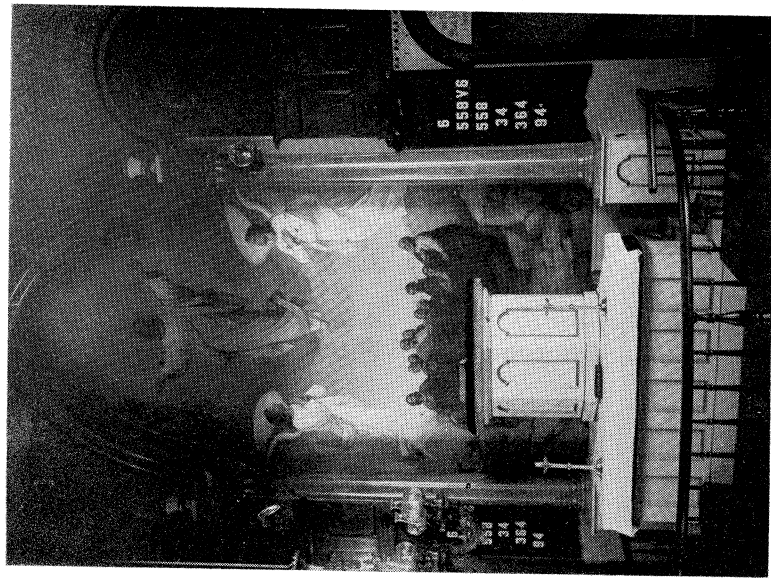
MAIN STREET IN ALMOND (ca. 1908)





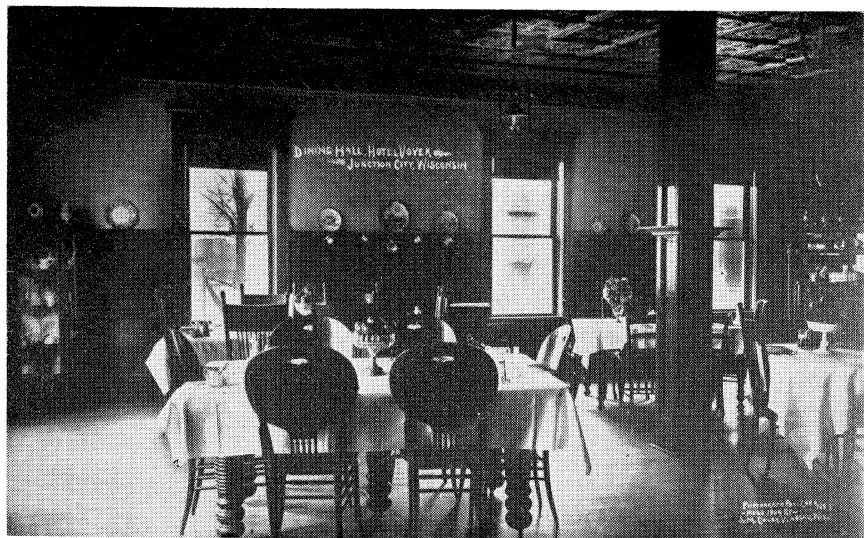
**SACRED HEART CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
AT POLONIA 1902-1934

Reputedly largest rural Catholic church in United States. West wall of second church built 1884 (right), razed after brick structure (above) completed.



**ALTAR OF NORTH NEW HOPE**  
**LUTHERAN CHURCH**

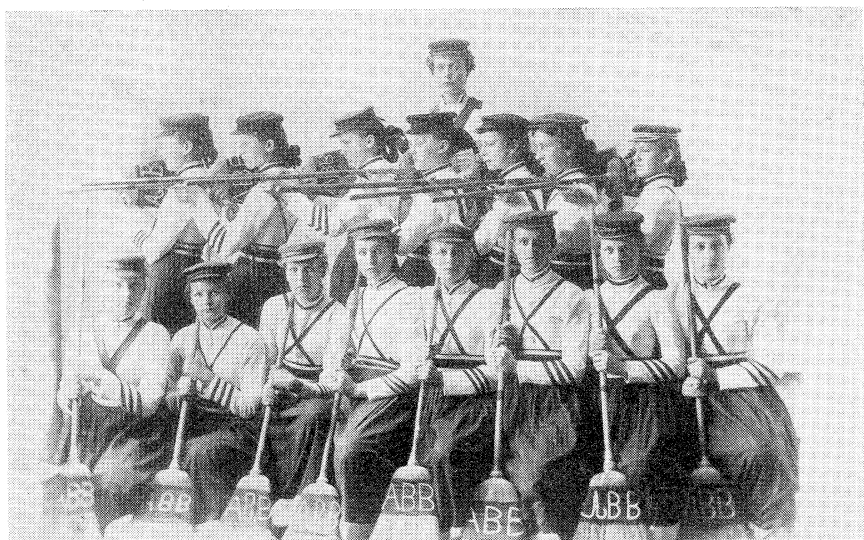
Dedicated 1874, church destroyed by fire 1924. At right over door Norwegian quotation from *John* 6:56. Painting by anonymous artist probably inspired by Raphael's *Transfiguration* in Vatican Picture Gallery.



DINING HALL, HOTEL VOYER, 1909



RAILROAD DEPOT AT JUNCTION CITY



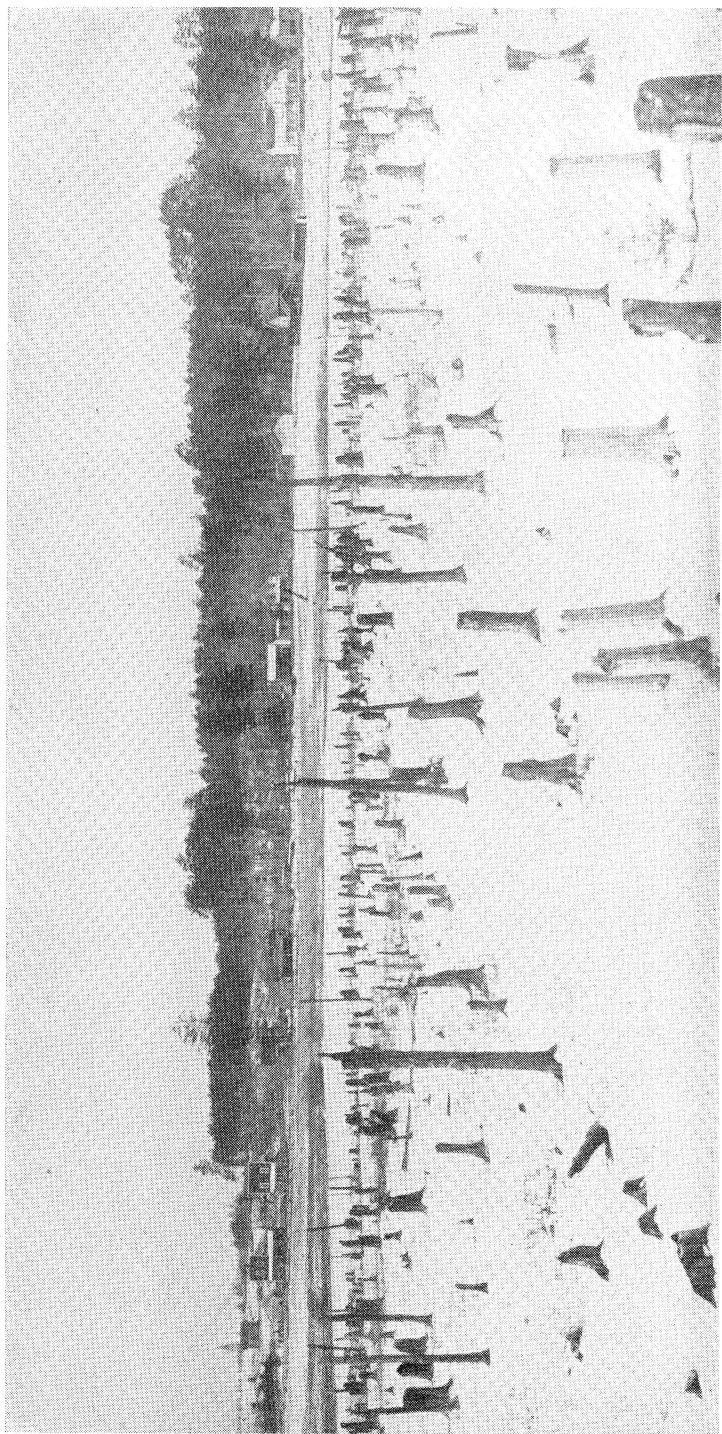
AMHERST SCHOOL STUDENTS BROOM BRIGADE (ca. 1895)

Seated (l. to r.): Alvina Bobbe, Inga Severtson, Clara Johnson, Vena Strong, Ella Anderson, Edna Morehouse, Annie Olson, and Zelle Fryar. Standing (l. to r.): Emma Nelson, Mabel Foxen, Stella Starks, Jennie Brandt, Maude Fenton, Esther Peterson, Nellie Rollefson, and Lucy Bishop, captain, at rear.



TOP BUGGY AND DRIVERS EARLY 1900s

Misses Mabel (left) and Kathryn Cobb of Belmont township. Lap robe covers feet to keep off dust. Arrows on signboard at rear point to Almond (five miles) and Waupaca (?).



PIONEER SETTLEMENT OF ROSHOLT VILLAGE (ca. 1899)

At left, Jens P. Hanson store and post office; next, probably store-boarded house, blacksmith shop and lumber piles (ownership uncertain); right center, residence and (small white building) store of Adolph Torgerson; next, feed mill of Jens Kasmussen and Andrew

Austin; far right, residence, barn, and office of J. G. Rosholt. Brush line of South Branch of Little Wolf Creek runs center. Fire has burned slashing among stumps (foreground) which, to judge from size, were not large trees.





#### DRAINAGE DITCH IN TOWN OF GRANT

Ditch 4 which runs into Four Mile Creek, one segment in complex of ditches, dams, and bulkheads created after 1905 by Portage County Drainage District on Buena Vista Marsh.



#### SUGAR BUSH IN TOWN OF LINWOOD APRIL 23, 1899

View of famed maple forest in elbow of Wisconsin River, once worked by Chippewas, later by Warner family. Kettle at right probably used for final stage of boiling sirup to sugar, while shallow pans (leaning against tree at left) for early stage of boiling sap. Man at left uses shoulder yoke to carry sap buckets. Women on picture suggest "visitor's day," probably Sunday outing.

seer of highways; John Phillips, sealer of weights & measurers; and N. F. Bliss and M. Wylie, justices of the peace.

Shortly after the spring election, a special election was held on May 27 to elect a county judge in which Enoch G. Bean received 31 votes, William Walton, nine, A. L. Herren, two, Blank one, and Moses M. Darby, one. (The reference to "Blank" carries no initials).

The Rogers Collection contains a series of affidavits, nearly all on small scraps of paper, probably for economy reasons, in which the various town officers elected in 1849 and 1850 swore to faithfully discharge the duties of their office and support the Constitution of the United States to the best of their ability. Some of the affidavits use the familiar expression "so help me God," others do not. Most of the officers of the new town board supported each other where sureties were required. Other names mentioned in these affidavits as surety officers were C. P. Rice, Hiram Calkins and Wm. Griffin.

John B. DuBay took the oath of office April 4, 1850, two days after he was elected, and promised "faithfully to perform the duties of Supervisor in the town of *Stephens* Point to the best of [his] abilities. . ." Below this appears "John B. his X mark Dubay" which means that DuBay, a man who helped to make the history of his time, was unable to write his own name.

The DuBay affidavit refers to the "town of "*Stephens* Point" and appears to have been made out by Mc D. Harkness, town clerk. Another affidavit signed April 12, 1850 by Major W. Fisk, one of the newly elected constables, refers to the "Town of Stevens Point" which also appears to have been made out by Harkness. The several other affidavits made out by Harkness in 1850 omit the name of the township entirely. There is no explanation in the Rogers Collection or in the records of the town proceedings *per se* for the change in name from the town of Middletown to the town of Stevens or "*Stephens*" Point. Nevertheless, from this day forward all documents which mention the township at all use the name Stevens (or "*Stephens*") Point. This

change in name, of course, came about as the result of the creation of Marathon County which was set off from greater Portage County in 1850, and it followed that the town of Middletown, half of which lay in the newly-constituted county of Marathon, would be reduced. Instead of keeping the name Middletown — as it was no longer in the *middle* between the towns of Plover and Bull Falls — it was changed to the town of Stevens Point.

At some time after the spring election of 1849 the town of Middletown was divided into two election precincts “for *Publick* (public) convenience,” one at “the House of George Kollock in the precinct of Little Fall Falls. . .” and the other at Stevens Point, and at these two places the first general election in the township was held Nov. 6, 1849. The poll list of the election held in the Stevens Point Precinct is not carried in the town proceedings but a document in the Rogers Collection reveals that it was held at the “House of Phelps & Hinton.” The men who went to the polls that day were — and this is also the first poll list of which there is any record available — in the order of their appearance: Thomas Hinton, A. Brawley, William Wigginton, Louis Debois, Willis Moore, Reuben Welsch, Walter Finch, Samuel Benedict, A. McAuley, Daniel Gardner, Louis Lemear, Joseph Felps (Phelps?), William Lowing (probably Loing,) Edward Carter, Thomas Dawson, Francis Lamear, Thomas Hannaser (?), N. E. Corbourn, A. McCaleb, Robert Arthur, Geo Logan, Ruel Gardner, Isaac Farris, Oliver Reveud (?), Welcome Mitchell, J. Wallace, P. D. Bangle, D. C. Joslin, John Winslow, E. W. Coburn, Limean (?) Gates, J. B. McNeel, Chas B. Rodman, Mathias Mitchell, Ben (?) Brown, Horace Judd, N. F. Bliss, A. Doughuty (?), Carlos Spoor, W. H. Oulkelt (?), Senica Harris, R. C. McKinney, W. R. Dickinson, L. B. Bennet, J. Phillips, Jacob Beedle, E. Caudey, B. W. Finch, Lewis Johnson, Lewis Lombard, Parker Wood, Thomas Emerson, Jacob R. Mead, and F. C. Thomas, making a total of 54 voters.

Two sheets of ledger paper pasted together carry the names of the 50 voters “at Little Bull Falls,” a name which is probably misleading. It was originally desig-

nated as the "precinct of Little Bull Falls," but from another document, made out by the inspectors of election in this precinct, it is stated that the November election was held "at the Trading Post or house of J. DuBays. . ." Further credence is given by the number of Scandinavian names which appear in the poll list, almost surely mill hands connected with the Week saw mill on the Big Eau Pleine who may have driven down to DuBay's over the road along the left bank of the Little Eau Pleine to the Wisconsin and crossed on a ferry. It is extremely doubtful whether any road connected the Week mill with Little Bull Falls at the time.

From the proceedings of the town of Stevens Point it is learned that a special town meeting was held at the house of J. B. Phelps (probably the tavern-house) on Jan. 3, 1851, when the voters patently were not anxious to exercise their franchise as the meeting was called for the purpose of raising a new tax, probably for school purposes, and a total of eight votes were cast, six for and two against. The clerks at this election were James S. Young and N. W. Whiting. The names of Brawley, chairman, and Ira Vaughan and Orin Maybee are appended to this entry as supervisors although, as noted above, DuBay had been chosen as one of the supervisors in the spring election. The fact that he had to sign his own affidavit with an "X" may have led him to disqualify himself and Vaughan was appointed in his place.

From the town proceedings it is learned that elections in 1852-53 were held at "house of W. J. Empey" in Stevens Point and a special election in 1853 at the "house of N. B. Lloyds" in the town of Stevens Point. The general election of 1853 was held at the little school house at 420 Clark Street.

The last entry in the first road book of the town of Stevens Point describes a road commencing ". . . in front of W. C. Muzzy's house. . ." which was located near modern Jordan. The statement was never completed and ends with the word "thence," the rest of the description left blank as though the clerk, on learning that the city of Stevens Point was taking over the town of Stevens Point books, had dropped his pen and hurried off.



The balance of the book is also filled with blank pages. A spirited debate arose over the question of who was to retain the original proceedings of the town of Stevens Point, the city or the township. As these records have reposed in the City Hall to this day, the city apparently won its point whereas later town of Stevens Point books are held by Carson which for a long time was part of the town of Stevens Point. Nevertheless, these two ledgers, in addition to the Rogers' Collection, form a unique record of the original founders of the city of Stevens Point. A few of the names listed in connection with the election of 1849 and 1850 are those of men who left the county, but most of the names reappear in later records of the city, not to mention in the outlying townships, especially Amherst, Stockton, Buena Vista and that portion of Eau Pleine which later became the town of Dewey.

#### THE TOWN OF STEVENS POINT (later period).

The town of Stevens Point, which in 1850 covered most of the northern part of the county, was reduced in 1856 when modern Wood and Portage Counties were constituted. Portions of the township east of the Wisconsin River were also detached from it when the town of Stockton was created in 1855, and the towns of Hull, Eau Pleine, and Sharon were created in 1859-60, leaving the balance of Stevens Point township situated, for more than a decade after 1860, mostly west of the Wisconsin River in modern Carson and west Eau Pleine.

In 1877 the town of Stevens Point ordered a road laid, among others, to "Runkel's Mill." This was probably George Runkel who operated a saw mill on a small creek which is identified only on the 1895 plat as Howe Creek (since dried) about three miles north of Junction City in Sec 24. As the water from the pond created by a dam here was scarcely sufficient for a mill, it is believed that it operated on, or was supplemented by, steam. It was probably built shortly after the Wisconsin Valley Railroad was laid through here in 1874 which made it possible to ship out lumber by rail instead of hauling to the river to be rafted. According to Otto Paetch, town

clerk in 1958, Runkel had two or three tram lines running into the timber to the west and southwest of the mill to bring logs to mill.

A post office was established here on Feb. 25, 1876 called "Runkels Mills," with Anton Arians serving as the postmaster. It may have been located in a store which the company operated near the mill. Two or three other buildings, aside from the mill, such as a boarding house, a blacksmith shop and two or three private residences made up the community. The mill property passed to the hands of Anton Arians (*ca.* 1880) who lost everything a few years later in a fire which consumed the entire installation and apparently every building and piece of lumber around it. William Holbrook of Junction City remembers, as a boy, seeing Arians, his wife and family walking down the railway track, carrying all they possessed. The Arians' found a place to live in Junction, started life over again and made a successful comeback in the business and political life of the community. The Runkel's Mill post office was discontinued June 12, 1886, probably as a result of the fire. There is no trace of the mill today although part of the embankment for the dam is visible. Runkel (now spelled Runkle) School is situated on the blacktop a few rods to the west as well as Runkel Cemetery and church.

The last mention of a town of Stevens Point meeting in Junction City occurs April 2, 1878.

The summer of 1886 is recalled as one of the driest in many decades. A pall of smoke rolled in from forest fires in Minnesota which clouded the sky over Wisconsin for several days. This smoke could have been caused by other fires as well, for on Sept. 3, 1886, the town board of Stevens Point paid \$30.30 to nine men "fighting the fire from bridges and corduroys."

In 1875 Town 25 in Range 6, which had been taken from the town of Stevens Point and handed to the new town of Eau Pleine in 1858, was handed back to the town of Stevens Point, but in November the County Board voted to return the north one half of Town 25 to Eau Pleine. Three years later in 1878 the town of Stevens Point annexed all that portion of Town 24, Range 7

lying east of the Wisconsin, then part of Hull, in addition to sections 31, 32, 33 and 34 and all of Sec 35 lying west of the river in Town 25, Range 7 which, for the past several years, had been part of Eau Pleine. This arrangement still left the town of Stevens Point badly divided with the greater part of its territory on the right bank of the river, and several sections on the left bank around modern Casmier.

In 1884 the town of Stevens Point sought to have the south one-half of Town 25, i.e. the south part of modern Eau Pleine in Range 6, detached from Carson and attached to itself. Apparently this had become such a sensitive point that it was taken out of committee and discussed by the County Board acting as a committee of the whole. Finally in an ordinance enforced on and after April 1, 1899, the County Board "vacated," more bluntly, abolished, the town of Stevens Point, by detaching what was left of it to the towns of Hull, Eau Pleine, Carson and Linwood, and by reassigning parts of Hull and Eau Pleine to the new town of Dewey. This was the last major overhaul of township boundaries in the county.

## STEVENS POINT, The Village of

It is generally accepted as a fact — although there are no documents to sustain it — that Stevens Point was named after George Stevens who in 1839 used the “point” or peninsula on the Wisconsin River at the foot of modern Main Street to launch his supply canoes for the journey north to Big Bull Falls (Wausau) where he built a saw mill in 1840.

The most oft-repeated version of the naming of the village is provided by Sherman, himself a pioneer of 1848, less than a decade after Stevens passed through. The Sherman version, in brief, follows:

“In 1839, bidding his (i.e. Stevens’) family and friends good-bye, he, with John Fox, a millwright, started for the Pineries. . . In Illinois he purchased two yoke of oxen and a wagon, hired Daniel D. Dillie as a teamster to drive, and after loading the supplies, started for the Pinery. After a long and tedious journey, they arrived at the end of the road, at a point at the head of Shaurette Rapids on the Wisconsin River, now the foot of Main Street in this city. After a short rest, he sent the team and teamster back for more supplies while he and Fox remained to make further preparations for ascending the river to Big Bull Falls . . . While stopping at the head of Shaurette Rapids he built the addition to the log shanty . . .”<sup>1</sup>

In order to learn what “log shanty” Sherman is speaking of, it is necessary to jump ahead a number of *Note Books* where it is stated that this shanty, which was 12 by 16 feet, was constructed not by Stevens but by James Allen, a part Indian, who worked for Conant and Campbell in the saw mill at Conant Rapids in 1838 or 1839. Allen, he says, was married to an Indian, and

“ . . . as females were very scarce in those days and as he wished to remove his Indian queen from the influence of the white man, he went up the river about a mile and with the assistance of Leander Trudell, built his cabin on the bank of the river at the foot of Main Street. Soon after the cabin

<sup>1</sup> *Note Book*, no. 1.

was erected, George Stevens, with John B. Fox and Daniel D. Dillie, arrived at the head of Shaurette Rapids where the shanty was built. He purchased the shanty from Allen, and built an addition, where he stored his goods.”<sup>1</sup>

This log shanty apparently stood on the point of the peninsula in the Wisconsin River formed by the slough along modern Briggs Street and the deep curve of the Wisconsin just below modern Clark Street and from whence came “Stevens’ Point.” A birdseye view of the city made in an artist’s sketch of 1874 reveals more strikingly than any plat or map how the bend of the Wisconsin River between Clark Street and the slough formed a point resembling an arrowhead aimed directly into the river (see illustration).

In his late years, Sherman, who died in 1906, began collecting papers for the purpose of writing a history of Portage County. From these it is learned that not only Trudell took part in helping Stevens build an addition to the log shanty mentioned above, but also Orin Maybee. After completing this task

“... they (presumably Stevens, Trudell and Maybee) went to the foot of Conant Rapids . . . and made a large canoe, which was hauled by teams to the head of the rapids. Here the goods were shipped and taken up the river to Little Bull Falls [where] they had to make a portage by hauling their boats and goods above the falls, then reloading them again and landing at Wausau. . . .”<sup>2</sup>

If teams were required to haul this canoe, it probably was a dugout hollowed from a big pine, not a bark canoe. But from the evidence of the Sherman account, there is reason to wonder why this community was not named after Allen or Trudell. That Stevens remained in the area for only a short time and used the shanty merely as a transshipment point to Big Bull leaves one to wonder how the name ever stuck at all, if, in fact, it did. Yet out of a chance remark, or reference, many of the names of the county, as elsewhere in the state, can trace their heritage with little relation to the logic of things.

The story of how Stevens came to pass through the

<sup>1</sup> *Note Book*, no. 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Sherman Papers*, pp. 2-3, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

tract of land which would one day bear his name is also described in the reminiscences of the Hon. John C. Clark of Marathon County.

"In 1835 Robert Wakely opened a tavern and trading post at Point Baussee; he being a live American, desiring to know where the river headed, wandered to the north and traveled up and up until he came to Big Bull, and on and on to Grandfather Bull . . . In 1839 he was down at St. Louis on lumber from Whitney mill, there met George Stevens, who was there with lumber from Alleghany where he had lumbered for many years. He run his lumber down the Alleghany to Pittsburg, in rafts and on to Cairo, the mouth of the Ohio River, then by barge up to St. Louis.

"Wakely told Stevens about the great pine forests and the water power on the Wisconsin river which greatly excited Stevens, for he thought that Wakely was telling him fairy tales . . . Stevens soon after came to Wisconsin and found things to his notion far better than Wakely had told him . . ."

That Wakely lived at Point "Baussee" (variously spelled) a decade later is certified in a mortgage entered into at that place between Francis La Mere and Wakely. La Mere mortgaged "one dark red ox, and one light red ox with a white star on his forehead, being the same yoke of oxen purchased by Wakely from Houghton & Batten in the fall of 1844. . ."

The entry on the land which Stevens occupied around Plummer and Clark Islands at Wausau was made Oct. 5, 1840. Judge Marchetti writes that the mill "must have been built and ready for operation in 1840, because there exists a contract . . . in which Stevens obligates himself to pay to the other party, who evidently was renting and running the mill, the sum of \$4.50 per 1,000 feet for sawing, he, Stevens, to furnish the provisions for the men and buying all the 'clear stuff' manufactured by the mill man at the rate of \$9 per thousand."\*

Apparently Stevens' mill went into operation in the latter part of 1840 as Henry Merrell, who visited Big

<sup>1</sup> *History of Marathon County*, pp. 63-64.

<sup>2</sup> *Mortgages*, Book A, p. 56.

<sup>3</sup> *History of Marathon County*, p. 62.

Bull Falls on a census taking mission in the summer of 1840, found Stevens still in process of construction. In the spring of 1841, according to semi-legendary accounts, Stevens engaged Hiram Stow to pilot what is believed to be the first lumber rafts down the Wisconsin River from Big Bull to St. Louis. Stow, who later operated a store at Plover, almost surely had previous experience in lumber rafting, yet on the success or failure of this trip no doubt hung the future of the Upper Wisconsin Pinery. For unless the pine lumber could be rafted to market, there was no other feasible way out. Stow lived to tell the story of this great adventure and lest anyone doubt his skill or his courage let him gaze hard on the angry rapids below the Consolidated dam in Stevens Point where, at the time, there was no dam, no slide, and no piers to guide the raftsmen, only masses of jagged rocks and a current so powerful that the slightest miscalculation might shatter the raft to smithereens and drown the raftsmen in whirlpools of foam that spun like a top. Nevertheless, this epic trip by Hiram Stow, as unbelievable as an exploit by Paul Bunyan, went un-sung in the ballads of the times.

But what one man could do, others could do after him, and within a few years, great fleets of pine lumber — the hardwood was not being cut as it would not float — began moving down the Wisconsin each spring and early summer, and the slack water above Shaurette Rapids became a stopping place for the raftsmen who tied up their cribs of lumber and came ashore for supplies at the local chandlers and probably bought rope, chains, hammers, axes, peavy poles, canthooks, saws, blankets, and tobacco, not to mention food and liquor. And by 1847 the territorial census reveals that the Precinct of Stevens Point was already forging ahead of Plover Precinct. It was apparent that here, not in Plover where the county seat was located, the first city of the county would one day be located.

But the first man to make an entry on land in the future village and city of Stevens Point was Andrew Mullarkey, an immigrant from County Connaught, Ireland. According to family tradition, missionary stories

were being circulated in Ireland in the early 19th Century about the evangelization of the Indians in the land of the "Moscosin" (Wisconsin) and one of these stories described the whirlpools in the big river of the "Moscosin" which dragged Indian canoes under and which, at certain levels, even howled and moaned for the blood of its victims. From this had developed a belief among the Indians that a large animal (no kin of Lochness monster) inhabited the river, and, when the Indians were introduced to the Christian conception of original sin, they naturally associated the monster in the river with the devil. Accordingly, hazardous curves and whirlpools were given names like the Devil's Elbow, the Devil's Jaws, and the Witches' Gulch.

These missionary stories excited one Henry Mullarkey who, probably in the 1830s, set out from Ireland to challenge the monster in the river of the "Moscosin." When he arrived he may have stayed for a time with James Allen, or even DuBay, because family tradition holds that he shared a shanty with a man part Indian on the Upper Wisconsin. He may have established a trading post on a spot tentatively identified as the site of the Green Bay Depot at the foot of the present Main Street in Stevens Point. The trading post was probably moved a short time later to the left bank of the Little Eau Pleine by sliding the building on winter ice up the Wisconsin River. The land where Mullarkey's new trading post allegedly stood was actually entered by Andrew Dunn in 1844 and sold to Andrew Mullarkey in 1845. (See *Eau Pleine, The Township of.*)

Failing to find the land or the river of the "Moscosin" as bad as the missionaries had painted it, Henry Mullarkey meanwhile had returned to Ireland to bring as many of his family as were willing to come to America, although his own father refused to make the move. Other members, including brother Andrew, settled first in northern Illinois. Leaving the family eventually, Henry and Andrew went north and rediscovered the location of the trading post which Henry is said to have first built at the foot of Main Street before moving it farther north. Presumably impressed with the location.



Andrew may then have gone south to the U.S. Land Office in Mineral Point where he made an entry on fractional government Lot 1 (Sec. 32, T. 24, R. 8) on Sept. 10, 1844 and a few weeks later on government Lot 2 covering all of the property around the future Public Square in Stevens Point down to the banks of the Wisconsin River and a few blocks to the east. To repeat, this is the earliest indenture on a tract of land affecting the future city. The land around had been surveyed into sections by Hathaway in 1839-40, but it had not been subdivided into forties or, in this instance, fractional government lots. Mullarkey may have accomplished this himself, or hired another surveyor.

In 1845 Mathias Mitchell acquired government Lot 1 from Andrew Mullarkey and "a certain piece of land" in government Lot 2 from Mullarkey and Charles Mad-dy. Mullarkey, who lies buried in Bellville, Wisconsin, may have remained for a time in Grand Rapids Precinct as the 1847 census lists the firm name of "Cain & Mullarky" at the head of a household of 12 persons, none of which was a female, which suggests a mill or logging operation. Henry Mullarkey, who remained on the Upper Wisconsin, eventually disappeared and not even legend survives the circumstances of his death. Perhaps the Old Man in the river had met the old man from Ireland after all and challenged him on his own ground.

The first mention of the name Stevens Point appears in an indenture dated Jan. 29, 1847 when Mitchell borrowed \$2,000 from A. Warren Sr., and as a bond offered "certain lots and tracts of land laying (lying?) in this place commonly called Stevens Point, and numbered on the map of that said place in part as follows according to (here the entry leaves a blank space) Birchley's Survey, namely Lots 1 & 8 in Block 2, and all the land north of said Lots and of equal width with them, as far back as the first little creek or brook. Also 66 feet of land fronting on Main Street. . ."

In making this arrangement with Warren, it was also

<sup>1</sup> *Mortgages*, Book A, p. 109.

agreed that Mitchell was to buy the plat or map made by the man referred to as Birchley. Later in the year, probably using Birchley's map to guide him, Mitchell platted the land he acquired from Mullarkey into village lots and blocks, all lots 132 feet by 50 feet, and laid out the two streets, Main and *Clarke* (Clark) east and west, and 1st and 2nd Streets north and south, none of which were more than four blocks long. He also deeded to the village of Stevens Point a Public Square, a heritage of New England, containing one and half acres which, it should be noted, is not square, but rectangular, longer north to south. The original plat, entered Nov. 12, 1847, reveals that most of the business lots were located around the square and west to the river. The north lots terminated at Moses Creek, popularly referred to as the "slough." Decades later the city drained this slough through a large sewer. The reclaimed land has been built up with residences as well as making possible the opening of a couple of blocks on the west end of Briggs Street formerly subject to flooding during high water.

In the first several years of growth the name of the village and of the township was variously spelled Stevens, Stevens' or Stephens Point. When John DuBay took oath of office as supervisor on the new town board of Stevens Point in 1850 reference is made in the affidavit to the "town of Stephens Point." An indenture of March 8, 1849 which describes a land transfer between John and Henry Curran makes reference to the "town of Stephens Point."<sup>1</sup> The possessive Stevens' Point was also common and appears in a news dispatch as late as 1853.<sup>2</sup>

The point on the river bank used as a staging area by George Stevens had no doubt been used for similar purposes by the Chippewas long before this. The field notes of Hathaway refer to a Chippewa trail on the opposite bank of the river a little farther upstream where a man called Charettes (Shaurette?) had already built two

<sup>1</sup> *Deeds*, Vol. A, p. 260.

<sup>2</sup> *Pinery*, July 27, 1853.

establishments before 1839 and which, there is reason to believe, were trading posts. This Chippewa trail may have been a short-cut from Plover to the Black River country for Indians, dragging their canoes on a travois, who wished to avoid the extra trip north where the river could be forded on foot at DuBay's and instead launched their canoes at the foot of the present Main Street in Stevens Point to cross the river and pick up the trail west.

Before the dam at Shaurette Rapids was raised, an island was located less than a quarter of a mile north of the Clark Street bridge known to the Chippewas, according to Hiram Calkins, as *Kah-kag-e-winch-e-min-it-e-gong*, meaning, he says, "Hemlock Island . . . a name applied to Stevens Point on account of an island in the Wisconsin opposite to the village covered with Hemlock. . ."<sup>1</sup> John T. Kingston, clerk of the board of county commissioners in 1848, told Dr. John Phillips that when he first visited the Pinery, Stevens Point was known by the Indian name of Hemlock Island.<sup>2</sup> Neither one of these versions makes clear whether the Indians referred to the "point" in the river, the island in the river, or both, as "Hemlock Island," nor is there any reference to the latter name in early indentures.

Some idea of the primitive conditions of the forest which surrounded the little settlement clinging to the bank of the river in 1848 is gained from Sherman who offers what appears to be the only eyewitness account. He was approached in Plover, he says, by Matt and John Campbell to come to Stevens Point and finish the inside of a store and install shelves. There is no mention in early indentures to a "Matt" Campbell but as James Campbell's middle initial was 'M' it is quite possible that his middle name was Matthew or "Matt" as Sherman refers to him. According to the *History of Northern Wisconsin*, the Campbells in 1850 were operating

<sup>1</sup> Hiram Calkins, "Indian Nomenclature and the Chippewas," *Collections*, Vol. I, p. 119.

<sup>2</sup> Obituary, *Stevens Point Journal*, June 11, 1898.

a hardware store, "successors to Robert Bloomer."<sup>1</sup>

Sherman describes his first trip to Stevens Point in part as follows:

"... the next morning I took the necessary tools upon my back and started for Stevens Point . . . Through mistake I took the path leading up the Plover. After traveling it some distance . . . I was satisfied I was on the wrong track. So I left the trail and took a westerly course through the woods until I came to a small hill or knoll with some graves upon it. While here I heard some one chopping still farther in a westerly direction. I went on until I came to a small building about opposite of where the Curran house now stands (Copps Company in 1958). This proved to be my destination and where I put up shelves and fitted the room for a store, which I think was the first one in Stevens Point. That day Dr. Phillips (John) came and stopped with the Campbells. At night we were put to bed by crawling up a ladder and through a trap door, where we found a bunk or bed tucked in under the roof. The doctor being the smallest crawled in first, leaving the front side for me, and there we slept. . ."<sup>2</sup>

In another version of the same story, Sherman recalls being surrounded "by an army of bedbugs" but in the above letter, written on the occasion of the death of Dr. John Phillips, he omitted the insects. The knoll with the graves was probably the first cemetery in the community and was located between 425 and 433 Main Street. This suggests that the 400 block in 1848 was considered far enough away from the settlement to be safe for a graveyard. It was later removed.

As the Campbells had taken over the original store of Robert Bloomer, the first in the village, it is pertinent to fix the location of this pioneer establishment. In 1851 James M. (Matt?) Campbell disposed of this property to John Slothower and the description of this indenture states that the property was 15 feet off the east side of Lot 2 & 7, Block 7, and 35 feet off the west side of Lot 1 & 8 in the same block.<sup>3</sup> It probably stood somewhat in the middle of Lots 2 & 7 facing Main Street, or about half a block east of the modern Green Bay De-

<sup>1</sup> *History of Northern Wisconsin*, (Chicago: The Western Historical Society, 1881), p. 737.

<sup>2</sup> Letter in *Stevens Point Journal*, Aug. 15, 1903.

<sup>3</sup> *Deeds*, Vol. B, p. 70.

pot building. There is no record of a license issued to either Bloomer or Campbell to operate a store. This suggests that it was a bona fide store, did not need a license, and did not sell liquor. The Campbells apparently began operating a tavern-house either in the same building connected with the store or elsewhere in the village as the county commissioners early in 1847 issued a license to James M. Campbell "to keep a tavern at Stevens Point. . .". But they continued in the hardware business at least until 1851 when the store was taken over by Slothower.

However, the first tavern-house or hotel in the village was built by Mathias Mitchell at the foot of Main Street, probably in Lots 2 & 3, Block 1, and Lot 10, Block 2, in other words, a few feet east of modern Crosby Avenue on Main Street, today used as a municipal parking lot. These lots conform more or less to an indenture of May 24, 1847 when Mitchell disposed of this land and property to Joseph B. Phelps who took a \$2,000 mortgage with Mitchell described as "Commencing at the southeast corner of lot upon which Warren's store is erected and running west 156 feet to the corner of the D. F. Smith lot. Then north 132 feet, said lot to be of equal width at each end. Said lot to be the same upon which the tavern house now occupied by A. H. Bancroft is erected and situated on the north side of Main Street. . ."<sup>2</sup>

This suggests that Asa Bancroft (or Bancraft) had been operating the Mitchell tavern, apparently as a renter, which was now being taken over by Phelps. The first county treasurer's book reveals that Mitchell paid \$15 for a tavern license on March 24, 1845, while the County Board proceedings of 1846 mention a notice to Mitchell, C. P. Rice and John DuBay that their tavern license had expired. The treasurer's book shows that Mitchell renewed the license, not Bancroft. The tavern was known variously as the Raftsman's Home, the Rafters, or as Mitchell House. It was here that the

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, County Commissioners Sessions, Vol. I, p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> *Mortgages*, Book A, p. 138.

spring election was held in 1850 for the first town board of the newly-created township of Stevens Point when it was referred to as the "house of Messrs Phelps & Hinton" (Thomas H. Hinton, who also operated the "Blue Eagle" tavern in Wausau).

A third tavern-house license was issued to H. W. Kingsbury (listed in 1847 census of Stevens Point Precinct) a few weeks after the Campbells got their license.

The first to be issued a license to operate a "grocery" at Stevens Point was A. (probably for Andrew) Warren Sr., whose bond was approved July 19, 1847. It was obviously in operation before this date as the indenture between Mitchell and Phelps, which mentions the store, is dated May 24, and from the description, was situated in the southwest corner of Lot 9, Block 2, or one lot or so west of the Copps Company at 144 Main Street.

On Sept. 5, 1847 William Richards (an error for Reichardt) appears to have applied for a license "to keep a grocery at Stevens Point."<sup>1</sup> This was probably located in Lots 4 & 5, Block 7, that is, on the west side of south 1st Street facing Main Street. On Sept. 18, 1848 Reichardt disposed of this property to Angus McAuly (or McCauly) and Samuel Drake who in turn were granted a license for a grocery by the county commissioners on Sept. 15. Finally, the county commissioners on April 3, 1848 had also approved a license for a tavern-house to Welcomb Mitchell and Daniel Brown at Stevens Point.

No other licenses are mentioned in the county sessions, for after Jan. 9, 1849 these functions were taken over by the town board of Middletown. These tavern-houses, stores and "groceries," then, are the first in Stevens Point of which there is evidence. It is significant that no mention is made to saloons licensed in the village. A license for a tavern-house, which did not serve liquor, cost \$25 in 1847-48 at Stevens Point. But when Reichardt was licensed to operate a grocery, he was charged \$75. There is reason to believe that the "groceries" included liquor and that he was paying ex-

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings, County Commissioners Sessions, Vol. I, p. 116.*

tra for the privilege. This falls within the meaning of the word attached in the early 19th Century to a *groceri* or grocery, often little more than a grog-shop. And it is also reasonable to assume that the lumberjacks and river men who passed through Stevens Point in the 1840s were not being deprived of their grog rations however surreptitiously acquired.

By the fall of 1850 the village of Stevens Point had a population estimated at 200. The *History of Northern Wisconsin* quotes a business directory (apparently no longer available) of the village for the year 1850 which included the following: Mitchell House operated by Joseph Phelps; City Hotel operated by Brown & Granger; Star Saloon operated by Walton (William) & Walsworth (Silas S.); The Ocean Wave, a saloon (probably named after a Great Lakes vessel of the same name which went down in a fire in 1853); Sailor Jack & Watts, another saloon, ("Sailor Jack" was John Hawn, a Hollander, and Watts' given name was William); Matt and John Campbell, hardware; John Strong, general merchandise; Mathias Mitchell, Young & Maybee, Thomas Hinton, B. Finch, and Campbell & Bros., lumbermen; Francis Lamere and James Crandall, boarding house keepers; Seneca Harris, a boot and shoe maker; Anson Rood, builder and merchant; and J. Young & O. Wiswald, hotel keepers. The local money lender and broker was John Weland.<sup>1</sup>

Although the period of its existence is uncertain, there also appears to have been a saloon known as "Norwegian Hell" which had "memories of hard drinking and skylarking. . ."<sup>2</sup>

The first issues of the *Pinery* in early 1853 carry only one advertisement of a saloon, which did not preclude others, known as the "American Saloon" and operated by G. C. Reveland who advertised, in part, as follows:

"Any persons particularly anxious to escape the awful fate of starvation can most effectually do so by stopping at this Saloon, and just calling for anything in the line of *eatables*

<sup>1</sup> *History of Northern Wisconsin*, p. 737.

<sup>2</sup> Harry Ellsworth Cole, *Stage Coach and Tavern Tales of the Old Northwest*, ed. Louise Phelps Kellogg, (Cleveland, Ohio, The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1930), p. 170.

that he can think of. Fowls of all kinds, Oysters, Pigs Feet, Sardines, Crackers, Beef Steak, Fish, and just as like as not Quail will be in the programme in a few days . . ."

The advertisement is garnished with small insets of snipe, clam and fish. Perhaps this was the real Norwegian Hell.

On Jan. 28, 1854 the *Pinery* had occasion to refer to the hotels in the growing village. Phelps "new tavern house" (the first one burned in 1853) was to be opened Feb. 22. In addition, N. B. Lloyd's Franklin House, James S. Young's United States Hotel, and Mann & Slutts' (Azro Mann & Matt Slutts) American House, were described as "all good houses in full flow and doing good business." The location of Franklin House is uncertain, but the United States Hotel and others that followed it undoubtedly stood at 144 Main Street. The American Hotel was in the block directly east of the United States Hotel on the north side of Main Street adjoining the Public Square. This burned Christmas Day in 1854 and was never rebuilt.

The price of commodities in Stevens Point, prevailing wage scales and interest on money, quoted for June 3, 1853 in the *Pinery* of the same date was as follows:

Pork per bbl	\$18.00	
Flour per bbl	5.00	
Butter per lb.	.16	
Lard per lb.	.10	
Eggs per doz.	.06 to .09	
Dried apples per bu.	1.75	
Beans per bu.	1.25	
Oats per bu.	.40	
Corn, shelled		
per bu.	\$ .70	
Hay per ton	6.00	
Hams, smoked, per lb.	.09	
Cheese per lb.	.08	
Candles, tallow, per lb.	.14	
Soap per lb.	.06	
Salt, fine, per sack	.50	
Beer, strong, per bbl.	7.00	
Laborers' wages per day, common		\$ 1.25



Laborers' wages per month	\$16.00 to \$20.00
Rafting and running river, per day,	\$1.50 to \$ 2.00
Mechanics, per day	\$1.50 to \$ 2.00
Milch cows, fresh, each	\$25.00 to \$30.00
Public Lands, per acre, each	\$ 1.25
Public Lands with land warrants	\$ 1.00
Money for 30 days	1½

The first saw mill in the village was built by William H. Johnson in 1846-1847 on the Wisconsin River near the terminus of modern Arlington Place. (See *Those Who Came First*.) This mill, the several tavern-houses, saloons and stores, in addition to a number of frame shanties and log cabins was the Stevens Point which Albert Gallatin Ellis no doubt found when he visited here in 1851. What his primary mission was is uncertain, but the field notes of Portage County refer to a fractional survey made by Ellis and his son of Town 23, Range 7 (Linwood) in mid-September 1851. Up to the time of his arrival, probably no one had fully appreciated the strategic situation occupied by the village and its potential in the lumbering industry, for in the next 30 years Stevens Point was to become the center of lumbering and logging operations in the Wisconsin Pinery, in addition to serving as a supply depot for raftsmen running down lumber to St. Louis from mills in the northern part of the county and in Marathon County.

And in the next 30 years no man did more to publicize and popularize the village, later the city of Stevens Point, than Albert G. Ellis, not only a pioneer of the city, but a pioneer of the Wisconsin Territory. Born in New York state in 1800, he became an apprentice printer at the age of 16, and three years later was engaged by Eleazer Williams, the half-breed Indian missionary, to serve as his assistant on a visit to Green Bay in 1821. Returning to the East, Ellis arranged to be sent back to Green Bay the following year as a missionary school teacher and lay-reader of the Episcopal Church. In 1827, he entered government service and

in the next several years served in various capacities as a surveyor and assistant in Indian affairs. In 1836 he was elected a member from Green Bay to the first territorial legislature at Belmont, and also served in 1841-44, once as speaker of the house. In 1837 he was made surveyor-general in charge of sub-contracting for regional surveys.

In his early years at Green Bay, Ellis assisted in founding the first newspaper in the Wisconsin Territory known as the *Green Bay Intelligencer*, and on the basis of his visit, or visits, to Stevens Point in the early 1850s, launched the first weekly newspaper in the village appropriately called the *Wisconsin Pinery* which made its initial run on Jan. 14, 1853. When the government opened a land office at Stevens Point on June 24, 1853, no doubt at the urging of Ellis, he had himself appointed receiver and Abraham Brawley, register. In later years he served several times as mayor of the city and died on Dec. 23, 1885. A strong Democrat in his political affiliations, deeply devoted in his religious faith, Ellis took the lead in building an Episcopal Church in the summer of 1853, the first in the village of any denomination. This was located on the northeast corner of Church & Clark Streets. His contribution to the cultural life of the community he had chosen as his home, both through his newspaper work and later in articles for statewide publications, can scarcely be gauged and it is fitting that his oil portrait should be included among the famous men of Wisconsin at the State Historical Society in Madison as well as in the Public Library at Stevens Point.

While the *Wisconsin Pinery* publicized central Wisconsin, it did not reach out far and was not meant to. To fill this need, Ellis in 1857 wrote the *Hand Book of Stevens Point and the Upper Wisconsin* which appeared in the size of a modern pocket-edition. It may have been distributed gratis to newspapers in the New England and Atlantic states. While some of the comments and hopes expressed in the book are overly optimistic, as time was to prove, Ellis nevertheless gave a

picture of Stevens Point and other communities on the Upper Wisconsin which was both timely and historic. No doubt the book did much to bring both business men and settlers to the county.

The years between 1853 and 1857 can well be called "boom" years for Stevens Point. From a village of some 600 or more in 1853, the population early in 1857 had jumped to nearly 2,000. There were several saw, lath and picket mills either in or just outside the village limits. The Moses Strong, ex-Johnson, mill was being operated by J. H. Morrison, and a mile above the village, also on the left bank near modern Bukolt Park, Abraham Brawley had built a mill operated by steam and had a log boom in the Wisconsin River. On the right bank of the river, on or near the old Conant & Campbell site, Messrs. Dale, Carson and Robinson were operating a saw mill. Ellis estimated that there were 500 buildings of all kinds in the village, 270 of which were dwellings and 23 stores which he classified nine as dry goods, seven grocery and provisions, two hardware and tin, two clothing and merchant tailors, and three variety and fancy goods. There were six hotels and several boarding houses, ten saloons, one meat market, one bakery, one brewery, one grist mill, one planing mill, seven carpenter shops, two dry kilns, one lath factory, two wagon shops, four blacksmith shops, five shoe shops, three cabinet and furniture shops, two paint shops, one harnessmaker's shop, two watch makers, two millinery stores, one dress-maker's, two banks, three school houses, one high school (apparently the White School was considered a "high school" although not to be confused with the modern sense of the word), two churches completed and two in construction, one newspaper and printing office, two law and land agency offices, one livery stable, two stage offices, a railroad office, a post office, and a U. S. Land Office. In addition he mentions that the village was served by six physicians, five lawyers, one surgeon-dentist, two Daguerrean photo shops, three music teachers, four surveyors, and four ministers.

It is significant that Ellis, in his *Hand Book*, should

make a special point of defending the integrity of the lumbermen who were opening up the Wisconsin frontier. Said he:

"A great misapprehension had prevailed abroad, not only in regard to the extent of this pursuit, but more especially as to the character of the men engaged in it, which the foregoing exhibit (meaning his *Hand Book*) will serve in some measure to correct . . . . The lumbermen on the Upper Wisconsin are not only men of means to prosecute the business with eminent success, but they have the further qualification of intelligence, energy and perserverance [while] the character of the Wisconsin lumbermen for honesty, intelligence, and astuteness in business, will not suffer in comparison with that of any other class, at home or abroad."<sup>1</sup>

What Ellis saw he unquestionably believed in. One who took a rather dim view of the men who worked in the woods and on the river, and by implication of their employers, was the Rev. O. A. Duus of Scandinavia who served a small group of Norwegians in Stevens Point as visiting pastor in 1855-56. From his letters it is learned that he was in Stevens Point on March 5, 1856, and found lodging in a house located directly on the Wisconsin River, and this is what he saw and thought:

" . . . The river is filled with rafts of logs and other timber which are to float down from the pineries via the Wisconsin and Mississippi rivers to the southern states, where there are few pines. A poor house of planks or just a board laid cross-wise over a plank serves as a shelter for the crew of the raft, who have all their possessions there. They earn from \$1.50 to \$4.00 a day but they are unfortunately the scum of humanity, the dregs both of Europe and America. They live a life of constant drinking, gambling, swearing and cursing, and even of occasional murder. They flee from justice, and since the language is all the same here in America they cannot be detected by their dialect. They lead a detestable existence and consider perjury as nothing."<sup>2</sup>

Ellis represented the builder-type of American and though no doubt a man as religious as Duus, was not blinded by the nature of man to the point where he let it unbalance his judgment, whereas Duus, who came

<sup>1</sup> Albert G. Ellis, *Hand Book of Stevens Point and the Upper Wisconsin*, (Stevens Point, Wis., Ellis, Tracy & Swayze, 1857), p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> *Frontier Parsonage*, p. 26.

from an aristocratic family in Norway, never succeeded in comprehending the spirit of new America and within a few years returned to Norway. It was that way for some.

But Duus was not entirely wrong, nor Ellis entirely right. Both views were exaggerations. The one man, trained to detect sin, found it in abundance; the other, probably anxious to overlook sin, found an overly amount of virtue. Moreover, Ellis was writing in the formative period of economic expansion, but as competition increased among the lumbermen, ethical practice deteriorated and even today one may hear stories of logs stolen at night by a leading lumberman in the booms above the city, or how another lumberman sabotaged his competition by blocking the transit of lumber until he got his own fleet over the Shaurette dam first. Laws were slow to be enacted to regulate the new industry, and apparently even slower to be enforced, and despite the earlier protestations of Ellis, Stevens Point in the next several decades became what may be described as a "tough town," something like a Western cow town, only instead of cow hands coming in to spend their savings after the long drive up to Kansas from the Panhandle, these were loggers and lumberjacks who had spent the winter in the woods. In the spring they came out of the woods to relax and spend their money, or stopped on their way back from St. Louis after delivering a fleet of lumber to celebrate with their hard-earned savings. Men worked under conditions which no labor union would consider feasible today, while the type of men who were attracted to the logging and river running had, of necessity, to be men of tough fibre who, if willing to risk death over the rapids, were equally willing to risk death in a local saloon fight. But the brawls in the saloons and local dives were mostly rough-and-tumble affairs with occasional mayhem. Few involved murder.

While there appears to have been no settlement on the modern West Side of Stevens Point until the 1870s, mill owners farther down the right bank of the Wiscon-

sin River as well as on Mill Creek were no doubt crossing the river in private boats to purchase supplies in the village even before a ferry was established here in 1853. On March 31 that year the County Board issued a license to Valentine Brown to operate a ferry for a period of eight years "from the foot of Main Street." The *Pinery*, however, reported that the ferry was already in operation on Jan. 21.

Ferry rates allowed by the County Board for each vehicle or wagon drawn by one span of horses or one yoke of oxen was 50c; for each additional span or yoke of animals, 25c; for one span of horses, mules or yolk oxen, 37½c; for every vehicle drawn by one beast, 25c; for a single horse or ox, 20c; for droves of cattle, per head, 5c; for droves of sheep, per head, 3c; and for foot passengers, 5c.

Brown either defaulted on his franchise or refused to continue, for on March 29, 1855 the County Board granted a license, for a period of four years, to Francis LeMere and his heirs "of keeping and maintaining a Ferry across the Wisconsin River from the West end of Clark Street . . . to a point opposite on the West side . . . and no other Ferry shall be established within one mile . . . above or below. . ."<sup>2</sup> In granting this franchise the board insisted that the new operator should maintain a good ferry and attend to business at all times, which might suggest that affairs under the previous management had not been satisfactory. Ferry rates were about the same with a proviso added which doubled all rates after 9 o'clock in the evening.

LaMere apparently conducted a business-like arrangement and the County Board renewed his license on April 5, 1862. When LaMere went off to service in the Civil War, the charter was turned over to William Avery on Jan. 25, 1864 and he appears to have continued until the first wooden bridge was built in 1867. Work on the iron bridge to replace the wooden structure, destroyed in a tornado, was begun in 1877. This

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, Board of Supervisors, Vol. II, p. 208.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 237.

stood until May 30, 1923 when it was destroyed by fire and was replaced by the modern concrete bridge.

It is an interesting fact that the County Board maintained control over the licensing of river ferries on the Wisconsin River both in Linwood and the city of Stevens Point.

Around 1900 some citizens, apparently under the impression that the name Stevens Point had a "back woods" sound to it, began a movement to change the name to "Plato," after the Greek statesman and philosopher. George W. Cate, a pioneer of 1845 and long-time judge, took up the defense of the old name and in a long letter to the press said that the arguments for a change "look like a nine-cent sieve after a lot of boys got through playing shinny with it."<sup>1</sup> This appears to have put the quietus on the movement and the history-packed name of Stevens Point was allowed to remain, even as it ever should be.

<sup>1</sup> *Stevens Point Journal*, Jan. 19, 1901.

## STEVENS POINT, The City of

On Sunday, June 29, 1958 the city of Stevens Point began a week of celebration to commemorate the 100th anniversary of its incorporation as a city. The centennial was celebrated by contests for young and old, pageants, banquets, parades, and fireworks. A 100-gun salute by the firing squad of the Berens-Scribner Post No. 6, American Legion, touched off the celebration at a brief ceremony held at noon on the grounds of the Schumann-Heink Memorial at the corner of Clark and Church Streets. Catholic churches throughout the city participated with special services while Protestant and Jewish services stressed the theme: "Stevens Point 1858-1958 — Yesterday's Challenge and Today's Responsibility." It was a fitting reminder of the growth of a city.

When the village of Stevens Point was platted in 1847, it was governed first by the county commissioners, and in 1849 for more than one year by the township of Middletown, and from the spring election of 1850 down to June 30, 1858 by the township of Stevens Point. An act to incorporate the city of Stevens Point was approved by the Legislature on May 17, 1858<sup>1</sup>. The area of the new city was set off from the town of Stevens Point and covered three entire sections on both banks of the Wisconsin River in addition to the lower one half of three more sections, also on both banks of the river, with about two-thirds of the city lying north of the present Bliss Avenue. On March 8, 1871 the state Legislature approved a change in the boundary lines of the city by detaching three forties in the northeast corner of the city and attaching these to the town of

<sup>1</sup> *Private & Local Laws*, (1858), Chap. 267.



Hull.<sup>1</sup> Several minor additions have been made since that time and the city presently covers an area of 7.92 square miles.

Thus the village of Stevens Point, never incorporated, jumped from a township corporation into a city of three wards with two aldermen from each ward and one supervisor from each ward on the County Board. The 1st Ward covered all of the city north of the eighth line running west of Division between Main and Clark Streets and across the Wisconsin River to the city limits. The 2nd Ward covered everything south of the eighth line west of Division, and the 3rd Ward covered everything east and south of Division Street which at this time ran southwest on what later came to be Park Street.

The first election of city officers was held June 26, 1858 when the following were elected: William W. Schofield, mayor; H. B. Martin, treasurer; and from the 1st Ward, Aldermen Anson Rood and Valentine Brown; from the 2nd Ward, H. Ferguson and Moses Perkins; from the 3rd Ward, Seth Holmstad and A. G. Hamacker (also Hamaker).

The earliest tax roll available on these three wards is dated 1860 when the following paid taxes in the 1st Ward: Brookins & Gilchrist, F. W. Blanchard, J. S. Brown, H. F. Clements, C. B. Curtis, John Casey, A. Collins, Orlando Curtis, Mrs. E. Crandall, Robert Dixon, Thomas Donnan, A. G. Ellis, Benj. Fulton, Luscindia Gardner, Rodger Doudd (?), John Gardner, J. A. Gansby (?), probably Crosby) W. H. Gilchrist, Patrick Ryan (?), S. Harris, McKennie, Hewitt, Michael Hanley, S. Higgins, C. B. Jackson (administrator), Henry Lawson, Polley (?) Luce, Norm (?) Slutts, S. R. Merrill, J. H. Morison, Wm. A. Morse, Peter McKeowne, Charles Mante, L. B. Morrison, I (?) N. Masin, Sam Willett, Duncan McGregor, Phelps & Davenport, Martin Perkins, J. L. Prentice, Patrick & Lester, Moses Perkins, John Phillips, E. Y. Royce, M. M. Strong, John Smith, E. W. Vaughn, Joseph Wilmot, Eskel (?) Wilson, and Andrew J. Warren.

<sup>1</sup> *Private & Local Laws*, (1871), Chap. 220.

In the 2nd Ward: Wm. Allen, A. Brawley, R. A. Baldwin, T. K. Blodgett, C. W. Burdick, John Burns, Clipholot (probably Elephalet) Baker, Margaret Banard (?), W. Cames, A. B. Crosby, J. W. Chuvrich (?), G. T. Cline, A. L. Mertin (administrator), Orange R. Ellis, M (?) Fergerson, Wm. Griffin, W. Gouldbury, C. Hoeflinger, C. H. & A. Helm, Ferguson & Moe, Albina Hail, Horace Judd, B. Johnson, J. E. Judd, Joel King, L. Lombard, Duncan McGregor, Jos. Saunders, J. B. Phelps, G. L. Park, R. P. Russell, B. L. Sharpstein, Wm. Stephan, Henry Steel, J. G. Spaulding, H. J. Wheelock, J. (?) Winslow, A. Warren, Jr., Wm. Weston, Wm. Wyatt, H. Valantine, and C. Zimmer.

In the 3rd Ward: Mary Vaagart, I (?) H. Brewer, Buterfield, L (?) Brabernt, E. Burns, W. H. Bean, E. Beach, James Crook, C. P. Conser (?), W. M. Christian, J (?) W. Dodd, M. Duziens (?), A. Earl, I. W. Emphy, I. Fay, B. Fulton, Finch, J. Hazard, W. B. Holt, E. R. How, R. Helms, Bishop Johnson, H. H. Jacobs, A. Lowell, J (?) Morgan, Sol Mitherell (?), R. Mollton, C. H. McCulloch, A. S. Martin, Saml McGracken, Wm. Packard, James Pine, O. Rood, Minor Strobe, Wm. Shepard, L. E. Secor (?), F. Switzler, Sthole (?), N. Stevens, C. Sheckle, Francis Savage, Thompson, E. H. Vaughn, A. P. Vaughn, A. Watterman, J (?) V. Wright, L. T. Willard, J (?) G. Minor, A. Rood, and T. Olson.

Several of the above names paid taxes in one or more wards, most prominent of whom were Moses Strong and A. G. Ellis, but they have not been repeated in the above. The majority of the names listed also are included in the personal property assessment, but there are a number of names not included in the real estate assessment which are included only in the personal property assessment. In the 1st Ward, these additional taxpayers were Joseph Boyle, John Casey, Cox & Brothers, J. J. Cone, J. H. Driscoll, Louis Dill, A. Neamger, Michael Sweeny, C. C. Schleager, and R. D. Wood; in the 2nd Ward, Thos. Anderson, Hugh Brawley, N. Belknapp, H. Bahner (?), M. M. Carpenter, W. H. Field, Moses

Finch, Bertill Johnson, Ed Langenburg, W. H. H. Noble, Denis Ryan, Geo. Stenger, L. W. Sands, H. D. Sager, and Amos Wiltz; in the 3rd Ward, Denis Calkins, Austin Lowell, and Theodore Myers.

Under the aldermanic form of government implied in the incorporation, the city was to be ruled by elective aldermen and a mayor in a body known as the Common Council. The first meeting of the Common Council was held July 1, 1858 at the "old district School House," the small building at 420 Clark Street. J. L. Prentice was appointed clerk pro tem and the Council went into a formal ballot for city clerk which resulted in the election of J. J. Pine. Anson Rood was named president of the board of aldermen, while Gilbert L. Park, appointed city attorney, was instructed to draw up a code of by-laws for city government. At a second meeting of the Common Council on July 6, the city attorney and city clerk's salary were each fixed at \$50 per annum although the clerk was also allowed fees "not chargeable to the city. . . ." Apparently this arrangement did not suit the city clerk who resigned a few days later and was replaced by Charles B. Curtis. On the following day, the Council appointed three "commissioners" to the County Board. The clerk who entered these minutes probably should have used the word *supervisors* as the county was then being administered by a board of supervisors, not commissioners. The three men appointed were D. R. Clements, 1st Ward, Thomas Copp, 2nd Ward, and Orton Rood, 3rd Ward.

Meanwhile, the city grew rapidly and by 1880 the population had risen to 4,445 with 862 families or an average of five and 15/100 persons per family.<sup>1</sup> To meet this expansion a bill to revise, consolidate and amend the original charter was approved by the Legislature in the spring of 1877 which gave the city one additional ward, the 4th Ward, which covered, roughly, everything north of the slough somewhat along the present Briggs Street. Under the new dispensation, the city treasurer was made responsible for collecting taxes which up to this time

<sup>1</sup> *Stevens Point Journal*, July 3, 1880.

had been in the hands of appointed tax collectors hired on a percentage basis. The change also brought in four justices of the peace having jurisdiction over police matters and abolished the office of police justice. Instead of a road commissioner for each ward, a city street commissioner was to be appointed by the Common Council.

The new charter of 1877 also gave the city full control over its own schools and eliminated the authority of the county superintendent. The manner of electing the school board was revised so that not all the members might be removed by a single election. Finally, the last major change authorized the election of city attorney, assessor and marshal who previously held office by appointment of the Common Council.

In 1889, with the city population approaching 7,896 (1890 census), the city was divided to create two more wards for a total of six.

Aldermen serving on this reorganized Council following the spring election of 1889 were: 1st Ward, Peter Ule and D. Lloyd Jones; 2nd Ward, J. C. Campbell and D. H. Vaughn; 3rd Ward, Alex Gilbertson and John Eggleston; 4th Ward, Robert Wallace and Joseph Gliniski; 5th Ward, P. H. Cashin and Lynn Fuller; and 6th Ward, J. G. Russell and Andrew Lutz.

The six-ward arrangement continued in effect until 1935 when the 3rd and 4th wards were divided to create two new wards to be numbered 7 and 8 and that portion of the 1st Ward west of the river was made into the 9th Ward. Two aldermen were elected from each ward up to this time except from the 3rd and 4th wards which, from 1889 to 1928, were each represented by four aldermen. This arrangement was again revised on May 1, 1937, after the aldermanic form of government was restored, when an ordinance of the Common Council provided that one alderman should be elected from each ward.

The last enlargement of city wards was made in 1957 and became effective after the spring election of 1958 when wards 10 to 13 were created. By this action, the

city increased its representation on the County Board and gave wider representation to the Board of Education which elects one member from each ward.

While the manner of electing and appointing city officers has varied through the years, it was not until a referendum held on April 1, 1941, that the electorate expressed its preference for the election of all senior officers. The vote was 2,867 for, and 1,110 against the change which became effective in the spring election of 1943 when, in addition to mayor, alderman, and board of education, the following offices became elective: city clerk, treasurer, assessor, attorney, engineer, health officer, city physician, street superintendent, superintendent of parks and playgrounds, and two justices of the peace. Since then the office of city health officer and physician has been combined and the office of city engineer abolished in favor of the newly-created director of public works which is filled by appointment of the Common Council.

Before the city manager form of government was adopted in 1928, all city officers were elected in the even numbered years. However, when the change back to aldermanic government was decided in 1936, the next spring election held to elect a mayor fell in 1937, an odd-numbered year and the mayor has since been elected in the odd-numbered years. Elections for aldermen are held in the odd-numbered wards in the odd-numbered years, and in the even-numbered wards in the even-numbered years. Elections for City Hall officers are held in the odd-numbered years. While the mayor and aldermen take office on the third Tuesday of April following the spring election, city officers take office on May 1.

In 1915 municipal government in Stevens Point consisted of a mayor, aldermen, city clerk, controller, treasurer, city attorney, health officer, two assessors, chief of police and four policemen, and one constable. A board of police and fire commissioners, created in 1910, supervised fire and police matters, while standing committees and a board of public works made up

the other supervisory groups. In addition to the fire department, each of the six wards had two fire wardens, whose chief duties were property inspection for fire hazards, an office which has since been abolished.

The sequence of city ward expansion has been outlined above for convenience and continuity. However, a major change in the form of city government was made in the late 1920s and into the mid-1930s when the city manager form replaced the aldermanic. The movement for a city manager probably grew out of the great speed-up in industrial development after World War I and the so-called "stream-lining" of both business and government. Anxious to follow the example of other cities boasting greater efficiency, the electors of Stevens Point went to the polls on Feb. 28, 1928 to mark their preference on an advisory referendum which read: "Shall Stevens Point be reorganized under the city manager plan of government. . . ?" The vote was 4,914 for, and 2,787 against the plan.

Under the city manager plan the wards of the city were not abolished, but instead of electing aldermen from the several wards, five commissioners, more often referred to as "councilmen," were elected at large. At the election held April 3, 1928, following the February referendum, the following councilmen were elected: Louis R. Anderson, Ben. W. Dagneau, Frank A. Derzinski, Edward A. Oberweiser, and Herman A. Vetter. Three justices of the peace, instead of four, were elected, namely William G. Bate, J. L. N. Murat, and Sylvester Klestinski, and one constable, Roman B. Naliborski.

At the first meeting under the city manager form of government, held Tuesday evening, April 19, E. A. Oberweiser was elected president of the Council, and Louis R. Anderson, one of the five councilmen, was engaged to act as city manager, temporarily, at no remuneration.

An advisory board called the Water Commission was created to operate the water works, management of sanitary facilities, waste disposal, public cemeteries, parks,

playgrounds, public buildings, and to preserve records of maps and other documents related to public works. A Department of Finance was created which included the city clerk, city treasurer, city assessor and city auditor with the city manager an ex-officio member. In addition, a Department of Public Safety was created which was divided into three sections to maintain control over police affairs, law enforcement, i.e. the courts, and the fire department. These changes replaced the former park commission created in 1915 as well as the board of police and fire commissioners created in 1910. Finally, a Department of Health, a Department of Outdoor Relief, a special committee to handle the municipal library and another for the board of review, were created. The Department of Outdoor Relief was established to handle county relief projects in connection with federal agencies such as the Works Projects Administration.

Meanwhile, Horace W. Coleman of Norfolk, Virginia, had accepted an appointment by the Council made on May 21, 1928 to act as full-time city manager at a salary of \$5,000 per annum. He probably attended the first meeting of the Council on Dec. 28, 1928 at which time an ordinance was adopted to create a city planning and zoning commission.

Inviting an outsider to the city was probably expected when the city manager form of government was adopted, but it also created problems which both the councilmen and the new manager found difficult to resolve in the logical development of authority. Was the city manager to have more power than a mayor over the councilmen or was he to have less? Was he hired to "manage" the affairs of the city, as his title suggests, or was he to be "managed" by the Council? Apparently this aspect of the problem had not been accurately gauged in advance, and trouble soon arose apparently over both method and expenditures. But the Council which had the power to hire could also fire, and on Nov. 9, 1929 it adopted a resolution "that in the judgment of such Council it was for the best interest of the city of Stevens Point

that the present manager, H. W. Coleman be dismissed from office. . .” A further resolution charged that he had “. . . wilfully expended funds of such city contrary to law. . .”<sup>1</sup>

One who took exception to this action was Alex Wallace, city clerk, who, when advised of the impending action, threatened to resign if it was finalized and when it was, handed in his resignation, although the minutes of the Common Council fail to record either the incident or the resignation. Wallace held that the funds could not have been expended without the consent of the Council and instead of blaming the city manager, the Council should have taken the responsibility upon itself. On Jan. 14, 1930 Peter Walraven of Stambaugh, Michigan, was appointed the new city manager.

By 1933 a movement had developed in the city to abolish the manager form of government and return to the aldermanic. In a referendum on the question of continuing, the voters sustained the city manager by a margin of 2,545 to 1,472. But the opposition, led by Alex Wallace and others, who attacked the manager plan as dictatorial and wasteful of public funds, continued to press for a change. Finally, in 1936, a second advisory referendum was held on April 1, when the electorate turned down the manager form of government by a vote of 2,587 to 2,149. At a meeting held in May the Council, somewhat equally undecided, voted five to four in two separate motions to keep the city manager. The near deadlock was broken when Walraven offered to resign and the Council then voted six to three in favor of accepting his resignation. Selden F. McCreedy, city building inspector, was appointed acting manager effective June 15 and the manager form of government was continued until the spring election of 1937 when it was replaced by the aldermanic-mayor form of government which has since been maintained.

Fred A. Haas was appointed to take McCreedy's place as acting building inspector, and in the spring election of 1937 was elected city treasurer, the only elected of-

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, Stevens Point Common Council, Vol. K, p. 233.



ficial of 1937 who was still serving in City Hall in 1958 as treasurer.

One of the important changes made before the city manager form of government was dropped was taken at a meeting of the Common Council held Feb. 15, 1935 when the management and control of the police and fire departments was placed under the full supervision of a police and fire commission largely independent of the Common Council. This followed a successful referendum in the city which was necessary in order to qualify under Wisconsin statutes (Chap. 62, para. 13). This statute gives any police and fire commission which has the approval of the electorate the authority to prescribe rules and regulations for the police and fire departments, and to contract for and purchase all necessary apparatus and supplies, and to audit all bills, claims and expenses before the same are paid by the city treasurer.

Meanwhile, the city of Stevens Point, like the nation, began to feel the first shockwaves of the Stock Market crash of 1929 and the beginning of the Great Depression. In June 1931, the city was forced to borrow \$30,000 from the First National Bank. But city finances continued to deteriorate, whether because of the manager form of government, or the Depression, or both, would be difficult to determine. Tax collections became increasingly difficult, and in 1936 the city made an extension of final tax payments on real and personal property from Jan. 15 to March 1. In effect, the city was bankrupt and there were no funds to pay either city officials or school teachers. Temporary expedients were effected and a stiff retrenchment program adopted. These steps, plus the increased well-being of the nation's economy, finally brought the city back to solvency.

Mayors serving the city of Stevens Point through the years were William W. Schofield, 1858-59; A. G. Ellis, 1860; Gilbert L. Park, 1861; D. D. Long, 1862; B. L. Sharpstein, 1863; A. G. Ellis, 1864-65; W. W. Spraggon, 1866; A. G. Ellis, 1867; James S. Young, 1868; A. G. Ellis, 1869-71; Almanson Eaton, 1872; Matthew Wadleigh, 1873; Owen Clark, 1874; John D. McLean, 1875-

77; W. W. Spraggon, 1878-80; John O. Johnson, 1881-82; O. C. Wheelock, 1883-85; W. W. Spraggon, 1886-87; Owen Clark, 1888; Hiram Martin, 1889; W. W. Spraggon, 1890; Byron B. Park, 1891; James Reilly, 1892; S. E. Karner, 1893; Owen Clark, 1894; J. L. Barker, 1895-96; Patrick H. Cashin, 1897; George L. Rogers, 1898; J. L. Barker, 1899; Patrick H. Cashin, 1900-01; Philip Rothman, 1902-03; T. H. Hanna, 1904-07; Patrick H. Cashin, 1908-09; F. A. Walters, 1910-13; L. P. Pasternacki, 1914-15; F. A. Walters, 1916-17; William F. Owen, 1918-19; John N. Welsby, 1920-28; (city managers, see above); Frank J. Blood, 1937-41; Frank J. Lasecke, 1941 (resigned December 1942); J. J. Hannon, acting to 1943; Godfrey F. Clayton, 1943-46; Ben W. Dagneau, 1946-49; A. L. Jacoboski, 1949-53; Leonard L. Sorenson, 1953-57; and Paul M. Vincent, 1957-

Elective city officials, aside from mayor, serving the city in 1958 were Norman J. Meshak comptroller; Fred-A. Haas, treasurer; Clara Trierweiler, clerk; Ralph A. Cook, assessor; Norman L. Wanta, attorney; Ernest G. Bruske, superintendent of streets; Harry A. Groshek, superintendent of parks; and Dr. Frank Iber, health officer. Aldermen from the 13 wards were H. L. Kurtzweil, 1st Ward; Carlton Rustad, 2nd Ward; Raymond Rightsell, 3rd Ward; Raymond Wnuk, 4th Ward; K. E. Hurlbut, 5th Ward; Everett Morton, 6th Ward; Leo Mancheski, 7th Ward; Stanley Repinski, 8th Ward; Felix Klesmith, 9th Ward; Harold Cartwright, 10th Ward; Chester C. Wojcik, 11th Ward; John E. Shannon Jr., 12th Ward; and Edward Piotrowski, 13th Ward.

Members of the Board of Education are elected on a pattern opposite to city aldermen. Members in the even-numbered wards are elected in the odd-numbered years, and members in the odd-numbered wards are elected in the even-numbered years. Aside from Albert Moldenhauer, city superintendent of schools who serves as secretary of the Board, elective members in 1958 from the 13 wards were Alf Anderson, Gordon Hanson, Leo Larson, Edward Hoppa, Francis Roman, Leo Ohlert, Harvey Bartig, Fred Klingbail (replaced by Earl Upthagrove), Dr. W. G. Wochinski, Ted Holthusen, Leslie

V. Courtney, Dr. Frederick Reichardt, and Oswald Dehlinger. In addition there are three members from school districts outside the city, namely, Felix Lodzinski, Sims District, Milton Sorensen, Nugent District, and Robert H. Pederson Jr., Lake View District.

City supervisors on the County Board in 1958 were Allen F. Barrows Jr., 1st Ward; Harold Frost, 2nd Ward; Gilbert Kirby, 3rd Ward (replaced by C. Stratton Martin); Vilas Behr, 4th Ward; Ray Clark, 5th Ward; C. E. Nebel, 6th Ward; Vincent Jurgella, 7th Ward; Frank J. Steckel, 8th Ward; Nat Kinney, 9th Ward; Guy Love, 10th Ward; George Fisher, 11th Ward; Ernest Marchel, 12th Ward; and Theodore Schulfer, 13th Ward.

Throughout the early history of the city no permanent residence was ever established for either city offices or Council Chambers. In 1935 discussions were held with a view to building a city hall, but owing to the Depression, and later as a result of the outbreak of World War II, nothing further came of this. Finally, when the County Board began making plans for a new Court House, it was suggested that the county and city might cooperate on a building to be used in common. After discussions of what the city's share was to be, the Common Council on Aug. 19, 1957 agreed to accept 27 per cent. This was to cover not only the cost of construction, but also to apply to the operation and maintenance costs when the building was used jointly as Court House and City Hall.

Stevens Point, listed as a third-class city by population, is located in townships 23 and 24 north, range 8 east; latitude 44 degrees, 31 minutes, and 8 seconds; longitude 89 degrees, 31 minutes and 36 seconds. The population in the 1950 census was 16,564.

On Sept. 17, 1958, following a board of review meeting, the city had an assessed valuation of \$37,043-275 and a state appraised valuation of \$57,935,682.

On Jan. 1, 1957 there were 14.83 miles of concrete surface streets, 2.01 miles of asphalt on concrete, 5.06 miles of asphalt on macadam, .10 miles of brick, 32.69 miles of blacktop (roadmix), 1.00 miles of blacktop on

brick, 15.38 miles of dirt surface, for a total of 71.07 miles. Curbs and gutters covered 87.10 miles, sidewalks 76.07 miles, sanitary sewers 50.27 miles, storm sewers 30.95 miles, and watermains 53.33 miles.

In addition to streets, the director of public works supervises seven city parks, listed as Bukolt, 51.00 acres; Iverson, 99.20 acres; McGlachlin, 1.85 acres; Goerke, 32.70 acres; South Side, 1.44 acres; Mead, 14.50 acres; and East Side, 4.60 acres, for a total of 205.29 acres. The municipal airport located one mile northeast of the city, covers 583.55 acres.

Bukolt Park, once known as Waterworks Park because the city pumping plant and standpipe were located here, was designated John J. Bukolt Park on May 5, 1936 in honor of a Polish pioneer, inventor and business man whom the Common Council cited as "an outstanding example of what may be accomplished by steadfast devotion to a given task."

Iverson Park was named after its donor, Jules Iverson, a Danish immigrant who came to Stevens Point in the 1870s and established a jewelry business, branched into real estate and mortgages and became a wealthy man in his own generation, a symbol of Horatio Alger. The park was donated to the city in 1935 on the understanding that it would be maintained in perpetuity as a public park and especially as a playground for children.

McGlachlin Park, actually the first in the city to be designated as a park, was purchased in 1919, and after landscaping, was named in honor of Edward McGlachlin, first president of the park commission organized in 1915, and founder of the *Stevens Point Journal*. Other members on the first park commission in 1915 were R. A. Oberlatz, J. A. Cashin, M. E. Bruce, and J. J. Kryger.

On May 5, 1931 the Common Council set aside a certain portion of city property known as the Fair Grounds for a park while the southeast corner of this property was reserved for a school ground, later the site of P. J. Jacobs High School. The park was designated Goerke Memorial Recreation Field in honor of Mrs.

Amanda Goerke who in 1923 set aside a trust fund of \$10,000 for city recreational facilities.

The South Side Park was part of a purchase made by the city near the Soo Line depot immediately north of the railway right-of-way. The movement for a memorial was sponsored by the Stevens Point Woman's Club and the park was designated the South Side Memorial Park in honor of the veterans of World War I. A monument consisting of a base with bronze tablet, which lists those killed in the war, and a flag pole, were dedicated on July 6, 1923. Originally, it was intended to cast a bronze soldier holding a gun, but this project was dropped when some of the members of the Woman's Club objected. The war had been fought not only to make the world "safe for democracy," but it was also the "war to end war," and a man holding a gun in readiness could not be expected to uphold this belief.

Mead Park was created in 1946 as a result of a gift of land to the city on the right bank of the Wisconsin River by George W. Mead of Wisconsin Rapids.

East Side Park, probably so named because it lies on the east bank of the Wisconsin River at the foot of Main Street, was dedicated in 1939 on the occasion of the George Stevens Centennial. A stone memorial to Stevens was actually erected at the foot of Main Street in 1924 by the Daughters of the American Revolution, but in 1958, in preparation for the city centennial, it was moved a few yards to make it the center of the newly-created park.

The 71.07 miles of streets in Stevens Point carry names of pioneer and contemporary residents as well as the more common names of American presidents, national heroes, states, the flora and fauna of the region, and Arabic numerals. Positive identification of street names is impossible as there is no explanation in the Common Council records which accompany the ordinances establishing, or changing the names of streets, nor are street names appearing in new additions explained. Probable identification of most of the names is made possible, however, through the new additions platted over the years

and by the association of men and women to these additions and to their times.

The first complete map of the city appears to have been made in 1874 as an artist's sketch executed by the American Oleograph Company of Milwaukee (see illustration). Unofficial plats of 1895 and 1915 are available as well as modern maps. Nevertheless, the account that follows must be considered speculative and not authoritative.

The 1847 plat of Mathias Mitchell, the first in Stevens Point, carries the name, aside from Main, 1st, and 2nd Streets, of "Clarke" Street. Early indentures reveal that William H. Clarke was a justice of the peace in Stevens Point in 1848 and on March 8, 1849 served as a witness to a land transfer. It is reasonable to assume that Clarke Street, now spelled Clark, was named after him.

The Moses M. Strong Addition of 1853 added Bray Street (today the west end of Portage), origin uncertain; Brown Street, after Edward Dexter Brown, pioneer lumberman on the Plover who lived on the street; Water Street, after Water Street in Milwaukee probably and because it lay along the left bank of the Wisconsin River; Crooked Way, because it was a short-cut to Strongs Avenue from Clark Street and was in fact "crooked"; Strongs Avenue, after Moses M. Strong; Church Street, after the first church in the village, the Episcopal, which stood on the northeast corner of Church & Clark but facing the latter; Mill Street, because it led to the first saw mill built in Stevens Point on the left bank of the river, a name recently changed to Arlington Place, after the Arlington Hotel which once stood across from the Court House at the northwest corner of the intersection of Strongs Avenue and Arlington Place; Brawley Street, after pioneer Abraham Brawley; Wisconsin Street; Shaurette Street, after Shaurette Rapids; Spruce Street; Pine Street; Plover Street, after the Plover River; Elk Street; Prairie Street; and Wood Street, probably after a prominent wood lot nearby.

The Milo Smith, Orin Briggs and John C. Phillips Addition of 1853 added Smith Street after Milo Smith,

Prentice Street, after Jackson L. Prentice, first county surveyor; George Street, origin uncertain; Phillips Street after Dr. Phillips; Briggs Street after Orin Briggs; and Braynard Street, origin uncertain, and which at this time appears to have been the east end of Brown Street roughly between Union and Reserve.

The A. B. Crosby Addition of 1856 added Oak Street and Center Street; and H. D. McCulloch's Addition platted at the same time directly below Crosby's, added McCulloch Street; Dixon Street, probably after Robert Dixon; Center Avenue and East Avenue, the latter because it lay east of Division Street.

The Cornelius Helms Addition of 1856 is the first to include Division Street, although Strong's Addition suggests that it had already been laid out in 1853. The Helm's Addition also added Madison and Monroe Streets, after the presidents, and Wayne Street, probably after General Anthony Wayne, able soldier of the American Revolution and afterwards an Indian fighter in the Ohio Valley.

The Isabella Fay Addition in 1856 added Fremont Street, after John C. Fremont, then a popular explorer-hero of the American West; and Dayton Street, origin uncertain, one block east, later part of Illinois Avenue.

The John C. Phillips Addition of 1857, North Side, added West Street, after the fact that it then lay farthest west along the left bank of the Wisconsin River.

The Cephas Schekell Addition of 1857 added Frances Street (today spelled Francis), origin uncertain; Matilda Street, uncertain; Seth Street, after Seth L. Carpenter, register of deeds, and William Street, after E. A. Williams, long-time surveyor. These streets were divided north-south by Plank Road, an extension of Water Street; Henrietta Street, uncertain; Church Street; and Warner Street, probably after pioneer Horace O. Warner. The Plank Road got its name because it was planked with lumber.

News reports of the period suggest that the extension of Water Street to the Plover River, especially the hill

north of the river, was extremely sandy. In 1854 Abraham Brawley was given a charter by the County Board to plank this stretch of road and collect a toll at the bridge on the Plover. How long this arrangement continued is uncertain. (The 1874 artist's sketch of Stevens Point apparently errs in giving the name Josephine to Henrietta Street, and Martha's Street to Matilda Street, nor does it include Williams.)

Strong's Addition of 1857 added Hemlock, Tamarac, Maple, Cedar, and Cypress Streets — the last name a bit difficult to fathom in Wisconsin — River Street, because it lay along the left bank of the Wisconsin, but since 1895 abolished to make it part of Wisconsin Street, and Cemetery Street because it skirted the north side of Union Cemetery.

The Valentine Brown Addition of 1858 added North Street, because it then lay farthest north in the city; 5th Avenue; 4th Avenue; Washington Street, after the first president; Franklin Street, after Benjamin Franklin; Portage Street, after the county (referred to on the 1874 artist's sketch as Bray Street); Levee Street, because it lay along the south side of the slough, later incorporated into Briggs Street; Center Street; Meadow Street, after Hay Meadow Creek in the town of Hull; and Union Street, in honor of the Union of States.

The Isabella Fay & J. G. Spaulding Addition of 1859 added Fay Street (shortly changed to Ellis); Kingston Street, probably after an early village in Green Lake County, and since 1915 incorporated as East Lincoln Avenue; Jefferson Street, after the president; Martin Street, after J. A. Martin, a pioneer surveyor (later incorporated into Michigan Avenue); Cross Street, probably after William Cross; Chase Street, after Homer Chase, a senior river pilot; Point Street, after the abbreviation for the city (later incorporated as part of Minnesota Avenue); and Reserve Street, after a reserve subdivision nearby.

The A. G. Ellis Addition of 1859 changed Fay Street to Ellis Street, although at least two later additions into the 1870s continued to use the name Fay Street.



The Nathaniel F. Bliss Addition of 1871 added Bliss Avenue; Mason Street, probably after Charles S. Mason, one-time clerk of court; and Brewery Street, after the first brewery established by George Ruder, today the Stevens Point Beverage Company. Meanwhile, the street name has been dropped to make it an extension of Francis Street.

The John A. Walker Addition of 1874 added Walker Street; Wadleigh Street, after Matthew Wadleigh, lumberman on the Plover; and 6th Avenue.

The Central Addition of 1872 changed Dayton Street to Illinois Avenue, and added Wisconsin and Minnesota Avenues.

The Jacob Patch Addition of 1874 added George Street, after George H. Patch, and Frederick Street, after Frederick Patch.

The E. B. & H. (for Horace) Grant Addition of 1874 added Grant Street; Forest Street, after Forest Grant; and Crosby Avenue, then a one-block-long street south of Franklin, after Crosby Grant.

The Eliplet H. Vaughn Addition of 1876 added Algona Street, origin uncertain. The original plat and description both use the spelling *Algona*, which, in a certified true copy made by the register of deeds in 1936, appears as *Algoma*.

The William Avery Addition of 1877 appears to have platted the first streets on the West Side. Avery operated the ferry across the river in the 1860s. This addition added Whitney Street, after Ebenezer Whitney, lumberman at Knowlton who lived on Brown Street; Superior Avenue, because it ran north; St. Louis (Louis?) Avenue, because it ran south; Pearl Street, uncertain; Central Avenue, because it divided the West Side north and south; Quarry Street, after the nearby quarry which furnished the stone for the first Court House in Stevens Point; and Cross Street, probably because it was a terminal street on the south side of the addition.

The N. (for Nathaniel) Boyington and V. P. Atwell Addition of 1884 added Boyington Avenue and Lincoln Street. On this plat Division Street appears as "Grand

Avenue," probably an alternate name during the period.

The Wadleigh and Vaughn Addition of 1885 added Patch Street, after the Rev. Jacob Patch who lived nearby; Julia Street, after Julia Vaughn; Lora Street, after Lora Wadleigh; Cleveland Avenue, after the president; and Blaine Street, after James G. Blaine, unsuccessful Republican candidate for president in 1884.

Boyington & Atwell's 2nd Addition of 1886 added North Division and Jordan Road, the latter because it led to the village of Jordan then situated on the Plover River. Their 3rd Addition of 1892 still included the names Dayton and Martin Streets.

Valentine Brown's 1st Addition of 1889 added Vermont Avenue.

Jacob Patch & Others Addition of 1907 added Bush Street, origin uncertain; Mary Street, after Dr. Mary Helen Patch; Martha's Lane, after Martha Ann Patch; and Rice Street, after James and John Rice, one-time operators of a foundry at the corner of 1st and Clark, who also owned land on the South Side.

Ernest Sellers' Addition of 1910 added Howard Avenue, after Howard Sellers; Pearl Street, after Pearl Sellers; Forrest Avenue, after Forrest Sellers; and River View Avenue. North-south streets in Sellers' Addition were Echo Dells Avenue, after a spot on the Wisconsin River once known as Echo Dells; Sanatorium Avenue, after the local hospital; and Whiting Avenue, after George A. Whiting.

The City Holding Company Addition of 1921 added Richardson Street, after C. D. Richardson who platted it.

The Alois Firkus 1st Addition of 1921, West Side, added Stone Avenue, Granite Avenue (east-west streets) and Rock Street (north-south). The Firkus 2nd Addition of 1922 added Harding Avenue, after the president and Firkus Street.

The Frank Trzebeatowski Addition of 1921 added Prais Street, after Victor S. Prais, a local business man.

The Raymond J. Miller Addition of 1924 added Frontenac Avenue, origin uncertain.

The Guy A. Roberts Subdivision of 1924 added California Avenue.

With these several additions through the years, Stevens Point had two Cross Streets, two Pearl Streets, one Forest Street, and one Forrest Avenue, two George Streets, two Center Streets, one north of Main and one south, and one Center Avenue. The Cross Street of Avery's Addition of 1877 on the West Side apparently never became a permanent name. The original George Street between Division and Prentice was carried as late as 1915 but since has been changed to Rogers after George L. Rogers, one-time mayor; the other George Street between Forest & West is carried on the 1895 plat, while the 1915 plat omits it. It has since been changed to Georgia Street. Center Street on the North Side has been changed in recent times to North 3rd Street; Center Avenue, east of Division, to Wyatt Avenue, after A. F. Wyatt, long-time register of deeds, who lived at the corner of Clark & Wyatt, the former Center Avenue. This leaves the city with one Center Street south of Oak. In addition, Wisconsin Avenue from Ellis to the Soo Line tracks, often confused with Wisconsin Street, has been changed to Welsby Avenue, after John N. ("Spot") Welsby, who held the office of mayor the longest (1920-28) of anyone before or after him.

At a meeting of the Common Council in the mid-1950s a move was made to further eliminate duplicate names in the city. Pearl Street in Sellers' Addition became Carl Street, after Alderman Carlton Rustad, and Forrest Avenue became Ray Street, after Alderman Raymond Righsell. To avoid confusion with Wilson Avenue on the West Side, and a new street on the North Side called Wilson Street, below Bukolt Park, the latter was changed to Lee Street, after Leo Mancheski, a member of the board of public works.

When Ellis, ex-Fay Streets, was created, it linked up with Crooked Way which in recent times has been changed to West Ellis Street.

The extension of Brown Street east of the Normal School appears on the 1915 plat as Normal Avenue. In 1933 this was changed to College Avenue, and shortly thereafter all of Brown Street, including the east end

once known as Braynard Street, was changed to Normal Avenue. After Central State Teachers College was designated Wisconsin State College at Stevens Point in 1951, the name Normal Avenue was changed to College Avenue and the extension east of the college retained the name College Avenue.

Crosby Avenue has been applied to an extension running south which in times past was popularly known as "Sawdust Street," after the fact that it was largely built up along the bank of the Wisconsin River of sawdust fill from the nearby mills.

The street long known as Jordan Road was changed in 1933 to Stanley Street, the English name for *Stanislaus* (in Polish) after St. Stanislaus Church.

Soo Marie appears on the 1915 unofficial plat, and on modern maps as Soo Marie Avenue, probably after the Minneapolis, St. Paul & Sault Ste. Marie Railroad.

Contemporary names of new streets are Front Street, after the fact that it fronts on the Wisconsin River east of Bukolt Park; Bukolt Avenue, after John J. Bukolt, which replaced the old name of North Avenue; Academy Street, after a one-time Catholic seminary on the north limits known as St. Joseph's Academy and, since the replacement of the latter by Maria High School, changed to Maria Drive; Korbal Avenue, after Joseph Korbal who lived at the east end but actually on Division; Isadore Street, after John Isadore, who owned land nearby; Barney Street, after Barney (actually Bjarne) Fieve, one-time city engineer; Pulaski Place, after Casimir Pulaski, Polish volunteer in the American Revolution; Conant Street, after Conant Rapids, recently changed to Atwell, after the Atwell family, to avoid confusion with another Conant Street in Whiting village; Clayton Street, after Godfrey F. Clayton, mayor from 1943-46; Simonis Street, after Nick Simonis of Rosholt village; Peck Street, after Joseph A. Peck, one-time city assessor; Jersey Street, after a pure-bred herd of Jersey cattle kept by V. P. Atwell north of modern Goerke Park; High Street, after a hill (now leveled) which once existed here; Sims Avenue, after John F. Sims, president of the Normal School from

1909 to 1926; McGlachlin Street, after McGlachlin Park; Court Street, after the Court House; Gilkay Street, after John Gilkay; and Indiana Avenue and Texas Avenue on the east side.

Contemporary names added to streets on the South Side, that is, since the 1915 plat, include Depot Street, after the Soo Line Depot; Koch Street, which replaced the earlier name of Cemetery Street, after William Koch, a blind guitar player before World War I who, with August Johnson and Robert Lutz, fiddlers, played for local dances in what was popularly called the "Three-eyed Orchestra" (Johnson wore heavy glasses and Lutz was blind on one eye); Whiting Avenue, an extension from Sellers' Addition which replaced the name shown on all plats down to 1915 as Seth Street; Heffron Street, after John J. Heffron, real estate broker; Delaney Street, after a Greek barber in Stevens Point who took the name William Delaney after immigrating from Greece; Nebel Street, after 6th Ward Supervisor C. E. Nebel; Allay Lane, origin uncertain; Scribner Court, after Harold A. Scribner's Addition; Clara's Lane, uncertain; Lloyd Street, after Lloyd Wysocki (near McKinley School); Chamber Street, after the Stevens Point Chamber of Commerce which sponsored a development area on the South Side; and Lindbergh Avenue, after Charles A. Lindbergh, first to fly solo across the Atlantic in 1927.

New streets on the West Side since the 1930s include Cornell Avenue, after the village of Cornell, Wisconsin, a name which replaced Stone Avenue; Wilson Avenue, after the president and which replaced the name Granite Avenue; Jackson Street, after the president, a name which replaced Rock Street; West Clark, which replaced the old name of Central Avenue, as it extends from Clark Street across the bridge; Karner Street, after the family of the same name which founded an important saw mill on the right bank in the 1870s; Scott Street, after Ed Scott who lives on the street; Pleasant Street, and Cottage Street, the latter after the fact that several small cottages were built along this road. In addition, Superior Avenue has been changed to North River Drive, and St. Louis

Avenue to South River Drive.

Division Street, which "divides" the city east and west, for several decades ran south to about Madison Street and then angled southwest to the city limits. Some time between the 1895 and 1915 plats this extension was changed to Park Street, after Judge Byron P. Park.

A section of an old stage coach road to Wausau which cuts through Bukolt Park is today known as the Old Wausau Road.

While the east-west streets in Park Ridge, incorporated in 1938, are extensions of, or projected extensions to already existing streets in Stevens Point, several new names, aside from Sunset and McGlachlin Avenues, appear as north-south avenues; namely, Viertel Avenue, after Ernest Viertel who platted the first addition in Park Ridge; Green Avenue, after Mrs. Theresa Green; Hannon Avenue, after Maurice Hannon, Stevens Point druggist; and Sunrise, after the fact that it lies farthest east along the basin of the Plover River and faces the sunrise first. A recent addition in the town of Hull is IGA Avenue after the local supermarket of Independent Grocers Alliance.

In Point Manors and Plover Hills Additions, still part of the town of Hull, east-west streets include the projected extensions from the city of Simonis and Prais Streets, in addition to Evelyne, after Mrs. Louis Schnittger who, with her husband, operates the Sky Club, Duncan Hines-approved restaurant and bar on H-51; Lorraine Street, after Lorraine Reiser; Robert Street after Robert Schnittger; Robert Place, Sunset Fork, Ridge Road and Ridge Court. Wilshire Boulevard, running north-south, was originally named after the Wilshire apparel shop on Main Street which in turn took its name from Wilshire Boulevard in Hollywood, California.

The city of Stevens Point was drained by two streams or creeks, one of which empties into the Wisconsin at the foot of modern Briggs Street, called Moses Creek, origin uncertain, but more often referred to as the "slough"; the other appears in the plat of Strongs Addition of 1853 although without a name. It originated in

the swamp north of the city and flowed south to the west of Division and near Spruce and Pine Streets turned west between Brawley and Wisconsin to empty into the Wisconsin River. The only bridge in 1853 was at Water Street, since filled in.

There were probably no street lights in Stevens Point until a kerosene lamp of uncertain description was established in front of Krembs' Hardware at the corner of Main and Second Streets in 1866. By 1884 Main Street was equipped with kerosene fixtures which had to be lighted and snuffed out each evening by the police department. Gas lighting was installed in several stores and saloons on Main Street in 1882 and in 1884 the city ordered ten gas lamps for the street. In 1885 S. A. Sherman demonstrated the first electric light by setting up a circuit which powered a light in the dome of the Court House and another at the top of the Liberty Pole in the center of the Public Square, but the city failed to award him a franchise for installing further lighting. A private company was organized and by 1888 some of the city streets were being lighted with electricity. In the years that followed a keen struggle developed between the private utility and the city for control of the lighting plant, but when the voters were asked to bond themselves to assure purchase of the plant, they turned it down, and it remained in private hands. The first plant of the Stevens Point Lighting Company was located in a brick building north of the North Side Fire Station; in 1905 the main power plant was shifted to the Plover River at Jordan.

In 1881 the Philadelphia Numbering Company offered to survey and number the stores and residences of the city and place street signs at the principal intersections. "There were about 250 owners upon which these signs ought to be placed. . ." said the *Stevens Point Journal*.<sup>1</sup> By the end of March 1881 the street signs had been installed and the numbering of the streets was to follow.

The Liberty Pole, mentioned above, stood 121 feet

<sup>1</sup> *Stevens Point Journal*, Feb. 12, 1881.

high. It was carpentered by Henry Welty in two sections, installed by Martin Perkins and dedicated by Mayor Ellis at a flag raising ceremony held June 9, 1869. Most parades and 4th of July celebrations began at the base of the flag pole. In 1895 it was moved to the south of the Court House and finally in 1913 to St. Michael's Hospital, less one section after a heavy wind broke off the top.

Actually, the flag pole raised in 1869 in the Public Square was a replacement. The first one was erected in connection with a 4th of July celebration in 1853. There was no flag in the village suitable for the occasion and while the men went into the forest for a tall pole, the women went about the stores to purchase the necessary material from which to make a flag. The materials were taken to a vacant store building at the southwest corner of Clark & South 2nd Street (the Skalski Company) where the women gathered to hand-stitch the flag. Some difficulty was experienced in making the stars, but after an able assist from the men, 13 stars were fashioned. The red and white stripes were made of red oiled calico, and white muslin, while the field was cut from blue woolen goods.

The flag and pole were dedicated at appropriate ceremonies on July 4th. An oration was given by Gilbert L. Park, then a young attorney, and a picnic dinner followed in which some 300 people participated. The *piece de resistance* was roast pig.

The flag was displayed on holidays for the next decade or more and, during the Civil War, whenever the North claimed a victory. On April 15, 1865 it flew at half mast as the city and the nation mourned the death of Abraham Lincoln.

The final disposition of this historic flag is unknown.

Stevens Point streets in the early decades were, like most pioneer village streets, merely roads laid over the sod and featured by sandy ruts and pot holes where the water might remain in puddles for days. Horse manure gathered in winter time and had to be hauled away in



spring. In summer the dust often blew in all directions. There were no sewers and no drainage facilities to speak of other than what nature provided. Even as late as the 1880s Main Street was often a quagmire and Alex Wallace recalls the time when pranksters carried a boat into Main Street and put up a sign: "No fishing allowed."

By mid-1873 there were 12-foot wide wooden sidewalks although even these were considered none too wide.

The first attempt at paving the streets was made in 1891 when the Council accepted a bid from an Oshkosh firm to lay cedar blocks from Main and First Streets to Strongs Avenue and on Third Street from Main to Clark. The job got under way on July 16 when Mayor Byron B. Park was "accorded the distinction of laying the first cedar blocks." In 1896 the Council adopted a resolution relating to the construction of macadam surfacing on several streets which meanwhile had also been covered with cedar blocks.

In the late 1880s John W. Gray organized a private company to provide city water and by 1889 the city had running water furnished by a plant and standpipe located in what came to be known as Waterworks Park, later renamed Bukolt Park. The standpipe, 140 feet high, was a landmark in the city down to 1958 when it was demolished.

The first water works plant stood near the Wisconsin River because water was pumped directly out of the river both for drinking purposes and for the fire hydrants. After the turn of the century, new paper mills farther upstream made the Wisconsin River no longer a source of fresh water. Stories of dead cows and human corpses floating down the river were also heard. Many families in the city installed private wells for drinking purposes. But the main reason for the need of a new source of water was inadequate pressure in the fire hydrants. Discussions on this problem began during Mayor Pasternacki's administration in 1914 and Alder-

<sup>1</sup> *Stevens Point Journal*, July 18, 1891.

man Charles E. Van Hecke and Daniel Corlett were appointed by Pasternacki to investigate the report of a hydraulic engineer that another river flowed beneath the bed of the Plover. Van Hecke and Corlett, in rubber boots, spent many days with a small crew of men in the winter and spring of 1914-15 sinking wells up and down the valley of the Plover. Samples of the water were sent to laboratories in Madison and it was established that the source was pure and abundant. Engineering journals hailed it as an unusual phenomenon and tribute was paid to the persistence of the two men who served without compensation.

Meanwhile, an unofficial valuation of \$175,000 was placed on the old water works plant. The Council refused to accept this figure. The voters in the spring election of 1916 also were opposed to buying at this price. It was not before 1922 that arrangements were finally made by the city to take over the water works plant and establish its own utility in the Plover basin. Since that time Stevens Point has been known as the "city of wonderful water." After World War II a number of cities in the United States began adding sodium fluoride to the public water supply as an antidote to tooth decay, especially among children. A small group of citizens, led by Alex Wallace, Ben La Haye and A. A. Skalski, fought against fluoridation. Wallace took up the issue originally not as a fight against fluoridation but against what he considered a violation of "due process of law" and the manner in which the issue was handled. It finally came to a referendum in September 1950 when the electorate voted, roughly two to one, in the negative. This referendum had a deep influence on other cities considering the same procedure because Stevens Point was among the first cities of any size to refuse the advice of expert opinion — by no means unanimous — and which turned the tide against fluoridation throughout the United States, at least for the moment.

The first telephone line in the city, known as "Spaulding & Cadman's telephone line" linked the

John Cadman drug store at 417 Main Street with the Wisconsin Central freight depot where Boardman C. Spaulding served as station agent. It was established in the latter part of 1879 "not only for the use of the gentlemen named but for the accomodation of the general public who wish to converse over the wire." The terms were \$5 a year or 10 cents "for single messages and answer."<sup>1</sup>

The beginning of a public telephone system in the city was made on Sept. 1, 1882 with the establishment of a central exchange in what was then the Mitchell Building at 319 Main Street. Mrs. Isa G. MacBrien served as the first operator and by June 1883 there were 79 subscribers. The telephone operators, long known as "hello girls," maintained a pre-eminent position in communications at Stevens Point until 1957 when the dial system was introduced. The company has been known since its inception as the Wisconsin Telephone Company.

Radio receivers were introduced to Stevens Point probably in the early 1920s. In an effort to get market and crop information to farmers, the State Department of Agriculture and Markets established WPAH at Wau-paca in 1922. This was moved in 1924 to Stevens Point and the call letters changed to WLBL. It remained until 1951 when, by an act of the Legislature, control was transferred to the State Radio Council and the transmitter moved to Auburndale.

Meanwhile, a 250-watt commercial radio station was established in Stevens Point in 1948 called WSTP (after the letters in the two names ST-evens P-oint). In 1958 the power was increased to 1,000 watts. WSTP, a strong booster of Stevens Point civic and commercial interests, easily covers a 50-mile radius and has been heard on normal broadcasts as far away as Pittsburg. The station is owned by the Stevens Point Broadcasting Corporation, Peter A. Barnard, president.

As if to point up the two epochs in the economic development of Stevens Point (See *When Lumber Was*

<sup>1</sup> *Stevens Point Journal*, Nov. 15, 1879.

*King*) a number of industrial firms in 1958 were presented certificates of recognition by the State Division of Industrial Development for having been in business in the community 50 years or more. These certificates went to Citizens National Bank, Copps Company, First National Bank, Green Bay & Western Railroad, Haertel Monument Service, Hardware Mutuals, Joerns Bros. Furniture, Journal Printing Company, Lullabye Furniture, Nigbor Furs, Soo Line Railroad, Stevens Point Beverage Company, Vetter Manufacturing Company, Weber Tackle Company, Whiting-Plover Paper Company, Wisconsin Public Service Corporation, the Wisconsin River Division of Consolidated Water Power & Paper Company, Wisconsin Telephone Company, and Worzalla Publishing Company.

Three retail firms in Stevens Point which have been in business more than 50 years and in the same family are Continental Clothing Store, Boston Furniture & Funeral, and Kuhl Bros. Clothing Store. Although no longer in business, Krembs Hardware, established by Charles Krembs, was in the same family more than 50 years. But the family which established the longest continuous service in the same business was Berens Barber Shop, begun in 1879 on the Public Square (later moved east on Main Street) by Nicholas Berens, an immigrant from Germany, and carried on as a partnership with Charles Schenk for a number of years, and finally by son Alex Berens. In 1952 the firm was sold to Ed Jablonski.

"Lifetime" customers, according to Alex Berens, were E. M. Copps, R. A. Cook, "Ed" McGlachlin, E. D. Glennon, Oscar Moe, P. J. Jacobs, Harry D. Boston, "Jim" Dunegan, "Sam" Karner, E. J. Pfiffner, Judge Byron B. Park, and Carl von Neupert, senior and junior. All had their own shaving mugs. The peak in the shaving-mug era was reached in the 1890s when the shop had a total of 96 private mugs on the shelves. The popularity of the private shaving mug grew out of a new style when men, long accustomed to sporting beards or mustaches, began to go clean shaven.

Most patrons shaved once a week, usually on Friday. Shaves were 10c and haircuts 25c, and patrons could also buy tickets, 12 shaves for a dollar. Round neck shaves were five cents extra.

A brief history of the 19 industrial firms which were given 50-year certificates in 1958 follows:

**CITIZENS NATIONAL BANK** — This bank opened in temporary offices on July 13, 1893 while a stone structure was in process of construction at 425 Main Street. Completed in 1894, the bank has maintained a continuous residence on this site although both the facade and interior were completely renovated in 1921. At the close of business on Dec. 31, 1957 Citizens National had total deposits of \$10, 180, 830.71 and a capital structure of \$738,510.82. The officers were A. C. Kingston, chairman of the board; S. G. Kingston, president; J. M. Pfiffner and C. W. Nason, vice presidents; A. C. Brezinski and E. H. Karlen, assistant vice presidents; C. A. Pfeffer, cashier; and Victoria Nowak, assistant cashier.

**COPPS COMPANY** — After losing a shingle mill and a planing mill to fires, E. M. Copps in 1892 took up the feed, grain and coal business and in 1893 went into partnership with L. Starks of Plainfield and Chicago in the buying and selling of potatoes and grain. Wholesale groceries were shortly added to the business. In 1912 Starks withdrew from the firm and it was reorganized as the Copps Company dealing in wholesale groceries, coal and fuel. A. M. ("Fred") Copps, who joined the firm in 1894, became president after the death of his father in 1923. In 1944 the company joined Independent Grocers Alliance (IGA), a national chain of wholesalers. The Central Wisconsin Company, later changed to Dairy States Markets, was organized as a subsidiary in 1946 to expand the warehouse and trucking business. It presently controls nine supermarkets. The coal and fuel business was sold to C. G. Fletcher in 1948, about the same time that A. M. Copps retired as an officer of the company, leaving the business to be carried on by son Gordon ("Stubs") Copps, president,

and a nephew, Donald W. Copps, vice president, and Blaine Carlton, secretary-treasurer.

**FIRST NATIONAL BANK** — The oldest in business, this bank opened on Aug. 1, 1883 in a two-story frame building at 405 Main Street and eight years later occupied a stone structure at 433 Main Street. These offices were maintained until 1955 when a new building with drive-in deposit facilities was completed at 519 Main Street. At the close of business on Dec. 31, 1957 the bank had total deposits of \$12,254,394.28 and a capital structure of \$948,357.98. The officers of the bank were Gordon R. Connor, chairman of the board; Joseph R. Hartz, president; Leo C. Larsen, senior vice president; Norman G. Oertel, vice president; John C. Wozniak, assistant vice president; Elmer R. Ross, cashier; Theresa Sullivan and Lorneze W. Belmont, assistant cashiers; and Leonard F. De Baker, auditor. No record of this bank would be complete without the name of James W. Dunegan who came to work as a clerk the day it opened and remained for the next 68 years. The last 29 years before his death in 1951 he served as president.

**GREEN BAY & WESTERN RAILROAD** — (See *From Dog Sled to Airplane.*)

**HAERTEL MONUMENT SERVICE** — This company grew out of an Illinois concern organized by Henry Haertel Sr. in 1872. In 1901 Henry Haertel Jr. came to Stevens Point and organized Haertel Monument Service on West Ellis Street where the company still maintains its head office in an historic building moved from Main Street and once the home of the First National Bank. Haertel Monument Service today has the largest retail monument business in Wisconsin. George Haertel, a son of the founder, became sole owner in 1935.

**HARDWARE MUTUALS** — This is a combination of two companies, the Hardware Mutual Casualty Company and the Hardware Dealers Mutual Fire Insurance Company. Hardware Mutuals trace their beginning to a meeting in 1903 of retail hardware dealers who agreed

to form a mutual insurance company. Business formally began April 4, 1904, in an office at Berlin, Wisconsin. In 1911, P. J. Jacobs became secretary, and under his leadership the main office was moved to Stevens Point in 1912. The first unit of a modern office building on Strongs Avenue was completed in 1922 and in 1930 enlarged to cover an entire block — today an architectural landmark and source of pride to Stevens Point. In the trade, Hardware is known as a fire, casualty and group writer which includes insurance on automobiles, boats, fire and extended coverage, general liability, burglary, inland marine, glass, workmen's compensation and group accident and health. All the firm's business is sold on the mutual basis whereby policyholders receive the benefits of underwriting gains in the form of dividends. Hardware Mutuals are among the leaders in the mutual insurance companies in the United States and are presently headed by Carl N. ("C. N.") Jacobs, a son of P. J. Jacobs. (Sentry Life Insurance Company, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Hardware Mutuals, was established in 1958 to provide group life insurance to group policyholders of Hardware Mutuals.)

**JOERNS BROS. FURNITURE** — This company is an outgrowth of a firm founded in 1899 as the Coye (after W. H. Coye) Furniture Company. It was taken over by Charles A. Joerns in 1917 and his son, Frederick C. Joerns, is now president of the company. It specializes in bedroom suites.

**JOURNAL PRINTING COMPANY** — In 1870 a weekly newspaper called the "Point" was founded by Eaton B. Northrop. The newspaper did not thrive and ceased publication in 1872. In 1873 the defunct plant was taken over by Edward McGlachlin who changed the name to the *Stevens Point Journal*, also a weekly publication. On Oct. 23, 1895 publication began of a daily paper which has maintained uninterrupted service since that time. Meanwhile, a rival weekly was started in 1878 by Edward G. Glennon called the *Gazette* which continued until 1919 when it was merged with the newly-founded Journal Printing Company. Frank W.

Leahy became the owner at this time and his son, Weldon C. Leahy, is now president.

**LULLABYE FURNITURE** — The invention of an automatic cradle for children by a Polish immigrant, John J. Bukolt, marked the beginning of this company. After the invention was patented in 1897 Bukolt began to manufacture cradles in a workshop attached to his house. The shop was later moved and enlarged in 1904 and the company reorganized under the name of Automatic Cradle Manufacturing, a name which was changed in 1920 to Lullabye. The plant, which has about 250 employees, today manufactures plywood, youth beds, chests and furniture for children's rooms. About 200 additional employees serve the company in plants located in Georgia and Butternut, Wisconsin. The Bukolt family holds controlling interest, Edmund V. Bukolt, president, and Victor J. Bukolt, secretary-treasurer, both sons of the founder.

**NIGBOR FURS** — This business in quality ladies' furs grew out of a tannery built in 1895 by Thomas Mirowski on the left bank of the Wisconsin River north of the railroad bridge. In 1898 Michael Nigbor became a partner and a few years later became the owner both of the tannery and a fur manufacturing shop at the southwest corner of the Public Square. In 1921 Nigbor Furs began as a retail store at 313 Clark Street and is presently located at 533 Main Street which serves both as manufacturing and retail center. The company also operates factories and salons at Milwaukee, Manitowoc, Green Bay, Wausau, and Berlin, and has more than 40 leased fur departments in stores of Wisconsin, Michigan, and Illinois. The stock in the company is owned by the two sons of the founder, Bernard E. Nigbor, president, and Chester P. Nigbor, vice president and treasurer.

**SOO LINE RAILROAD** — (*See From Dog Sled to Airplane.*)

**STEVENS POINT BEVERAGE COMPANY** — The site of this company has been associated with the manufacture of beer since 1857 when Messrs. Ruder and



Wahle established the first brewery in the city on what was then the Plank Road (roughly 1100 block on Water Street). It has passed through several changes of ownership, and in 1924 became known as Stevens Point Beverage Company which also manufactured soft drinks. The soft drink line has been discontinued and the company today manufactures about 40,000 barrels of "Point Special" beer each year. The Korsmann family holds controlling interest, Calvin L. Korsmann, president.

**VETTER MANUFACTURING** — As a result of a chance acquaintance made in 1893 on a Chicago street car, Herman A. Vetter agreed to operate a sash and door mill property in Stevens Point. He came to the city the same year and later acquired ownership of the mill and went on to establish a family dynasty in the wood industry. He was joined by his father, Henry Sr., and a brother, C. H. Vetter. One of H. A. Vetter's sons, Herman B. ("Buzz") Vetter is today vice president in charge of sales and advertising, and another son, G. F. ("Fritz") Vetter, is also a vice president. Carl Vetter, a son of C. H. Vetter, is secretary in charge of production. Hans, a son of "Buzz," and Richard, a son of "Fritz," representing the third generation, have also entered the business. The company plant ("Vetter Makes it Better") which today covers some three and a half acres, specializes in the manufacture of doors, windows, moldings, interior trim, cabinet work and mill work for homes and public buildings.

**WEBER TACKLE COMPANY** — This company began as a craft industry in the home of John C. Frost in 1896. His daughter, Carrie J. Frost, made a hobby of tying flies for her father, an avid trout fisherman. Soon others were demanding these American-made flies and out of this developed C. J. Frost Fishing Tackle Company ("Fish Fight for Frost Flies"). In 1920 a group of Stevens Point businessmen purchased the Carrie J. Frost company and elected Oscar L. Weber manager of the new firm known as Frost Fishing Tackle. Shortly thereafter another company known as G. (for George Sr.) W. Frost & Sons was organized. A year after Weber took

over the original company he resigned to form a fly business of his own known as Weber Lifelike Fly ("If Weber makes it — a fish takes it"). G. W. Frost & Sons is today controlled by the sons, George Jr. and Harold Frost, while Webers in 1958 changed its name to Weber Tackle Company. Weber Plastics Inc., organized in 1957 for the manufacture of plastic sporting supplies, is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Weber Tackle. Between the Weber and Frost interests, Stevens Point takes credit for being the "fly tackle capital of America." Officers of Weber Tackle in 1958 were E. C. Wotruba, Sr., president and treasurer; C. R. Cook, A. L. Bauman, and J. D. Duggan, vice presidents; E. C. Wotruba Jr., assistant to the president; and Marguerite E. Puarica, secretary.

**WHITING-PLOVER PAPER COMPANY** — Organized as the Plover Paper Company in 1891 by George A. Whiting *et al* of Winnebago County, and Emmons Burr of Stevens Point, this mill was later taken over by Whiting who purchased the interests of the other stockholders and in 1912 changed the name to Whiting-Plover Paper Company. In the beginning the main product of the company was book paper, but in 1904 it began to produce air-dried rag-content bond, ledger, writing and thin papers which are still the principal products. The company has 200 distributors throughout the United States, and is presently headed by Thomas Leech, president. The annual payroll of some 205 hourly-paid men and women and 40 salaried employees is more than \$1,100,000.

**WISCONSIN PUBLIC SERVICE CORPORATION** — One of the giants of Wisconsin power utilities, this organization traces its origin to the formation of the Oshkosh Gas Light Company in 1883. The company expanded its operations to electric power and absorbed small and obsolete power and light companies in the east and northeast of the state. One of these was the Stevens Point Lighting Company, organized in 1888, later merged with the Wisconsin Valley Electric Company, which in turn was absorbed by Wisconsin Public Service. Water power, once a major factor in

the early growth of the company, today provides only 18 per cent of its generating needs. Steam plants at Green Bay and Weston township in Marathon County provide most of the power.

**WISCONSIN RIVER DIVISION, CONSOLIDATED WATER POWER & PAPER COMPANY** — While the 50-year certificate was issued to this paper mill located at Whiting, the same company, with head offices in Wisconsin Rapids, also operates the Stevens Point Division paper mill. Both of these mills and dams on the Wisconsin River are part of a vast complex of hydroelectric power facilities maintained by Consolidated mainly in Adams, Wood, Portage and Marathon Counties. The Wisconsin River Division traces its history to 1891 when the Wisconsin River Paper & Pulp Company was organized, built its first pulp mill and on Feb. 20, 1892 made its first "dry run." The Stevens Point Division was built in 1918-19. The principal products of these two mills and other Consolidated affiliates are enamel printing papers used by leading magazines such as *Life*, *Look*, *McCall's*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, *Mademoiselle et al.* It also produces coated opaque waxing, tissue and manifold papers, folding cartons, containers and tubes. In 1957 there were 262 employees at the Wisconsin River Division and 200 at the Stevens Point Division whose total wages, salaries and employee benefits for the year ending Dec. 31, 1956 amounted to \$2,614,477.

**WISCONSIN TELEPHONE COMPANY** — (See *above*.)

**WORZALLA PUBLISHING COMPANY** — (See *Ethnic Groups of Portage County*.)

## OF FIRES AND FIREMEN

Like most early villages of Wisconsin, built almost entirely of wood, Stevens Point experienced a series of disastrous fires in the first decades of its growth. One of these occurred in 1853 when fire broke out at the Phelps Tavern-House, at the foot of Main Street, which would have burned to the ground but for the "vigilance and activity of the pinery boys [who] saved the building."<sup>1</sup> The editors of the *Pinery*, in reporting this fire, made their first plea for a fire engine — a plea which they continued to make for the next several years before anything materialized.

On Christmas day, 1854, American House burned to the ground and several nearby dwellings were saved only by the heroic efforts of a "bucket brigade of 300 men. . ."<sup>2</sup>

On June 13, 1860 the *Pinery* reported that Main Street was partly in ruins as a result of a fire that destroyed the City Hotel located at the northwest corner of First & Main, formerly the site of the United States Hotel in the early 1850s. Several other buildings lying between the hotel and the Wisconsin River were also destroyed. Main Street was again in flames in August 1861. This time the volunteer fire company, despite a strong north wind, was praised for preventing the fire from spreading south across Clark Street.

The worst fire in the early history of the city in loss of life occurred on the night of June 5, 1889 when the St. James Hotel, opposite the Wisconsin Central (Soo) Depot, burned and three people were suffocated, namely, Charles Oatball, night clerk; Maggie Riley, dining

<sup>1</sup> *Pinery*, July 13, 1853.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Dec. 30, 1854.

room girl; and Ingerber Dryeson, pastry cook. Oatball lost his life in an attempt to rescue Miss Riley, his fiancée. From the position of their bodies found in a doorway on the second floor it was evident that his last act was a gesture to protect her from the flames which had enveloped the hallway and prevented escape. Guests at the hotel that night included Mr. & Mrs. Tom Thumb noted dwarfs of circus fame, who were performing at McCulloch's Hall when the fire broke out.

Nearly all the saw mills, planing mills, flour and feed mills in the city were destroyed by fire at one time or another.

One of the most serious fires in the city's history occurred July 5, 1886. That year the Fourth of July fell on a Sunday and the fifth was celebrated. As a result of a firecracker a fire started near the river bank and quickly spread to the North Side Lumber Company mill and yards located about 80 rods north of the foot of Main Street. Fanned by a strong westerly wind, the fire continued to spread over the North Side and for a time it was feared that the entire city might be destroyed. Picket brigades of volunteers fought off roof fires as far east as the 800 block and despite this at least one house on Division Street was burned.

The Moll-Glennon Company dry goods store was one of three buildings badly damaged in a sensational blaze on Jan. 6, 1942. Missing after the fire started were Miss Elizabeth Moll and Mrs. Ellen Heffron who jointly occupied an apartment above the building. Thousands of gallons of water were poured into the wreckage in freezing temperatures. The body of Mrs. Heffron was found in mid-morning seated upright in a chair, coated with ice. The body of Miss Moll was found later in the day. This led to public demands for better fire fighting equipment.

The bucket brigade of the 1850s was given its first modern fire fighting equipment in 1860. Alderman Anson Rood was appointed on February 11 to go to Chicago to make the purchase which was a hand pump-er known as "Fire King No. 1." This was a second-

hand affair acquired originally by Chicago in 1835 and used probably into the 1850s. It was brought to Stevens Point and used until 1875 and perhaps on occasions later, before it was retired. Learning of this the Chicago Historical Society attempted to buy it back in 1904, but the price of \$500 was considered too high. In 1922 a representative of the Chicago Historical Society came to Stevens Point to locate the pumper which meanwhile was being used as a pump with ditching crew on the Buena Vista marsh. "Fire King No. 1" was bought for \$100 from its new owners and learning of this, the city of Stevens Point, which still had possession of the hose cart and reel also acquired in 1860, made a gift of the latter to the Chicago Historical Society where both the pumper and reel are now on exhibit.<sup>1</sup>

There are no official records on the organization and proceedings of the Volunteer Company in the early 1860s, but in the period from 1868 to 1872 several hundred documents<sup>2</sup> have been preserved, all on individual slips of paper, large and small, which throw a sharp light on the doings as well as the mechanics of the organization. This was no longer a group of mere volunteers who might run willy-nilly down the street to a fire, as the name might suggest, but a specialized and highly dedicated group of citizens, deeply aware of their responsibilities, jealous of their reputation, and anxious to be of service to the community.

A constitution and by-laws had been adopted by the Volunteer Company some time before 1868. This prescribed penalties for failure to attend meetings, and disciplinary measures for malfeasance of duty. Leading citizens of the small city, not members of the company, were proposed for honorary membership which, at least in 1872, entailed dues of \$5 per annum. Obviously, an organization which did not pay any salary except to the engineer and secretary — \$25 a year to each — had to be based on something other than monetary self-interest. It became, in fact, an honor and a mark of social

<sup>1</sup> *Chicago History*, (Chicago Historical Society, Vol. V, no. 1, 1957), pp. 9-14.

<sup>2</sup> In collection of Portage County Historical Society.

distinction to belong to the company. It also became a club which enjoyed dances, oyster suppers, snack lunches and beer. In 1872 Ball & Pratt handed in a bill of \$6.94 for pickles, mustard, cracknels, finger snaps, tomato catsup, and one can opener. During the same year a big spread was also arranged which included roast beef, dried beef, pickles, tripe, pickled feet, beef tongue, vegetables, garden sauce, biscuits, pies, cakes, ice cream and lemonade. At other times the menu was simply cheese and crackers, no doubt washed down with Adam Kuhl's beer.

The first steam fire engine was acquired in 1874, a year before the new station house was completed on North Second Street and which is still standing. The city had no horses to haul the \$4,500 engine this first year and to make up for this, offered \$5 to the owner of the first team that arrived at the station after the fire bell rang in the tower. Considerable rivalry ensued at times for the privilege of hauling the engine. On one occasion, probably in 1876, a fire occurred in the northwest corner of the Public Square and a farmer passing by with a yoke of oxen unhooked and hurried over to the station.

A team of horses to haul the fire engine, a span of chestnut Morgans, was purchased for the city in 1877 by Owen Clark at a cost of \$382 which included harnesses. Another horse, a bay, was acquired to pull the hose cart which was driven by John Brinker. Arthur Sturtevant drove the fire engine team while James Gardner served as engineer through most of the 1880s. Whenever the engine crew went out on a call, two big stag hounds owned by Sturtevant loped alongside the horses, barking and baying to warn pedestrians and traffic to the side.

The first fire truck, chain drive and hard rubber tires, equipped with motor-driven pump, was introduced to Fire Station No. 1 on Nov. 9, 1917 and driven for a number of years by Thomas Helminski. When the truck arrived and the horses were retired, one who looked back with nostalgia on the passing of the horse-

driven engine was Herman Krembs, associated with the fire department from 1886 to 1931, who wrote in his *Journal-Diary*:

"There was romance and thrill in a dash of a fine team of horses drawing the sparklin (sparkling) engine with its trailing column of smoke. The fire fighter always was and always will be a hero. The horse shared his human companion's glory. What a thrill it was for the little boys and girls to be taken down to the engine house and there be lifted in the arms of a fireman and up to pet the horses on the nose."<sup>1</sup>

A second volunteer fire company was located on the South Side at least as early as 1880. Land was purchased on the South Side for a fire station in 1885, and first mention of "Company No. 2" in the minutes appears in an entry of May 21, 1888 when trouble arose over a misunderstanding with Company No. 1 on the North Side relative to a Memorial Day celebration. The South Side company refused to "come out" for the parade because "the line of march wasn't to the South Side." Apparently forgotten by the time of the Fourth of July when both companies agreed to compete for prizes offered by the city, this may have marked the beginning of contests between the two stations which continued for a number of years — the most common form of competition being a horse race. While oldsters placed bets on the race, youngsters from the North and South Sides organized gangs which fought each other over the results. Meanwhile, the South Side was equipped with a new fire engine, "The General Ellis," in 1885.

On Feb. 19, 1892, a resolution was introduced in the Common Council by Alderman John Leahy to establish a paid fire department. The pay scale started at \$35 a month for ordinary fireman to \$100 for chief. The first fire call performed by the newly-paid company occurred on the first day of paid duty, June 21, 1892, when the Stevens Point fire engine was shipped by train, via Junction City, to Wausau to assist in fighting a big fire. The railway companies made no charge for this special train.

<sup>1</sup> In collection of Portage County Historical Society.



In a series of entries apparently made many years after the event, Herman Krembs explains in his Journal-Diary that Charles Leahy commenced working in the paid department in 1892; Alexander ("Sandy") Love, 1894; Tom Helminski, 1895; Lyman Rowe, 1898; Mike Helminski, 1906; George K. McDonald, 1912; Frank Kirsling, 1918; Peter Yorton, 1919; Anton Tuskowski, 1922; Lyman Rowe Jr., 1923; Joseph Szafranski, 1923; George H. Fisher, 1927; Mike Miller, 1929; Joe Pleet, 1931; Carl Kitowski, 1933; Roman Kubisiak, 1933; and Edgar W. Darkes, 1935. In still later entries, it is learned that Lloyd Mrozinski joined the force in 1925, and that Charles H. Packard served as chief from 1907 to 1929. His place was taken by Herman Krembs who retired in 1931. Next in seniority to Krembs was Charles Leahy who joined the force in 1892 and became chief on the retirement of Krembs. Krembs and Leahy established another record for having served without a day off from 1892 to 1908. During this period fire fighters worked 24-hour shifts, 365 days a year. This system was replaced, probably in 1908, by the double platoon when firemen served 24 hours on and 24 hours off duty.

Frank Kirsling was made chief in 1932 upon the retirement of Leahy and served until 1937 when he was replaced by George K. McDonald, acting. The latter resigned a month later owing to ill health. His place was taken temporarily by Paul Tuszka who served until November when he was replaced by Carl Kitowski who continued until November 1938. He was replaced by Roman Kubisiak who asked to be relieved in February 1940. His place was filled by Tuszka until April 1943, and on May 1 Carl Maslowski became chief and has since continued in this capacity.

Serving the Stevens Point Fire Department in 1958, aside from Maslowski, were, First Platoon, Station 1, Carl Kitowski, captain, and Victor Soik, Edward Zurzwski, and James Pieczynski; First Platoon, Station 2, Raymond Steinke, Lieutenant, and Leonard Jakusz, Dale Tuszka, and Raymond Bartkowiak. Serving in the Second Platoon, Station 1, were Roman Kubisiak, captain, and Stan-

ley Jakusz, Edmund Worzalla, and Frank Nachman; in the Second Platoon, Station 2, were Frank Tretatowski, lieutenant, and John Eckerson, Peter Lazare, and Richard Tuszka.

A bell to remember in Stevens Point was the one installed in the tower of Fire Station No. 1 in 1876. It was used not only to warn of fires, but for many years served as a curfew. In 1941 Chapter No. 30 of Disabled American Veterans of World War I erected this bell at the corner of Church & Clark Streets as part of a memorial of Mme. Ernestine Schumann-Heink. Colonel Ferdinand Hirzy, a veteran of World War I & II, married Else Heink, the granddaughter of the famous contralto singer who appeared in Stevens Point both in concert and on private visits.

Alex Wallace treasures many memories of the North Side fire station which he justifiably claims was a "second home" to him as a boy living on the North Side. He recalls an incident in the 1890s after the crew of the paid fire department had taken up quarters in the station house. The men were having difficulty sleeping on moonlight nights because a large dog, kept by the owner of a small hotel nearby, bayed at the moon. Two of the firemen decided to put a stop to this, and, one night when the moon was in eclipse, slid down the slough in a skiff and put ashore a short distance from the dog house. Crawling up to within throwing distance, one of them tossed a firecracker in the direction of the dog house and retreated to the skiff before the explosion occurred. The next morning one of them sauntered over to a nearby saloon to pick up any rumors and arrived just in time to hear the hotel owner proclaiming to the barkeeper: "Dem anarchists tried to blow up my place last night. Tossed a stick of dynamite right into my dog house and would have killed my dog if I hadn't sold him yesterday!"

## PIONEER JUSTICE

While respect for law and order in Stevens Point is today a commonplace and the city a law abiding community, with occasional lapses characteristic of all communities, it was not always so. From the time of the appointment of the first constable in 1848 down to 1868, the city had its problems, chiefly with boisterous lumberjacks and river men, but in 1868 the first of a series of murders occurred which for the next 30 years or more was to give the city a reputation for lawlessness probably unmatched by any of equal size in Wisconsin. Carrying a gun appears to have been considered a necessity and the most popular weapon was a .38 caliber "bull-dog" type revolver. The most favored method of shooting a man was either from ambush or by walking up behind him unawares and emptying the revolver into his back. There were no heroics about giving the other man a chance to draw first, which was largely a myth even in Dodge City, nor was it in the nature of the times to give the other man the slightest advantage and especially in Stevens Point which lay at the heart of the booming lumber industry.

The reasons for this period of lawlessness are not easy to determine. The city was a frontier community and the spirit of the frontier, even as it was being applied in the West at the time, reserved justice to the individual first, the law second, and property rights were more important than human rights. It might be expected that the men on the river and in the logging woods would have been the most willing to take to themselves the execution of personal justice, but the facts belie this. Most of the shootings and murders were committed by citizens of the city, tradesmen and professional people. Nor can any one ethnic group be singled out. Even

more amazing is the fact that most of the crimes went unpunished, both through the leniency of jurors and the cleverness of local or out-of-county attorneys for the defense. The leniency of jurors who at one moment found a defendant not guilty by reason of insanity, and in the next moment, declared him sane, was in itself a reflection of an attitude difficult to reconcile with modern concepts of justice.

One of the contributing factors to the laxity of law enforcement in the early decades was probably the system, inaugurated when the city was incorporated, of electing a city marshal for a term of one year. While this reflected a healthy distrust of anyone holding police power too long, it also placed a severe handicap on law enforcement by the fact that what took place under one marshal might be considered of less importance to his successor. The records reveal that only five marshals succeeded themselves by one year.

The system of electing a city marshal was changed in 1883 by having the mayor appoint a chief of police and confirmed by the council. But the mayor naturally wielded considerable influence and these appointments, often patronage affairs based on political favors and party affiliation, were not always calculated to bring out the most qualified man for the job, nor to give any continuity to the detection of crime. Moreover, the records reveal that the office of mayor, too, was one of rather temporary nature. City politics in the early years were openly partisan and the major political parties, Republicans and Democrats, squared off like two prize fighters entering the ring where no holds were barred and the Marquis of Queensberry rules unheard of. There is considerable evidence to suggest that politics also influenced the decisions of jurors who were no doubt equally interested in party affiliation and loyalties.

It is not possible here to trace all the major crimes in the city down to the turn of the century, but the three most celebrated cases involved the murder in 1868 of Roswell C. Blanchard, a pioneer cabinet maker who owned a shop on Main Street; the hanging of the Courtwright Brothers in 1875; and the shootings that led to

the murder in 1888 of Willis W. Haseltine, a local attorney.

Blanchard had left in September to visit relatives in Vermont and was expected back in the city around Oct. 20. On his return trip he probably boarded a stage at Gills Landing which was scheduled to arrive in Stevens Point at midnight. When the stage arrived, Blanchard was not on it although his baggage was. There may have been two other passengers on the stage that night but if they were, they apparently had disappeared as nothing further is recorded about them. Apparently no one suspected foul play but as one day followed the next without the appearance of Blanchard, speculation arose and finally John ("Sailor Jack") Hawn was sent to Gills Landing to investigate on the theory that Blanchard may have fallen from the steamer into the river. No clues were found. The following spring, when the ice went out at Bloomer Rapids, the mutilated body of Blanchard was found floating under some willow trees.

The stage coach drivers and others associated with the stage lines were questioned, but no confessions were obtained. In the town of Lanark there is still a legend which holds that someone heard a crying out, as of a man being murdered, when the stage went by, but whether the crime was committed on the road or nearer the city is uncertain. A hitherto unpublished version of the incident appears in a record of the Old Settlers' Club kept by Sherman who, in noting the death of Mrs. Blanchard in 1902, made this additional comment:

"He (i.e. Blanchard) was murdered on the stage at McDill on the hill west of Big Plover River. The stage driver's name was Sharp (here Sherman leaves an empty space as he apparently was unaware of the driver's first name). . . He was attacked and struck with a wrench used to hold the eveners to the stage. He was then taken to the hog-hole and weighted down with stone & thrown in the Wis River & found below the Bloomer Rapids. . ."

The Hog-Hole referred to here was known in days of lumber rafting as a dangerous eddy which once existed near the modern site of the Whiting-Plover Paper Mill and legend says that some hogs were drowned here. But Sherman fails to explain the reasons for identifying the

hill at McDill with the Blanchard murder. It was commonly believed to have been a case of mistaken identity and that the intended victim was S. H. Karner, a local lumberman, who was rumored to carry considerable sums of money on his person. Karner had gone to Illinois and was expected back on the stage in question but had delayed his return a day and missed his earlier date with Death.

A reward of \$500 was offered by the Stevens Point Common Council for clues leading to the apprehension of the murderer or murderers, and the *Pinery* opined that "who committed the cowardly act and damnable is yet to appear."<sup>1</sup> No one ever came forward to claim the reward.

The second and also the most sensational tragedy in Stevens Point occurred with the double lynching on the night of Oct. 18, 1875 of the brothers Amos and Isaiah Courtwright who were hanged by a mob from a pine tree located on the northwest angle of modern Whiting Avenue and Water Street. An objective study of this case has yet to be written, nor can it be done here. But the background of the case up to this time has been largely influenced by a newspaper interview with J. O. Raymond, a Plover attorney, who prosecuted the case before the hanging. While there was ample time to interview the defendants when they were being held in the county jail at Stevens Point, there is no evidence that any attempt was ever made to get their version of the story.

The incident grew out of a mortgage lien. Amos Courtwright was a partner with Luther Hanchett in a saw mill situated on the Plover River at modern McDill in the early 1850s. Hanchett became involved in politics and probably in order to concentrate his attention on his new calling, sold his share of the mill property to his partner. As Courtwright did not have sufficient capital to cover the entire transaction, the unpaid balance was mortgaged to Hanchett. In 1862, Hanchett, then a member of Congress, died in Plover. The Hanchett estate then began action for satisfaction of unpaid

<sup>1</sup> *Pinery*, April 22, 1869.

mortgage liens. Meanwhile, in 1867, J. O. Raymond married the widow, Lucinda Hanchett, nee Alban, and naturally took a direct interest in the prosecution of the estate claims.

Amos Courtwright owned a farm in Sec 5 of Buena Vista (the Sigmund Stremkowski place) where he lived with his family. Raymond sought possession of part of this property as satisfaction of the claims, the circumstances of which are clouded in legal technicalities and alleged delinquent taxes, and whether Raymond was entirely justified in pressing suit for the Buena Vista property, is also beyond the scope of this narrative. Nevertheless, the case was finally bound over to Green Lake County Court in 1870 and the County Board proceedings reveal that Raymond was allowed \$36.25 as expense money in the case of "J. O. Raymond against Amos Courtwright."<sup>1</sup>

But the Courtwrights refused to be evicted and the case dragged on, becoming more bitter as time went on and finally in October 1875, County Sheriff Joseph H. Baker was forced to execute a writ of restitution against Amos and Isaiah Courtwright on the farm in Buena Vista, obviously a task distateful to him as both Baker and Amos Courtwright had been pioneer neighbors before the Civil War.

There is considerable evidence to suggest in connection with earlier attempts to evict the Courtwrights, as well as references to Amos Courtwright written by Sherman years before the event, that he was a man of intransigent nature, often at odds with his fellow man, while his brother Isaiah Courtwright and six other local characters in Stevens Point were cited by the Common Council in 1869 as being "Spendthrifts" who, through the use of intoxicating liquors, were "injuring their health and destroying the peace of their families and disturbing the quiet of the city. . . ." All seven men were "posted," that is, licensed places in the city were for-

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, Board of Supervisors, Vol. III, p. 299.

<sup>2</sup> *Proceedings*, Stevens Point Common Council, Vol. A, p. 587.

bidden to sell them liquor.

Sheriff Baker had visited the Courtwright farm on more than one occasion and had advised the brothers of the impending action, to which they had allegedly warned him to stay away or get shot. But Baker, who rose to the rank of lieutenant, commanding a squad in the 1st Cavalry and wounded in action at Shiloh, was not only a popular man, as revealed by his re-election to the office of sheriff, but also a brave man. On the fatal day he approached the Courtwright farm with a posse and while the posse remained behind, Baker passed through the gate leading to the house when he was shot from a window by rifle fire in the hands of Isaiah Courtwright. He managed to stagger to the house and return the fire before deputies rushed in and surrounded the house. But Baker, mortally wounded, was carried to a granary on the farm while directing his deputies to set fire to the house. He died 12 hours later.

However, darkness was approaching and in the smoke of the fire and general confusion, the Courtwrights fled into a woods to the east and made their way to the farm of Justice of the Peace Leonidas Lombard in Sec 6 of Lanark where they surrendered. The posse learned of this and surrounded the Lombard house and attempted to set fire to it, but further violence was averted by the presence of John Eckels, under-sheriff and father-in-law of Baker, who insisted that the law take its course. The following day the Courtwrights were spirited through back roads to the county jail in Stevens Point, and it was from this jail, a few days later, that they were taken by a mob, variously estimated at 12 to 40, and hauled or dragged behind a wagon to the pine tree on Water Street. Both had been viciously beaten in the head and face before the hanging.

On the death of Baker, the *Plover Times* carried a story headed:

A Shocking Murder!  
DEATH OF SHERIFF BAKER!

Intense Excitement!

In the account of the funeral of Baker, the *Times*



reported that "the congregation was the largest and the procession the longest, we have ever witnessed in Plover."<sup>1</sup> But in the same issue, the *Times* also said that already there were rumors of a "jail delivery," i.e. mob action to seize the prisoners. H. G. Ingersoll courageously deplored any such action and expressed the hope that the law would be allowed to take its course.

The reference to "intense excitement" was apparently no overstatement. A grave wrong had been committed in a community which a decade earlier had sent the biggest contingent of volunteers into the Union Army of any in the county, whose relatives and friends in the New England states ("tempered in New England sleet") had been the leaders in the 1840s and 1850s of the abolitionist movement which led to the Civil War. And when one of their own people in Portage County was shot to death in the performance of duty, all the passions of puritanical justice came to the surface to demand an immediate rectification of righteousness, even as John Brown's body.

But the following week, when the Courtwrights were hanged, the *Plover Times* made no mention of it except to run the same story of the week before on the death of Baker which appeared this time in a supplement mostly filled with lands up for tax sale. Nor is there any mention of the incident in the proceedings of the Common Council of Stevens Point, or of the County Board, although on Nov. 14, 1875, a few days after the jail delivery, a committee of the board to examine public buildings found that damage had been caused to the county jail, reporting that:

"... there has been quite a breach made in the North Wall of said building which has not been fixed. Also there is two bolts in the hinges of the iron door in the Main Alley of the Jail that have been about half sawed off. Also one lock on one of the cells is in a bad condition as the inside plate is partly loosened."<sup>2</sup>

No explanation is given for these extraordinary circumstances.

<sup>1</sup> *Plover Times*, Oct. 29, 1875.

<sup>2</sup> *Proceedings*, Board of Supervisors, Vol. II, p. 511.

Officially, the only clue that Baker had been shot was a petition circulated in Plover and handed to the County Board for an appropriation "for the Benefit of the Widow & Children of J. H. Baker, deceased. . ."<sup>1</sup> The matter was turned over to the committee on claims which appears to have taken no action, although a later entry reveals that Mrs. Ellen Baker was allowed \$414.89 for "boarding prisoners by Baker," obviously a bill Baker had coming before his death. The proceedings of the Masonic Lodge of Plover reveal that assistance was lent to the widow of Baker on several occasions.

Sophia Courtwright, widow of Amos Courtwright, and several members of the family and friends were placed under arrest and two charged with the murder of Baker, but all were later released. No efforts appear to have been made to assist the bereaved family although there is strong reason to suspect that friends in Amherst and Lanark helped them on a clandestine basis. The specter of fear rode the dirt roads and a form of mass hysteria gripped the population. The subject was apparently considered unspeakable, not only because of the guilt involved, but lest someone divulge the identity of the mob.

The editors of the *Stevens Point Journal*, on the other hand, described the raid on the jail and the hanging in considerable detail, but without mentioning any suspects. The jailer, Frank Wheelock, who was asleep when the mob overpowered him, may have recognized some of the men behind the masks or by their voices, but there is no evidence that he ever testified against them, and no arrests were made.

The Courtwright brothers were buried in a common grave at Plover Cemetery in Block 2, Lot 68. Two small, unmarked headstones stand on this lot today, and, as if a vast conspiracy were afoot to destroy all evidence of the crime, there is no entry on the Courtwrights in the official Register of Deaths in Portage County.

For many years after the hanging, the big pine tree continued to stand, unmindful of its own notoriety, and

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, Board of Supervisors, Vol. II, p. 564.

whenever a new arrival came to the city he was almost certain to have it pointed out to him. John Lowe of Pine Grove recalls the first time he visited Stevens Point as a boy in the mid-1880s; accompanied by his father and Samuel Manley, the trio drove up Water Street and Manley pointed to the tree and said, "That's where they hanged the Courtwrights."

In the decades that followed a legend developed that all those who took part in the hanging met violent deaths under one circumstance or another, even as a myth developed in the 1920s and still repeated by Egyptain tourist guides that the discoverers of King Tutenkhamon's tomb met untimely ends.

The third important tragedy in the history of the city was the shooting of A. E. Morse, a local bank cashier, by Willis W. Haseltine, an attorney, on June 19, 1886, and two years later on April 3, 1888 the shooting of Haseltine which was charged to the brothers John D. and Henry Curran. The circumstances which set the stage for the murder of Morse are old as time; the name of Morse became linked romantically with Mrs. Haseltine. Learning of the affair, Haseltine shot and killed Morse while the latter was driving horse and buggy down the 700 block of Main Street. The horse continued to the Public Square where the body of Morse fell into the street. Haseltine surrendered but pleaded not guilty when the trial came before Circuit Court on Oct. 3, 1886. Lengthy testimony was heard in the days that followed, but when the jury retired, it took only 13 minutes to find the defendant "innocent of the charges against him for reason that he was insane at the time of the commission of the act. We further find that said Willis W. Haseltine is now sane."<sup>1</sup> The verdict was received with wild demonstrations of approval and "large numbers had pressed forward to shake hands with the defendant and congratulate him, and the great trial was at an end."

After Haseltine was acquitted, he reputedly carried two revolvers, one in each coat pocket, with which he

<sup>1</sup> *Stevens Point Journal*, Oct. 30, 1886.

threatened to shoot John Curran, a close friend of Morse and linked to the Morse scandal by his friendship with Miss Anna Park, who in turn was a friend of Mrs. Haseltine, nee Eva Wadleigh. After the shooting of Morse, according to local legend, John Curran slipped out of the city and spent a year or more in Milwaukee. Apparently hoping that the affair had quieted down, he returned to Stevens Point and a short time later had gone to Alex and Henry Bergholt's Barber Shop, then probably located on the north side of Main Street near the Square, when Haseltine entered and was about to draw a gun on Curran. Patrons stepped between them while Curran retreated through a back door. The continued threats to the Currans, it is said, became common knowledge although never reported in the press, and probably went far to clearing them of the murder in the long trial that followed the shooting of Haseltine in 1888.

The shooting took place on North First Street. Haseltine was returning from a livery barn where he kept his horse and as he passed Curran House, on the opposite side of the street, he was cut down by a double-barreled shot gun fired from the direction of Curran House. The coroner's jury found that John D. Curran fired the fatal shots, although this was never proved. Both John and his brother Henry were indicted for the murder and pleaded innocent and each were freed on \$5,000 bail which they had no trouble raising among friends, and enemies of Haseltine.

The case attracted wide attention in the press and the two defendants found no lack of popular support as well as opposition occasioned largely by the circumstances of an election involving a Democrat sheriff who had allegedly sworn to see John Curran "in States Prison." Fearing an impartial trial, attorneys for the defense moved for a change of venue. This led to an imposing list of affidavits signed for and against a change of venue by those who favored the innocence of the Currans and by an equal number who did not. The court finally decided to remove the case to Wau-paca County where trial was held in the early summer

of 1889. The defendants pleaded self-defense and in the conflicting testimony that followed, the jury appears to have come to the conclusion that some doubt existed in the prosecution's case and found the defendants "not guilty." And once again the "spectators arose in mass, and those most intimate with the Currans leaped over benches and railings in their rush for the inner circle."<sup>1</sup>

Curran House, near where the shooting of Haseltine occurred, stood on the northwest corner of Main & First Street (Copps Company site in 1958). An etching on the back cover of *Wisconsin Lumberman* for April 1873 reveals that it was a three-story building, facing Main Street, with a two-story annex to the west on Main (later raised to three stories) and a two-story annex to the rear believed used for kitchen and service quarters. It was one of the most popular hostleries in the city in the 1870s to 1890s, and Mrs. Henry Curran, who served as *maitre d'hotel*, was highly regarded and respected.

But it was never proved that either of the Currans did the shooting on North First Street and rumor was that a "Bohemian from Milladore" was the hired gun.

The wave of crime which placed Stevens Point in the news actually began in the early 1880s. This situation in 1882 was summed up by the *Journal* editors who, under a caption "Rowdyism Run Rampant" had this to say:

"When peaceable citizens get knocked down and pounded by roughs; when inoffensive by-standers are pounded on the head by the keeper of a house of ill fame; when two-fisted roughs, pimps and prostitutes ride up and down the streets at breakneck speed; . . . when big-fisted bullies parade the streets, flanked by armed blacklegs seeking after someone to pummel; when brawling rowdies openly defy the officers of the law and loudly proclaim that they can whip any man in the city; when a man mounts a horse and rides up and down the main street of our city in imitation of the Younger brothers; when these things occur, as they all have occurred in the city of Stevens Point within the past few weeks. . . it is high time that all good citizens stop and enquire whither are we drifting?"<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Stevens Point Journal*, July 6, 1889.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Sept. 2, 1882.

Aside from the Morse-Haseltine murders, several other murders and attempted murders were committed in Stevens Point in the 1880s and 1890s and around the turn of the century, but most of these were linked to domestic troubles and business feuds. Two involved local brawlers, Pat McHugh, a one-time prize-fighter, and Jack A. Riley, better known as "Buckskin" Riley. Pat McHugh operated a saloon on the south side of Main Street west of the square in the early 1880s and had more than once been arrested as a result of rowdyism. In April 1883, while sweeping the board walk in front of his saloon, McHugh was shot at several times and wounded by a .44 caliber rifle fired from the direction of Curran House on the opposite side of the street. He was removed to a hospital in Fond du Lac where he eventually recovered and to his dying day wore a watch chain with the ball of lead that nearly ended his life, but he never returned to Stevens Point.

One of the suspects in the McHugh shooting was "Buckskin" Riley, a man with a long police record before he came to Stevens Point in 1880 and one that kept up with him after he arrived. In this instance, however, Riley had an alibi furnished by some girls he employed in a brothel on the South Side and the crime went unpunished. A short time later Riley was in trouble with the police again and after a hot pursuit, was captured and lodged in the city jail which stood on North 2nd Street. There were rumors afloat that certain elements, who feared Riley would be released again, were planning a lynching party. Instead, one night when the jailer had gone down the street to Curran House for a midnight lunch, what is believed to have been a small party of men broke into the jail and riddled Riley with .32 caliber bullets. The Common Council appointed a special committee of three to consider the matter of offering a reward for the killers, but the committee, in returning its report, felt that since Riley's arrival in the city, he had "by his disorderly conduct put said city to great expense [and] we believe and report that no reward should be offered by said city for the apprehen-

sion and conviction of the person or persons who killed said Riley.”<sup>1</sup>

Strong exception was taken to this report by Edward McGlachlin, editor of the *Journal*, who apparently realized what the Council did not, namely, that “the cheapest way to deal with crime is to punish it.” The attitude of the committee was no doubt a reflection of the callousness which had become entrenched in the community since the hanging of the Courtwrights. Three years after Alderman Henry Curran participated in the committee report mentioned above he was himself to be charged with murder. It was a dangerous era for anyone to have an enemy.

\* \* \*

In the latter part of 1957, the world was shocked by the criminal depredations of Edward Gein, a part-time farmer near Plainfield in Waushara County, who murdered Mrs. Mary Hogan, a tavern keeper in the town of Pine Grove in Portage County on Dec. 8, 1954, and went unsuspected until the murder of Mrs. Bernice Worden of Plainfield on Nov. 16, 1957. In addition to murdering two women, Gein had molested a number of women's graves in nearby cemeteries, one probably in Spirit Land Cemetery in the town of Almond. After he was committed to the Central State Hospital for the Criminal Insane, angered citizens secretly burned the Gein home (“house of horrors”) to the ground. His case was considered “unparalleled in modern history.”<sup>2</sup>

\* \* \*

The first mention of law enforcement in Portage County occurs in April 1848 when the county commissioners appointed Samuel D. Rollins a constable “in and for the Stevens Point Precinct for the year A.D. 1848. . .”<sup>3</sup> While the area covered by this precinct is not described, it no doubt took in the early settlement of the village then known variously as Stevens or Stephens Point.

Rollins probably served until the spring of 1849 when the first election of officers for the newly-elected township of Middletown was held at which time Rollins (the pro-

<sup>1</sup> *Stevens Point Journal*, Sept. 8, 1883

<sup>2</sup> *Time*, Dec. 2, 1957, p. 40.

<sup>3</sup> *Proceedings*, County Commissioners Sessions, Vol. I, p. 128.

ceedings use the initials L. D. instead of Samuel D.), George Kollock and A. McKellep were elected constables.

With the incorporation of the city of Stevens Point in 1858, the elective office of city marshal was established, and continued until 1883 when the office of chief of police was established by appointment of the mayor. City marshals from the beginning were A. E. Aldrich, 1858-59; J. O. Wiswall, 1860-61; F. G. Houston, 1862; William Collins, 1863; David Fitch, 1864; William B. Gilchrist, 1865; William Walton, 1866; John Herron, 1867; John O. Johnson, 1868; F. R. Houston, 1869-70; James P. Dunn, 1871; John Gardner, 1872; Fred Ford, 1873-74; J. H. Whitney, 1875; Frank Wheelock, 1876; Paul Lukaszewicz, 1877; Charles Gottery, 1878; A. J. Empey, 1879-80; Count Sigmund Bielski, 1881; A. J. Empey, 1882; and James Bellinger, 1883.

Police chiefs were Bellinger, 1883; John A. McDonald, 1884-85; John Finch, 1886-87; John Knauf, 1888; John Finch, 1889-91; Thomas J. Coan, 1892; William Zorn, 1893-94; Forest W. Kingsbury, 1895-96; John McGivern, 1897; Christ Geisler, 1898; John McGivern, 1899-1900; Thomas J. Coan, 1901-03; John Leahy 1904-07; Patrick O'Connor, 1908; John F. Hofsoos, 1909-26; Harry Hewett, 1926; Leo Frymark, 1926-35; A. W. Risch, 1935-43; and E. L. Zeaman, 1943-. Supporting Chief Zeaman on the police force of 1958 were Capt. Emmett Komassa, Lt. George Anderson, Sergeants Ben Sankey and Frank Barbers, and Patrolmen Steve Konieczki, Floyd Pautz, Frank Helminski, Joe Kutella, James Cholewinski, Ray Hintz, Howard Craig, Gary Mrozinski, Alex Landowski, George Kuplic, Leonard Hucke, Gordon Daniels, Ray Kulas, and Anthony Glodowski.



## THE LUST FOR LIFE

Even though the last decades of the 19th Century in Stevens Point were marked by sensational rowdyism and shootings, they were at the same time filled with a lust for life. Some of the men who settled in the county in the 1850s and 1860s had, by the 1880s and 1890s, grown moderately wealthy in the logging and lumbering business, or in real estate, or as merchants and hotel keepers. They built imposing residences for themselves and were anxious to display their newly-acquired affluence by taking part in sports events and community activity. They were anxious to be immortalized, too, and paid for personal biographies written in so-called histories of the county which extolled the virtues and deeds of the pioneers.

It was a time when national sports were beginning to be of interest to everyone. After John L. Sullivan won the heavyweight boxing championship in a match that went 75 rounds with Jake Kilrain in Louisiana, people in Stevens Point followed Sullivan's career as if he were a local hero. When James Corbett finally knocked out the world champion in 21 rounds, Sullivan allowed that "whiskey and women did this"<sup>1</sup> but he was still Page One news.

It was the period of the beginning of the emancipation of women, of saloon-smasher Carrie Nation, and window smasher Maria Sweeney, born and raised in Stevens Point, who became famous in the 1890s throughout Wisconsin and Minnesota as the champion window smasher. In 1891, on her way to Antigo from Appleton, she paused long enough in Stevens Point to clobber a plate glass in the general store of Mike Clifford. "People who can

<sup>1</sup> *Stevens Point Journal*, Sept. 8, 1892.

afford to have plate glass can afford to buy more," she said.<sup>1</sup>

Faro games and cock fighting were popular forms of gambling in dives around the Public Square, but probably nothing compared to the bets laid on locally-owned horses entered at the Great District Fair every summer. Trotters like Louis Brill's "Maggie Sherman," and Brill & Emmons Burr's "B.B.P." (foaled on Byron B. Park's birthday and named after him), and H. & J. D. Curran's "Pat Downing" competed in races throughout the Midwest and Kentucky.

In the early 1890s bicycling became a popular pastime. The Stevens Point Cycling Club met every Monday evening. A uniform was adopted which included blue knee pants and cap, black stockings and belt, and a light colored shirt. Trips were made to Lake Emily, to Plover and to Wausau, and relay races were organized between competing cyclists in Stevens Point and Wausau. On a ride to Plover in 1897 some 200 persons participated, starting at the Public Square and ending in front of the Hotel Warner in Plover where lemonade was served.

In 1895 a "unique entertainment" was being promised at the Methodist Episcopal church "in shape of a phonograph concert, the instrument being one of Edison's newly improved [and] instead of tubes held to the ears the sounds are reproduced in a large funnel and can be distinctly heard by more than one thousand people at a time."<sup>2</sup>

The rise of big league baseball in the cities of the East prompted local clubs to be organized and one of the early ball games held in 1876 saw Stevens Point defeat Almond 25-9.

Camping at McKinley Park on the Second Island, Woodland Park on the Third Island, Jesse Martin's Island, and Maple Beach on the Wisconsin River several miles above the city was a favorite summer holiday. Vacationers erected tents and spent two and three weeks enjoying the company of other campers, cooking on primitive stoves, boating and swimming.

<sup>1</sup> *Stevens Point Journal*, June 20, 1896.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Aug. 24, 1895.

Fourth of July was celebrated with fanfare and patriotism. In 1876, on the centennial of the Declaration of Independence, 100 salvoes were fired from an artillery piece at sunrise accompanied by the ringing of bells. A parade formed at 9 a.m. consisting of the Stevens Point Cornet Band, color bearers, members of the Common Council, County Board, fire company and apparatus, civic societies and citizens. The procession probably marched to Warren's Grove (southeast corner of Clark & Division) where the band played, and, after the opening prayer by the Rev. A. A. Joss, the Declaration of Independence was read by D. L. Jones. A male chorus sang the Star Spangled Banner; the Hon. George W. Cate gave an oration; and the German Maennerchoir sang *Die Wacht Am Rhein*, followed by the benediction and singing of America.

Political victories by the major parties were often occasions for both public celebration and horseplay. When the Democrats went into office in 1884, after a long absence from the White House, canons were fired in the city and roast ox was served at tables 300 feet long in Warren's Grove. A. E. Morse paid off a political bet by wheeling a bag of flour to A. G. Cate's residence. In the evening a torch light procession was staged followed by fireworks and dancing.

The arrival of the circus every summer was another big event. Before the railroads came to the city, circus troupes arrived in wagon caravans, replaced by circus trains when the railroads were built. Watching the elephants and horses being unloaded from their cars at dawn, and later the big parade of bands and circus wagons driven by six-in-hands or four-in-hands — the horses shining like silver — was a source of never-ceasing wonderment and color. There was the time in 1878 when John Wysocki of Sharon married and took his wife to see the circus in Stevens Point as a sort of honeymoon and after that they rarely missed a single season. When the children came they too were taken to the circus.

Minstrel shows ("Gentlemen — Be seated!") appeared at local halls in the winter months, and home talent plays

were well supported. When the new McCulloch's Hall on Main Street opened in 1873 the Stevens Point Dramatic Association presented "Love in '76" which featured Hattie White, Irving Wyatt, and Paul Weston. In 1884 a chorus of 125 voices gave two performances of the operetta "Red Riding Hood's Rescue." Uncle Tom's Cabin was performed in 1903.

Roller skating became a fad in the 1880s and is still enjoyed by many. To cater to this new sport, the Central City Roller Rink was built at the corner of Strong's Avenue and Ellis Street (G. A. Gullickson Garage in 1958). When interest in roller skating waned, the Rink was converted to the Rink Opera House where plays were given, lectures heard, and political campaigns advanced, among them, the campaign of Robert M. ("Bob") LaFollette Sr. running for governor the first time in 1900. Later elected a U.S. Senator, he was judged by a special committee of senators in 1957 as one of the five immortals of the United States Senate.

Another entertainment center, the Grand Opera House at 444 Main Street, was built in 1893 by G. F. Andrae. Here traveling stock companies performed and lyceums were given. Here Lyman Howe appeared in the late 1890s with an illustrated stereopticon lecture, and in 1904 returned to present one of the first motion pictures in the city. Attendants hidden behind the wings provided sound effects.

Eugene V. Debs, later a Socialist candidate for President, appeared at the Grand Opera House in 1903. Lecturing on the subject "Labor and Civilization" he predicted depression and panic in a capitalistic society and the end of the competitive system. His prophecy of depression came true, but his analysis of the competitive system was wrong, for instead of losing itself in a socialistic wilderness, the American system of free enterprise brought forth the highest standard of living to the greatest number of people the world has ever known.

Mark Twain's "Pudd'nhead Wilson" was performed by a visiting stock company at the Grand Opera House in 1898. Lola LaFollette appeared in her own touring

company here and Cecil de Mille was once a visitor to the stage. William Jennings Bryan, thrice a candidate for President on the Democrat ticket, lectured at the Grand in 1905, and in 1908 the silent motion picture, "Montana", featuring Harry Carey, was shown.

The demand for social activity is reflected by the building of numerous local halls before and after the turn of the century. These include, Curtis Hall, Quinn Hall, Chilla's Hall, Adam's Hall, Forester Hall, Glover's Hall, Good Templars Hall, Knights of Pythias Hall, Kuhl's Hall, Loberg's Hall, Masonic Hall, Odd Fellows Hall, Redfield's Hall, Schwebach's Hall, Walsh's Hall, White's Hall, Zimmer's Hall, Bemowski's Hall, Rothman's Hall, Reton's Hall, Lesecki's Hall, *Eintrachts* Hall, and the Empire (originally Sprafka's Roller Rink) where the all-time favorite early motion picture "Birth of a Nation" was presented. Many of these halls were second-story affairs over store buildings.

Evening dinner parties, masquerades, and grand balls at local hotels, sponsored by the firemen as well as by civic and charitable organizations, were highlights of the year for many. One of the popular early hotel ballrooms was at Avery House, north of the Public Square, where men leaving for service in the Civil War were seen off at farewell parties, and those who survived, welcomed back at reunions. Most people walked to these social affairs, but for the more stylish there were public hacks kept in at least three local livery stables which could be hired with a driver who sat high up front. In the 1890s the leading hotels in the city were American House at 301 Water Street, Arlington House, 325 Strongs Avenue; Curran House, 144 Main Street; Hotel McGregor, corner of Clark & South Third Street; and Jacobs House, 441 Clark Street.

The favorite dance in the 1860s and 1870s was the cotillion, a formal square dance by invitation. In the 1880s new forms of the dance were introduced which shocked the oldsters and no doubt pleased the youngsters. One of these was the "Saratoga Walk", but the editor of the *Stevens Point Journal* was quite certain that the

girls of Stevens Point, "being sensible, will not attempt to adopt [it]. . . in which the first requisite is to throw your shoulders back, the chest forward, chin up and stomach in, and then walk, wriggling head, limbs, and especially bustle."<sup>1</sup>

It was only the beginning. The emancipation of women continued as both sexes enjoyed a togetherness never experienced in public before, chiefly in new forms of the dance such as the waltz, the fox trot, tango, the schottische, and, after World War I the Charleston, and after World War II, "rock 'n' roll."

Another event which attracted thousands to Stevens Point was the annual fair organized on Dec. 9, 1885 as the "Central Wisconsin Agriculture, Mechanical and Scientific Association," later known as the Great District Fair, which was located on the several acres of ground on the northeast corner of Main Street and Michigan Avenue. This was sponsored in the beginning largely by leading horse fanciers anxious to exhibit the racing skill of their trotters. The fair at Stevens Point continued to be a main attraction down to World War I when interest began to lag as new forms of entertainment, chiefly automobile driving, replaced the love of horseflesh for the combustion engine. The last fair was held in 1927 and two years later the company was dissolved when the city agreed to assume its indebtedness in exchange for the fair ground site.

After the turn of the century lyceums in the outlying districts of the county were supplemented in summer time by Chautauqua, a form of lyceum staged in circus-sized tents. Tickets were sold by business and civic organizations in advance to guarantee a full house and the Chautauqua tent remained in the community three and four days, a change of program each afternoon and evening in one grand splurge of culture and uplift. This filled a need which contemporary Americans can scarcely appreciate because radio and television have brought Broadway theater into the living room and made familiar the voice of the President of the United States.

<sup>1</sup> *Stevens Point Journal*, Sept. 11, 1886.

The lust for life has been the nature of man in all ages, yet the old generation vows that it had more fun in its youth than the new generation. Teen-agers in turn wonder how grandmother ever had any fun. Thus each judges the other by the standards of its own which bears witness to the age-old conflict between what is considered old and what is considered new, when in the final analysis there is nothing old and nothing new. Everything is in the present.

## WHEN LUMBER WAS KING

The economic development of Stevens Point, and to some extent that of the entire county, divides industrially into two epochs. The first, roughly, from the 1840s to the 1890s when the cry of "timber-r" was never far distant. The second, the modern industrial era which began when paper mills replaced the saw mills and furniture factories replaced the shingle and wooden ware mills.

Up to the early 1870s it was not feasible to plane lumber for export because the method of export — rafting on the river — would have damaged the finished product in transit. With the coming of the railroad in 1871 this was changed. Although lumber was dressed in the city before 1874 for local consumption, dressing lumber for export was probably begun in 1874 by the firm of Herren & Whitney. By 1879 there were seven planing mills in addition to saw mills in Stevens Point or immediately outside the city limits. The planing mills branched into the manufacture of sash and door mills and related products. This in turn led to the wooden ware industry introduced by Smith & Sons and Menasha Wooden Ware in mills located on the West Side which specialized in staves and bottoms for pails, tobacco tubs and barrels. In 1881 the Webster Manufacturing Company saw mill was built about three miles northwest of the city on the Wisconsin Central Railroad where lumber was sawed from hardwood for wagon hubs and axles. This opened up a market for the hardwood in the county where the pine and hemlock had been removed. Out of this combined experience in the planing mill and wooden ware business developed firms like Vetter Manufacturing Company, Lullabye Furniture, Joerns Bros. Furniture, and Worzalla Folding Fur-



niture which have since become nationally known for wooden ware products.

Both the paper mills and the wooden ware factories introduced a new circumstance of labor by the use of modern machines which required skilled technicians as well as craftsmen, and, what with all the details of laboratory research, bookkeeping, marketing and distribution, brought in the so-called "white collar" worker. Finally, with the founding of the Sixth Normal School in 1894 and the transfer of the Hardware Dealers Mutual Fire Insurance Company from Berlin to Stevens Point in 1912, the city in fact became a "white collar" town dependent not only on the woodman's axe, but on the machinist's tools, the technician's skill, the business man's acumen, and the educator's knowledge.

Some idea of what the logging and lumber industry meant during the first epoch may be gained from a news report of 1874 which estimated that 79,900,000 feet of lumber were to be manufactured in the county that year in addition to more than 30 million shingles.<sup>1</sup>

Stevens Point was the hub of this great logging and lumbering activity from the 1840s into the 1880s. In 1853 a news correspondent visiting the city had this to say:

"It is difficult to calculate the extent of the lumbering business on the Wisconsin River; at this place there are fourteen saws, constantly cutting lumber for the Mississippi market. There are scores of large stacks (presumably lumber — M.R.) piled along the banks of the river waiting to be rafted and run down, in which business, for the past three days, four or five hundred men have been employed. The bustle and excitement ... in many respects ... is similar to the scene in some naval port ... It is estimated that twenty-five million feet will leave here now, and in the June freshets."<sup>2</sup>

On April 27, 1855 the *Pinery* reported that 140 "rapids pieces" of lumber (i.e. lumber in cribs) were run over the dam at Stevens Point which averaged 22,000 feet of lumber in each piece for a total of

<sup>1</sup> *Stevens Point Journal*, March 21, 1874.

<sup>2</sup> *Pinery*, May 20, 1853.

3,080,000 feet, and the lumber was "passing these rapids at about the same rate daily."

This was the period before the cross-cut saw had drag teeth, when men called "lumberjacks" went into the pine forest, chopped down the trees with long-handled axes, hauled the logs to a saw mill with oxen, or skidded them to a river with oxen and floated the logs down to a saw mill where they were cut into rough lumber, planks, or shingles, and pushed back into the river to be floated to markets in Illinois, Iowa, and Missouri.<sup>1</sup> In addition to felling the trees and marking them for the sawyers to cut, the choppers, using their axes, carved a water mark on the side of the log. After the logs were skidded to the river bank one of the men used a hammer with the brand of the company which was stamped at both ends of the log. Thus each log contained a water mark on the side as well as a stamp on each end. These marks were made to prevent confusion on the drives and also to discourage log thefts. The John Week Lumber Company used the "circled W" that is, the letter W enclosed in a circle; the S. Y. Bentley mark on the Plover was VXV, and a familiar mark on the Little Wolf used by Conlee Lumber Company consisted of two Y's which resembled a 'W' with two tails at the bottom. The river drivers referred to this as the "double-you-boot-jack" because it resembled a boot jack, a device often found outside sleeping shanties to assist the men in pulling off their leather boots.

Life in the logging camp was primitive. The shanties were jerry-built, cold, and lacking any semblance of insulation with the result that frost often coated the inner walls next to the bunks where the men slept. The bunks in turn were hard and often bug ridden.

The day in camp began long before sunrise with a terrifying call from the cook or clanging of an iron bar

<sup>1</sup> An excellent account of lumber rafting on the Wisconsin and Mississippi Rivers was compiled by Prof. Albert H. Sanford, one-time teacher at the Normal School, from the diaries of S. A. Sherman and appeared in the *Stevens Point Journal* March 11, 1911. Another account of rafting days written by Ceylon Childs Lincoln, also good, appeared in the same issue.

which was guaranteed to pierce the eardrums of the soundest sleeper. After breakfast of salt pork ("sow belly"), johnny cake or buckwheat cakes, molasses ("black strap"), and coffee, the men were on their way into the woods before dawn. The day ended when they could no longer see to work.

In the evenings and on holidays, the lumberjacks sat about the shanty swapping stories, playing cards, listening to someone play on a jew's harp, or fiddle, or joining in the ballad of the *Little Brown Bulls*. It was also a time for coarse jokes and games. One of the practical jokes played on a tenderfoot in camp was called "stick pulling." Two men were seated on the floor with the toes of their shoes braced against each other and held an axe handle or stout stick crossways between them. The purpose of the game was to see who could pull the other off the floor. But when a tenderfoot came to camp, he was pitted against a man who was not the champion and easily won. At last he had to take on the *real* champion who made out that he was not sure he could hold his own. But he pulled and strained and finally had the newcomer's behind off the floor at which point one of the others slid a dishpan of water under him and the champ let go. Splash!

In the 1890s, when the cross-cut saw came into general use for felling trees, two sawyers could usually cut enough logs to keep up with one horse teamster skidding the logs to a skidway. It was important for the teamster to be on good terms with the sawyers because the latter could easily favor the teamster by the way they felled the trees. The story is told of a teamster who boasted to the men in the sleeping shanty one night that he did not have enough "hot biscuits" (freshly cut logs) to keep his team busy. This was a reflection on the capability of the two sawyers who, up to this time, had been favoring the teamster by the manner in which they felled the trees. When they learned of this report, they at once began to fell the trees so that the tops landed directly in the trails used by the skidding teamster. This forced the teamster to skid the "hot biscuits" around the tops and

by night fall he was some 20 logs behind the sawyers. This went on for several days and the teamster tried to pass off his original remark as a joke, but the sawyers were determined to teach him a lesson. Finally the teamster asked for another assignment and a new man took his place. This was the law of the woods; no man could boast of his superiority over other men.

Before the cross-cut saw came into use for felling trees, and when axes were the main tool, the champion chopper of Portage County in the 1870s may have been William ("Big Bill") Gliszinski of the town of Sharon. H. H. ("Tip") Hoggle (mentioned in 1872 tax roll) employed Gliszinski and Martin Rustad as a team chopping down trees in the Twin Lakes district. From the surveyor's field notes it is evident that some of the finest pine timber in the county was located near these two lakes. According to a semi-legendary account handed down through the Rustad family of New Hope, "Big Bill" had taken a long week-end holiday, including Monday, to attend a local church festival and, on the following Tuesday, in an effort to make up for lost time, he and Rustad chopped down 20 white pines in one day, each tree long enough to make two 32-foot ship timbers, none less than 24 inches square at the top for an estimated 80,000 scaled feet. In addition, most of the trees furnished a 14 to 16-foot log on the top. The 32-foot timbers were squared at McMillon's mill in Sec 22 and sold to shipbuilding interests.

Most of the logging in the early period was done along rivers and the logs were either skidded directly to the river bank, or hauled by sleigh and unloaded at a landing on the river pending the drive in spring. Log drivers required peavy poles, actually a form of canthook, but somewhat longer, with a steel pointed end. In addition, they required long poles with a spike at the end known as "pike poles." Another form of the pike pole had a short hook behind the spike which was used to pull, or lead a log out of a slough or away from snags. This device was often called a "hookeroon" and was a favorite tool among log rustlers.

Clyde Kinney, formerly of Linwood, was a log driver for the John Week Lumber Company in the early 1900s when logs were still being driven down from the Big Eau Pleine to Stevens Point where the Week mill was then located. A log-driving crew on the Wisconsin at this time consisted of at least one peavy man, one pole man and two *bateau* (boat) men. The peavy man kept the logs moving along the river and away from the shores, and the pole man went after the logs which had snagged in the sloughs, or, when the water was high, actually drifted ashore and become stranded. This was known as "sacking" logs and "bringing up the rear." Two men or more in the *bateau*, fore and aft, moved back and forth across the river carrying the peavy man to any danger spot where a log jam threatened. Interestingly, down to the last log drives on the Wisconsin River the drivers always referred to this boat as the *bateau*. It was larger than the average fishing rowboat, of special construction, and perhaps for this reason retained the original pronunciation of the French who devised it.

Kinney recalls that the Weeks often hired "green Norwegians" to work on the log drives, and one crew that started out in a *bateau* at Stevens Point promptly tipped over. The Weeks' foreman made the men swim back into the water and recover their peavy poles ("after all, they cost a dollar apiece!"). According to Julian Maxfield of Plover the loss of a peavy pole was a touchy matter on the river as well as the butt of a joke among the drivers which ran: "To hell with peavy! You'll find it charged up on *ladger* (ledger)."

While some of the early saw mills were located away from the rivers, the vast majority were located on a stream, for even though the mill may have operated on steam, locating it on a river made log drives possible directly to the mill. Before and even after the rotary saw was introduced in the early 1850s, the mills were equipped with "up-and-down" saws which operated on a shaft propelled by a water turbine wheel. These cut from three to four thousand feet in a 12-hour day.

Another form of early saw was called the "muley" which made a larger cut than the "up-and-down" saw. Comparatively little power was required to run these early mills which also explains why some were built on what today appears to be rather small streams.

Driving logs down stream to local mills was hazardous, but nothing compared to the driving of lumber rafts. These were actually cribs of lumber piled criss-cross about three feet deep and bound together with poles and pegs so that they could be run over a rapids or a dam without breaking to pieces. This did not prevent many from being broken up, however. While the average crib of lumber contained 4,000 feet, some contained a good deal more. Most of the rafting was done at flood tide in spring or after a heavy rain. Owing to periods of low water, it often happened that a raft took all spring to reach St. Louis. On the other hand, there were times when a crew made three round trips in a single season. Thus the flood condition on the Wisconsin River from the 1840s to 1880s was a source of abiding interest to the lumbermen because on the whim of the river depended the livelihood not only of the men doing the rafting, but the men chopping in the woods and sawing at the mills. If a mill owner was unable to get his lumber out he often laid off his crews.

On these drives men slept and ate on board the rafts, but at night they tied up along the river bank, and, if there was a settlement nearby, went ashore to enjoy the company of other raftsmen and friends. It was customary for mill owners to ship lath or bundles of shingles (also known as "bolts") along with the rafts and it was not unusual for some to be missing before they reached St. Louis. The shingles were a favorite medium of exchange for a jug of whiskey and who was to say whether the shingles were lost over the side while running the "Bloomers" at Stevens Point or the rapids at Devil's Elbow?

Wages on the river were \$1 to \$1.50 per day in the early 1850s, but rose rapidly and, by the 1860s, most raftsmen were earning \$3 to \$4 per day, while a good

pilot often made a \$1,000 a season. The work attracted a daring race of men ready to risk death for the extra pay. Most survived, but the angry rapids at Mosinee and Stevens Point mark the watery graves of many men who took the calculated risk and failed.

Aside from Hiram Stow, who reputedly piloted the first fleet of lumber down the Wisconsin from Big Bull Falls, other well-known raftsmen from Portage County in the 1840s into the 1860s include Edward H. Metcalf, Jesse Anson, Antoine Precourt, W. J. Empey, Louis Blow, Isaac Ferris, Louis LeMere, Ross Gamble, J. O. Wiswall, S. A. Sherman, Mark F. Winslow, "Gus" Levine, Homer Chase, Calvin D. Richmond, John Richey, Silas Walsworth, James McHugh, Patrick Ryan, John Leary, Michael Sweeny, David C. Bailey, Perry Phillips, Simon Young, John Hawm, James O'Brien, Jesse Martin, David Rogers, John Eckels, William H. Packard, Michael Cassidy, Andrew O. Vaughn, Leander Trudell, and Matt C. Slutts.

The majority of these men became pilots who lived in Plover or Stevens Point and could be hired to take fleets of lumber over the Shaurette dam and Conant Rapids and farther if needed. Most of them in later life became successful business men and farmers.

Heman Webster, a veteran of the Civil War from Buena Vista township, rafted lumber in the 1870s. In a letter to his wife written from Grand Rapids in 1872 he said:

"I have got over Grand Rapids all safe and only broke 4 cribs. The river is low and I shall not make a very quick trip unless the river raises, but I have got over the worst place so you need not worry about me any more for the old lumber is all right now... I can't write any more tonight for it is late and I am awful tired..."

One who made an unscheduled crossing over Conant Rapids in Stevens Point was Herman Krembs, then a youngster, who made this entry in his diary while serving as a fireman:

"... James Glennon was cooking on a fleet that was tied up at the foot of Main Street to put on supplies for the

<sup>1</sup> In collection of Mrs. H. J. Steinke, Menasha, Wis.

trip south. They used to uncouple their rafts here and run a few cribs over the dam at a time. Jack Glennon and me wanted very much to go over the dam on some of these cribs, so we went down one day and asked Jack's *fater* (father) for lunch and he gave us some of his famous johnny cake. After lunch we *hidd* (hid) ourselves under a shelter of boards and after a long time we felt the crib moving and when we were right near the dam we showed up and believe me we got the devil but it was too late then to put us off. That ride gave me a thrill that I will never forget. We went down to Conant Rapids and came back home in the dark, tired but happy, but that was our last ride...

In order to make a shallow or stony river more navigable for log driving, it was usually necessary to create dams at intervals which backed up the water and created a "head." When the "head" was released by opening the dam, known as "pulling the slash," the logs were sent headlong down stream to the next dam. In eastern Portage County along the Little Wolf these were called "improvement" dams; in Linwood along Mill Creek they were referred to as "splash dams." This type of temporary dam was not necessary on the Plover or Wisconsin Rivers, but dams call "crib" dams were built for water-power and to create ponds for the saw mills. The principle of this type of dam is the same used by the beavers and is constructed by laying a series of criss-crossed logs in the river, topped by a platform of planks in the form of a lean-to. The greater the water pressure against the platform, the more the river "leaned" on the crib and held it down.

As the Wisconsin River was the main artery for river rafting and log driving in the Pinery, most of the legends and stories of lumbering are associated with it. Not much is remembered of the Plover River which must be considered second to the Wisconsin. Millions of feet of lumber were rafted down this river into the mouth of the Wisconsin from the early 1840s into the 1870s, while logs driven down stream from the early period into the 1890s are estimated at more than 700 million feet.

While there is reason to believe that lumber was



rafted on the Plover earlier, the first evidence appears in an indenture of Dec. 14, 1843 when James Harper, a party of the first part, and Andrew Dunn & Hugh McGreer, parties of the second part, purchased Harper's interest in the mill located at Jordan. Among the terms of the contract, Dunn & McGreer agreed to deliver a stated portion of sawed lumber "and pile the same in some place near the mill in a situation suitable and convenient for rafting. . ."

An act declaring the Plover open to navigation from its mouth to Pike Lake was approved by the Legislature on March 14, 1853.<sup>1</sup> The same act also declared it a misdemeanor for anyone to build a bridge or obstruction which might prevent the free flow of navigation. The Plover was open for navigation, meaning lumber rafting and log running, long before, but the law was passed, no doubt, to thwart attempts by some dam owners to collect a toll for lumber or logs run over their dams.

Some idea of the great activity on the Plover is gained from a news report of 1883:

"The Plover river drives are in at last. The first drive containing about nine and one-half million feet, run by George Maine, reached Jordan and mills below about a week ago. The rear drive of over 13 million feet, run by George Barnsdale and J.S. Mitchell, reached Jordan on Wednesday of this week. The drive, which was about five miles long, was one of the largest ever run out of the river at one time. The logs belonged to nine different concerns. In addition to the above there are a number of small lots which will increase the amount to about 24 million feet."<sup>2</sup>

Not long after the railroads came in the 1870s, lumber rafting on the Plover ceased although the log drives continued. An affidavit in Circuit Court states that the last log drives to McDill mill were made by Matt Stapleton in 1889 and the last drive to the mill at Jordan was made by Henry Reading in 1894.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Deeds*, Vol. A, pp. 62-63.

<sup>2</sup> *Private & Local Laws* (1853) Chap. 73, p. 161.

<sup>3</sup> *Stevens Point Journal*, June 30, 1883.

<sup>4</sup> *J. D. Danielson (plaintiff) vs. Stevens Point Pulp & Paper Company (defendant)* in Circuit Court, Portage County.

The first saw mill and dam on the Plover was built at Jordan in the late 1830s. (See *Those Who Came First*.) The second was built above the mouth by Amos Courtwright and Luther Hanchett in 1853 and in 1864 passed to Dr. A. S. and Thomas H. McDill who operated both a saw mill and later a flour mill here. The saw mill burned in 1895.

The next mill site upstream was located about two rods north of the present highway bridge at Iverson Park. The indenture reveals that Edward D. Brown bought land here in 1856 and built a saw mill which in 1865 was taken over by George J. Goodhue. In 1870 it passed to Michael A. Rousseau and Daniel L. Stevens who discontinued it around 1878.

The next mill upstream was at Jordan and occupied almost the same site which in 1958 served as the power house of the Wisconsin Public Service Corporation. Hugh McGreer was associated with this mill in a succession of partnerships at least as early as 1843 down to 1864 when it became the property of Matthew Wadleigh and John H. Walker, later Wadleigh and W. H. Kingsbury. In 1857 the Wisconsin Lumber Company had acquired part ownership by taking a \$27,000 mortgage on "all that certain piece or parcel of land . . . lying upon the east side of the Big Plover River and to the middle of the stream." This clears up a moot point, namely, whether there were one or two mills at Jordan. The Ellis account (*Hand Book* of 1857) places two saw mills here, one owned by McGreer and one by the Wisconsin Lumber Company on either bank of the river whereas all this property was one mill located on the left bank.

Somewhere near the McGreer mill stood a match factory in the 1850s which was operated, according to Ellis, by "Mr. Buffum & Co." (probably Oliver Buffum). The *Pinery* said he was "manufacturing good percussion matches. Why send east for them when they can be purchased here?"<sup>2</sup> Apparently the match factory

<sup>1</sup> *Deeds*, Vol. F, p. 528.

<sup>2</sup> *Pinery*, Aug. 28, 1856.

did not succeed as nothing further is recorded about it.

In 1899 Wadleigh sold the power site at Jordan — the mill was obsolete — to Arthur and Ernest Van Order, father and son, who concentrated on flour milling, mostly rye flour. However, there appears to have been a grist mill located near the saw mill long before this time. In 1904 Van Order sold the power site to the Stevens Point Lighting Company and moved upstream to a shingle mill which, in the 1870s-'80s, he operated in partnership with William Reading under the firm name of Reading & Van Order. He then took over the mill from Reading and converted it to a grist mill which in 1909 passed to R. B. Johnson who ceased operations after World War I. This property is presently owned by Harry Christensen.

The Van Order dam site was probably established before 1860. A road survey ordered by the town of Hull in 1861 took a bearing on "station No. 3 located near (first name illegible) Curtise's Dam." This was probably C. B. Curtis of Stevens Point who pioneered the Van Order dam site.

The last important mill on the Plover in Portage County was situated about four miles above the Van Order mill in Sec 7 of Sharon. The origin of this dam site is uncertain. In 1864 the town of Hull, which then had jurisdiction over Sec 7, approved \$200 for the purpose of "building a bridge across the Big Plover River ½ mile above Earl's mill in town twenty-four, range nine." It is fairly certain that this is the mill later known as the Bentley mill, and the Earl mentioned here is probably Alfred Earl of Stevens Point. In 1870 the town of Hull ordered a bridge replaced at Jordan and another "above Daniel Hubbard's shingle mill." As it is known that Hubbard, probably with George Hubbard, operated a mill on the upper Plover, there is reason to believe that it was located on the site of Earl's mill. This property in 1879 passed to Clarence A. Sherman who either mortgaged or rented that same year to S. Y. Bentley. The latter got title to it in 1891. Bentley continued making shingles at this mill in the

1880s and in 1890 began building a "rotary saw mill" adjoining the shingle mill "with a daily capacity of 20,000 feet."<sup>1</sup>

Bentley and several brothers were among the earliest woodsmen in the Pinery and began in the 1850s shaving shingles by hand at a stand located south of Shantytown Lake, almost on the town line, but within Marathon County. From shaving shingles, S. Y. and George Bentley later built a shingle and saw mill in Sec 4 of Sharon (west of Trunk J). The partnership was dissolved apparently in 1879 when S. Y. Bentley moved over on the Plover. The Shantytown mill, originally called the "South Lake mill," was operated by others and finally in 1903 was acquired by V. P. Atwell and J. N. Boyington who probably discontinued it in 1904.

After S. Y. Bentley's death in 1908, the mill on the Plover was taken over by son Adam who operated it into the 1920s. While the mill has been razed, the power site was acquired in 1944 by Lawrence E. Dana of Wisconsin Rapids who established a wooden ware industry on the new dam which is still in operation.

One of the earliest mills in Sharon, not on the Plover, was the Charles McMillon (or McMillan) mill in Sec 22, about two miles northeast of the present North Star on the Tomorrow River. An early reference to it appears in a road survey of 1862. The plat of 1895 identifies a grist mill on this site which suggests that saw mill operations had long since ceased.

A second important mill away from the river was built, probably in 1869-70, by Nathaniel Boyington in Sec 24 of Sharon (the Rose Polak place). As the post office was discontinued here in 1895 it may be that saw mill operations had ceased by that time. Boyington also made shingles and cultivated hops on land nearby.

William Buffum built a saw mill either on government Lot 2 or 3 in Sec 6 of Sharon (the Johanna Schulist place). Buffum made an entry on these two lots in 1889. The mill burned in the early 1900s and was never rebuilt.

<sup>1</sup> *Stevens Point Journal*, May 3, 1890.

There were at least two other earlier mills in Sharon. Surveyor Huntington in 1853 encountered a man named Parker who had a saw mill in Sec 5 and another named Brown who had a mill in Sec 18, but fails to give their first names.

Lumbering on the Wisconsin River in Portage County probably did not surpass the Plover until after the railroads came to Stevens Point. After 1873 new and larger mills as well as planing mills were built along both banks of the Wisconsin River. Moving upstream on the Wisconsin from the Portage County west line in 1875 one would have encountered his first saw mill, the Meehan mill, in the town of Linwood (see *Linwood, The township of*). Farther upstream around the elbow of the river at the Bloomer Rapids stood S. A. Sherman's mill, already in decline. In an address to an Old Settlers' club meeting held in 1881, Sherman stated that "I moved to this place in 1853, bought Gilbert Conant out and built at the Bloomer Rapids where I now reside."<sup>1</sup> Apparently Conant, who, with Campbell, built a mill on the opposite side of the river in the late 1830s, later owned the land on the left bank as well.

The next mill upstream was located on the right bank (somewhat opposite the present Wisconsin River Division of Consolidated) on government Lot 5, Sec 8, and operated by John M. Robinson (or Robeson). In 1863 this property had an assessed valuation of \$10,000 on which \$288.50 in taxes was paid to the town of Linwood. The mill burned in 1886. Circumstantial evidence suggests that this was on or near the same site once occupied by Conant & Campbell.

A short distance farther upstream on the left bank, at the end of Mill Street (Arlington Place) stood the former W. H. Johnson-Moses Strong saw mill which in 1869 was acquired by Owen Clark. The latter added a grist mill to this property. Both burned in 1882, but the saw mill was rebuilt and burned again in 1891.

<sup>1</sup> *Stevens Point Journal*, Aug. 27, 1881.

The first issue of the magazine edition of *Wisconsin Lumberman* (1873) states that this mill was driven by water power, had two double circular saws, a gang edger, lath, picket mills and planer, with an average cutting capacity of 100,000 feet in 24 hours. The mill employed 25 hands working a 11-hour shift; the lowest wages were \$1 per day and the highest, excepting filer, \$2.50 per day. Competent filers got \$100 per month.<sup>1</sup>

A few rods north of the end of Main Street in 1875 stood a steam saw mill built by William Weston & Sons, later taken over by others. When the mill burned in 1886, the site and a new mill built by the North Side Lumber Company was later acquired by the John Week Lumber Company. About three blocks farther northwest, somewhat towards the end of the present Franklin Avenue, stood the Knox Brothers' saw mill in 1875 which in 1877 passed to Messrs. Bosworth & Reily of Fond du Lac. About half way between the Weston and Knox mills, E. M. Copps built a shingle mill in the latter part of 1875 which burned in 1877. He rebuilt a planing mill not far from the original site which burned in the great fire of 1886 (later the site of the E. J. Pfiffner planing mill).

On the west side in 1875, about 80 rods north of the Clark Street bridge, stood the Cronkhite, Plummer & Company mills, one a saw mill and one a planing-shingle mill, later taken over by Menasha Wooden Ware, and eventually by Henry Wallace and S. E. Karner who reverted to a saw mill long known as the "Red Mill."

Nearly a mile farther northwest on the right bank of the river, outside the city limits, stood S. H. Karner's steam saw mill.

The stirrings of the first labor movement in Stevens Point began in the Bosworth & Reily saw mill in 1892, and spread to the Week mill and across the river to the "Red Mill." The men demanded higher wages and a shorter day, that is, a work day reduced from 11 hours to ten hours; in addition, anyone working for less than \$1.75 per day was to be given an increase of "one

<sup>1</sup> *Wisconsin Lumberman*, (1873) April, p. 14.

shilling" (25c). The owners countered with a compromise which was less than the workers demanded, but which was accepted. This represented the first important gain for labor in the county and the work day was reduced to ten hours. Nothing like it had ever happened before in central Wisconsin. While only a brief display of violence occurred in front of the "Red Mill," the strike caused deep concern among business men who, for the first time, realized they could no longer deal with the working man as they had in the past, such as firing a man at the whim of a foreman or for other petty reasons. But with greater freedom for labor came greater responsibility, too.

The peak years in the logging and saw mill industry at Stevens Point were probably reached in 1879-80. The running of lumber rafts continued on an ever diminishing scale after the railroads came. In the early 1880s there were some years when no rafts passed the city. In June 1887 the Wallace & Redford mill on the Little Eau Claire sent down 1,200,000 feet in lumber cribs to the Mississippi markets. Several smaller fleets came down about the same time, probably the last of the great lumber fleets to pass through Stevens Point.

The lumbermen in this great epoch were the leaders on whom the economic life and, in a larger sense, the social welfare of the city, depended. In their generation they helped to give meaning to life by providing jobs, leadership and inspiration for others. They cut down the king of Wisconsin trees — the white pine — as well as the Norway pine and the hemlock, and a later generation sentimentally wonders why some of these trees might not have been spared. But no law was enacted to establish forest preserves in Portage County and unless the taxpayers were willing to set aside funds for this purpose, the owners of the timber, who were paying taxes on it, could scarcely be expected to do so on their own. Neither did the early Yankees and newcomers to the county have the means to make exceptions of special timber lots on their quarter sections. In fact, they were anxious to see them removed to make

room for more farm lands. Too much has been made of the "come-and-get-it" type of lumberman; it is extremely doubtful whether, if the present generation had lived then, that it would have done differently. The American spirit of free enterprise which logged off the timber also brought settlers to the county who not only helped to tame the land, but to people the city and villages around. The great trees were cut, but they served the living to which the earth belongs.



## PORTAGE COUNTY IN FIVE WARS

Men from Portage County have gone off to war five times in less than 100 years, namely in the Civil War (1861-65), the Spanish-American War (1898-1900), World War I (1917-18), World War II (1941-45), and the Korean War (1950-53). Of these the greatest patriotic fervor was stirred up in the Civil War when men fought to preserve the Union of States, and in World War I when men fought to make the world "safe for democracy."

In the war with Spain men joined the colors with enthusiasm but it was fought by only a handful of men and can scarcely be considered on the same footing with the other four wars. In World War II men went into service with less enthusiasm than their fathers in World War I. The draft was already in effect and the war was not entirely unexpected. Most men sensed that it was going to be a long war fought on many fronts around the world. But inductees went into service in a business-like manner and when Ernie Pyle watched the first units moving up to the front in north Africa they marched with a natural cadence known only to Americans and he wondered whether they had not been marching all their lives. But the war lacked definition and the singleness of objective of World War I. Not even a good war song was ever written about it. "Over there" was everywhere.

The Korean War, following closely on the heels of World War II, was probably the most unpopular war ever fought by Americans and yet men went into combat — many of them veterans of World War II — because of a sense of duty towards a task that had to be accomplished no matter how unpleasant.

Oddly enough, the most vivid on-the-spot descrip-

tions of army life and combat come down to us not from the recent wars, but from letters written by Portage County officers and men in the Civil War, especially the remarkable series of letters written home to relatives in Buena Vista by Capt. Irvin Eckels, one-time clerk of the County Board.<sup>1</sup> This did not mean that similar descriptions could not have been written by men in World Wars I or II, but the Civil War imposed no censorship restrictions because the lines of communications between soldier and home were held by the Union, whereas in later wars land and oceans separated men in combat from their homes which made interception of the mail possible by enemy action, or agents. Hence the need for censorship.

Despite the comparative brevity of America's participation in World War I, this was the only war which saw two men from the county promoted to staff officers, namely, Edward F. McGlachlin, who rose to major general in the army, and Albert W. Grant, who rose to vice admiral in the navy. Both were career officers from West Point and Annapolis who also participated as company grade officers in the Spanish-American War.

Clayton Slack, who grew up in Linwood and fought in World War I, is the only Congressional Medal of Honor winner from the county. He was decorated in France by General John J. Pershing for clearing out two German machinegun nests singlehanded and taking a number of prisoners. He now operates a resort at Round Lake near Hayward, Wisconsin.

Of the five wars since 1861, the Civil War, also known as the War Between the States or the War of the Rebellion, was by far the most tragic in the number of men from the county killed, or died of wounds, or disease, or as prisoners in Confederate camps. The county had a total population in 1860 of 7,507 and yet there were more casualties among this number than total casual-

<sup>1</sup> Original letters in collection of Clair Eckels, Buena Vista township. A complete copy of these letters, in addition to other Civil War letters, made by the author of this history, is now available in the files of the Portage County Historical Society, Stevens Point, Wis.

ties in World II when the population was more than four times as great. But those who returned to the county helped to make the history of their time.

After the first two years of the Civil War, when the North gained little and lost much, it was clear that the war effort would have to be enlarged. All were volunteer enlistments up to 1863 when Lincoln introduced the draft. But the city of Stevens Point and most of the 13 townships of the county did everything possible to encourage volunteers by offering cash bounties. It was still considered unpatriotic to draft anyone. The available proceedings of the town boards of Almond, Amherst, Hull, New Hope, Sharon and Stockton are marked by numerous entries relating to special town meetings held in 1864 and 1865 for the purpose of raising money to be used as bounties for volunteer enlistments. But there appeared to be a vast confusion over the question of draft quotas. As a result one town meeting which might vote to raise \$2,000 for bounties on one day, a few weeks later might vote to rescind or change this action. Few men actually left the county as a result of bounties offered. The failure to provide cash bounties for recruits in most townships apparently was not the fault of the town boards, but rather the result of chaotic conditions in the draft system which, in the parlance of World War II, was "snafu" (situation normal, all fouled up).

It was also possible in the Civil War for a man to hire another man to take his place in the draft. This was done by offering the substitute a cash bonus which was raised either by the man called up or by the community in which he lived. This was not entirely an excuse for draft-dodging because some were family men and those who left families behind also placed responsibility on the town boards. Meanwhile on Nov. 23, 1861 the County Board agreed, by a vote of eight to six, to provide \$2 per month for each child under 14 whose father had entered service as of Nov. 1, 1861.

A unique entry in township records appears in the original "road book" of Stockton which lists the names of the men "who were drafted and served in the Army of the U.S.A. to put down the Southern Rebellion."

This record — the only one of its kind in the county — reveals that of the 78 men who went into service, two went as substitutes for others, three were drafted, while all the others were volunteers — a remarkable record. On the evidence of their names nearly all were of English-Irish-Scotch ancestry.

The men from Portage County in the Civil War were assigned to nearly every artillery battery and infantry regiment activated in Wisconsin, and some served in non-Wisconsin units. They fought all over the South. The place names where some were killed or wounded include Ft. Gibson, North Carolina; Cold Water, Rappahannock Station, Petersburg, and White House Landing, Virginia; Williamsburg and Rivers Bridge, South Carolina; Kennesaw Mountain and Atlanta, Georgia; Hurricane Creek and Vicksburg, Mississippi; Pittsburg Landing, Tennessee; Altoona, Pennsylvania; and L'Angeuille Ferry, Arkansas. Apparently the 1st Cavalry Regiment was caught in ambush at L'Angeuille Ferry as the number of men killed or taken prisoner from Portage County was probably the highest in proportion to the number engaged of any single action.<sup>1</sup> The battle at Altoona, Pennsylvania, marked the highest number of prisoners taken from the county in a single action. Several from the county died as prisoners, especially at Andersonville. Several from the county also deserted.

The record which follows of Portage County servicemen in the Civil War is neither complete nor entirely accurate. The official roster of Wisconsin volunteers, from which this is culled, admits this is impossible, and the editors of the roster have inadvertently confused their own evidence in some entries where men transferred from one unit to another. As a whole, the dates and facts as given are probably as accurate as can be expected of military records. However, what follows includes only men from the county who served in Wisconsin units, not out-of-state. Wayne Patterson of Buena Vista, for example, whether he joined in Wisconsin or

<sup>1</sup> Wisconsin Legislature. *Roster of Wisconsin Volunteers*, (Madison, Wis., State Printers, 1886), Vol. I, pp. 1-49.

not, was killed in action at Raymond, La. while serving with the 20th Illinois Regiment Infantry and his name does not appear in the roster. Nor is it possible to detail all the transfers, and different units the men served in; and, when a man made corporal or rose from NCO to commissioned rank it does not follow that his promotion came in the unit he is identified with in this text — which would require many pages of recitation. Many of the men from the county apparently gave their address where they enlisted; Jacob Mehne, for example, a pioneer of Almond township, gave his address as Stevens Point. Some gave their address as Jordan, actually “New Jordan,” but there was no post office here until 1864 and this was called Hull, not Jordan. No distinction is made in the roster between townships and villages of the same name. It will be noted also that none of the servicemen gave their address as Alban, Carson or Grant, none of which had been incorporated (Grant 1864) while some of the others who gave their address as “Stevens Point” probably meant the township which included modern Carson. Finally, it must be emphasized that the names which follow include only men *who left from the county*, not veterans who came to the county after the war, or even during the war after being discharged for service connected disabilities.

Serving in the 1st Regiment Cavalry, Co. B, from Portage County, were John T. Consaul, Stevens Point, commissioned 2nd Lt., taken prisoner at L’Anguille Ferry, Ark., Aug. 3, 1862, later exchanged by the Confederate Army for one of their own; Bradley Brown, Stevens Point, killed in action Aug. 3, 1862, L’Anguille Ferry; Daniel S. Bullock, Eau Pleine, made sergeant; Joseph Etchew, died Aug. 15, 1862, Cape Girardeau, Mo., disease; Walter O. Field, Stevens Point, made sergeant, prisoner, L’Anguille Ferry, d. July 9, 1864, Nashville, Tenn., disease; Francis W. Hazard, made corporal, killed in action Aug. 3, 1863, L’Anguille Ferry; Seth Homestead, Stevens Point, made Q.M. sergeant; Merville W. Morgan, Eau Pleine, prisoner, Bloomfield, Mo.; Orlan B. Muzzy, Stevens Point, prisoner, Gainsville,

Ark.; Francis Savage, Stevens Point, made corporal; William J. Baker, Plover, NCO to 2nd Lt.; Homer E. Bush, Plover, made sergeant; Sylvester G. Crocker, Eau Pleine, prisoner, Newman, Ga.; and Charles S. Vaughn, Plover.

In Co. H were Charles O. Roseberry, Pine Grove, prisoner, Cleveland, Tenn., d. Andersonville prison; James Sample, Pine Grove, made corporal; and Daniel Werner, Meehan. John Baker, Stevens Point, NCO to 1st Lt., served in Co. I, and August H. Guernsey, Almond, served in the 2nd Regiment Cavalry.

In Co. H, 3rd Cavalry, were Capt. Nathan L. Stout, Stevens Point, d. June 27, 1863, Leavenworth, Kan., disease; Dewit C. Brown, Stevens Point, NCO to captain; John W. Van Myers<sup>1</sup>, Stevens Point, NCO to captain, wnd. Sailor's Creek, Va.; and Jerome Nelson, Amherst, NCO to 1st Lt. Enlisted men from Stevens Point in Co. H were Nelson Andrews; Giles G. Barto, made 1st sergeant, discharged 1864, disability; William H. Benson, made corporal, d. Jan. 21, 1863, Ft. Leavenworth, Kan., disease; Truman H. Boomer, veterinarian, made corporal, discharged 1864, disability; Jesse Boyington; Thomas H. Brawley; Hugh H. Brawley; Iowa Brown, discharged 1862, disability; Louis Castle, discharged 1862, disability; James A. Gibbons; William M. Gilbert, made corporal; Benjamin Giliam; Mark A. Groom, buglar, d. Jan. 21, 1863, Ft. Leavenworth, Kan., disease; David R. Holbrook (who may also have gone under the name William Holbrook) discharged 1863, disability; Daniel B. Hull, made corporal, discharged 1863, disability; John K. Hutchinson, vet., NCO to 1st Lt.; Ezra Mann, killed in action May 25, 1863, Ft. Gibson, N.C.; George C. Miller; William Page, saddler, made corporal, killed in action May 25, 1863, Ft. Gibson, N.C.; Jackson L. Prentice, NCO to Q.M. sergeant and 2nd Lt.; Simeon S. Richardson, d. Jan. 26, 1863, Ft.

<sup>1</sup> The discharge papers of William Reading, corporal in Co. D, 5th Regiment, dated June 20, 1865, were signed by Capt. Van Myers at Halls Hill, Va. Reading, later a lumberman on the Plover, gave his residence as Knowlton when he went into service on Aug. 29, 1864.

Leavenworth, Kan., disease; Norman Shannon; James Sitherwood; William Smart, vet.; William Sprague, discharged 1862, disability; George A. Stowell, prisoner, Plum Bayou, Ark., March 9, 1865, exchanged May 27, 1865; Arnold Stowell, d. Oct. 23, 1864, St. Louis, Mo., disease; Henry N. Stroud, vet., made sergeant; Freeman H. Tabor, vet., made sergeant; Arthur Van Order; David H. Vaughn; Ignatius Wetzel, vet. and blacksmith; Jesse L. White, wagoner, discharged 1863, disability; James Wolford, discharged 1863, disability; and James Young, made sergeant.

Enlisted men in Co. H, 3rd Cavalry, from Plover, were Milton S. Alban, bugler; Lewis B. Farr; James B. McDill; Charles Vaughn; and John Jordan; from Amherst, Edgar Allen, vet. and wagoner; Isaac R. Grover, vet., made corporal, later commissary sergeant; Edwin Hathaway, made corporal; John Hennis, bugler, made corporal; Hiram R. Morrison, vet.; William G. Rice; John B. Robb, vet. surgeon on staff section (office of veterinary surgeon abolished Aug. 30, 1862); John Severance, vet.; and Edwin Turner, made corporal.

Commanding 8th Battery, Light Artillery Wisconsin Volunteers, was Stephen J. Carpenter, Stevens Point, killed in action Dec. 31, 1862, Stone River, Tenn., replaced by Capt. Henry E. Stiles, also of Stevens Point. John D. McLean, Stevens Point, served in 8th Battery as senior 2nd Lt., a rank no longer used, promoted Jr. 1st Lt. (also no longer used); and Henry L. Wheeler, Eau Pleine, NCO to Jr. 2nd Lt.

Enlisted men from Stevens Point in 8th Battery were William Agnew, made 1st sergeant, discharged 1863, disability; George Banker, vet., made corporal; James Barr, discharged 1862, disability; Alonzo M. Buffam, made corporal, d. Aug. 8, 1862, Jacinto, Miss.; John T. Collen, discharged 1862, disability; Fritz H. Darling, vet., made corporal with classification "handy man and inventor", prisoner; Charles Fleming, vet.; Gustavus Frank, vet., made corporal; Peter Gordon, discharged 1862, disability; William Heaton; Albert Higgins, d. July 28, 1863, Nashville, Tenn., disease; Melvin W. Higgins, d. Corinth, Miss., date unknown; Edwin R. Howe, desert-

ed May 27, 1862; Benjamin Hurst, discharged 1862, disability; Hezekiah Hutchings, made 1st sergeant, discharged 1862, disability; Nathan J. Johnson; Daniel McAulley, discharged 1862, disability; Henry McLean, vet.; Patrick McMahon, vet.; James McMurphy, d. Sept. 28, 1862, Jackson, Tenn., disease; Lewis McMurphy, d. Jan. 5, 1863, Nashville, Tenn., disease; Abram Moyer, discharged 1862, disability; Eaton B. Northrup, made corporal, discharged 1862, disability; Hiram Palmer, made sergeant; James H. Peanor; William Reynolds, discharged 1863, disability; Joseph Robbins; Isaac Roe, discharged 1863, disability; Edwin W. Royce, discharged 1862, disability; Oscar O. Snyder, discharged 1863, disability; Thomas J. Tuttle, vet.; and William H. Walton, d. Nov. 20, 1862, Bowling Green, Ky., disease.

Other enlisted men from the county in 8th Battery were Alfred Davy, Eau Pleine, vet., made corporal; Daniel J. Ellis, Amherst, discharged 1862, disability; Wilson Ellis, Amherst, d. Nov. 1, 1862, Jackson, Tenn., disease; James McBridge, Hull; Benjamin F. Morrison, Amherst, vet.; Isaac M. Moss, Buena Vista, vet.; Squires P. Thorn, Almond, vet.; Isaiah Uptahgrove, Buena Vista, vet.; Lucius Washburn, Almond, discharged 1863, disability; and Joseph H. Worby, Hull, vet., wnd., Stone River, Tenn., (battle of Murfreesboro).

Serving in the 3rd Regiment Infantry, Co.K, from Portage County were Daniel and John F. Hillstrom, both of Amherst; Arthur Fletcher, Buena Vista; and Lemuel P. Harvey, Sharon (probably an error for Amherst where his name appears in 1870 tax roll).

Serving in the 5th Wisconsin Regiment, Co. B, was Hugh Hubbard, Peru (i.e. New Hope), killed in action June 1, 1864, Cold Harbor, Va.

Serving in Co.E, 5th Regiment, from Plover were William H. Alban; Jesse Anson, wnd. Williamsburg, Va.; Roswell Beach, d. Nov. 29, 1863, Wash. D.C., wnds. Rappahannock Station, Va., Nov: 7, 1863; Bozeil Courtwright, d. Oct. 21, 1861, disease; Henry Curran, commissioned 2nd Lt., promoted brevet major; Charles M. Dunsmore; George W. Hale, d. Sept. 24, 1862, Wash.



D.C., disease; Ely Mitchell, discharged 1861, disability; Charles T. Packard, made corporal; Henry C. Russell, discharged 1863, disability; John B. Russell, killed in action Nov. 7, 1863, Rappahannock Station; William L. Tucker, discharged 1862, disability; Frank R. Walker; Resse W. Walker, made sergeant, wnd. Williamsburg and Gaines' Mill, killed in action May 5, 1864, Wilderness, Va.

In the 5th Infantry (Reorganized), Co.A, from Stevens Point were Francis Aldridge, Calvin Blood, wnd. April 2, 1865; Warren Cheeney; and William C. Young.

In Co.D, 5th Infantry, were Salmon O. and Sylvester W. Andrews, both of Stevens Point; Phillip H. Blodgett, Eau Pleine, wnd. April 2, 1865; James Pierce, Plover, made corporal; Cyrenus Simmons, Eau Pleine; Aseal C. Wilmot, Plover, made sergeant; and the following from Stevens Point: John P. Campbell, made 1st sergeant; Carlos B. Coburn; Milton S. Cottrell; Freedom D. Cromwell, wnd.; Nahum Cromwell; Phillip A. Field, made 1st sergeant; Gunder O. Johnson; Wesley King, made corporal; George Ross, wnd. April 6, 1865, Sailor's Creek, Va.; Mathew J. Scidmore, made corporal; Edwin Ward; Herbert Ward, wnd. Sailor's Creek; and Milo Wells, wnd. Sailor's Creek.

William Bremmer, Stockton, was commissioned Sept. 14, 1864, wnd. Sailor's Creek, made captain Co.F, 5th Regiment (Reorganized). Calvin D. Richmond, who gave his address as Stevens Point, but probably settled earlier in Stockton, rose from NCO to 1st Lt. in Co. F. Enlisted men in Co. F were Ebenezer L. Aber, Plover, killed in action April 2, 1865, Petersburg, Va.; John T. Aber, Plover; Edwin A. Allen, Eau Pleine, made sergeant, wnd. Petersburg, Va.; Isaac L. Baker, Almond; Albert A. Beggs, Almond, killed in action April 2, 1865, Petersburg, Va.; James Beggs, Almond; William C. Carver, Eau Pleine; Franklin C. Cram, Almond; George W. Cram, Almond; George A. Downing, Buena Vista; Chester H. Dwinnell, Stockton; Orson Fancher, Stevens Point, wnd. Sailor's Creek; Charles H. Gee, Plover, wnd. Sailor's Creek, d. May 14, 1865; Nelson Gee, Almond,

made corporal; Eli Grannis, Almond, made corporal; Frederick Gross, Almond, wnd. Sailor's Creek; Waldo L. Hill, Almond; Guilford Hodgen, Plover; John D. Kleiner, Stevens Point; Silas W. Lamareaux (the roster leaves the residence address of Lamareaux blank, but as there was a family by that name in the county and as so many other county wen were in this same company, it is reasonable to assume he was from the county); Henry Lisner, New Hope, killed in action April 2, 1865, Petersburg, Va.; Samuel M. Manley, Almond, wnd. Petersburg, Va.; Job Margeson, Plover; Henry McCallen, Almond, made corporal; Henry Morgan, Stevens Point; William L. Phillips, Stevens Point, wnd. April 2, 1865, d. April 13, Wash. D.C.; Andrew Rowe (probably misspelling for Roe), New Hope; Leonard Stickney, Almond; Henry C. Willard, Stevens Point, made corporal; Jay B. Winslow, Eau Pleine; Samuel F. Dinslow, Almond; and George M. Worden, Stevens Point, wnd. Feb. 7, 1865.

The 8th Regiment Infantry, Co.A, was commanded by Capt. Josiah B. Redfield of Waupaca, but the following enlisted men from Portage County served with this unit: Johathan Adams, Buena Vista; Charles Allen, Stockton; Edwin Allen, Stockton, discharged 1863, disability; Eugene Allen, Amherst, vet.; Augustus E. Allen, Stockton, d. Jan. 29, 1862, Cairo, Ill. disease; George B. Allen, Amherst; Charles A. Bangle, Amherst, d. May 7, 1865, Ft. Gaines, Ala.; Woldridge A. Baker, Plover, killed in action Aug. 13, 1864, Hurricane Creek, Miss.; Alonzo J. Beers, Buena Vista, d. Feb. 28, 1862, Cairo, Ill., disease; Joseph Bennett, Stockton, d. July 2, 1862, Farmington, Miss., disease; John Casbeer, Stockton, vet.; William W. Christian, Stevens Point, made corporal; James F. Richmond, Stockton; Samuel A. Sanderson, Hull; and Nathaniel Shannon, Stockton, discharged 1862, disability, later re-enlisted, wnd., prisoner, Petersburg, Va., July 30, 1864.

Louis Schuetze, Stevens Point, rose from NCO to 2nd Lt., Co. D 9th Inf. William Zimmer, Stevens Point, served as wagoner in the same company; Frederick Zim-

mer, Stevens Point, made sergeant, taken prisoner, mustered out Dec. 3, 1864 which suggests that he was an exchange prisoner as the war was not yet over.

Two enlisted men from Amherst served in Co. B, 12 Inf., namely James F. Allen, d. Dec. 15, 1864, Savannah, Ga., disease; and Edgar Starks. Allen enlisted Oct. 11, 1864 and died two months later in Georgia which suggests little basic training before going into a zone of combat.

In Co. G., 12th Inf., were five from Stevens Point, namely, William M. Carpenter, made 1st sergeant; John Ellington, vet.; Ole C. Nilson, d. Oct. 2, 1863, Natchez, Miss., disease; Andrew Oleson, vet., made corporal, served with Capt Langworthy's expedition to the federal fleet announcing Sherman's occupation of Savannah, wnd. Kenesaw Mountain; John M. Park; and Martin Simenson, vet., wnd. Aug. 6, 1864. Two from Eau Pleine in the same company were William and Jacob Scott who both enlisted the same day, probably brothers.

A number of men from the county served in Co. B, 14th Inf., namely Syndey B. Carpenter, Plover, from NCO to captain; Alonzo J. Austin, Plover, deserted July 18, 1865; John F. Beach, Plover, wnd. Vicksburg, transferred to Veterans Reserve Corps (invalid corps); James D. Beach, Plover, made sergeant; Alfred Bennett, Plover, discharged 1862, disability; Alexander Bremmer, Plover, prisoner, d. Oct. 22, 1863, Vicksburg, Miss., disease; Oscar P. Briggs, Stevens Point; Daniel W. Daniels, Stevens Point, d. Oct. 3, 1864, Brownsville, Ark.; Orlezius Deruza, Stockton, wnd. discharged 1862, disability; Horace Dewey Jr., Lanark, vet.; John Driskell (probably Driscoll), Charles Drake, Plover, made sergeant, wnd. Shiloh, d. April 20, 1862, St. Louis, Mo.; Arunah Dwinnel, Stockton, made sergeant; Orren W. Frost, Stevens Point, transferred to V.R.C. 1865; Bruno Glorie, Stevens Point, d. Dec. 10, 1864, New Albany, Ind., disease; Alfred Harrold, Sharon, (probably Alfred Earl of Stevens Point who had real estate and lumber interests on the Plover River after the war); Thomas Healey, Stevens Point; Hazzard Harrington, Stockton, d.

June 26, 1862, Pittsburg Landing, Tenn., disease; Edward V. Higgins, Stockton, discharged 1862, disability; Wilson E. Higgins, Stockton, wnd. Shiloh; William Kemp Jr., Lanark; Francis H. Lemere, Stockton, vet., made corporal, on detached service to U.S. Sanitary Commission 1864-65; Francis S. Marshall, Linwood, vet.; Henry Mason, Stevens Point; John McGown, Plover, made corporal; William McIntyre, Hull; Henry G. Meizner, Stevens Point; Charles M. Myers, Buena Vista; Theodore Myers, Plover, vet.; George Oleson, Hull; Isaac Robbins, Plover; Joseph Roberts Jr., Plover; Joseph Roberts Jr., Stevens Point, deserted July 17, 1864; Hiram Roe, Buena Vista; Gustavus Schuets, Hull; Joseph Schlegel, Stevens Point; Samuel Seaman, Stevens Point; Elijah Smart Jr., Stevens Point; Marshall M. Smith, Linwood, d. Aug. 28, 1862, St. Louis, Mo.; Henry Smith, Buena Vista, wnd. in accident; William H. Smith, Stevens Point; George W. Stanley, Stevens Point, discharged 1862, disability; Lewis R. Strong, Plover; Thomas Thompkins, Stockton, made corporal, wnd. Corinth, Miss., discharged 1863; Jacob Vogt, Stevens Point; John Wilson, New Hope, d. July 8, 1864, Huntsville, Ala.; Henderson Winans, Linwood; Ezra Whittaker, Plover, wnd. Shiloh, d. May 9, 1862, St. Louis, Mo., disease; James Wolford, Stevens Point, discharged 1865, disability; William H. Worden, Almond, discharged 1862, disability; and Lewis Young, Almond.

James Brabant, probably of Stevens Point, served in Co.K, 14th Inf. (also listed as John B. Brabant in Co. G from Mosinee, but a transfer from Co. K where he made sergeant).

At least five enlisted men from the county were recruited by Capt. August Gasmann for Co. I of the 15th Regiment, made up mostly of Scandinavians from Wisconsin with additional strength from Minnesota, Illinois, and Iowa. August Gasmann gave his address as Waupun but he was a member of the Gasmann family which moved to Amherst in the mid-1850s. For reasons unknown today he held his commission from date of rank Jan. 15, 1862 to April 3, 1863 when he resigned.

The five men in Co. I from Portage County were Peter Clausen, Amherst, d. Nov. 23, 1863 Chattanooga, Tenn., disease; and the following from New Hope: Ole Amundson, d. July 22, 1864, Chattanooga, Tenn., disease; Lars Halvorson, discharged 1863, disability; John Rambeck, made corporal, discharged 1862, disability; and John O. Wrolstad (spelled *Wraalstad* in the roster), made sergeant.

Serving in the 16th Regiment were Jerome Adams, Buena Vista, promoted captain; Elisha B. Beers, Buena Vista; John E. Bishop, Plover, missing in action Oct. 3, 1862, Corinth; Asahel and Isaac S. Humiston, Lanark; James Pollock, Buena Vista, d. Feb. 14, 1862, Madison, Wis., disease; Zacheus E. Richmond, Buena Vista; Lloyd Wakeman, Plover, wnd. Atlanta, Ga., d. Aug. 17, 1864, Marietta, Ga.; Reuben Wakeman, Plover, killed in action Aug. 26, 1864, Atlanta, Ga.; Charles A. Casler, Pine Grove, d. Aug. 9, 1863, Vicksburg, Miss., disease; David Collier, Belmont, wnd. Shiloh, 1862; Benjamin Dean, Belmont, missing in action, d. Aug. 4, 1862, Macon, Ga.; Charles Doolittle, Almond, vet., wnd. Shiloh; Henry H. Eastman, Meehan; David Lant, Almond, prisoner Oct. 31, 1862; David R. Morgan, Belmont; George J. Raschow, Linwood, wnd. Shiloh, d. St. Louis, Mo.; Robert W. Sanders, Belmont, wnd. Shiloh; Noah Strong, probably Belmont; Ole Iverson, Stevens Point, wnd., d. July 22, 1864, Atlanta, Ga.; George Wilson, Stevens Point; Charles H. Newkirk, Almond; Knudt Olsen, Jordan; Minor Taylor, Jordan, wnd. Atlanta, Ga.; and William H. Youngblood, Jordan.

Serving in the 17th Regiment from the county was Cyrus Fairbanks, Belmont, (listed in 1863 tax roll) d. May 16, 1865, Willett's Point, N. Y., disease.

Commanding the 18th Regiment was Col. James S. Alban, Plover, wnd. April 6, 1862, d. April 7, battle of Pittsburg Landing (Shiloh), Tenn. Others from the county in the 18th Regiment were Gilbert L. Park, Stevens Point, promoted captain; Andrew J. Welton, Jeremiah D. Rogers, and Capt. William J. Kershaw, all of Plo-

ver; John Alexander, Stockton; and Andrew J. Lucia, Jordan, prisoner at Shiloh.

Company E, 18th Regiment, largely activated by Portage County officers and men, was commanded for three years by William Bremmer of Stockton and in the last year of the war by Luman N. Carpenter of Plover who was taken prisoner at Altoona, Pa. and later escaped. In addition were George Walbridge and Joseph H. Baker of Plover, both 1st Lieutenants. Enlisted men in Co. E were Jeremiah Andrews, Linwood, John Alexander, Stockton; George G. Allen, Plover, d. Columbus, O. Sept. 5, 1863; Austin L. Atwood, Linwood, d. May 14, 1862, St. Louis, Mo.; Thomas G. Bacon, Belmont (listed in 1863 tax roll), prisoner, Shiloh; Edwin Bancroft, Pine Grove, d. Jan. 10, 1862, Koekuk, Ia.; Charles Bates, Stevens Point; Alfred Bates, Linwood; Joel S. Beadle, Linwood, prisoner, Shiloh; Flavel Bedell, Linwood, prisoner, Altoona, Pa.; George A. Beers, Plover, prisoner, Altoona; John W. Beebee, Amherst; Addison W. Bell, Plover, prisoner, Altoona; John Berry, Plover, prisoner, Shiloh; Theophilus Borcier, Buena Vista, prisoner, Altoona; Charles Bremmer, Plover, prisoner, Altoona; Sheridan Bremmer, Stockton, prisoner, Altoona; James A. Bremmer, Stockton; William W. Campbell, Plover, prisoner, Shiloh and Altoona, promoted 1st Lt.; Allen Carpenter, Buena Vista, d.? (no information); Hiram H. Clark, Plover; Orrin Clough, Plover, prisoner, Altoona, promoted 2nd Lt.; William Coleman, Linwood; George W. Craig, Almond, prisoner, Altoona; Samuel H. Currier, Stockton, prisoner, Altoona; George Drake, Linwood, prisoner, Shiloh, d. Nov. 28, 1862, Portsmouth, R. I. from exposure in Confederate prison; Loren Dodds, Plover; Alfred B. Doolittle, Stockton, prisoner, Shiloh; Samuel Drake, Plover, prisoner, Shiloh; James Dwyre, Plover, d. June 4, 1862, Jefferson Barracks, Mo.; William H. Edminister, Belmont; Reuben Edminister, Belmont, d. May 9, 1862, Evansville, Ind.; George W. Evans, Linwood, d. April 17, 1862, New Albany, Ind.; August Feist, Amherst, prisoner, Shiloh; John E. Field, Stevens Point, killed in action, April 6, 1862, Shiloh;

Cornelius Halliday, Linwood; Eugene L. Halliday, Linwood; Stephen R. Hayner, Plover; William C. Haas, Plover, d. disease; Byron P. Hough, Linwood, prisoner, Altoona; Edward Hugo, Plover, prisoner, Shiloh and Altoona; Henry Hutchins, Linwood; Benjamin F. Jackson, Plover, prisoner, Altoona; Myron Johnson, Linwood; Henry L. Johnson, Plover, prisoner, Altoona; John Kinney, Linwood; John Lankton, Plover, prisoner; Tola Lawson, Linwood, prisoner, Altoona; James Lombard, Stockton; Phillip Marx, Stockton, prisoner, Shiloh and Altoona; Clifton G. Merrill, Almond, killed in action April 6, 1862, Shiloh; Peter McMillen, Stockton, made corporal; William F. Mitcheltree, Linwood, deserted; Hubbard Moss, Plover, prisoner, Altoona; Charles Pack-er, Stockton; Chester E. Powers, Plover, d. Nov. 15, 1862; Edwin A. Randall, Belmont, d. May 29, 1862; Aaron L. Rand, Stevens Point, prisoner, Shiloh, d. June 9, 1862, Montgomery, Ala.; Truman Rice, Plover, prisoner, Shiloh; Andrew Sanders, Plover; Samuel C. Sandford, Almond; Stillman H. Sawyer, Plover, prisoner, Altoona; William B. Shepperd, Stockton; William H. Sherwin, Stockton, wnd. Shiloh; James Smith, Belmont; Reuben W. Spalding, Stockton; John A. Sterling, Plover; Jasper Taylor, Belmont; Albert Taylor, Belmont (also in 1863 tax roll); Orrin S. Tucker, Plover, d. July 24, 1862; Charles H. Tucker, Plover, prisoner, Shiloh; Schuyler Whittaker, Buena Vista, prisoner, Altoona; Walter Whittaker, Plover, wnd. Altoona; and Phillip Yates, Buena Vista, prisoner, Altoona.

Serving in other companies of the 18th Regiment were Jacob B. Chamberlain, Amherst; Wellington Kollock, Buena Vista; Asa E. Mathewson, Stevens Point; Joseph Mulkins, Buena Vista; Charles O. Pease, Plover; Samuel C. Alban, Plover; John Finnesy, Stockton; Patrick Stinson, Belmont; John Stumpf, Plover, prisoner, Shiloh, wnd. Vicksburg, promoted 2nd Lt.; Jonathan R. Danforth, Stockton, d. Nov. 14, 1862, Grand Junction, Tenn., disease; Norman A. Danforth, Amherst, wnd. Oct. 3, 1862, Corinth, Miss.; Herman G. Ingersoll, Plover; Hiram Reikard, Stockton, d. May 25, 1862, St. Louis, Mo.;

Nicholas S. Secoy, Plover; and John Q. A. Soper, Jordan, prisoner, Shiloh.

There appear to have been no officers or men from the county in the 19th and 20th Infantry Regiments. Serving in the 21st Regiment were David W. Mitchell, Plover, 2nd Lt., killed in action Oct. 8, 1862, Chaplin Hills, Ky.; Henry Clinton, Lanark, who apparently enlisted in 1862 under age and was discharged three weeks later; and Russell A. Horton, Amherst.

In the 22nd Regiment were Thor Iverson, George Robinson, Albion C. Squires, Christopher Syverson, William N. Taft, Christopher Tree and William J. Whitman, all of Jordan. Taft was wounded.

James McCall, Amherst, appears to have been the only man from the county in the 31st Regiment and was taken prisoner at Bentonville, N. C.

In the 32nd Regiment, Co B, was Richard O'Keefe, Sharon, and Herman Michelkamp, Sharon, Co. D, both draftees in 1864.

Company E, 32nd Regiment, was heavily recruited from the county. Serving from Almond in this company were Samuel N. Brown, Benj. F. Eschenbauch, Aaron H. Frost, d. Oct. 8, 1863, Memphis, Tenn., disease; Jonas White; and Calvin B. Springstine, d. May 16, 1864, Memphis, Tenn., disease. From Amherst were 1st Lt. Amos M. Ball; 2nd Lt. Franklin Phillips; Severenus Becker; Edward Bobba; Charles F. Buck; Theodore H. Czeskleba, wnd. March 21, 1865, Bentonville, N. C.; Alexander Darling, d. Nov. 6, 1864, Chattanooga, Tenn., disease; Thadeus Horton, d. Jan. 12, 1863, Jackson, Tenn., disease; Uriah O. Mitcham, d. Nov. 1, 1863, Amherst, Wis., disease; John Vanskiver; John N. Webster; and Rueben Wilson. From Buena Vista were William W. Ainsworth, d. June 22, 1864, Decatur, Ala., disease; George W. Ainsworth, d. July 1, 1863, Memphis, Tenn.; Jay Bennett; Edwin L. Carpenter; Charles H. Drake, d. March 15, 1863, Memphis, Tenn., disease; William W. Drake; Amandar P. Hartshorn; Rolla Morrison; Elisha Moss; John Newby; Robert Newby; and George J. Russell; from Belmont, John W. Swan; from Lanark, Nathan



W. Baldwin; Alfred Bossard; Thomas W. Boss; Peter Ciperlee, d. Jan. 13, 1863, Jackson, Tenn., disease; James Cooney; and James Standfield, Jr.; from Linwood, William H. Fields and Solomon R. Story; from Pine Grove, Isaac Ingraham; from Plover, Capt. Irvin Eckels, killed in action, Feb. 3, 1865, River's Bridge, S. C.; Alvin Blood, wnd. July 27, 1864, Courtland, Ala. and Feb. 3, 1865, River's Bridge, S. C., right arm amputated; Sylvester Boodry; Henry F. Everetts; John Norton, wnd. Aug. 17, 1864, Atlanta, Ga.; Lewis H. Pierce; Lemuel G. Rice; Benjamin L. Roe, Jerrous Roe, Stephen Sanders; Orseumus M. Simonds; Richard B. Synder; Francis Southerland; Francis Vassbinder, wnd. Feb. 3, 1865, River's Bridge, d. Feb. 5, 1865, Blair's Landing, S. C.; William N. Warriner, d. March 25, 1865, Memphis, Tenn., disease; James Welsh, deserted, Oct. 31, 1862; Philander Whiteaker, d. March 11, 1864, Memphis, Tenn., disease; from Stevens Point, Edward M. Baker, d. July 22, 1864, Decatur, Ala., disease; from Stockton, John W. Allen; Alfred T. Cross, d. Feb. 16, 1863, Memphis, Tenn., disease; Jacob B. Fancher; George W. Higgins, deserted March 26, 1864; Andrew Nelson; Patrick O'Brien; Orrin A. Phillips, d. Nov. 25, 1864, Madison, Wis., disease; Theodore Pollard; Alonzo Streeter; Benj. Van Valtenburg, d. Aug. 13, 1863, Memphis, Tenn., disease; and Willis D. Worden.

Serving in the 34rd Regiment was Frank Harmsher, Jordan; in the 36th, Franklin Bush and William H. Bills, Buena Vista. Bills was wounded at White House Landing, Va., d. June 10, 1864.

Serving in the 37th Regiment were John H. Orrick, Stevens Point, 1st assistant surgeon; George Cline and Robert Morehouse, probably of Sharon; and the following from Pine Grove: Robert M. Crawford, prisoner, Petersburg, Va., July 30, 1864; William Seeley; Patrick Short; William Smith, wnd. July 30, 1864, Petersburg, Va.; Warren J. Van Tassel; and Elijah Winslow. All of the Pine Grove men enlisted in the latter part of March 1864 which suggests that a recruiting officer had visited the township. Others in the 37th Regiment were Mich-

ael Wagner, Almond; Payson Dunn; Albert and George Hodgson, Sharon, (George Hodgson listed in 1854 tax roll of Plover); Nathaniel Kimball, Stockton, Halbert Lombard, Buena Vista; and John Stockhardt, Amherst, wnd. June 18, 1864, prisoner, July 30, 1864, Petersburg, Va., d. Sept 8, 1864, Danville, Va.

In the 38th Regiment were Oscar U. Mitchum, Amherst, prisoner, July 30, 1864, Petersburg, Va., d. Dec. 29, 1864, Danville, Va.; Ira Whipple, Lanark; John Scott, Linwood; Joseph Scott, Stevens Point, wnd. Jan. 5, 1865, Petersburg, Va., d. Jan. 8, 1865; David and Lewis Henry, Buena Vista; and Abraham Wolf, Buena Vista, wnd. Petersburg, Va., April 2, 1865, left leg amputated.

The official Wisconsin roster makes no distinction between Sharon township in Portage County and Sharon village in Walworth County, and Belmont township in Portage County and Belmont village, once located in the southern part of the state and first meeting place of the territorial Legislature. Several names of servicemen are listed from "Sharon" in the 40th Regiment only one of which can be double-checked against an account book kept by S. Y. Bentley when he presumably operated Shantytown saw mill, namely, William H. Moore (in the roster) which appears in the account book as "Will More." George Densimore, listed from "Sharon," may also have been from Portage County.

In the 42nd Regiment, Co. A, were Gains Aldrich and John C. Wilmot, Amherst; Mathias Ellingson and John Oleson, New Hope; Charles M. Sawyer, Lanark; Alphonzo Crofoot and Benj. B. Mathewson, Buena Vista; William H. H. Allen, John M. Collier, Harvey S. Robinson, and John L. Smith, all of Lanark.

In the 43rd Regiment were Cornelius Eastling, Almond; James Potter and Edwin F. Rich, Pine Grove.

In the 44th Regiment, Co. B, were Claus Christianson, William H. Oles, musician, Rasmus Rasmussen and Robert Wilson, all of New Hope. In Co. C were Bartel Johnson and Joseph M. Kimball, Stockton; Even Johnson and Andrew Peterson, Amherst; George, James and

Richard Kemp, Chester B. Pasco, Alexander Rait, James and John Swan, and Robert P. White, all of Lanark; and Sylvester and David N. Towne, Belmont. In Co. E was Leonidas Lombard, Lanark, and in Co. F Andres A. Torstad, Lanark. In Co. G were James W. Johnson, Joseph Mercer, and Nelson Strong, all of Buena Vista.

In the 45th Regiment, Co. H, was John O. Johnson, Stevens Point, who rose from sergeant to a commission and finally to command of his company on Dec. 5, 1864.

Charles E. Webster, Amherst, an NCO, served in the staff section of the 46th Regiment. Serving in Co. B of the 46th from Amherst were Worth Aldrich, Christian Amondson, William Ball, William S. Bangle, Matthias Ferstacke, Benjamin Fleming, William Loing, Henry Lysne (musician), Johan Nelson, Eber Penny, Adam Peterson, John Walter Jr., Will C. Holly, and Hugh P. Simpson. In Co. B from Almond were Frederick Ellenger, John Hetzel, George Messing, and Jacob Milius; from New Hope, Halver Hanson and Lars Larson Loberg; from Pine Grove, William Ferguson; from Plover, George H. Altenburg, Edward V. Higgins, and Harrison Rice; from Stevens Point, Ephraim B. Grant, Horace Grant, Joseph H. Gramlich, Edward L. Haney, Valentine Kheil, Frederick Kruckman, Henry D. Maxum, William L. Orrick, Augustus C. Primus, William J. Roe, Philip Sauter, Harrison Sloggy, Alonzo Smart, George Stenger, John H. Stewart, and Nils Trulson; and from Stockton, Calvin A. Burrows.

Serving in Co. D, 47th Regiment, from Amherst, were Jonathan Adams, George W. Adams, Christopher Anderson, Andrew Anderson, William Bobbe, Adam Ebert, Joseph S. Ellis (musician), Lars Isaacson, Nels Nelson, and Roderick B. Palmer; from New Hope, Simon T. Blihovde, Nels Evenson, Christian Evenson, John Gulbrandson, Claus Gunderson, Simon Iverson, Thorbjern Larson, Andrew Larson, (d. Aug. 5, 1865, Nashville, Tenn.), Peter Peterson, Jorgen Peterson, and John G. Skegstad; from Belmont, William Grant.

In the 50th Regiment, Co. D, were Nels O. Brathovde, New Hope; George Kent, Almond; and Lester L. Hawes,

Almond, d. May 19, 1865, disease, St. Louis, Mo.; in Co. K, Jacob Mehne and Jacob Messing, Stevens Point.

Company C, 52nd Regiment, was commanded by Capt. George A. Spurr who gave his address as Plover, although he was associated with a saw mill in Lanark in the 1850s. Others in Co. C were Leonard N. Anson, Job R. Barker, Lewis C. Beach, Francis S. Berry, George B. Fox, Charles Hennig, LeRoy A. House, Hiram McCollum, John Metier, James O. Raymond, and Albert A. Ricker, all of Buena Vista; Elisha B. Beers, George C. Newby, William B. Shepard, and Alanson B. V. Bean, all of Linwood.

For more than 40 years after the Civil War the veterans maintained a deep sense of loyalty to one another and to the memories they shared of the great struggle. In the 1880s they began to join the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.). The first post, No. 16, was organized at Amherst on April 15, 1880 and named after Capt. Irvin Eckels, killed in action at Rivers Bridge, South Carolina, Feb. 3, 1865.

Plover Post No. 149 was chartered March 21, 1884 to be followed later by Post No. 156 at Stevens Point, and Post No. 115 at Blaine. In addition, a Womans' Relief Corps established Post No. 96 at Stevens Point. The names of these posts are listed on the Civil War monument which was erected in front of the Court House by the G.A.R. at impressive ceremonies held in 1890. Above the names of the several posts on this monument appears this legend:

Portage County  
to  
Her Heroes Who Fought  
and  
Her Martyrs Who Fell  
that  
The Republic Might Live

The last entries for membership in the minutes kept by the G.A.R. post at Amherst are dated July 2, 1906, when 21 paid their dues. By 1910 most of the G.A.R.

posts in the county were running out of members. They were fast joining the bivouac of the dead and their headstones may be found in most of the cemeteries in the central and southern townships of the county, and around Plover and Stevens Point.

Aside from brush wars fought with brigands on the Mexican border, the Spanish-American War was the shortest ever fought by Americans in the last century. The Philippine Insurrection which grew out of the war with Spain was never called a war because it was a campaign of limited objective to put down insurgents. While a number of men served in units other than from Portage County, Company I of the 4th Wisconsin Volunteer Regiment was recruited mostly in the county. None from this company was killed in action because the Cuban campaign was concluded before the men were out of training in Alabama. Quite a few succumbed to disease. Veterans of the county organized the Fred J. Carpenter Camp No. 43, United Spanish War Veterans, which early in 1959 was formally dissolved by the five surviving members, namely, A. M. Copps, Ole Larson, E. A. Merrill, Sigmund Miller, and Alex Wallace.

From 1914 to 1917, Americans, still neutral, watched the Central Powers and the Western Allies fight for supremacy in Europe and on the high seas. The break in United States neutrality and pro-German sentiment came on May 7, 1915 when a German submarine sank the *Lusitania*, a British passenger ship of the Cunard line which was carrying many Americans. By April 1917 President Woodrow Wilson decided that German power had become a threat to the security of the United States and asked Congress for a declaration of war. While many enlisted in the first three months, the need for manpower was enormous and within three months the draft was instituted. The first man called up on July 20, 1917 from Portage County was Charles C. Miller.

While men from the county were assigned to many units, the main rallying point for volunteers in April-May 1917 was Troop I, 1st Wisconsin Cavalry. Its identity was shortly lost when it became attached to Battery

E, 120th Field Artillery, 32nd ("Red Arrow") Division. After training at Camp Douglas and Waco, Texas, the 32nd Division sailed for France where it went into combat on the Western Front at Chateau Thierry. Other men from the county in other units fought at Soissons, the Aisne-Marne, and in the Meuse-Argonne offensive.

Men from the county killed in action or died in service in World War I were:

Adams, Frank Jr.

Berens, Romulus C.  
Blaskoske, Anastazy  
Borgen, Raymond T.  
Brill, Benjamin J.  
Burtis, Darrell D.

Chapman, Renold E.  
Chase, George H.

Erickson, Carl A.  
Eskofski, John F.

Furo, George I.

Gray, John E.

Hayner, Earl E.  
Holt, William E.  
Huggins, Robert P.

Johnson, Edmund

Knutson, Elmer  
Knutson, Greger  
Kropidlowski, Peter W.  
Kulas, Charles  
Kulas, Peter P.  
Kunz, Stanley F.

Mac Nish, George G.  
Mallum, James E.  
Martini, John W.

Mead, John Van  
Melum, John O.  
Michalski, Leo F.  
Mjelde, Obert J.

Niemczyk, Frank  
Nitka, Anton  
Nowak, Frank

Oertel, Carl E.  
Olson, Omey J.

Palash, Andrew H.  
Palewade, John  
Pliske, Thomas F.  
Printz, Frank E.

Reilly, John P.  
Rozell, Albert H.  
Russell, Irvin E.

Shulist, Martin  
Singer, Peter  
Stenson, Emil H.  
Szczesny, Stephen F.

Tallakson, Ingwald

Winecke, Walter  
Wyrowinski, John

Zielinski, Joseph H.  
Zylka, Frank M.

On March 8, 1919 the *Stevens Point Journal* carried a page one story on the death of Leo Keenan, former employee of the Soo Line yard office at Stevens Point who, in World War I, joined Battery D, 129th Field Artillery in Kansas City, Missouri. In a letter to relatives, the commanding officer, writing from Roseiries, France, A. P.O. 743, said:

"It is with a sad heart that I have to inform you of the

death of your brother, Leo Keenan, who was a corporal in my battery. He died at Base hospital No. 91 from an attack of appendicitis... The battery lost one of its best and most efficient men and I know exactly how it would feel to lose a son. There is not much that can be said to comfort one in a case of this kind, but you can feel that Leo Keenan died with an honorable record — one that any man can be proud of; that he did his part in the greatest adventure for the right that our country has ever undertaken, and that he left behind him a whole battery of friends and comrades who miss him as keenly and mourn him as sincerely as his family will."

The letter was signed, "Harry S. Truman, Capt. 129th Field Artillery, Commanding Battery D."

When World War II broke out for Americans after the Japanese air attack on Pearl Harbor, Dec. 7, 1941, many from Portage County were already in service under a peace-time draft instituted a year earlier. And unlike World War I, most of the men went directly into the army, navy or marine corps rather than through the National Guard. But the Guard, nevertheless, played an important role. Two Stevens Point units, Headquarters Battery and Battery D, 2nd Battalion, 120th Field Artillery, 32nd Division, were inducted into federal service on Oct. 15, 1940 with 189 officers and enlisted men. This battalion was redesignated the 129th Field Artillery Battalion on Jan. 16, 1942 attached to the 32nd Division which arrived at Port Adelaide, Australia, May 14, 1942. The division bore the brunt of the burden in jungle fighting and island hopping operations all the way from New Guinea to the Philippines. By the end of the war casualties and disease had practically denuded the 32nd Division of its original complement of Wisconsin men.

But the 3,874<sup>1</sup> men and women from the county in World War II fought not only in the Pacific, but in the fetid jungles of Burma, across the wind-swept deserts of Africa, over the terrible mountains of Italy, and along the treacherous hedgerows of France. With the Navy

<sup>1</sup> Correspondence, Wisconsin Selective Service System, Madison, Wis., April 24, 1958.

behind them they went ashore in the greatest amphibious operations ever known and immortalized beach-heads like Sorrento, Anzio, Normandy, Tarawa, Saipan, Iwo Jima and Okinawa.

And there were men from the county who flew in the 8th Air Force over northern Europe, the 15th Air Force over Italy and southeast Europe, the 14th Air Force over China, the 10th Air Force over Burma, the 20th Air Force over Manchuria and Japan, the 5th, 7th and 13th Air Forces over the Western Pacific. Some were in the navy at Midway when Torpedo Squadron Eight ("One man left to tell the story/ Of a rendezvous with fate/ Tell the story of the glory/ Of Torpedo Squadron Eight") turned back the enemy in the decisive battle of the Pacific. Some from the county went down in flames, or bailed out and were picked up by a friendly underground, or taken prisoner. Some barely made it, like Col. Thomas J. Classen and Earl Cooper who, in separate air actions, bailed out over the Pacific and spent many days on a life raft before rescue.

Men from the county who paid the supreme sacrifice in combat or line of duty were:

Arndt, Clarence E.

Bader, Robert E.  
Bartkowiak, John  
Bekowski, Andrew J.  
Berg, Sidney E.  
Bestul, Luther J.  
Blavat, Felix J.  
Brill, Eugene D.  
Busa, Frank A.

Cashin, George H.  
Cater, Clifford D.  
Cauley, Thomas W.  
Christensen, Carl B.  
Cisewski, Leonard J.  
Cisewski, Myron B.  
Clark, Orville B.  
Cote, Hilmer G.  
Crabb, John C.  
Crotteau, Donald C.  
Cutnaw, Kent P.

Dahlen, Leonard L.  
Demski, Harold F.  
Dolke, Emil A.

Domack, Eugene R.  
Doyle, LeRoy M.  
Drefcinski, Thomas K.  
Drewa, Harry J.  
Drifka, Raphael E.  
Dulski, Benedict W.  
Dumphy, Frank G.  
Durand, Edward D.  
Dzwonkoski, Onufry  
Epright, Wilbur E.

Falkowski, Frank E.  
Firkus, Anton A.  
Fischer, Frank F.  
Fletcher, Jerome B.  
Fredoch, Ernest W.

Garski, John A.  
Glisczynski, Leo  
Glodowski, Chester F.  
Golomski, Richard N.  
Grzanna, Joseph A.

Halkoski, Alex J.  
Hathaway, Albert E.  
Heinen, Ira E.



Henkel, Clarence A.  
Hintz, Bruno  
Hintz, John E.  
Hopkins, George H.

Jablonski, Joseph R.

Kawleski, Raymond D.  
Kazmierczak, Bernard  
Klasinski, Walter J.  
Klesmith, Leonard A.  
Klish, Chester B.  
Kolinski, Donald J.  
Koltz, Benedict J.  
Koshollek, Joseph C.  
Kryshak, Joseph S.

Larson, Richard L.  
Lea, Garth A., Jr.  
Liebe, Edward F.  
Lisiecki, Valentine V.  
Love, Robert J.

Mansavage, Ralph L.  
Matkey, Leonard E.  
Mayek, John W.  
McGuire, Thomas P.  
Meacham, Harold S.  
Mish, Ignatius P.

Nelson, Emery J.  
Nowak, Clifford

O'Brien, James W.  
Olson, Joseph A.  
Ostrowski, Nick C.

Palash, John L.  
Peskie, Frank C.  
Phaneuf, Duane R.  
Pieczynski, Raymond J.  
Platt, Paul F.  
Powers, Donald W.  
Przekurat, Clifford V.

Ramchek, George J.  
Rath, Willard F.  
Roberts, Richard F.  
Roe, Ezra, P.

Schfranski, William J.  
Scribner, James M.  
Secosh, Chester S.  
Severt, Frederick A.  
Shafranski, Felix F.  
Shudarek, Ralph J.  
Sopa, Chester L.  
Stimm, Howard M.  
Strasser, George P.  
Strope, Douglas K.  
Suplicki, Bernard A.  
Swanson, Clifford H.  
Szymkowiak, Bernard J.

Taggart, Gordon  
Tiarks, Werner C.  
Turzinski, Leo E.

Vaughn, Rolyn D.  
Vincent, Jack E.

Walukones, Alvin  
Wanta, Hubert J.  
Warner, Wesley G.  
Watts, James W.  
Wiener, John C.  
Winkler, William L.  
Winter, Howard G.  
Wiora, Henry H.  
Wishman, Roman J.  
Worden, Neal O.

Yach, Robert P.

Zeleski, Raymond S.  
Zivicki, Hubert D.  
Zmuda, John A.  
Zoromski, Richard H.

After World War II, Korea, a Japanese possession since 1911, was divided by the United Nations for administrative purposes at the 38th parallel. Korea north of this line later became the Korean People's Republic, a Communist regime, and Korea south of this line, the Republic of Korea, a non-Communist regime. Antagonism developed and at five o'clock on the morning of June 25, 1950 north Korean ground forces crossed the 38th parallel in a campaign to wrest control over the entire peninsula. The United States and 14 other United Nations members sent ground, air, or naval units to

help south Korea resist this action. A year later, after the enemy had been pushed back to the 38th parallel, a cease-fire was arranged. The truce negotiations failed and fighting was resumed. A final truce was not achieved until July 27, 1953 but no peace treaty was signed and a state of truce still exists. It was a vicious war over mountainous terrain where men fought for days to take or hold a single piece of real estate — discouragingly suggested by such names as Heartbreak Ridge, Porkchop Hill, and the Punchbowl.

A total of 1,250 men and women from the county served in the ground forces during the Korean War. The figures for other branches of the service are not complete. Killed in action or line of duty from the county between June 25, 1950 and July 27, 1953 were Joseph S. Berna, killed in motor vehicle accident in Korea Nov. 16, 1952; Ernest M. Kaminski, killed in action July 13, 1951; Jack L. Frater, killed in action June 17, 1952; David E. Halverson, killed in action Sept. 2, 1952; James Hofius, killed in action Aug. 27, 1951; Forrest N. Knich, killed in action July 31, 1950; Clifford J. Lukasavage, killed by stray bullet at target practice, Patrick Air Force Base, Cocoa, Florida, May 12, 1953; James L. McClenathan, killed in action in Korea, May 29, 1951; Charles M. Ostrander, missing in action Dec. 1, 1950, officially listed as dead Dec. 31, 1953; James M. Skupniewicz, drowned accidentally in Korea May 12, 1952; Louis E. Slusarski, killed in action Oct. 10, 1951; Robert J. Somers, died March 19, 1951 of injuries following auto accident in New Jersey; Jerry A. Thompson, died in North Korean prison camp March 15, 1951; and Edward S. Waldoch, killed in action March 2, 1952.

After World War I three veterans organizations, the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Schumann-Heink Chapter No. 30, Disabled American Veterans, were launched in the county. "The General McClachlin Post No. 568, Veterans of Foreign Wars, named after Major-General Edward Fenton McGlachlin, was organized at Stevens Point in 1926. Restricted to overseas veterans, is still active as well as the Auxiliary.

While some American Legion posts were defunct by World War II, most survived and after the second war new posts were organized and old ones revitalized. The first Legion post in the county was organized at Stevens Point on July 19, 1919 and named after Romulus C. Berens, a private in the 130th Infantry, 33rd Division, who was reported wounded in France on June 10, 1918 and officially declared dead Oct. 17. On May 1, 1948 the name of the post was changed to the Berens-Scribner Post No. 6 after James M. Scribner, a navy radioman who died of wounds suffered in air patrol action over the Philippines on Dec. 27, 1941. A destroyer escort vessel was also named in his honor by the navy in 1944.

The Stevens Point post is the largest in the United States for a city of like population and has a membership of more than 1200, the third largest in Wisconsin.

The second Legion post in the county was organized at Amherst on Aug. 25, 1919 and named after Selma E. Voigt, a nurse from Amherst Junction who died in service. It was assumed at the time that she was a member of the Army Nurse's Corps. Years later it was learned that she was a civilian employee of the corps, and thus it came about that Amherst probably has the only post in the United States named after a civilian and a woman.

A post was organized at Arnott after World War I and named after Andrew H. Palash, a private in the 39th Infantry, 3rd Division, killed in action Aug. 6, 1918. Later disbanded, this post was reactivated after World War II in Plover and named the Palash-Platt Post No. 543 after Paul F. Platt, seaman 1st class, who died at sea following an air attack on the U.S.S. *Peary* in Manila Bay on Dec. 10, 1941.

Post No. 339 was organized at Almond after World War I and named in honor of John Meade, a private, who died in service. After World War II it became the Meade-Rath post after Willard Rath, a staff sergeant, killed in line of duty in an airplane accident.

Post No. 553 at Bancroft, organized after World War I, honored Leo Yonke, a sergeant killed in the action at Soissons, France, July 18, 1918. Later disbanded, this post was reactivated in 1953 and named the

Yonke-Christensen post after Carl B. Christensen, a staff sergeant, killed in action on April 11, 1944 while on his 21st bombing mission over England en route to Germany.

Post No. 281 at Junction City was organized after World War I and named for George I. Furo, a sergeant in the 47th Infantry, 5th Division, killed in action on Aug. 1, 1918. After World War II the name was changed to Furo-Heinen post after Ira E. Heinen, a private 1st class, killed in action in the south Pacific.

A post was organized at Rosholt after World War I and named after James E. Mallum, a private, who died in service in France on Oct. 7, 1918. The post continued about two years and disbanded. After World War II, Post No. 509 was activated and named after Emory J. Nelson, seaman 1st class, killed in action off the south coast of Java on March 1, 1942 while serving on the U.S.S. *Pecos*, an oiler in the Asiatic Fleet which came under enemy air attack. On March 19, 1959 the name was changed to the Nelson-Kaminski Post after Ernest M. Kaminski, killed in action July 13, 1951, the first post in the county to honor a veteran of the Korean War.

These, then, are the men and women who accepted the ultimate responsibility of freedom among men of good will everywhere, for a free society expects that each of us shall share in the conduct of government, whether at home or overseas. Let us mark their purpose in life, their mission in death, and, lest this form of government be forfeit, may we rededicate ourselves to the great tradition established by these men and women and the pioneers of Portage County.

## Bibliography

The main body of this work is based upon the proceedings of the Portage County Commissioners and those of the Board of Supervisors; upon the township and village clerk's records, the "road books," the tax rolls, and treasurer's books; and upon the several earliest volumes of Deeds, Mortgages, Pre-emption Certificates, Land Entries, Births, Marriages, Deaths, and the records of Application for Citizenship. In addition, the field notes of the United States government survey, including the Three Mile Survey of the Wisconsin River as well as the subsequent subdivision of townships, were used. Most of these records were studied for the formative years of settlement between 1836 and 1880. The proceedings of the Stevens Point Common Council were carried down to the modern period in order to trace the several changes made in the form of city government.

The newspaper files of the *Plover Herald* and *Plover Times*, the *Stevens Point Journal*, the *Wisconsin Lumberman*, and the *Wisconsin Pinery* were consulted extensively.

Unpublished diaries and papers include a diary written in Norwegian by Knut Halverson between the years 1872 and 1878 (a translation of which has been made into English by the author), now in possession of the Portage County Historical Society; a diary kept by Leonidas Lombard in 1857, now in possession of Mrs. Robert J. Haertel, Wauwatosa, Wis.; the diaries and papers of S. A. Sherman, now in the archives of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wis.; the proceedings of the Old Settlers Club, now in possession of Mrs. Anton J. Kolstad, Stevens Point, Wis.; and the papers of the George L. Rogers Collection, now in possession of the Portage County Historical Society.

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## INDEX

The index which follows makes certain distinctions and uses several abbreviations. All men and women mentioned in early documents who settled in Portage County, permanently or temporarily, or paid taxes to the county, between the years 1836 and 1850 are referred to as "frontiersmen"; all, similarly classified, who came after them between 1850 and 1870 are referred to as "pioneers". One exception, however, is made. Owing to a reorganization of Sharon township boundaries in 1870, the tax roll of 1872 was included in the foregoing text instead of an earlier one. As the names listed in this roll were taxpayers in 1872, it is reasonable to assume that the vast majority settled here on or before 1871 and therefore have been included in the category of "pioneers."

Frequently, the rolls include only one name of a taxpayer. When this is the case, the abbreviation NFN (no first name) or (NLN) will be used. The abbreviation CWV stands for Civil War veteran from the county, although no distinction is made in the index between veterans who died in service and those who returned. The abbreviation WWI, WWII, and KW after a name means that the man was either killed in action or died in service during World War I, World War II, or the Korean War.

Considerable difficulty is experienced with the spelling of names when dealing with the raw material of history. It must be emphasized that the spellings are taken as they *appear to be spelled* in the original hand-written document.

Owing to the fact that Plover township at the time of organization took in territory to the east — later incorporated as Stockton and Buena Vista townships — quite a few names which appear in the Plover tax roll of 1854 later reappear in the Stockton and Buena Vista rolls. Almond, similarly, took in Belmont before the latter was incorporated in 1856, and several families who paid taxes to the Almond treasury were actually residents of modern Belmont. Thus, quite a few names of taxpayers appear more than once in the text, but what one document may refer to as "John E. Doe," another may simply write "J. Doe." As cross-references to all these names would extend the index to impracticable length, an attempt has been made, through cross-checking of the several sources, to indicate the full names in the single entry, as well as different spellings and use of initials which some men preferred.



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