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# IRISH SETTLEMENT

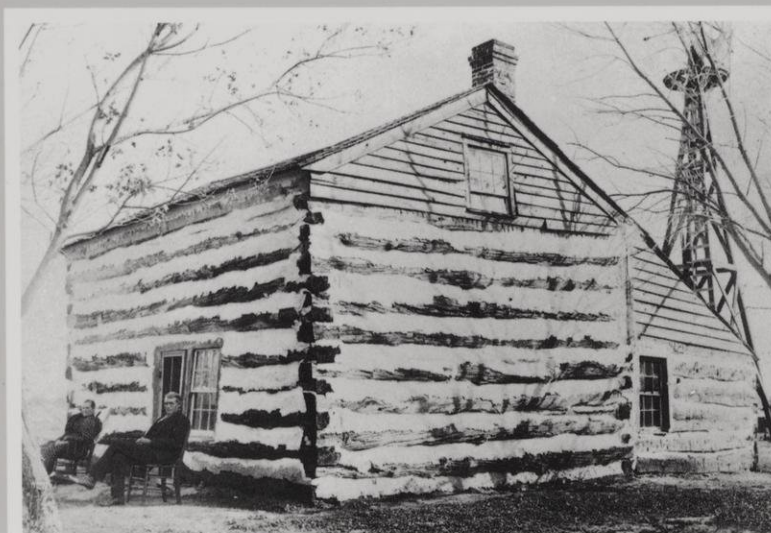
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1840



1860



By Thomas P. Kinney





# IRISH SETTLERS OF FITCHBURG, WISCONSIN 1840-1860

## Irish Settlers of Fitchburg, Wisconsin 1840-1860



**Front Cover Photos:**

Top: Kinney Log Cabin—1880's  
Michael and Alice Kinney  
Bottom left: Lacy Home—1880's  
Moses and Maria Lacy Family  
Bottom right: Fox Hall—1897  
Addie Fox Kiser

**Back Cover Photo:** Children at Cistern—1913  
Anna, Katharine and Philip Fox

**Project Consultant:** John O. Holzhuetter  
State Historical Society of Wisconsin

**Research Editor:** Carole S. Kinney  
Fitchburg Historical Society, Archivist

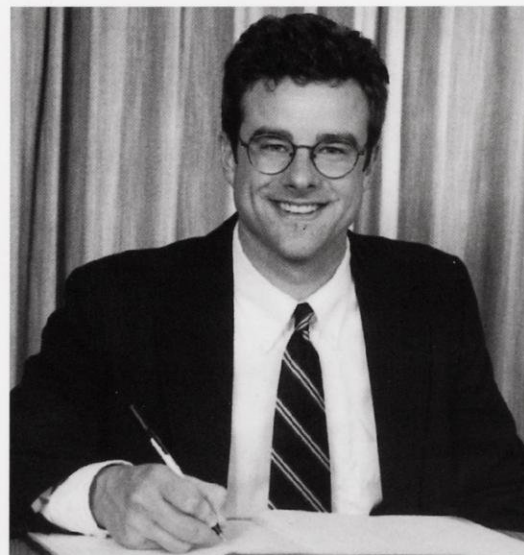
**Printing:** Litho Productions, Inc.

**Author's Background:** Thomas P. Kinney is a sixth generation resident of the Kinney homestead on Irish Lane. He is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin—Madison with a B.A. in History and is currently studying at Marquette University Law School. Tom gave a presentation on the Irish pioneers of Fitchburg at the American Conference for Irish Studies in Madison in 1991. The idea for a book to preserve this information was conceived at that time, and was encouraged by the Fitchburg community with special support from the Fitchburg Historical Society.

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# IRISH SETTLERS OF FITCHBURG, WISCONSIN 1840–1860



By Thomas P. Kinney  
Fitchburg, Dane County, Wisconsin

Fitchburg Historical Society  
1993

Special appreciation is extended to the author's family  
and neighbors, as well as to John O. Holzhuetter,  
Professor John Lyons, and the Fitchburg Historical Society,  
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Bill and Carole Kinney  
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Mary Kinney, in memory of Wilfred C. Kinney  
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# Preface

Tom Kinney's *Irish Settlers of Fitchburg* defies most stereotypes about local history, which is usually so narrowly defined as to discourage interest beyond closely defined borders, and also about its authors, who generally hover on the downhill side of retirement. In Tom's case, age thirty lies somewhere on the horizon; he wrote this work during a summer vacation from law school and in off-moments while working at a job between undergraduate and graduate schools.

As for content, *Irish Settlers of Fitchburg* reaches well beyond the confines of its title to illuminate county-wide and statewide issues of interest—just as good local history should. Tom Kinney even has provided some details that should interest the Irish-American community nationally.

To give a county and state example, his discussion of territorial and early statehood roads and transportation routes helps clarify the story for much of southern Wisconsin. As revealed by Tom Kinney, these territorial routes were transient and highly flexible, responding to geography and changing again and again over a period of only twenty years, quite unlike modern hard-surfaced highways and streets. Yet, despite these characteristics, roadways controlled development, giving rise to Dane County hamlets which have virtually faded from both the landscape and memory.

Other issues he touches upon beyond the immediate tale of the immigrant include: the contrasts between governmental and natural boundaries; the rapidity of change during Wisconsin's earliest years; the discontinuous nature of neighborhoods and ethnic enclaves; the impact on agriculture of a large nearby city like Madison; and the interaction of private and public institutions.

But Tom Kinney does not ignore his primary goal: to give the Irish of Fitchburg their due. Compared to Dane County's German and Norwegian immigrant communities, historians

have neglected the Irish, not to mention other English-speaking immigrant groups. Kinney has begun to remedy this situation. His affection and respect for his Irish ancestors and their neighbors shine through every page.

Madison's development inexorably is erasing "old" Fitchburg, but this young author has made sure that it will not be forgotten. He has searched out vestiges of roadbeds and mine shafts, has tramped the fields, woods, and marshes. He has talked to old-timers and farmers and housewives and teachers. He has combed archives, libraries, and courthouses. In the process he has learned more about old Fitchburg than anyone else now knows. And he has taken the trouble to put his findings into print. Let us hope that he will continue to refine his research and continue to share his findings and thoughts about Fitchburg well past retirement age nearly two-score years from now.

John O. Holzhueter  
State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
July 19, 1993



# Introduction

An estimated two million Irish immigrants came to the United States in the mid-nineteenth century seeking to better their lives economically. Nearly fifty thousand of them sought out the farmland and cities of southern Wisconsin, many of them having been deprived of their livelihoods by an impoverishing potato famine that struck Ireland from 1845 to 1855. And of those fifty thousand, seventy-six Irish families had settled in the Town of Fitchburg by 1860.<sup>1</sup>

The Irish of Fitchburg, Wisconsin, constituted one of the largest rural ethnic settlements in southern Dane County. In a time when a cluster of five homesteads of the same heritage was often called a settlement, an area such as Fitchburg with seventy-six Irish families was a very significant community. The Irish were leaders in founding churches, organizing schools, and serving in both state and local government. Today, most people remember the Irish as having lived in working-class neighborhoods of big cities. But three-quarters of all Wisconsin Irish lived in agricultural communities and small villages in 1860, and only later did a majority of the Irish move to cities in response to growing employment opportunities.<sup>2</sup>

The rural Irish settlement in Fitchburg was formed in the 1840's near the northern end of the convergence of two of the most important roads in south-central Wisconsin: the Madison-to-Janesville mail road and a Milwaukee-to-Mineral Point road associated with the lead trade. The merging of these roads began south of the intersection of Fish Hatchery and Adams roads, extended south to Swan Pond, and then went through Oregon township and into Rutland. In Oregon, a road branched off and went to Beloit. In Rutland, the Old Janesville/lead teamsters' road divided, with one road going to Janesville and the teamsters' road going east to Milwaukee (see Map on page 19).

Travel on the territorial roads was essential to the Irish. For example, the railroad did not reach Madison until 1854, so farmers hauled their wheat cash crop on a ten-day journey by ox team and wagon to Milwaukee. Local roads were used to take farm produce such as potatoes to sell in Madison. Also, most Irish Catholic families made the two-hour trip to Madison each Sunday to St. Raphael's Church, a small wood-frame structure built in 1850.

The majority of Irish who settled in the thirty-six square miles of Fitchburg township arrived between 1840 and 1860. They shared their new-found homeland with people of other cultural backgrounds, including German immigrants and Winnebago Indians, as well as families of varying ethnicities who moved from the northeastern states. As time went on, some of the Irish moved to northwestern Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, and the Dakotas. Fitchburg became an important family anchor point for Irish homesteaders throughout the region. Today, Fitchburg has the municipal status of a city, but it is still home to a large rural Irish-American community with many families continuing to live on the homesteads of their ancestors. The Irish-American residents of the 1990's are proud of their past and concerned about the future of their community.







A Dane County wilderness roadway—sketched in 1852.



# Immigration of Irish to Dane County

On a crisp November day in 1842, two Irish immigrant brothers in their twenties drove a horse and buggy through oak woods along an Indian trail that ran from Janesville to Madison. As they entered the township that was to become known as Fitchburg, the young men pulled up their buggy at a small log hotel on the banks of a pond, where it is said that the skies overhead would blacken from time to time with immense flocks of migratory birds. The brothers were on a mission to look for land on which to build homesteads. A man named Harvey Bush, who had recently established one of the first farms in the township, offered to guide them to prime, unclaimed land two miles to the east. They rode out to view the property, which turned out to be gently rolling prairie land interspersed with oak groves. After canvassing the promising territory, Harvey Bush turned to the brothers and uttered his now legendary line: “[It’s] fine land, but in such an out-of-the-way place.”<sup>3</sup>

The brothers, George and Dr. William Fox, felt that the land would suit their needs and left for the Milwaukee land office where they purchased tracts from the government on November 18, 1842.<sup>4</sup> They returned to live in Fitchburg in June, 1843. With the arrival of additional pioneers, the development of the Irish agricultural settlement of Fitchburg was underway.

As for the skeptical guide, Harvey Bush, he left the township within a few years after the conversation on the prairie. Fitchburg may have been out-of-the-way at the time, but it easily survived the criticism and today is one of the fastest-growing cities in Wisconsin. To understand how Fitchburg and its Irish have come so far over the past 150 years, the early decades in the development of Wisconsin and Dane County need to be considered.

The Irish formed one of many ethnic groups that moved to the Wisconsin frontier during the years 1840 to 1860, when

individuals purchased much of the available land in southern Wisconsin from the federal government. The majority of Irish and other immigrants came to Dane County either directly from Europe, or after having lived for a while in Canada or on the East Coast.

The Irish reached Canadian or U.S. seaports often following six to eight weeks on a sickness-ridden vessel. Large numbers sought jobs and housing in such coastal cities as Boston and New York. Many of the Irish worked long hours for low pay in industrial sweatshops. Stereotypically, urban Irish were known for working as policemen and saloonkeepers, but in fact most were employed as laborers or factory workers.

Many of the Irish who moved inland from the East Coast were lured by the prospects of employment on railroad and canal construction projects. Later, some of those laborers chose to use their savings to buy farms either near the coast or on the frontier. They were joined by Irish who had enough cash in hand from the sale of property in Ireland to purchase an American farm. The federal government advertised that land was available in Wisconsin, and many Irish seized the opportunity.

Wisconsin Territory was organized out of the preceding Michigan Territory in 1836. Dane County was also formed that year, named for Nathaniel Dane, who helped draft the Northwest Ordinance which established government in the region where Wisconsin is today. The wilderness from which Madison grew was designated as the new capital of Wisconsin Territory in November, 1836. Madison, also the county seat, was named for a popular past president, James Madison, who had died earlier that year.

Wisconsin became a state in 1848 after years of increasing settlement. From 1840 to 1860, pioneers purchased land from the government and speculators, and they began farming on much of the arable land in Dane County. The population of Dane County underwent tremendous growth in these years.



In 1840 there were 314 residents in the county, but by 1860 there were 43,922; among these, 11 percent of the heads of households were natives of Ireland. The population in 1860 of the Town of Fitchburg was 1,177; approximately one-third of the heads of households in the township were born in Ireland.<sup>5</sup> (See Appendix A.)

The Irish were joined in their journey to Wisconsin by people of a variety of backgrounds, including German, Swiss, and Norwegian. Though fewer in number than some other ethnic groups, the Irish population in Wisconsin increased during the 1845-1855 potato Famine emigration from Ireland. Most Irish from the East Coast came by way of steamboat through the Great Lakes to Milwaukee, then by oxen team and wagon to their destination. Some Irish came overland by prairie schooner across Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois to reach Wisconsin Territory.

Irish who had arrived before 1840 worked primarily in southwestern Wisconsin lead mines or in the southeastern port towns on Lake Michigan. These Irish communities and some rural farming settlements sent representatives to the first great St. Patrick's Day parade in Milwaukee on March 17, 1843, sponsored by Milwaukee's Roman Catholic Church. The Irish of the "Bloody Third" Ward, a district in Milwaukee known for its immigrant brawls, were well represented. The *Milwaukee Sentinel* reported that delegations with banners hailed from localities such as Mineral Point, Madison, Watertown, Geneva, Kenosha, Racine, Franklin, Muskego, Waukesha, Pewaukee, and Cedarburg.<sup>6</sup> (Fitchburg was not represented because the first Irish settlers did not arrive until that June.)

The frontier town of Milwaukee grew rapidly from 1840 to 1860, and it received a boost from the Irish Famine immigration. In 1840, Milwaukee had a population of 1,712. By 1860, the city had grown to 45,246 people, of whom 3,100 were born in Ireland. German immigrants made up a third of Milwaukee's inhabitants.<sup>7</sup> Some Irish left Milwaukee after living there for a few years and saving money to move west.

Crucial to understanding the settlement pattern of the Irish in Dane County is that the Irish came in two waves. The first occurred in the 1840's and resulted in agricultural settlements. The second occurred in the 1850's in connection with railroad construction. Fitchburg was one of Dane County's first Irish agricultural settlements, and typified a common pattern of settlement in which pre-Famine immigrants arrived and staked claims. Families fleeing the Famine soon settled around them. Eight pre-Famine Irish families formed a core in Fitchburg, settling between 1843 and 1845; nearly seventy other families joined them in the years that followed (see Appendices D and E).

The Irish held township offices such as chairman and treasurer during the pioneer days in Fitchburg, but settlers of other nationalities shared these responsibilities with the Irish, so the Irish were not considered a dominant social or political force in the township (see Appendix B). The Irish constituted a third of Fitchburg's population in 1860, and they may have totalled over half of the citizenry if they had stayed within the boundaries of the township. Instead, the Irish settlement was centered in the southeast part of Fitchburg, with additional residences located in the towns of Oregon to the south and Dunn to the east (see Map on p. 28).

The towns of Cottage Grove and Westport also became home to large rural Irish communities in Dane County.<sup>8</sup> The early formation of Westport in northern Dane County was heavily influenced by its Irish settlers, who began arriving in 1845. The township was named after the O'Malley family's home town in County Mayo, Ireland. The Irish had a stronger voice in government in the Town of Westport than they had in Fitchburg. While Westport had about the same number of Irish as Fitchburg in the early days, it had fewer non-Irish families.<sup>9</sup> Thus, the Irish had a greater impact on the development of the Westport community.

To the east of Westport lies the Town of Burke, which was named for the Irish-born politician and British reformer,





This 1855 map of Dane County shows township names, a few of the major roads, the railroad to Milwaukee, and a planned railroad to Chicago.



Edmund Burke. Despite the early presence of Irish settlers, the Town of Burke did not grow into one of the larger Irish communities of Dane County and is known for its Norwegian contingent.

The Town of Cross Plains contained an Irish settlement that was half the size of the Irish community in Fitchburg, but nevertheless was a substantial colony in an area largely known for other ethnic groups, especially Germans. In the southern part of Cross Plains township, a group of forty Irish pioneer families homesteaded near Pine Bluff.<sup>10</sup>

Although a number of Irish agricultural communities began developing in the 1840's in Dane County, the 1850's brought the rise of railroads in southern Wisconsin and an influx of Irish laborers. A railroad from Milwaukee to Madison was completed in 1854 with the help of a number of Irish, but due to periodic layoffs some of the Irish turned to farming, especially in an area west of Milwaukee in Waukesha County. Communities of Irish railroad laborers such as the one at Janesville developed in the Rock River Valley.

Though railway lines did not come through Fitchburg until after 1860, other areas in Dane County, particularly some of the larger villages and the City of Madison, were populated by Irish who came to Dane County as railroad laborers. For instance, the railroad towns of Mazomanie, Sun Prairie, and McFarland had a number of Irish residents, many of whom had been employed by the railroad when the tracks were laid in the mid-1850's. Each of these three villages and their surrounding areas had only two-thirds as many Irish as were in Fitchburg.<sup>11</sup> In McFarland, the agent of the railroad at the depot which opened in 1857 was William McFarland, who was born in England to Scotch-Irish parents. The village was named after McFarland, who owned the land on which it was built.

The Irish also sought railroad employment in the area of Madison's "Fighting Fourth" Ward. An Irish district since the 1840's, it was a rough-and-tumble immigrant neighborhood located southwest of the Capitol where railroad workers

and their new families began to integrate into society, often employed as laborers, liverymen, and seamstresses.

In 1860, the City of Madison had a population of 6,611, of which 14 percent had been born in Ireland. The outlying Town of Madison had about a dozen farms that were owned by Irish, and a number of its Irish residents were tenant farmers or worked in the nearby city.<sup>12</sup>

The growing number of Irish immigrants in Madison and other cities fueled resentment on the part of some American-born residents. A nationwide nativist or "Know Nothing" movement in the 1850's advocated the curtailing of Catholic immigration. The Know Nothings formed the American party, which opposed the election or appointment of Catholics and/or the foreign-born to official positions. Irish who attempted to vote in an election in Madison on November 7, 1854, were subjected to harassment, as noted by Madison's *Wisconsin State Journal*. Nativists stood by the polls watching for Irishmen and hoping to have a discussion about their residency (a person had to be a resident of the state for one year to vote) that would result as follows:

"Wait a minute friend. Are you a voter?"

"A voter? an' sure an' hav'nt I voted this five year in the state of New Yorrick? Away wid ye that wad deprive an honest man of his vote in this fray country!"

"But have you lived in this state six months?"

"Ah, be Jasus, an' that I have. It'll be seven months that I lived here Monday week. Do ye mind that now?"

The election board would then inform the Irishman of Wisconsin's one year residency requirement and send him away.<sup>13</sup> Nativist harassment like that in Madison is not known to have occurred in Fitchburg, probably because of the large number of Irish in the township.

The agricultural settlement of Fitchburg comprised one of many diverse ethnic enclaves that blanketed the county. The seventy-six Irish families of Fitchburg emerged as a significant



community because they formed the largest of all ethnic settlements in the surrounding townships. While the Irish were amusing their neighbors and confusing the census takers with their thick Irish brogues, a half a dozen French immigrant families to the southwest of Fitchburg near Belleville, were forming the nucleus of what would become known as Frenchtown. Their native peasant dress raised eyebrows, and for 25 cents neighbors could buy a pair of wooden shoes from them. The shoes were made of dry poplar wood and were stained black with homemade dye.<sup>14</sup> Besides Frenchtown, major European immigrant settlements around Fitchburg included the Norwegians of Stoughton and the Swiss of New Glarus.

Ethnic groups celebrated national holidays of the old country and saints' days such as St. Patrick's Day, but people of all backgrounds would rally together for the Fourth of July. The Scottish settlement in Verona township near the Sugar River became famous early in the territorial days for its Fourth of July celebration, as in 1845, when residents from Fitchburg and neighboring townships converged on the western Verona Scottish settlement. Men and women of all ancestries found themselves learning to dance the Highland Fling to the music of bagpipes and enjoying the cheer of home-distilled Scotch whiskey.<sup>15</sup> The Irish of Fitchburg and immigrants throughout Dane County were learning to be Americans by integrating some of their native traditions with those of the cultures that swirled around their emerging settlements.



Counties of Ireland





A practical but time-consuming way to make marshes passable was to construct corduroy roads out of trees felled in local forests.



# Transportation Routes

The road systems of southern Wisconsin were vital to the development of the region from 1840 to 1860. The first roads built through this vast wilderness connected the southwestern Wisconsin lead mining region with the southeastern Wisconsin Lake Michigan port towns of Milwaukee, Racine, and Southport (now called Kenosha). After Madison was selected the territorial capital in 1836, the legislature authorized roads out of Madison in all directions, creating a spiderweb of transportation routes. Nestled within this mesh was the Town of Fitchburg, which was quickly transformed into an important commercial crossroads.

Fitchburg was becoming an essential conduit for southern Dane County even before the Irish and other settlers began to build farms and homes there. Its woods and prairies provided valuable roadsites not only because the township served as the southern doorway to Madison, but because Fitchburg contained high grounds that separated two watersheds—the Yahara River's to the east and the Sugar River's to the west. Travelers utilized these highlands to minimize the problems of crossing rivers and marshes with heavy wagons. In the territorial era when many rural townships were crossed by only one or two principal roads, Fitchburg boasted four major routes. These included an important road that was used regularly by lead teamsters traveling between Mineral Point and Milwaukee, and the road for mail carriers—the Old Janesville Road (Fish Hatchery Road)—which connected Madison to Janesville.<sup>16</sup> These two roads converged in Fitchburg over the span of nearly a mile and a half. The Madison-to-Monroe stage road (Seminole Highway and Fitchburg Road) and County MM emerged as the two other major routes. Along them, enterprising Yankees built taverns and villages in the early 1840's. (Yankees were those who were born in the United States and had lived in New England, New York, and Pennsylvania.) The Irish followed on the heels of these Yankees.

Although most of today's major roads in Fitchburg remain

on the same course as they followed in 1860, roads during the settlement days constantly shifted in location and rose and fell in popularity as streams were bridged, marshes were drained, and ramps were built through cuts in hills. Roads affected everything in people's lives—the way they traveled, where they settled, and how they earned their living. One of the greatest gambles Yankee or immigrant families took was whether or not the parcel of land they bought was on a trail that would be authorized as a road in the future by the territory, county, or town. And if the farm was already on such a track, would the road be abandoned if a stream was bridged two miles away? A well-maintained road in front of one's farm not only increased its resale value, but provided access to highways for hauling produce to sell in Madison and for taking wheat and other products to market in Milwaukee. Yankee merchants entertained the same risks as they built their hotels, stores, and blacksmith shops at stagecoach stops, which they knew could be bypassed by railroads in future years. As long as a neighborhood road maintained its utility, families prospered and enjoyed seeing travelers who told tales of Indian skirmishes and even a gold rush in a distant land called California. Roads brought to the pioneers a way of seeing and interacting with the outside world that cannot be recaptured today.

The Old Janesville Road and the trail often used by lead teamsters developed into the most important roads in Fitchburg. They converged around Oak Hall, a now defunct village site near the intersection of Fish Hatchery Road and County M. Oak Hall became the most prominent trading post in the surrounding townships. When the Fox brothers came looking for land in 1842, they traveled by way of the Indian trail that became known as the Old Janesville Road and stayed at the original hotel at Oak Hall.

The route commonly used by lead teamsters was actually a series of roads that connected Mineral Point to Milwaukee, and included one of the first roads to cross Fitchburg. The lead



teamster route was also used by farmers to transport wheat to Milwaukee. Today, farmers in and around Fitchburg are quick to point out the roadbed and consistently identify it as "the old lead trail."

Lead mining in southwestern Wisconsin attracted many early pioneers. People of European descent took over the lead mines from the Indians in the early 1820's, and the mines were worked by the Welsh, Cornish, Irish, and others. The mines contained rich deposits; when production reached its peak about 1847 nearly 85 percent of the world's lead was being mined in southwestern Wisconsin and northwestern Illinois.<sup>17</sup> Lead was used in making products like paint, pipes, and bullets. Most was marketed by shipping it on steamboats down the Mississippi River, destined eventually for processing plants in New York, Boston, and Great Britain. But from about 1836, when some mine owners began looking for quicker and cheaper routes to the East Coast, until the coming of the railroad in the mid-1850's, a substantial amount of lead was hauled by canvas-covered wagons and four to eight yoke of oxen across southern Wisconsin to Lake Michigan. Much of the lead that was shipped via the Great Lakes was sent to Buffalo, New York, to be processed into white lead, which was used in paint. Not realizing how heavy lead could be, immigrants in southern Wisconsin were said to have wondered why so many oxen were required to pull what appeared to be almost empty wagons.<sup>18</sup> On the return trip to the mines, the lead teamsters would bring back dry goods or carry immigrants to the frontier.

Some of the major lead trails crossing south-central Wisconsin included one going through northern Green and Rock counties, one in southern Dane County, and a road through central Dane County passing through Madison on its way to Milwaukee.<sup>19</sup> The trail through southern Dane County by way of Fitchburg is difficult to trace at some points, because territorial officials authorized different stretches of it at different times, depending upon the stretches' usefulness in connecting important area villages. Parts of the trail were abandoned in the mid-1850's when trains replaced wagons for hauling lead. Sur-

veyors' maps have not been found for some stretches of the trail, so the only remaining clues to their location are local legend and angled fencerows lined by wagon-wheel ruts.

Southern Dane County's lead road probably came into use between 1839 and 1841. The lead that was mined near the village of Mineral Point was still being shipped to the East Coast via the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico. Then 1839 turned out to be a dry year when the lowered water level of the river exposed rapids that the lead boats could not navigate. Mineral Point teamsters began searching out routes to Milwaukee with the fewest inclines and water crossings. Increase Lapham wrote in his 1844 book about Wisconsin Territory that lead was brought from Mineral Point to Milwaukee beginning in 1839. These early shipments also were noted by newspapers such as Milwaukee's *Courier*.<sup>20</sup> By 1841, taverns began to appear at watering holes along the lead trail in Fitchburg and neighboring townships.

Although the southern Dane County lead road had a number of branches and alternate routes, the primary track is believed to have stretched from Mineral Point to Whitewater, and from there to Milwaukee. A more direct route was built later, running parallel for the most part to today's County A through the towns of Perry, Primrose, Montrose, Oregon, Rutland, and Dunkirk (see Appendix C). An earlier trail was used through the highlands of Fitchburg before the road over the marshes was improved and the branches of the Sugar River were bridged in the Town of Montrose.

Lead teamsters steered their heavy wagons clear of wetlands whenever possible. "Corduroy" roads could be made by cutting down trees and laying them side by side to form roads through marshes, but lead teamsters were being paid by the shipment and preferred to spend as little time as possible building roads.

While maps from those earliest days are not available to show the entire lead route that swung north toward Fitchburg to skirt the Sugar River, existing somewhat later maps show limited stretches of the road, and local traditions fill in many of



the gaps. The lead trail went northeast from Mineral Point to join the roadbed that is now U.S. Highway 18 and 151, which also brought lead wagons from Ebenezer Brigham's mines at Blue Mounds.<sup>21</sup> (See Appendix C.)

In December, 1838, the territorial legislature authorized construction of a road that would go east from Mount Horeb to Janesville. This roadway would converge with a road that would be built from Madison to Janesville (the roadbed included part of today's Fish Hatchery Road).<sup>22</sup> Although a survey map of the road from Mount Horeb to the convergence has not been found, the road is believed to have crossed Verona on today's U.S. Highway 18 and 151 roadbed and to have swung southeast across Fitchburg to merge with Fish Hatchery Road just south of the intersection with Adams Road.

The Town of Verona gained an early position of importance in southern Dane County due to the construction in 1844 of the Badger Mill in central Verona, a half mile south of the lead trail. This grist mill, the first in Dane County, was built by George and William Vroman and William Wheeler. The Vromans also owned property in Fitchburg.<sup>23</sup> (The Town of Verona was named in 1847 after Verona, New York, the previous home of the Vroman family.)

In eastern Verona, the lead teamsters probably left today's U.S. 18 and 151 roadbed to switch onto the older Nesbitt Road before embarking on an eight-mile, southeasterly cross-country trek through Fitchburg and Oregon following the dividing Sugar River-Yahara River ridge. Turning southeast, they avoided the marshes interspersed in the region of the four lakes—Mendota, Monona, Waubesa, and Kegonsa—in central Dane County.

The lead trail entered the west side of Fitchburg and proceeded to Vroman's woods just south of the intersection of Seminole Highway and Grandview Road. The road's path between Nesbitt Road in eastern Verona and Vroman's woods is unknown, but it may have gone around the north end of Goose Lake to enter Fitchburg near the intersection of Lacy and Fitchrona roads, so as to avoid having the wagons cross



This stretch of the old lead trail is visible from the intersection of Lincoln and Glenway roads in Oregon, Wisconsin. In the background are the Fitchburg highlands that were used by lead teamsters to avoid the region's wetlands. Photo taken in 1993.

a stream that flowed from marshes near Goose Lake to the Badger Mill area.<sup>24</sup>

At Vroman's woods, the lead trail crossed the Madison-to-New Mexico road, which included Seminole Highway and Fitchburg Road. The village called "New Mexico" has been renamed "Monroe." The legislature authorized this connecting road in 1838.<sup>25</sup> Seminole Highway was the most important north-south road in Fitchburg in the late 1830's and was the southern door to Madison before the roads over the marshes between Lake Wingra and Lake Monona (Fish Hatchery Road and Park Street) could be improved.<sup>26</sup>



Settlements on territorial roads in Fitchburg developed from west to east, with the first pioneers settling on Seminole Highway in the late 1830's, the next pioneers selecting choice sites on Fish Hatchery Road in the early 1840's, and additional families locating on County MM in the mid-1840's when the road over Nine Springs Marsh was upgraded.

Seminole Highway became the location of the first farm to be opened by a person of European descent in Fitchburg. In 1837, a few years before the first Irish arrived, John Stoner raised crops southeast of the corner of Lacy Road and Seminole Highway on what became known as Stoner Prairie. Stoner is thought to be about the third person to open a farm in Dane County. A pioneer neighbor described Stoner's makeshift house in these terms:

He erected a shanty, open on three sides, covered with oak shakes, which turned out most of the rain; a fire in front on the ground for cooking purposes; a bundle of straw and blankets; a few camp stools, constituted the furniture of this cabin, in which he managed to keep open house. Many a weary traveler and visitor has partaken of his hospitality . . . in this improvised house.<sup>27</sup>

Since John Stoner only worked the farm during weekdays and lived in the fledgling settlement of Madison on weekends, the title of the first permanent settlers of Fitchburg goes to the Vromans, a New York family of Dutch descent who arrived in the fall of 1839.<sup>28</sup>

From Vroman's woods, the lead trail proceeded east over the southern part of Stoner Prairie before swinging south toward Oak Hall. Less than a half-mile east of the Vroman homestead is the site of a lead mine dating to the pioneer days. (The location of the mine is shown on the 1873 plat map of Fitchburg.) The vertical shaft has been filled in with stones for a long time, and a broad indentation in the ground is the only sign of past activity at the site. It is not known how deep the shaft was. A newspaper article in the *Wisconsin Herald*, which was published at Lancaster in Grant County, mentioned that

where a vein of lead is present, one may need "only to go 15 to 20 feet into the bowels of the earth" to reach lead ore.<sup>29</sup> Most mines had to be dug deeper when the initial supplies of ore were exhausted. The Gordon and Rosalie Vroman family who live on the original Vroman farm have a chunk of lead ore from the mine.

Another lead digging was in the southwestern corner of the Town of Verona in the vicinity of the Madison School Forest, near the lead trail.<sup>30</sup> Lead teamsters were known to prospect for ore at many sites along the lead trails of southern Wisconsin, but they met with only limited success outside the southwestern Wisconsin mining region.

After crossing Seminole Highway and southern Stoner Prairie on its way to Oak Hall, the route of the Fitchburg lead trail is not fully known. It is said to have crossed Bavery's hill on the eastern part of Adams Road before turning south and joining Fish Hatchery Road.<sup>31</sup> (The former Alvin Bavery farm is now owned by Laverne and Randall Theis.) The trail ran diagonally, and farmers preferred not to have their properties divided into anything but square or rectangular fields. Most of the diagonal roadbed to the west of the convergence with Fish Hatchery Road was therefore quickly plowed under by local farmers when lead wagons were replaced by railroads in the mid-1850's. Some signs of the lead trail still remain, including what appears to be a ramp built into the north side of Bavery's hill for easing the ascent. This cut would have been dug to relieve the oxen from having to climb the steep face near the top of the incline as they continued on their way southeast to meet Fish Hatchery Road.<sup>32</sup>

The lead trail and Fish Hatchery Road converged because the original trailblazers wanted both paths to have access to Swan Pond south of Oak Hall corners. Swan Pond was a resting place and a site to water horses and oxen. A later lead trail that served as a shortcut also used Swan Pond as a stopping point. This trail would have left today's U.S. Highway 18 and 151 where the City of Verona is now, and would have gone in an almost direct line southeast to Swan Pond. The trail used part







of today's County M roadbed, where nearby wagon ruts can still be found in woodlots.<sup>33</sup> This shortcut probably came into use after 1844, when a mill and presumably a bridge were built at County M and Badger Mill Creek. The main lead trail had originally gone farther north to avoid the creek.

In 1833 Fish Hatchery Road was sketched on a map as an Indian trail by land surveyor Lorin Miller, who dragged his measuring chains across Fitchburg and drove in stakes to mark section corners as part of the official federal land survey.<sup>34</sup> Road surveyors used this Indian trail in laying out the road from Madison to Janesville after the legislature authorized its creation in 1838. Planners also used what is today Fish Hatchery Road in establishing the northern part of a Madison-to-Beloit road, which the legislature approved the following year. The Board of Supervisors of Dane County had the road surveyed and laid out as far as the southern line of the county in 1839 (see Appendix C). The northern part of Fish Hatchery Road was used, except when Madison's Wingra Creek made it impassable at times of high water. Travelers from Madison would then go south on Seminole Highway to the main lead trail, after which they would turn east to reconnect with the old Fish Hatchery Road Indian trail and continue to Janesville or Beloit and on to Chicago.<sup>35</sup>

Several significant sites lined Fish Hatchery Road. The intersection of Fish Hatchery and Post roads was said to be a meeting place for Indians during the 1832 Black Hawk War. In any case, the Winnebago who lived in south-central Wisconsin had not been much of a threat, since they sided with the Americans in the Black Hawk War. They had populated Dane County before the war and continued to visit the area to hunt and fish for years afterward.

Besides Fish Hatchery Road, a second Indian trail went past Swan Pond at Oak Hall. This path connected Lake Waubesa in the Town of Dunn, which is east of Fitchburg, with the Sugar River and Belleville area, which is southwest of Fitchburg.<sup>36</sup> The pioneers did not turn this trail into a road, possibly because it ran diagonally across the land.

The importance of the Indian paths and lead road crossing at Swan Pond was recognized by the early entrepreneur William Quivey. Quivey, who was born in New York and is believed to have been of Scottish descent, built a double log hotel (the size of two log cabins placed end to end) on this site in 1841.<sup>37</sup> The hotel was located on the west side of Fish Hatchery Road and Swan Pond, and it was on the Fitchburg side of the town line with Oregon. In the early 1840's, the hotel became known all over southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois for its excellent hospitality and its convenience as a place to rest.<sup>38</sup> This Fish Hatchery Road inn was called Quivey's Grove, and the village in the vicinity of the inn at the intersection of Fish Hatchery Road and County M has long been known as Oak Hall after an area tavern. (Today's Quivey's Grove restaurant, which is located near Verona Road on Nesbitt Road, was named in honor of Fitchburg's first inn, though it is several miles northwest.)

When the Fox brothers, the first known Irish to come looking for land in Fitchburg, traveled from Janesville to Quivey's hotel in November, 1842, they would have found the inn at the peak of its prominence as the leading transportation center, the only post office, and the election polling place for a large part of southern Dane County. The Irish undoubtedly would have needed little convincing to purchase land reasonably close to the communication center of a good agricultural district like Fitchburg.

As a transportation hub, Quivey's hotel increased in significance because Fish Hatchery Road became more than just a route for travelers to and from Madison, Janesville, and Beloit. In 1842 it was named a mail route, and Quivey's hotel emerged as the only post office in Fitchburg and at least five surrounding townships south of Madison: Dunn, Rutland, Oregon, Montrose, and Verona.<sup>39</sup> When the stagecoach was introduced into the area, Fish Hatchery Road became the first stage road connecting Madison to Janesville. Fish Hatchery Road was also part of a stage road that originated in Madison and went southwest from Quivey's inn to Storytown, Belleville, Dayton, and other villages.<sup>40</sup>



Fitchburg Irishman Anslow Keenan explained travel by stagecoach as follows:

The stage driver would blow a horn a half mile north of Oak Hall—once or twice—from which the storekeeper would know how many pails of water were needed for the horses, meaning two or four horses. The capacity of the stage was six passengers, and, if there were ten to go, four of them must climb to the top and let their feet hang over and the baggage must wait until some future trip.<sup>41</sup>

As described by pioneer William Vroman, the lead wagons and stagecoaches competed for the long stretches of shared road such as the one by Quivey's hotel:

The commerce of the country at this early day was mostly carried on by Sucker team, a large Pennsylvania wagon with from four to six yoke of oxen to haul it. We called them prairie schooners, and they used to go in fleets, sometimes as many as eight or ten wagons together. These covered wagons going over the prairie at a distance, resembled very much a fleet of schooners, hence the name. Their principal loading on the journey to Lake Michigan was lead, and the back freight sundry goods for our merchants. They carried with them long goad poles, some ten feet long, and a lash to correspond; you could hear the crack of their whip for a mile away. They were the kings of the roads. Everything had to give way for them, until stage coaches were put upon the road, when the drivers got long stretches with knives in the end, and raked [the lead wagon] teams, sending them bellowing from the road, which caused them to give the stage coaches a wide berth.<sup>42</sup>

The visits to Quivey's hotel by lead teamsters and other travelers made the inn well-known. In 1842, Quivey's hotel became the polling place for an election precinct for eight southern Dane County townships, including what is today Fitchburg, Dunn, Rutland, Oregon, Montrose, Primrose,



A onetime Oak Hall post office building was moved to this farm southwest of the Fish Hatchery Road and County M intersection. The building has since been dismantled.

Springdale, and Verona.<sup>43</sup> People came from miles around to Quivey's hotel to vote in county, territorial, and national elections.

A testimony to the early prominence of the lead trail in the development of the region was that, in 1843, three of the five polling places in Dane County were located on parts of it—Blue Mounds, Quivey's Grove, and Clinton (situated in the eastern part of Dane County and now called Rockdale). Residents of the other two precincts voted at Madison and Sun Prairie.<sup>44</sup>

Significantly, non-Irish (Pritchards, Trues, and others) laid claim to parcels of land north of Quivey's hotel earlier in 1842 before the Irish visited the area. They bought woodland around



today's Fish Hatchery Road and County M intersection. The families of this Oak Hall community had lived in New York before coming to Fitchburg.<sup>45</sup> Whether or not a group of them came from the same town in New York is not known. Most of the families that purchased land from the government in 1842 returned home, then came back to stay in the spring of 1843. The Wisconsin territorial census of 1842 shows only four heads of households residing in Fitchburg: Joseph Vroman, William Quivey, Harvey Bush, and George Dyke.<sup>46</sup>

In the years after the 1842 decision of the Irish and other pioneers to settle in Fitchburg, Quivey's hotel began to fade from prominence, as large numbers of settlers began arriving in neighboring townships and establishing their own business centers. The hotel lost some of its status as a transportation center when some of the traffic going to Janesville began to use County MM when the road over Nine Springs Marsh was upgraded. By 1845, Fish Hatchery Road was labelled on maps as "Old Janesville Road," and the lead trail gradually became deserted in the mid-1850's.<sup>47</sup>

By 1846, Quivey's inn was no longer the sole post office in south-central Dane County, when additional post offices were established southwest of Fitchburg at Grand Spring (Paoli) and southeast of Fitchburg in Rutland. Some of the other new post offices included Verona in 1847, Lake View in eastern Fitchburg in 1848, Dunn in 1849, and Oregon in 1850.<sup>48</sup>

Quivey's hotel served as the polling place in 1842 for eight townships, but that number was steadily reduced beginning in 1844 as new polling places were created.<sup>49</sup> Quivey's inn at Oak Hall was important not only as a voting site but also as the place for early town meetings.

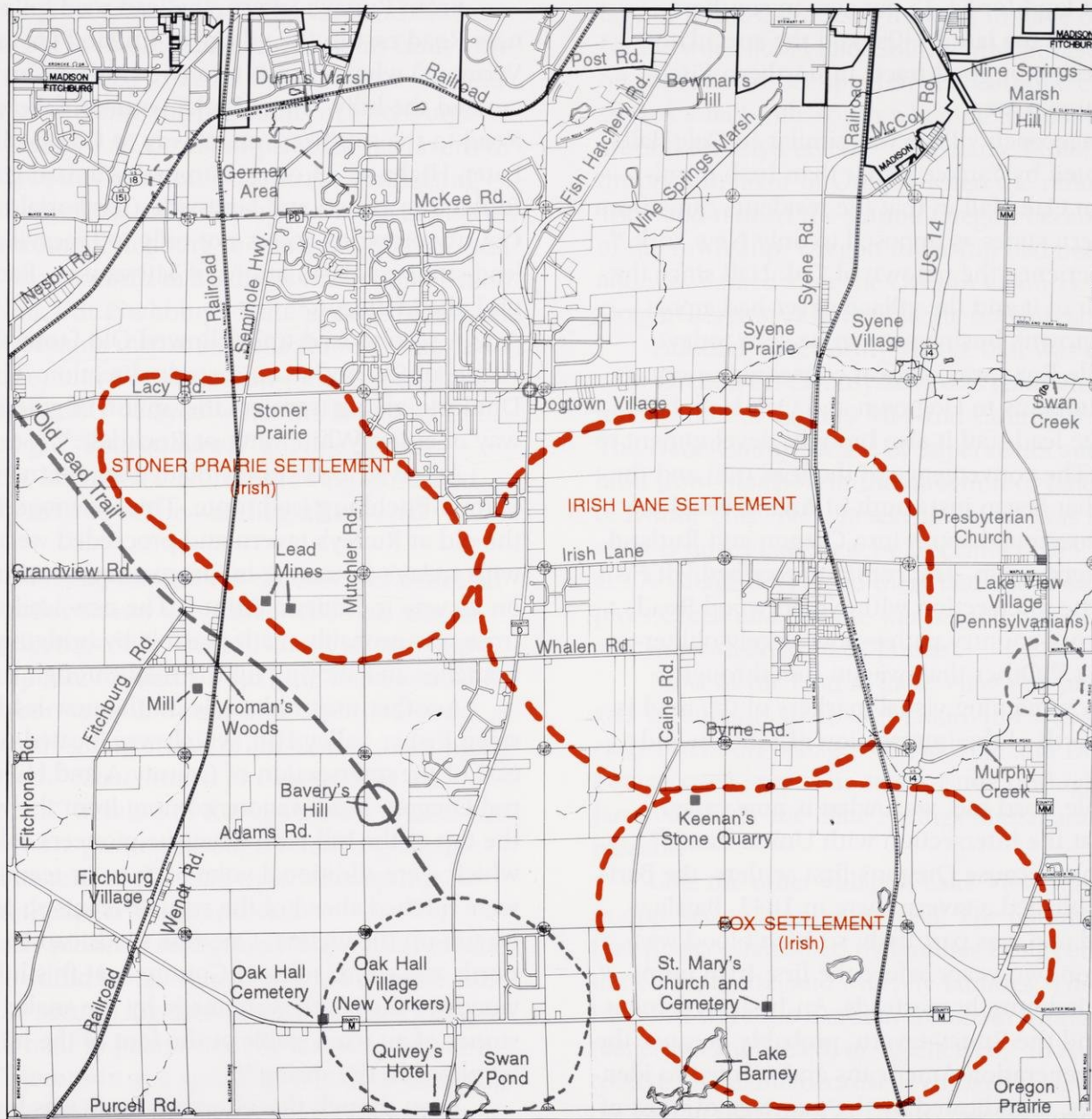
Fitchburg township was named in 1853 after the Oak Hall mail-stop, which had been formally designated in 1842 as "Fitchburg Post Office." The name of the post office was originally proposed by Dane County's first permanent settler, Ebenezer Brigham of Blue Mounds, who is believed to have suggested calling it Fitchburg after Fitchburg, Massachusetts, a town in the same county as his former home at Shrewsbury.<sup>50</sup>

Before the township became known as Fitchburg, it was known by two previous names, Rome and Greenfield. In 1846, the territorial legislature created a three-township area called the Town of Rome, which included present-day Fitchburg, Dunn, and Oregon. The Town of Rome meetings were held at Quivey's hotel. The area was named after Rome, Oneida County, New York, at the suggestion of John Ames of the Town of Oregon.<sup>51</sup> The Village of Oregon, near the center of the three townships, was known as Rome Corners. In 1847 one of the three townships broke away from Rome and was called Greenfield. Its name was changed in 1853 to Fitchburg to match the name of the post office, because of postal confusion with Greenfield in Milwaukee County.<sup>52</sup>

Quivey's hotel in Fitchburg closed in the early 1850's when the Quiveys moved to the Town of Union in Rock County, southeast of Fitchburg. The center of the Oak Hall community shifted a half-mile to the north of Swan Pond to the intersection of Fish Hatchery Road and County M where other families from New York lived. Oak Hall continued as a small village in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, having at times a tavern, store, blacksmith shop, church, school, and creamery. None of the public buildings remains today except for the old creamery, which is part of a house.

A second crossroads village on the Old Janesville Road in Fitchburg developed in the late 1840's. It was situated at the intersection of Fish Hatchery and Lacy roads, and was named Dogtown for the local canines that frequented the butcher shop for meat scraps and bones. The 1861 plat map of Fitchburg shows a tavern located southeast of the intersection and a blacksmith shop to the southwest. The growth of Dogtown as a stage stop was delayed in part until later in the 1840's, because in late 1836 and early 1837 land speculators bought much of the northern half of Fitchburg, particularly sections 1 through 15, which included some of the Dogtown area.<sup>53</sup> Dogtown was close to Madison, and speculators purchased the land shortly after the legislature chose Madison to be the capital. After a number of settlers, including some of the Irish, bought the best





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Prepared by: THE DADE COUNTY  
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Nineteenth century Fitchburg was home to three large Irish immigrant settlements.



parcels of government land for \$1.25 per acre in southern Fitchburg, newcomers in the late 1840's paid the speculators increasingly higher prices for good tracts in northern Fitchburg, such as the Dogtown area.

The Dogtown stagecoach village was similar to Oak Hall because it was populated by Yankee rather than Irish immigrants. It differed from Oak Hall in that the residents came from a variety of northeastern states as opposed to only New York.<sup>54</sup> Dogtown did not experience the renown of Oak Hall since the lead trail ran far south of it and the village never had a post office. No sign of Dogtown's businesses can be seen today.

The Old Janesville Road was of great consequence not only because it gave impetus to Dogtown and Oak Hall, but because along with the lead trail it also brought development to the Town of Oregon. The convergence of the lead trail and the Old Janesville Road that began just south of Adams Road on Fish Hatchery Road continued south into Oregon and Rutland before the roads diverged again. The common roadbed left Fish Hatchery Road near the intersection with Netherwood Road, to begin a diagonal cross-country path—now largely obliterated—to the southeast.<sup>55</sup> Other than wagon ruts through woods, one of the few remaining visual markers of the road is an angled fencerow north of the intersection of Lincoln and Glenway roads.

The Old Janesville Road met with what is now called Rome Corners Road at the intersection with Union Road.<sup>56</sup> This location is notable because Oregon's first settlers, the Bartley Runey family, established a tavern there in 1841. Bartley was born in Maryland and was part Irish, so Irish blood was introduced into Oregon two years before the first Irish immigrants opened their Fitchburg homesteads. An Irish settlement did not develop around the Runey tavern, probably because the Runeys were second-generation Americans and seemed to identify more with Yankees, as indicated by the marriage of most of their children to Yankees.<sup>57</sup> (The children of Irish immigrants tended to marry other Irish immigrants or their offspring.)

From Runey's tavern, the lead road followed Rome Corners Road east to the village of Rutland (named after Rutland, Vermont) where it split into two trails.<sup>58</sup> One of these paths crossed the hilly "Hog's Back" country, following Old Stage Road to the southeast on its way to Cooksville in Rock County. Later, Highway 14 came into use as a road going south out of Rutland to Union and Janesville. Territorial roads in Rock County provided access not only to Janesville but also to the lead shipping destinations of Milwaukee, Racine, and Kenosha on Lake Michigan.<sup>59</sup>

A second lead trail followed Old Stone Road out of the village of Rutland in an easterly direction. The road forked in Dunkirk, giving travelers the option of going to Milwaukee by way of either Whitewater or Rockdale.<sup>60</sup> (See Appendix C.)

An 1846 road survey platted an alternate course for the Verona-Fitchburg lead route. This new road branched off from the old at Runey's tavern and proceeded west where it joined with today's County A in Oregon and continued on other roads on its way to Mineral Point.<sup>61</sup> The new lead trail through Montrose was probably made feasible by bridging the Sugar River branches and shoring up the road through the marshes.

Another major obstacle on the new lead route was the steep Fisher Valley Hill, which was located nearly a half-mile east of the intersection of County A and Hillcrest Road in central Oregon. Lead wagons coming from the west were pulled to the top of the hill with what the pioneers called "snake teams," which were additional yoke of oxen or teams of horses that were hitched ahead of the regular teams so as to snake each wagon up the incline. Onetime roads can be found on both the north and south sides of County A at this hill; the ruts in the woods to the south were made by the snake teams. Foundation stones of an oxen stable at the foot of the hill are still turned up by plows in the spring.<sup>62</sup>

Even though this alternate route was built through central Oregon and Montrose, the lead trail through Fitchburg was still used in the late 1840's and early 1850's before railroads began



hauling lead. Lead wagons came from Dodgeville and Blue Mounds to the west of Fitchburg, and some wagons from Mineral Point may have continued to avoid the Montrose lowland during wet seasons by utilizing the highlands of Fitchburg.

Bartley Runey selected an excellent place for his tavern in Oregon township since this location became the connecting point of the old and new lead trails. Runey's tavern was also on a road that passed through Fitchburg to Madison. The shortest route from Runey's tavern north to Madison was to take Union Road and County MM. But Fitchburg's Nine Springs Marsh and Hill on County MM became the bane of the Runeys. The 1843 marriage of Jane Runey and David Anthony, the first wedding in Oregon, was considerably delayed when the Reverend S. E. Miner from Madison got "bogged down" at Nine Springs Marsh. Unfortunately, his horse died before being extricated. Miner himself finally arrived at the wedding all covered with mud.<sup>63</sup>

Travel hazards affecting the Runeys did not end with that incident. In 1846, Bartley Runey was killed when his wagon overturned on Nine Springs Hill. The hill could be very slippery, as in this description: "When [it was] icy, horses could be shod and protected, but wagons would skid, slide, and crash as autos do now, frequently going ahead of the horses and tipping over at dangerous spots." That stretch of County MM was dubbed "Breakneck Hill" because of Runey's demise.<sup>64</sup> One can see why people who were passing through Fitchburg chose Fish Hatchery Road instead of the road over Nine Springs Marsh and Hill until the latter was improved.

Significantly, early pioneers recognized that a good road to Janesville eventually would be developed over that marsh and hill. Thus in 1841 the second log cabin in the Town of Oregon was built on a future road to Janesville. The dwelling was constructed by Robert Thompson at a spring near today's Janesville Street and South Perry Parkway in the Village of Oregon. In 1843, C. P. Mosely built a cabin that was used as a tavern where the water tower near the center of the village is located now.<sup>65</sup> Although the village later developed around Mosely's, the vil-

lage of Rome Corners is thought to have originated at the Netherwood Road and County MM intersection. A store stood on the lot now occupied by the Catholic church. Rome Corners shifted a half-mile south when more businesses developed around Mosely's tavern.<sup>66</sup> The name Rome Corners was dropped in favor of Oregon when the railroad came through in 1864 and named the station Oregon because that was the name of the township. Oregon township had been formed in 1847 and was named after the Oregon Country (later known as the Oregon Territory) in the Pacific northwest.

Another noteworthy village that was developing along with Oregon on County MM was Lake View, located at the intersection of County MM and County B in eastern Fitchburg. The Dane County Board of Supervisors authorized a road to be built from Madison in the direction of Janesville via the Town of Dunn. This "New Janesville Road" was laid out through what is now Lake View by December, 1843.<sup>67</sup> (See Appendix C.) A village developed there because the road crossed Murphy's Creek and the site was a good place for travelers to stop and water their oxen or horses.

Most of the land at Lake View was purchased by pioneers and speculators in 1844.<sup>68</sup> Lake View was similar to the other early Fitchburg villages of Oak Hall and Dogtown in that it was a stagecoach stop. The stages came through on a new line to Janesville after the Nine Springs Marsh and Hill were made passable.

Like the other villages, Lake View was founded by Yankees as opposed to immigrant Irish. The community was different in that it was established by families from Pennsylvania, including the Getts, Kurtz, and Murphy families. The Murphys were not Irish but were the German Abraham Morfa family whose surname was anglicized, or "gaelicized," in America.<sup>69</sup> Lake View received its name because it enjoyed a view of Lake Waubesa to the east in the Town of Dunn. The lake can no longer be seen from there, possibly because area trees have grown up since the pioneers initially cleared the strip of land between Lake View and the Lake Waubesa marshes. John's Springs, which was





The Lake View stagecoach hotel and tavern was built in 1845 by a Pennsylvanian, Conrad Getts, on a road between Madison and Janesville—at the junction of present County Highways B and MM. A small bar to serve travelers and a well to keep drinks cool were in the cellar. Photo taken in 1990.

named for its owner John Kurtz and was located a quarter-mile east of Lake View, was for many seasons after the arrival of the pioneers an Indian campsite with up to two dozen wigwams.

Lake View lost some of its usefulness for travelers when stagecoaches were supplanted by a railroad line which bypassed the village in 1864. The new railroad became the leading mode of travel between Madison and Chicago via Janesville. Lake View landowners originally were convinced that the railroad would come through their village and they asked more money for their land than the railroad would pay. As a result, the railroad built on more reasonably priced land on Syene Prairie in

eastern Fitchburg, and a village developed around the Syene depot. The depot, which was located a quarter-mile north of the intersection of Syene and Lacy roads, was north of the Irish settlement areas. The railroad tracks are now owned by the Chicago and North Western Railroad. Syene Prairie, which covered parts of sections 10-15 in Fitchburg, received its name early in the pioneer days in honor of Syene (now Aswan), Egypt, which was referred to in Ezekiel 29:10 and 30:6 as the far southern town of Egypt. The Syene Prairie community was a southern frontier outpost of Madison.<sup>70</sup>

In 1887, a second railroad, the Illinois Central, was constructed through the township, and the Village of Fitchburg was built on what is today Wendt Road in southwestern Fitchburg. Both of the railroad villages began to decline when automobiles became the leading mode of transportation, and the Syene and Fitchburg village depots closed around 1926. Neither of the railroad towns was populated by people from a single state or ethnic group, unlike most earlier settlements in Fitchburg.

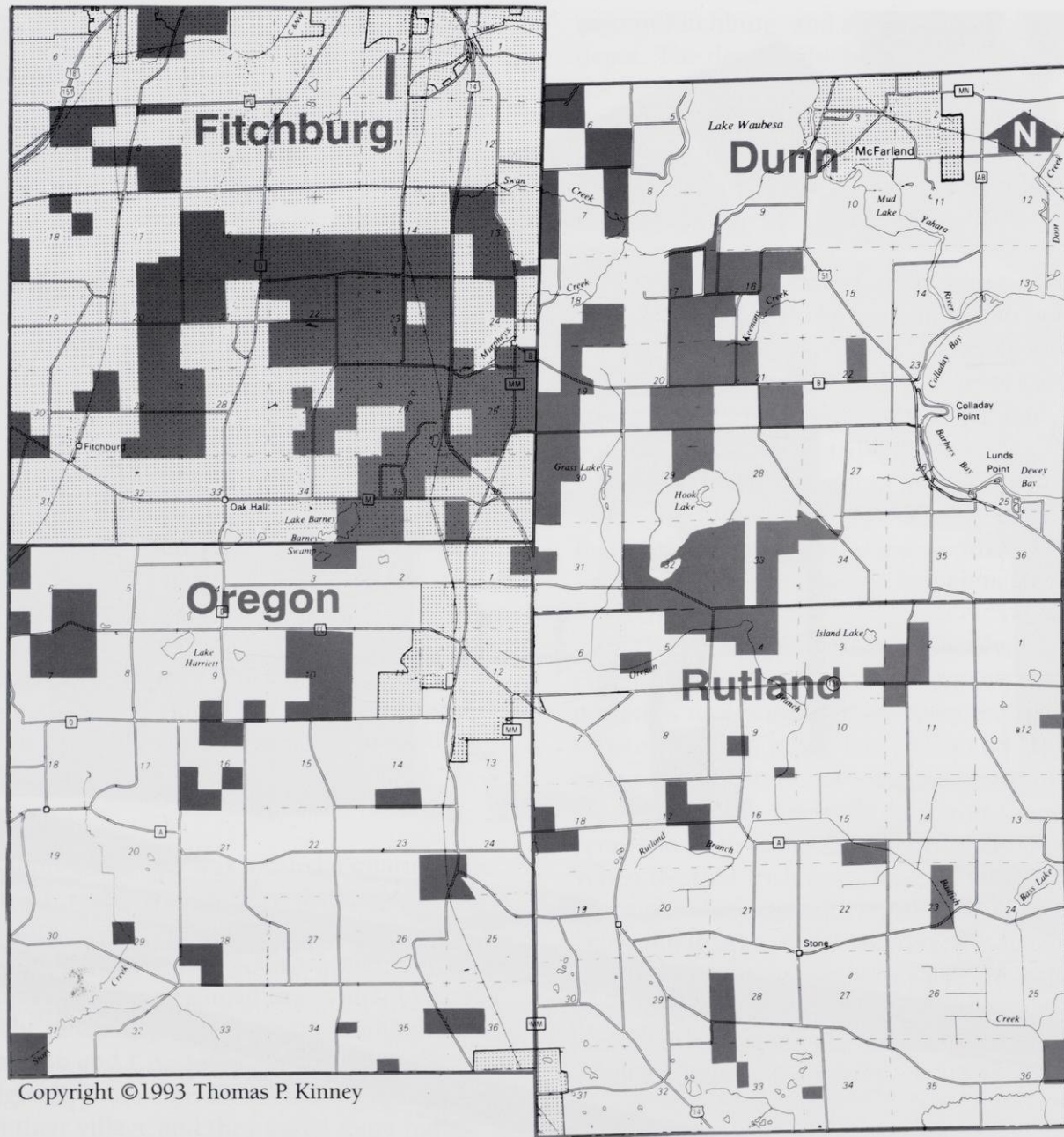
The patterns by which the Yankees and Irish settled in Fitchburg were largely dictated by the development of transportation routes through the township. The Yankee settlements were established in the late 1830's and the 1840's from west to east, not only along the lead teamsters' road, but also on strategic sites on three gradually improving roads into Madison: Seminole Highway, Fish Hatchery Road, and County MM. When the first Irish came looking for land, they stayed overnight along the convergence of the lead trail and the Old Janesville Road at Oak Hall, which was one of the most prominent settlements in southern Dane County in the early 1840's. With its good road access to markets in Madison and Milwaukee, Fitchburg stood out as a choice location for the Irish to adopt as their new home.







DeLavern Sykes by the Syene Depot about 1900.



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Irish possessed the shaded areas on this map in 1861.



## Irish Arrive in Fitchburg

Upon their initial arrival in the Town of Fitchburg, Irish immigrants entered a land of oak forests and open prairies inhabited by numerous deer, other game, and even prairie wolves. Lorin Miller, who surveyed the land in 1833, recorded in his notebook seeing hickory and aspen trees, scrub oak, hazel brush, red root, rosin weed, indigo, and green brier. Miller's description of the land as "gently rolling" and "holding out many inducements to the farmer" offers evidence why the Irish—having escaped famine and depression in their homeland—found Fitchburg so attractive.<sup>71</sup>

In the years after the Fox brothers' visit to Fitchburg in 1842, the Irish settlement rapidly grew to eight families in 1846 and seventy-six households by 1860. While the Irish were approximately one-third of the township's population, Yankees who operated many farms and a few village businesses made up over half of the inhabitants. The remainder was comprised of a small assortment of non-Irish farmers who were also immigrants. These proportions were unusual since the average Wisconsin township was only six percent Irish. But Fitchburg was similar to many of the state's townships in that Yankee farmers made up the majority of the heads of households in 1860, and immigrants of various backgrounds formed the minority of the population.<sup>72</sup> (See Appendix A.)

Immigrants and Yankees continued to enter Fitchburg in large numbers until most of the land was bought from the government and, around 1860, the population began to stabilize. Life during the settlement years stood in stark contrast to the decades after 1860. The frontier days were marked by log cabins overlooking freshly cleared forest gardens where wheat was being raised; goods were taken to market by wagons pulled by ox teams; the mail came by way of stagecoach. But by the late nineteenth century, Fitchburg had a completely different look, including neat white houses flanked by well-tended apple orchards. Expansive fields with grazing beef cattle and dairy

cows checkered the old forest. Horses replaced oxen, and stagecoaches were superseded by trains as Fitchburg prepared for the twentieth century.

Long before this modernization occurred, the early pioneers laid physical, economic, and social foundations in their wilderness settlements. The Yankees more than foreign immigrants were significantly less likely to settle in clusters of people from the same region or state of birth. Former New Yorkers comprised 28 percent of Fitchburg's 213 heads of households in 1860; those who did not live at the small Oak Hall village lived on farms dispersed throughout the township. New Englanders from states such as Maine and Vermont made up 15 percent of the township's families and also did not tend to form clusters when they built their homesteads. An exception to the Yankee tendency to live at scattered locations was the Pennsylvanian Lake View community, which constituted 6 percent of Fitchburg's population.<sup>73</sup> Yankees for the most part came in search of the best farmland and did not need to become culturally acclimated by living in ethnic settlements as did the immigrants.

While English, Scottish, and Canadian immigrants made up only a tiny fraction of the population and therefore did not have the numbers to form substantial settlements, the Germans and Irish had larger contingents and formed recognizable clusters. Four percent of the population was German, and some of these families settled north of the intersection of Seminole Highway and McKee Road in the 1850's. This community, which, according to the 1860 census, began with the Dinkels, Fergens, Kerfuls, and Wiesels, did not grow substantially in the following decades, and little trace of that settlement is left today.

The other major immigrant group with observable settlement patterns was the vast and ever-growing Irish community that comprised about one-third of Fitchburg's population. The



Irish built three large agricultural settlement areas in the township itself, with smaller nearby Irish homestead clusters in Dunn and Oregon townships. The majority of Fitchburg Irish pioneers from 1840 to 1860 staked claims in the southeast quadrant of Fitchburg in two adjacent settlement areas. One such area was the Fox Settlement, named for the Fox brothers who homesteaded there in 1843. The community has been known by this name since the pioneer days. The Irish Lane Settlement area began in 1844 and occupied parts of central and southeastern Fitchburg. A third, somewhat smaller group, settled on and around Stoner Prairie in western Fitchburg starting in 1848.

The Fox and Irish Lane settlement areas were founded by Irish who emigrated before the Famine in Ireland which began in 1845. The 1846 census shows Foxes, Keenans, and McGlynns at the Fox Settlement near today's County M, and Kinneys and Hamiltons at the Irish Lane Settlement area. Most of these families had lived in Canada and the northeastern United States for years, some since 1831.<sup>74</sup> There they saved money, augmented their education, and became familiar with American customs.

Like the Yankees, the pre-Famine Irish chose the largest tracts of gently rolling woodland that they could afford, because wheat grew well in stiff clay soil with its moisture-holding qualities. Many pioneer farmers were said to prefer timberland over prairies because they assumed the land that grew massive oak trees was more fertile than grassland. Prairies were not common on the East Coast so pioneers were not familiar with them. But large-scale wheat farming in the 1850's proved the prairies to be extremely fertile and easy to manage besides, because they were so level. When the settlers learned through much experimentation the best time of the spring to plow, and that plowing could not be done too deeply, crops such as corn proved to grow better on prairies than on one-time woodland.<sup>75</sup> Old maps show that the earliest pioneers built homesteads inside the woods within a half-mile of nearby prairie, probably because pre-settlement prairie fires had

burned into the woods and kept down the growth of dense underbrush.<sup>76</sup> Prairie lands along major territorial roads, like Seminole Highway, were an exception in that they were purchased by pioneers if speculators had not already bought the land from the government.

Most pre-Famine Irish followed the common pattern of land acquisition of buying woodland near prairies. The Fox Settlement was located near Oregon Prairie in the southeast corner of Fitchburg and the Irish Lane Settlement originated just south of Syene Prairie.

The Famine-era Irish immigrants of the late 1840's and early 1850's settled on farms adjacent to the pre-Famine Irish. This second wave of settlers often spent only as much time getting acclimated to America on the East Coast as it took to secure funds for the journey west. They differed from the pre-Famine Irish in that they often had less money. The pre-Famine Irish welcomed the newcomers, some of whom were family or friends, and the two groups soon became dependent on one another for assistance in activities like barn-raising, crop harvesting, and bookkeeping, the latter in particular for those who could not read or write.

By 1848 when most Famine-era Irish began arriving in Fitchburg, much of the preferred woodland had already been claimed. These Famine-era Irish often bought parcels on Stoner Prairie, even though this land did not front the Seminole Highway stagecoach road on the western part of the prairie. Other families chose the hilly, rocky moraines. Terminal moraines, overlooking the woods and prairies were miles-long strips of timberland where ice-age glaciers had stopped and rocks and glacial till fell free from the melting edge forming picturesque hills and kettles. At numerous places where roads cross these ridges in Fitchburg one can see the state capitol in Madison as well as look out across the Yahara River valley to the east or the Sugar River lowlands to the west.

The Milton Moraine, named for an advancement of the glacier that reached Milton, Wisconsin, runs diagonally from the southeast to the northwest corners of Fitchburg, bisecting





The 1861 plat map of Fitchburg was drawn by August Ligowsky. Parts of roads such as Irish Lane and McKee Road that may have received less frequent use are not shown even though the Fitchburg town clerk recorded the laying out of those roads in the 1840's. Other roads have since been abandoned due to lack of substantial use, such as the road by Monks' in sections 15 and 22 and the east end of Whalen Road.



the southeast quadrant. Most of the Fox Settlement was to the southwest of the moraine. The Irish Lane Settlement area was located to the northeast of the moraine and spread onto the moraine with the coming of the Famine-era Irish. In western Fitchburg, a number of Stoner Prairie families likewise owned acreage on the wooded Milton Moraine.

Famine-era Irish also bought Adams Road property south of Stoner Prairie on the Johnstown Moraine, which was named for the farthest southern advance of the glacier in Wisconsin at Johnstown Center in Rock County.

The glaciers created a number of relatively level areas that are now prairies as they pushed their way south. At the end of the last ice age some 12,000 years ago, the ancient Indians entered the area that is now Wisconsin and hunted forest game and fished in the abundant rivers and lakes. Indians found it hard to hunt in thick underbrush of uncleared forests, and turned to using fire to clear it out. Many plant specialists believe that Dane County prairies developed when maple and other non-oak stands burned in forest fires. Burr and white oak trees survived the fires since they had an insulating layer under their bark that protected them. Thinner barked maples burned if they were not shielded from the wind-driven fires by natural barriers such as nearby lakes. The level stretches became covered with prairie grasses and large parts of the oak forests became less dense and took the form of "oak openings," which were groves of oaks where the ground was covered with grass and small bushes.<sup>77</sup> When the pioneers arrived in the Fitchburg area, they noted that parts of the woods had a burned-out appearance, and that in most areas a wagon could be driven through the woods without being hindered by underbrush. The Indians' annual fall fires became less frequent with the arrival of the pioneers, and reports of the burnings ceased in the 1840's. Today, woodlots in Fitchburg that are no longer grazed by farm animals are returning to their pristine condition, and in most places one cannot maneuver a four-wheel-drive truck through their thickets and blackberry brambles.

Even before the end of the 1840's, the forests were regenerating themselves and adding to the challenges of the pioneer farmers. But the Famine-era Irish were initially more interested in obtaining land that was near to the three core Irish settlements. The process of the early Yankees and pre-Famine Irish selecting what they thought were the best parcels created some ethnic gerrymandering as well as isolated satellite settlements in and around Fitchburg. The expansion of the original communities began to reach its limits as the Irish settlements pushed up against marshes and Yankee farms. In the late 1840's and early 1850's, Irish immigrants began to buy land that was within a couple of miles but cut off from the main settlement areas, taking spots that had been overlooked earlier.

A breakthrough came for the Irish in 1850 when the State of Wisconsin began auctioning off a reserved square mile of land in each township—almost always section 16—to raise money for a state school fund. The land was sold in forty-acre parcels, and Famine-era Irish quickly populated large parts of the 640-acre "school sections" in the towns of Fitchburg, Dunn, and Oregon.<sup>78</sup> The significance of the school section sale for Fitchburg was that the land was located in a place that not only greatly enlarged the Stoner Prairie Irish Settlement, but connected it physically to the Irish Lane Settlement, thus linking a vast conglomerate of adjacent Irish homesteads encompassing the Stoner Prairie, Irish Lane, and Fox Settlement areas that has largely remained intact to this day.

A review of the Irish satellite communities that were isolated from, yet related to, this Irish heartland will help show the importance of the greater Irish community in the growth of the Fitchburg area. These outlying settlements, which contained between three and ten Irish families each, encircled Fitchburg's southeast quadrant, where the Fox and Irish Lane Settlements were founded earlier. Fitchburg's neighboring townships of Dunn to the east and Oregon to the south were also home to similar, smaller Irish settlements, while Verona to the west and rural Madison to the north had few



Irish homesteads near their borders with Fitchburg. For instance, Verona was only eight percent Irish as late as 1860 (see Appendix A).

What are some of these Irish satellite colonies?

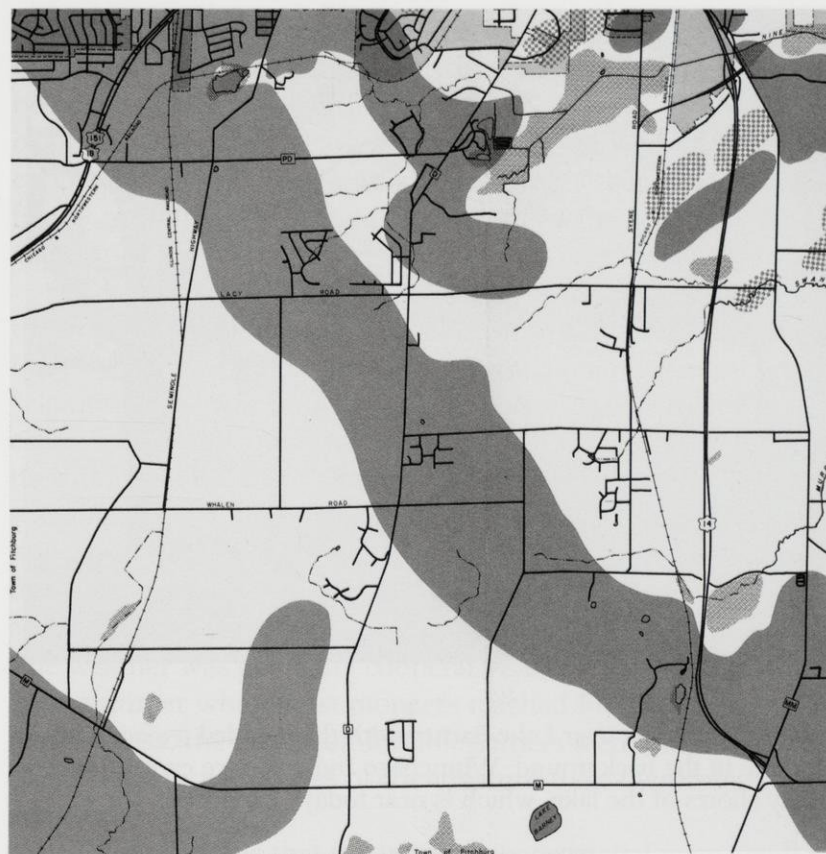
To the north of Stoner Prairie is Dunn's Marsh located on Seminole Highway. The Grady and Dunn families bought land from real estate speculators who owned much of northern Fitchburg, and the Irish built homes near the marsh. Later, relatives of these pioneers became established on Stoner Prairie.

Another outlying settlement was formed on County MM near Swan Creek in northeast Fitchburg. H'Elaine Gill, a gentleman of French descent, and his Irish wife Margaret arrived in 1854 and raised a large family there. Farther north, two Irish families worked as tenant farmers for neighboring landowners.<sup>79</sup>

The Swan Creek neighborhood extended into the Town of Dunn where the Lalor and Tipple families resided. William Lalor, an Irish Catholic, came to America well before the Famine, and bought land from the government on Swan Creek in 1846. William's father, Patrick Lalor of Tenakill House, County Leix, made history in Ireland in 1831 when he publicly refused to pay religious taxes to the Anglican Church. This action greatly accelerated an anti-tithe movement in southeastern Ireland.<sup>80</sup>

The Irish had struggled against rule by the English Crown for hundreds of years. The Protestant English army occupied all of Ireland after the Irish lost a series of battles in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Ultimately, southern Ireland won its political freedom with the creation of the Irish Free State in 1921, but the northern six counties continue to be a part of Great Britain today.

William Lalor wrote the following about Ireland to his father in 1843: "My returning to Ireland is altogether out of the question; if something very extraordinary [does not] occur I never shall see that beautiful, but ill fated miserable misgoverned Land of my Nativity—Blessed by Nature and Nature's God but cursed by Man."<sup>81</sup> The William and Amelia Lalor family prospered in America, and their homestead in the Town







Looking northeast over Lake Barney with the wooded ice-age Milton Moraine in the background. Winnebago Indians once camped on the grassy shores of the lake, which is near today's County M.

of Dunn remains in the family to the present. Many Famine-era Irish joined the Lalors in Dunn.

The Town of Dunn's previous residents, the Indians, also made important contributions to the history of the area. Indian effigy mounds were built in Dunn township near lakes Kegonsa and Waubesa by an Indian civilization that often buried significant members of their community in mounds from 300 to 1300 A.D. Many of these mounds were formed in the shapes of animals. The Indian history of areas such as Dunn and Fitchburg are remembered today when an occasional arrowhead is turned up in a field or garden.

An unusual highlight of the pioneer history of Dunn is the way the township was named. Although the Town of Dunn

sounds as if it may have been named for an Irish family, local histories allege that it was named for Dover, New Hampshire, but it was miswritten as "Dunn" by the engrossing clerk at the State Assembly in 1848. (The legislature may also have named it for Judge Charles Dunn, a key figure in the territorial period for whom Dunn County was named.)

The Town of Dunn was settled in a noteworthy pattern. Scattered throughout the township is the standard backdrop of settlers from New York, New England, and Pennsylvania. But the immigrant minority of the western half was largely comprised of Irish satellite settlements near the eastern border of Fitchburg, while the immigrant population of eastern Dunn consisted mostly of Norwegian farmers.

Most Irish in Dunn settled there in the 1850's. A number may have been railroad workers who stayed after helping complete the line from Milwaukee to Madison through what became McFarland.

A major Irish settlement in Dunn extended from the township's school section to Hook Lake. The community centered around the present-day town hall at the intersection of County B and Keenan Road. Some Irish families were the Gormans, Keeleys, Keenans, Lallys, Mahoneys, Mansons, and Sherlocks.

South of Hook Lake on Rutland-Dunn Town Line Road, an extraordinary settlement pattern that was not formed elsewhere in the Fitchburg area developed in a ten-family Irish community. In this Dunn settlement, the log cabins were built in a cluster along the road and some farms were as narrow as one-sixteenth of a mile wide and one mile long!<sup>82</sup> The arrangement bore some similarity to an ancient Irish land-use pattern where dwellings were located in a central place for assistance and protection, and long fields spread out behind each house. This design was more common in Ireland before the English estate system came to dominate in the 1600's and 1700's, when households were often dispersed to the outer fields of the property. The Dunn pattern differed from this old Irish system in that the Dunn land was owned by individuals and not held in common. Also, in Ireland the chief of the clan periodically



re-allocated land based on people's needs. (A clan was an extended family with a common ancestor.) The 1860 census reveals that most of the Irish families in section 32, like the Barrys, Cusicks, and Walshes, came to Dunn from Vermont around 1850. The families of section 33, including the Fitzgibbons, Flahertys, and Gareys, moved from New York in the early to middle 1850's. Little is known about the intentions of these families in developing their narrow farms, but the convenience and help that was gained by having close neighbors would have been as useful to the Irish Americans as it was for the ancient Irish.

South of Dunn in Rutland lived a scattering of Irish families such as the Hanans, Martins, O'Connors, and Welches, who made up 5 percent of the township's population in 1860. The majority of Rutland residents were Yankees with a sprinkling of immigrants—Danes, English, Irish, Norwegians, Scottish, and Welsh.

Oregon township, south of Fitchburg, was originally populated primarily with Yankees, although some Irish and other immigrant families were located on farms that were not part of large ethnic settlements. In 1860, Oregon's population was 12 percent Irish. A few Irish lived in and around the small village of Oregon. The Runey family, who arrived in 1841, resided in the eastern part of the township. John and Cornelius O'Brien moved into southeast Oregon in 1853; a large number of their descendants live in the area today. A group of Irish homesteads was located in the school section and later spread south into Fisher Valley on County A in central Oregon. A major artery on the west side of the settlement is now called Tipperary Road.

An additional satellite community of the original Irish settlements was a group of three Irish homes on Adams Road in the southwest part of Fitchburg. The old lead trail passed through land that a Barry family bought from the government in 1848 at what is now referred to as Bavary's hill. Descendants of the Barry, Eason, and McCune families have since moved to other parts of Fitchburg or out of the township.

The Irish satellite communities in Fitchburg, Dunn, and Oregon were important to the Irish of the core settlement areas because many families either were or became related by blood or by marriage. These early marriages facilitated friendship and cooperation as well as eventual inheritances that brought about family movements back and forth between the core and fringe communities.

The first season in the Fitchburg wilderness required the greatest show of ingenuity that the settlers could muster. Unless a family bought property on which a previous owner's "claim shanty" was built, new arrivals had to construct a log cabin from wood and mud gathered locally. While they built their houses and dug wells, they would live in their covered wagons, or turn their wagon boxes upside down and live underneath them. Additional shelter was provided by leaning boards against a tree and sleeping inside this lean-to while a fire out front kept howling wolves from venturing too close. The weather was generally cooperative in the late spring and early summer when most pioneers reached Fitchburg. Nonetheless, the more comfortable settlers were those who could sleep in the houses of friends until their own cabins could be built.

The log cabins that the pioneers constructed were small—about sixteen by twenty feet—with a large fireplace at one end of the room. The children slept in an upstairs loft and the parents slept downstairs. In contrast, a whitewashed stone cottage in Ireland often had three rooms arranged end on end with no loft. The old country chairs, beds, and tables probably were more civilized-looking than the pioneers' furniture. Very little cash was available in frontier townships for such items, so the settlers hewed some of their furniture from trees in the forest. Besides the few pots and dishes the Irish bought from the East, cookware and crockery were acquired gradually as stores were established and money was earned from harvests.

Much of the cash that the Irish had in their pockets when they first came to Fitchburg was turned over to the United



States government at the Milwaukee land office to buy property, usually at \$1.25 per acre. Because the federal government had taken so much actual cash out of Wisconsin from land sales, people lacked bills and coins, so they turned to a barter system in which a person might work all day in a neighbor's field and receive butchered pork instead of dollars. To put the scarcity of money into perspective, one person was said to have worked at various jobs all summer before he had saved enough coins to pay the 25 cents postage on a letter waiting for him at the post office.

Not all Irish families had enough money to buy land when they arrived in Fitchburg. A few of them became tenant farmers or renters. But many chose to "squat" on unclaimed land and try to raise the money over a few years to purchase it by growing wheat or other cash crops and doing such work as splitting rails for neighbors' fences. A difficulty with squatting was that someone with money could buy the farm from the government and try to force off the squatter. In 1841, a law protecting squatters' rights was passed, and protection groups sprung up around southern Wisconsin, including the Fitchburg Mutual Protection Society. It is said that claim jumpers would have their heads plunged into holes chopped into the ice in Lake Barney until they agreed to relinquish their deeds. Luckily, claim jumpers did not have to face the County MM "hanging tree," which served as a deterrent for horse thieves and worse, according to tradition. (The location of the hanging tree is no longer known.)<sup>83</sup>

After a few years, with a lot of hard work and perhaps some help from frontier justice, a landless laborer in Ireland could own a good farm in Fitchburg. The pioneer farms gradually expanded in size between 1840 and 1860, although many of the Irish farms were smaller than the Yankees' at first, since the Irish often had less cash with which to buy land. Most land purchases were of tracts either forty or eighty acres in size. By 1860, the average farm for both the Yankee and the Irish was 120 acres. The majority of farms had over forty acres cleared and tilled by 1850, and about eighty acres were put to the plow

by 1860. Farm growth began to slow and stabilize after that year since a good share of the land that was not too wet or steep to be cultivated was already being used for raising Indian corn, oats, timothy, and wheat.<sup>84</sup> Homesteaders sometimes bought strips of marshland even if it was a couple of miles away from their cabins because marsh hay was a good source of food for the livestock. Irish farmers owned most of the Byrne Road marsh and part of Nine Springs Marsh.

Wheat was the leading cash crop raised on most Fitchburg and Dane County farms from the 1840's to the early 1870's. Pioneers of the frontier states preferred to raise wheat during their early years in the wilderness because it usually supplied quick profits. In 1847, wheat became easier to harvest when Joseph Vroman bought the first reaper to be used in Fitchburg. Farmers hauled their wheat to market by ox-team and wagon along the old lead trail to Milwaukee.

Wheat did not always produce profits for the farmers. In some years, the trip to Milwaukee cost more than the amount for which the wheat sold, and farmers only came out ahead by giving immigrants a ride west from the Lake Michigan docks or by bringing back dry goods to local stores. The need for the long journey to Milwaukee was eliminated when wheat could be delivered to the new railroad depot in Madison in 1854 or to McFarland in 1856. Even more convenient were the Syene and Oregon depots of 1864.

Pioneers grew wheat not only to raise cash but also to make bread for their families. According to the writings of early settlers, the nearest grist mills for grinding wheat kernels into flour in 1843 were located at Ridgeway in Iowa County, Columbus in Columbia County, and Beloit in Rock County. Closer mills were built at Verona in 1844 and Stoughton in 1848. As the local population increased, grist mills sprang up east of Lake View in the 1850's and near the intersection of Whalen and Fitchburg roads in the 1860's.<sup>85</sup>

While bread was crucial to the pioneers' diet, many other important food items were produced from the gardens, woods, and lakes. The leading vegetable grown by both the Yankees





As farmers cleared woodland for fields, logs were often hauled by oxen and wagon to area sawmills to be used in constructing frame buildings.

and the Irish was the potato, which stored well and provided starch and fiber. The family cow provided milk, butter, and, eventually, meat. Pigs were common, so pork was more available than beef. Fruit found in the woods included wild plums, sour grapes, and various berries, not to mention nuts. Forest game was plentiful, especially deer, rabbits, and fowl. Those who lived near lakes and streams benefited from fish and waterfowl.

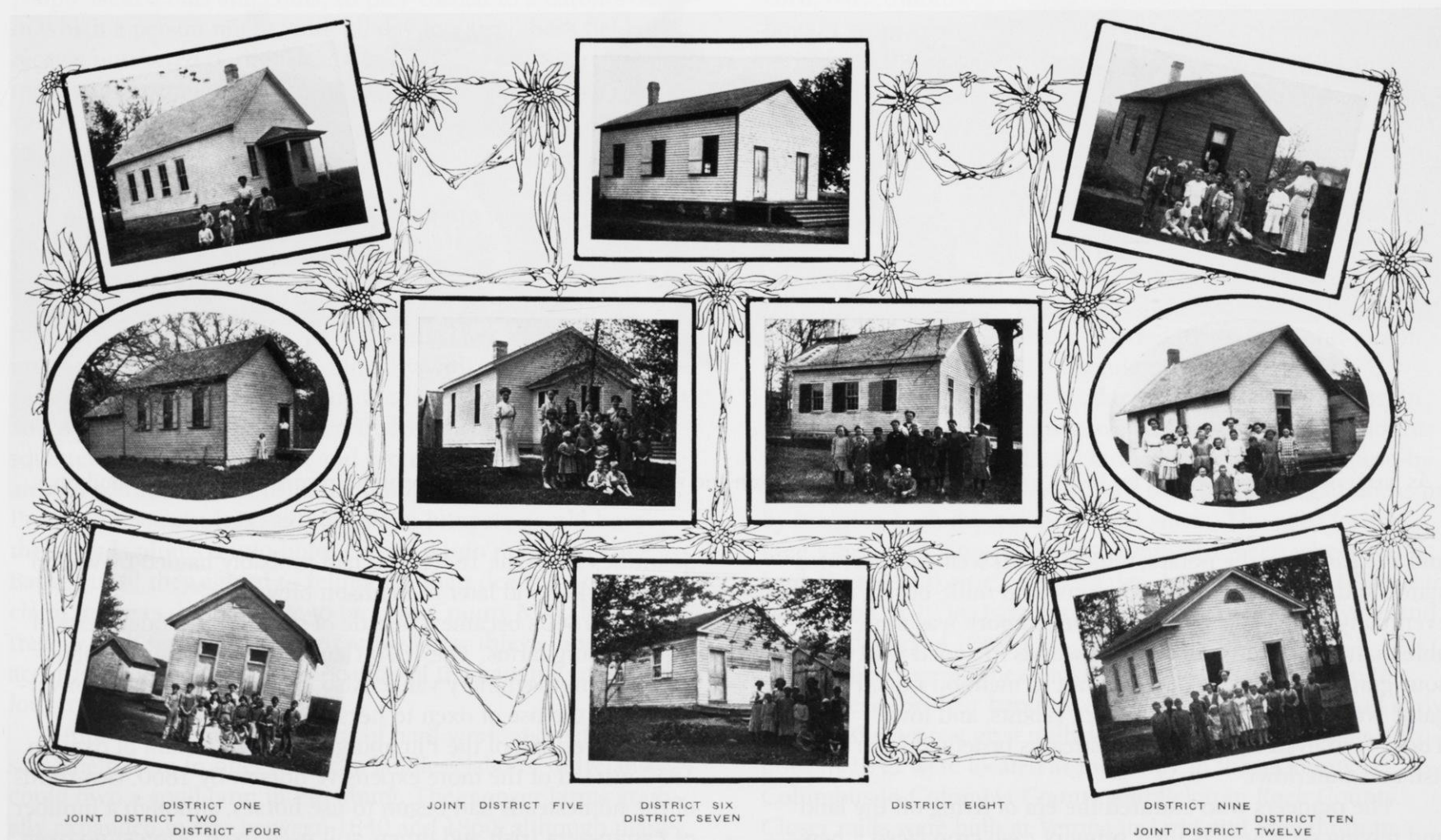
The pioneers who endured the era of living off the land and relying on wheat as their primary cash crop faced a new and dramatic challenge in 1861 when the chinch bug entered Dane County and devastated the wheat crop. Farmers continued to plant the same amount of wheat in the hope that good years might still lie ahead. Soon the pioneers began to diversify their sources of farm income. For instance, more farmers began raising barley, which some homesteaders had raised in small

quantities since the 1840's and had probably hauled by wagon to Milwaukee and later to Madison breweries.<sup>86</sup>

The 1860's became a decade of significant modernization for Fitchburg farms. The 1870 Census shows a considerable leap in farm machinery value. Also, a long and gradual conversion from the use of oxen to horses was completed in the 1860's. Over half of the Fitchburg farms had a team of oxen in 1850 instead of the more expensive horses. By 1860, two-thirds of the homesteads had begun to use horses, although a number of Famine-era Irish and others still used oxen. Almost no oxen remained in Fitchburg by 1870 when the switch to the faster and more versatile horse was complete.<sup>87</sup>

Another phenomenon that was related to expanding agriculture was the frequent use of day laborers by 1860. They were usually in their teens and twenties; many worked as hired men for previously established farmers while they earned





## Schools of Fitchburg

These photos were taken in 1911 and many buildings dating from the pioneer days are included. See Appendix F for names and dates of schools.



the money to buy their own farms. Young women worked as housekeepers for neighboring families as they, too, saved money. A large part of the young laboring class consisted of grown children of the older Irish families, friends from Ireland, and, often, soon-to-be in-laws.

Laborers were needed not only to work in the fields but also for new cash-raising projects. For example, sawmills were appearing in Madison and farmers hauled their wood to supply the building boom there. An additional money-making project was the planting of orchards. Remnants of these orchards can be seen today by watching for apple blossoms in the spring at abandoned homesteads. Orchard produce was sold in Madison in the 1860's along with other market crops.<sup>88</sup>

In the 1870's, many farmers gave up planting wheat since the soil was becoming exhausted, wheat prices were falling, and insects and disease continued to devastate the crop. Farmers had already begun increasing their number of pigs and chickens. Stock farming became popular, and additional sheep and cattle began to appear on hillsides and meadows. By 1880, the first dairy herds were forming in Fitchburg and in many other places in southern Wisconsin.<sup>89</sup> Milk from dairy cows has provided a principal form of income for many of the state's farmers to this day.

While success of the family farm was an essential priority to the early Fitchburg residents, an important matter during the winter season when there was less outdoor work to be done was the education of the children. The Irish immigrants as well as the Yankees advocated the prompt establishment of schools. Before the school buildings were erected, neighborhood children were taught in family homes. When the township government was organized in 1847, school construction was a top priority. Twelve school districts were eventually developed in Fitchburg, usually without regard to the differing ethnic origins of the pupils. For instance, the 1848 Lake View School was about half Irish. The only division of the twenty-four pupils by Pennsylvanian schoolteacher Andrew Kurtz was that the boys sat on one side of the aisle and the girls on the other.<sup>90</sup>

Unlike Kurtz, most instructors did not have a home in the area where they taught, and they boarded at residences around the neighborhood.

Some Irish parents were illiterate and therefore especially motivated to insure their children receive an education. Although literacy statistics were not recorded on the 1860 census for Fitchburg, the same federal census revealed that one in five Irish heads of households in Milwaukee was illiterate. In central Fitchburg, an educated man visited neighboring homesteads on Sunday afternoons to read the newspaper to local families. Parents would hush their children when they saw the man coming over the fields with a newspaper under his arm.<sup>91</sup>

Other goals of pioneer families besides education were the building of churches and the upgrading of their homes. In the 1850's, the Irish succeeded in establishing St. Mary's Catholic Church and a Presbyterian meeting house. One of the most visible symbols of frontier success was a stone, brick, or clapboard house to replace the log cabin. For the most part, Yankees were quicker to build new houses than the immigrant Irish. They had left their similar homes on the East Coast and came west on a mission to make money and civilize the wilderness. Homesteading was a speculative venture for many Yankees because they intended to break fields, build barns, and replace their log cabins with solid houses so that they could sell their improved properties for good capital gain, then move on and do it all over again. The Yankees' Puritan work ethic helped insure profits from the village businesses that some of them operated alongside their farms. A number of Greek Revival brick or frame houses were built by the Yankees in the 1840's and 1850's. The south wing of the red brick Pritchard House at Oak Hall and the Helms House near the southwest corner of Fish Hatchery and Whalen Road intersection are two of the few remaining examples of that architectural style in Fitchburg.

In contrast, most of the Irish did not come from long-established East Coast families. Only a few Irish households had earned sufficient funds to build new houses by the 1850's.





The transition from log cabin to frame house was a welcome event for nineteenth-century pioneers, although the cabin might remain for many years in silent testimony to earlier days. This 1911 photo of the Kinney farm on Irish Lane includes the “upright and wing” frame house with Queen Anne ornamentation that burned in 1920 and was replaced with the present house.



Some of the Irish joined the Yankees in the 1860's and 1870's in building a style of wood-frame house often referred to as "upright and wing." The wing was sometimes constructed with a kitchen on the first floor and was occupied before the gabled upright was built. Many of these houses are still found in Fitchburg. Most of the remaining log cabins were replaced by houses that frequently included Queen Anne ornamentation in the 1880's and 1890's.

An additional reason for the Irish being slow to replace their log cabins was that they did not all share the Yankees' speculative impetus to improve their land for resale. A large number of Irish were satisfied with living in Fitchburg because the good access to Madison markets helped them to achieve a goal of self-sufficiency. They put their money into buying nearby farms for their grown children, perhaps so that the clan could live together as in Ireland. The Irish immigrants' concept of the farm as a home for descendants helps explain why most of the 1990's Fitchburg residents whose families have lived in Fitchburg since before 1860 are Irish-Americans.

The primary experience for Irish arrivals in Fitchburg from 1840 to 1860 was that of building frontier log cabins and establishing pioneer farms. The Irish of the Fox, Irish Lane, and Stoner Prairie settlement areas and their satellite communities took on the wilderness challenges to build lives where potato famines and foreign armies would not tyrannize them. Schools, churches, and houses were only three of their achievements. They created the Fitchburg Mutual Protection Society to safeguard their land claims, and their wheat cash crops paid for their farms. By 1860, the Irish had built three healthy, resilient settlements that became the heart of one of Dane County's largest rural Irish communities.







Addie Fox Kiser with horses in front of Fox Hall in 1897. The Italianate house was built in 1856 by George and Catherine Fox from sandstone that was quarried locally and lumber that was transported across Lake Michigan. While the house was being built, the family lived in the basement which had a kitchen and a dining room.



# Fox Settlement

The first of the three core Irish communities to be established in Fitchburg was the Fox Settlement. The Fox and Keenan families arrived in the southeastern part of Fitchburg in June, 1843, well before the Famine emigration from Ireland. The Fox Settlement was important to the development of Fitchburg and southern Dane County because it was home to the first doctor in the region, and it provided a number of early political leaders.

The Fox Settlement centered around the Fox farms on County M, located south of the hilly Milton Moraine on the gently rolling land that the Fox brothers had viewed the previous November. Irish families that set up farms nearby included the Keenans, who lived on the southern end of Caine Road, and other Irish homesteaders who lived on County MM in Fitchburg. The McGlynns and the McWilliams were two of the first families to join the Foxes and Keenans at this settlement. Soon to follow were those escaping the Famine. On the 1860 census, some of the other area families listed were the Byrnes, Flemings, Giellands, Kellys, Lallys, and Pierces.<sup>92</sup> (See Appendix G.) Together, the families of the Fox Settlement developed a vibrant agricultural community.

Log cabins and barns were constructed, initially, and in time a public grade school, Prairie View, and a Catholic church, St. Mary's, were erected. Stores and hotels were not built, since the stagecoach routes, only two miles away, were the sites of villages—Oak Hall to the west, Lake View to the northeast, and Oregon to the southeast.

The founders of the Fox Settlement, the Foxes and Keenans, were from well-to-do families in Ireland. Eleanor Loftus Lynn Fox, the matriarch of the Fox family, was said to have been born in a castle in Ireland and to have died in a log cabin in Fitchburg. A family story relates that the Foxes left their Waterford home in 1832 when a member of the family

shot and killed an English officer who was confiscating a horse from the estate stables.<sup>93</sup>

The Keenan family, which consisted of five siblings in their twenties, emigrated from County Offaly in May, 1837, a few years after the death of their mother. Their father remained in Ireland. Another brother, Thomas, stayed in Ireland and was a barrister in Dublin. He wrote in 1843 to his sister Fanny in Fitchburg, "I often wished I was in some foreign country. . . . Make inquiry if the attorney business is good in America. Not that I have a notion of going but I would like to know. It is not as good here now as it was but indeed I can't complain as I am able to make £500 a year at it." Thomas Keenan did not move to the United States, but this letter gives one a sense that those who stayed behind were also weighing the option to emigrate.<sup>94</sup>

When the Irish arrived by covered wagon to the Fox Settlement, they faced many challenges. An early legend unfolded in 1844 about a Fitchburg heroine, Matilda Keenan. Matilda was returning from her brother George Fox's cabin carrying an infant in her arms when she met a full-grown bear. She fended off the bear by throwing her baby's bonnet and cloak to him and running home. Besides bear, an occasional panther was seen in the vicinity of Fitchburg.<sup>95</sup>

Despite the dangers of the wilderness, the Fox Settlement pioneers worked together to solve problems and better their lives. The adults of the community often had additional professions besides farming. Among these pioneers were a doctor, two preachers, and a grain-reaper salesman, all of whom spent time working both in Fitchburg and in other communities throughout south-central Wisconsin.<sup>96</sup>

Dr. William H. Fox was the first physician in the region south of Madison. He was said to have ridden through rainstorms until his boots were filled with water, as he went to see patients deep in the country. The son of Dr. William Fox wrote





Foxmount, located in the countryside east of Waterford, Ireland, was home to the William and Eleanor Fox family, who immigrated to the United States in 1832. Their son, George Fox, used Foxmount's floor plan in building Fox Hall in Fitchburg. Photo taken in 1975.

that his father treated not only settlers in Fitchburg, but also local Winnebago Indians who suffered from fever.

The chief sickness among the Indians was fever and ague, probably due to the climatic conditions and exposures under which the Indians lived. . . . Indians, numbering sometimes a couple of dozen or more, [sat] around under the trees in our dooryard at the old farm, while my father, with an assistant (usually one of his own daughters), administered to these sick Indians in the following manner; He would have a common dish-pan with a lot of powder in it, presumably mostly quinine. He would walk with this from one Indian to another, using a large tablespoon with which to put a dose of this powder in the

Indians' mouths, then his assistant, walking behind, would have a pan full of little chunks of raw salt pork, and with a fork would place one chunk in the mouth of each Indian for him to chew, and with which to work the powder down. . . . [A]s far as I can remember, I did not see a single Indian spit the powder out. . . .

In exchange for his services, the Indians would leave Dr. Fox, whom they called a "medicine man," tanned hides of deerskin and bearskin.<sup>97</sup>

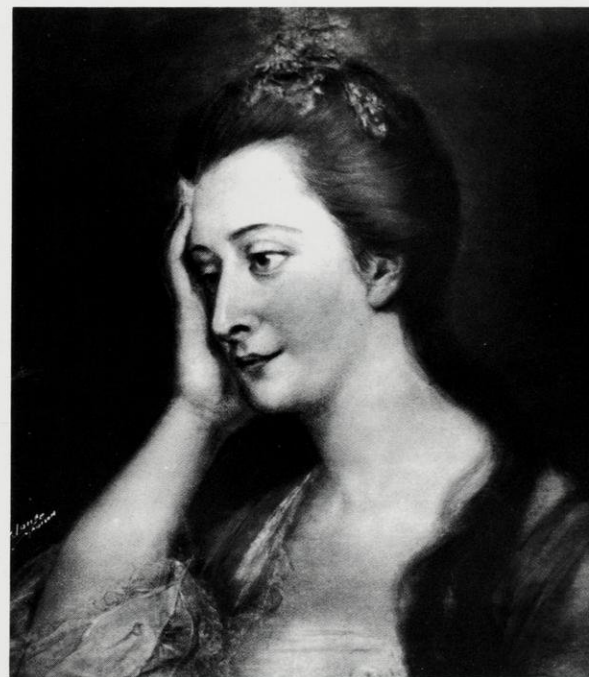
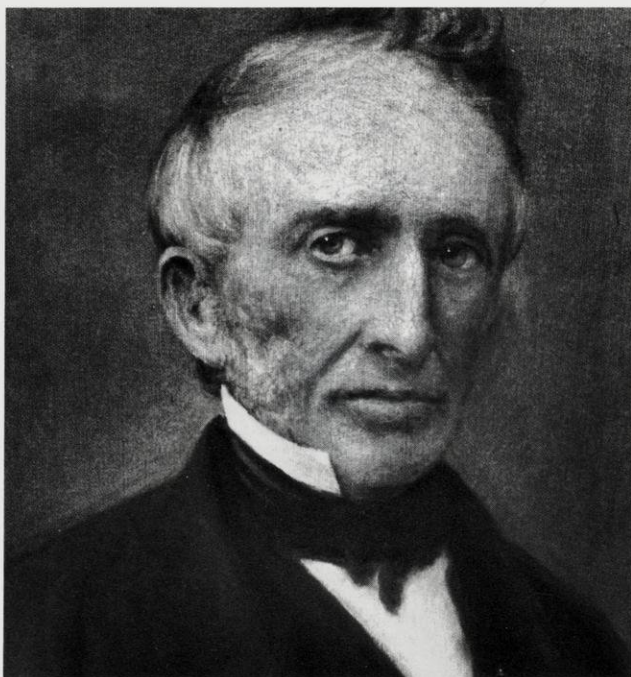
Dr. Fox was involved in Fitchburg government and became the first township treasurer in 1847. Also in that year he was a member of the Wisconsin state constitutional convention, serving on a committee that tackled a vast array of topics, including preamble, boundaries, franchise, internal improvements, taxation and finance, militia, and bill of rights.<sup>98</sup>

Another person with a number of responsibilities was John Keenan. In addition to raising a wheat cash crop and hauling it by ox team to market in Milwaukee and to lumber camps farther north, he was active in local government and was chairman of the Fitchburg Town Board from 1851 to 1857. John Keenan also served a number of terms on the County Board of Supervisors in the 1850's. In 1859, his wife Flora worked the farm while John served a term in the state legislature, where he was a member of the Assembly standing committee for state lands.<sup>99</sup>

Community events such as weddings were a focal point of Fox Settlement life. In January, 1850, John Keenan married Flora McKee. The bride's mother wrote to her sister Margaret who lived in County Down, Ireland, "Flora . . . was married on the sixteenth of the month. They were married before supper. Tea and supper are all one here. We had all things decent. They stayed with us all night and went home to their house the next day."<sup>100</sup> Evidently, the demise of the afternoon tea tradition was noteworthy to the Irish immigrants.

John Keenan's brother, George, raised extra cash by working as a shoemaker in Madison, which entailed traveling by horseback one hour each way. Another pioneer, John





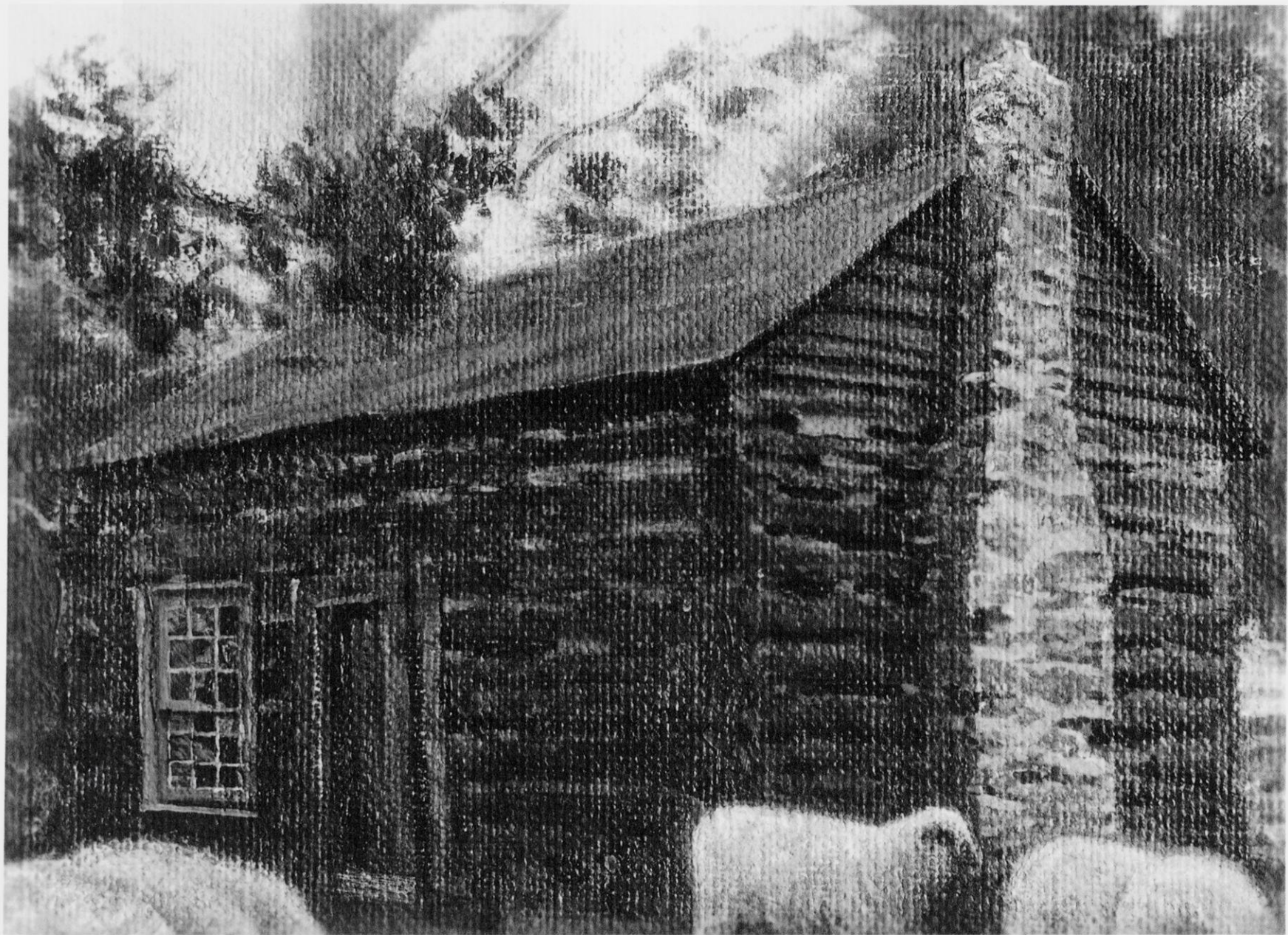
In 1843, William and Eleanor Fox were on the first wagon train of Irish to reach Fitchburg. The couple resided with their son George at the Fox Settlement.

McWilliams, arrived after the Foxes and Keenans and worked for five years on area farms doing such labor as splitting rails for fences while he set up his own farm. He started an apple orchard in 1846 on his homestead southwest of the intersection of County MM and Schneider Road, and it became one of the best orchards in the area. McWilliams was the first constable and the first tax collector for Fitchburg in 1847.<sup>101</sup>

The Irish settlement area spread north from McWilliams' farm along County MM. The farm to the northwest of the intersection with Schneider Road was owned by the Irish Gielland family. The property was later bought by Patrick Sheil who had been born in Ireland after the Famine, and left County Wicklow for America in 1881. Patrick and Rosanna Sheil moved onto the farm in the mid-1880's.<sup>102</sup>

Farther north and a half-mile to the west on Byrne Road was the Kivlin farm, which was purchased in 1862 from a Byrne family. Michael Kivlin and Anna Killerlain were married in 1854 in their native County Sligo, Ireland, where Michael was a farmer and fisherman. They immigrated to America that same year and Michael worked at slate and marble quarries while the young family resided in Rutland, Vermont. The Kivlins moved to Fitchburg, where they began farming. Later in the century, their son John bought a farm in nearby Rutland and purchased sheep from A. O. Fox's Woodside Stock Farm. John imported Shropshire, Dorset, and Cheviot sheep from England, and he bred Shorthorn cattle, Poland China and Chester White hogs, and Belgian horses.<sup>103</sup> Other leading stock farms in the area in the late 1800's included John





Dr. William and Cornelia Fox built this log cabin in 1843 where the Oregon State Farm is now located. The painting was made after the cabin was abandoned.



McWilliams' Oakwood Stock Farm and R. J. McWatty's Lake View Stock Farm.

Additional Irish farms were established north of the Fox Settlement on County MM. Matthew Fox, brother of George and Dr. William Fox, started a farm in 1845 a half-mile north of the Lake View village. The farm north of Matthew Fox's belonged to the Irish Cathcart family, who sold their place in 1868 to Edward and Ellen Glennan. The Glennans are an example of a family that first lived in a large East Coast city before buying a frontier farm. During the Famine, the Glennan family left County Roscommon and moved to Philadelphia. They traveled west in 1858 and lived in the Dane County towns of Blooming Grove and Westport before settling in Fitchburg. Their Irish-American hired man, Frank White, married their daughter, Bridget, and assumed management of the farm.<sup>104</sup>

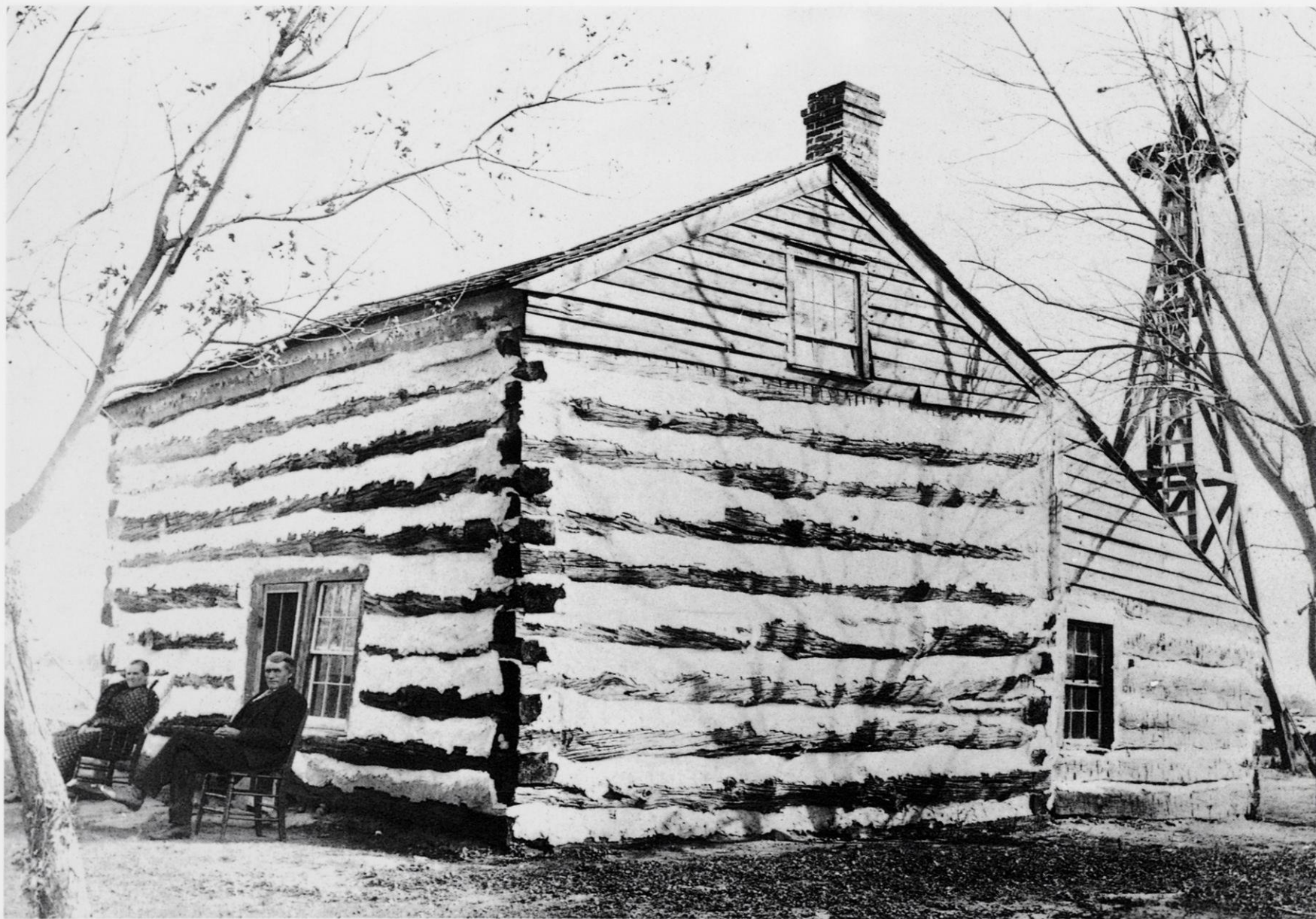
In the years 1843 to 1860, the Irish families of the Fox Settlement established a large number of households on the woodlands south of the Milton Moraine and along County MM. The settlement was founded primarily by well-to-do Irish and was expanded by Famine-era immigrants, forming a diverse but interdependent community. The Fox Settlement became known for welcoming Irish immigrants and offering employment on the established farms until newcomers could buy their own places. Two of the Fox Settlement's greatest contributions to the Fitchburg community were the first doctor south of Madison, and political leaders on the town, county, and state levels. The economic and political life of Fitchburg and the surrounding region was greatly enhanced by the efforts of the Fox Settlement pioneers.



In 1851, John Keenan was the first Irish person to be elected town board chairman. John and Flora Keenan lived on a Caine Road farm that had a stone quarry from which the limestone foundation blocks were gathered for most cabins and barns in southeast Fitchburg.







Michael and Alice Kinney seated in the dooryard of their 1844 log cabin, which was the first house built on Irish Lane. The cabin stood near the lilac bushes in front of the present Kinney farmhouse, which is located to the east of the intersection of Irish Lane and Caine Road. Photo taken in the 1880's.



# Irish Lane Settlement

**A**cross the wooded Milton Moraine, the second of the three core Irish communities was situated in central Fitchburg, west of the Lake View stagecoach stop, and northwest of the Fox Settlement. Through the middle of this settlement ran a road, later to be called Irish Lane. The community was significant to the development of Fitchburg because the Irish Lane Settlement had a large population of immigrants who worked an extensive group of adjacent farms in the heart of the township.

The Irish Lane Settlement began in 1844 with the arrival of the Kinneys, and by 1850 nearly half of the Irish in Fitchburg lived in this community. After 1850, many Irish families settled on Stoner Prairie, and the Irish population became more evenly distributed among the three settlement areas. Some Irish Lane Settlement families who lived in Fitchburg in 1860 include the Byrnes, Gormans, Kinneys, Lynches, McGaws, Monks, and Sweeneys.

The Irish Lane Settlement enjoyed continual expansion due to the steady stream of Famine-era immigrants. The Irish soon populated surrounding roads—Fish Hatchery Road to the west, Whalen and Byrne roads to the south, and Syene Road to the east. The terrain was a belt of relatively level land between Syene Prairie to the northeast and the Milton Moraine to the southwest, with some farmland extending onto the moraine.

Similar to the Fox Settlement, the Irish Lane Settlement did not have a commercial center, so the people carried on their business at the nearby stagecoach stops, such as Lake View and Dogtown. Unlike the Fox Settlement, the Irish Lane Settlement did not have a centrally located school. The children were integrated with those who were not of Irish descent at two area schools—Syene School to the northeast and Fitchburg Center School to the southwest.

The first homesteaders on Irish Lane were Andrew Kinney, his brother Michael, and their families. The Kinney brothers,

who emigrated well before the Famine, came from Newcastle Townland near Swinford, County Mayo. In Ireland, the family had a fertile, sixteen-acre tract of land. They also taught school at an abandoned church nearby. The brothers emigrated from Ireland in 1831, during a time of poor harvests and resistance to paying tithes to the Anglican church. Michael purchased a farm near Trois Riviere, Canada, where Andrew met Mary Jane Clark, a daughter of a Methodist minister. The English Clark family forbade Mary Jane's marriage to the Catholic Irishman, so the young couple eloped to the United States where they were wed by a justice of the peace at Salisbury, Connecticut, in 1834. Mary Jane later converted to Catholicism. Andrew worked on Erie Canal expansion projects, and in 1844 they moved to the wilderness in Fitchburg that became the Irish Lane Settlement. Michael and his wife Mary joined them the following year, and the families gradually purchased additional land expanding the farm to 200 acres by 1849. Andrew's log cabin was located on Irish Lane, east of the intersection with Caine Road, and Michael's farmsite was on Irish Lane nearly a quarter-mile southwest of the intersection. Square nails, pottery pieces, and foundation stones from Michael and Mary Kinney's log cabin are still unearthed today as the field is cultivated.<sup>105</sup>

When Andrew and Michael Kinney arrived in Fitchburg they were in their forties and were older than most of the Famine-era immigrants, the majority of whom were in their twenties and thirties. The brothers lent their expertise in work with which they were familiar. Andrew had knowledge of stone masonry and helped neighbors lay foundations for their log cabins and barns, while Michael had a talent for bookkeeping and assisted immigrants with their farm accounts. When the township government was organized in 1847, Andrew served as a fence viewer and mediated disputes about property lines. Michael was elected town treasurer in 1851.<sup>106</sup>

Some of the pioneers who joined the Kinneys at the Irish





The stables at the Kinney farmstead in Newcastle Townland near Swinford, County Mayo, Ireland. The family immigrated to Canada in 1831, and later to the United States. The round tower in the background was built in the eighth century as part of the defense of an early Christian monastery. Photo taken in 1991.

Lane Settlement also became active in local government. For example, Matthew Gorry was chosen to be one of the three town supervisors in 1854. William Hamilton became treasurer in 1860. Others served as supervisors of some of the fifteen road districts in the township.<sup>107</sup> Before running for office, most immigrants focused on building their homesteads and breaking their fields.

One element that helped to unify the people of the Irish Lane Settlement was that most families were from small farms in Ireland. They had a common interest in establishing larger and more productive farms and escaping the potato blights and civil unrest of Ireland. For instance, the Gormans, who emi-

grated on Famine's eve in 1845, left Ireland "because they could only own a few acres of land, which made the conditions undesirable." The Patrick and Bridget Gorman family farmed in Pennsylvania until coming west via stagecoach to Fitchburg in 1850. Later, the family moved to the Town of Dunn school section, and their Whalen Road homestead in Fitchburg was occupied by William and Ellen Gorman.<sup>108</sup>

Two families who left Ireland during the Famine were the Cullens and the Sweeneys, from County Wicklow. They departed in 1849 and purchased tracts of land on Byrne Road in the southern part of the Irish Lane Settlement. Before the Cullens built their Byrne Road home, they first constructed a





The Gorman clan built a log cabin on Whalen Road in 1850. Later in the nineteenth century, they moved into this house a half-mile west of their pioneer cabin. This photo was taken around 1898. Left to right: Martin, Arthur, Janie, Will (in buggy), Mae, Arthur Jr. (on rocking horse), Kate, Mary.

log cabin on the now largely abandoned Daniel Baxter Road, named for the 1843 road surveyor who is thought to have resided in Green County. The legislature authorized this territorial road from Madison to the Illinois state line via the Town of Albany. The path left Madison on today's Fish Hatchery Road and branched southeast near the intersection with East Cheryl Parkway.<sup>109</sup> The Daniel Baxter Road was altered a number of times within a half-mile-wide corridor, and modern remnants of it include Caine Road in Fitchburg and Glenway Road in Oregon. The road did not receive much traffic in the frontier days, probably because it was not a lead trail, mail route, or stage road. When parts of the road were abandoned, the farm-

sites of the Cullens in section 27 and Robsons (later owned by Monks) in section 15 were left stranded deep in the woods (see Maps on pages 31 and 86.) Neither of these building sites are in use today, and their long driveways are overgrown with weeds and trees.

The Cullens, like many of the area's immigrant families, came from southern Ireland. Though Fitchburg had few families from northern Ireland, two Ulster families that came to Irish Lane during the Famine were the Lynches and the McGaws. Patrick Lynch, a Catholic from County Fermanagh, settled in Fitchburg around 1847 and wrote home encouraging his siblings as well as nieces and nephews to join him. The





Bridget and James Monks were Irish immigrants who reached Fitchburg in 1855 during the wheat-growing era and built a log cabin in the Irish Lane woodland. They soon expanded their farm onto Syene Prairie and owned one of the largest farms in Fitchburg.

Lynches were the first Famine-era Irish to take up residence in Fitchburg.<sup>110</sup> Samuel and Mary McGaw were Protestants who emigrated from County Londonderry in 1849 and reached Fitchburg in the late 1850's. The McGaws rented an Irish Lane farm northwest of the intersection with Caine Road from the Ward family. Later, they bought property on East Lacy Road, and lived near the entrance of the present-day McGaw Park.<sup>111</sup>

The new arrivals at Irish Lane were hard-working farmers and they succeeded in improving their properties. The James and Bridget Monks family, ancestors of today's Faheys, Greens, and Hartys, arrived in 1855 and eventually expanded their farm of 160 acres to 480 acres, making it one of the largest in Fitchburg. The Monks' homestead was located on the north side of

Irish Lane a half-mile east of the intersection with Fish Hatchery Road. An unplowed part of the field marks where the log cabin once stood. During dry years, Julia Monks Fahey would ride horseback while herding her cattle to be watered three miles south at Lake Barney in the Fox Settlement. Julia's husband, John Fahey, lived for a short time at the large Irish settlement in the Town of Westport before coming to Fitchburg.<sup>112</sup>

Some families have not remained in Fitchburg for as long as the Monks' descendants, and one group left as early as the 1850's. The McLaughlins, Hawkins, Shields, Caffreys, McFaddens, and one of the Kinneys used their profits from wheat cash crops to buy farmland in Pierce and St. Croix counties in northwestern Wisconsin, where they moved to establish new homesteads.<sup>113</sup>





The nineteenth-century home of Lawrence and Cecily Hawkins, and the birthplace of John Hawkins in Loughrea, County Galway, Ireland. When the landlord evicted the Hawkins during the Famine in Ireland, he had a Catholic priest deliver the notice—so as to soften the blow. The Hawkins clan settled near Irish Lane in 1852, southeast of the intersection of Caine and Whalen roads. Photo taken in the 1980's.



As earlier pioneers moved away, more Irish replaced them. For example, the Patrick and Bridget Caine family bought the Hayes farm and other property in a valley of the Milton Moraine near the intersection of Caine and Byrne roads. The Caines had emigrated in 1867 from County Cork where Patrick was a seaman. The family lived on a New York farm before coming to Fitchburg in 1869.<sup>114</sup> Each day Patrick would climb the windmill tower on his Fitchburg farm and get a view from above just as if it were a mast of a ship.

A number of people of the Irish Lane Settlement raised money by selling farm produce in Madison. John Hawkins, a young Irishman who lived southeast of the intersection of Caine and Whalen roads, was known to have had his share of misadventures during his trips to Madison to sell his produce. In the mid-1850's, he was driving a team of oxen with a wagonload of potatoes to be sold at the railroad boarding houses near West Washington Avenue and Bedford Street. To avoid having to go around Monona Bay and the Greenbush marshes, he took a shortcut, as he often did, on the new railroad bed over Monona Bay adjacent to the site where the John Nolen Drive causeway is today. But this was no ordinary journey over the bay, because around the bend came a train. The steam whistle shrieked at John. He seized his oxen by the horns and tried to get them down the bank, but they were afraid of the water and would not budge. The engineer threw on the brakes and came to a stop in front of the wagon. The engineer was outraged. He kicked the oxen down the bank and booted John in the seat of his pants. All the poor immigrant could do was thank him for his treatment and follow his wagon down the bank. John's plight was perhaps not unlike the experiences of a number of immigrant Irish who were unaccustomed to new American ways.<sup>115</sup>

Nevertheless, the Irish had to carry out business in Madison, and some had relatives in the Irish neighborhoods. An example of this latter connection was the Kinneys' nephew Timothy Kinney, who made money in the 1849 California gold rush. He bought a farm on Irish Lane near today's West Hill

Drive as well as a hotel on Main Street at Bedford Street in Madison's Irish Fourth Ward, where he served as the first alderman. Timothy Kinney was also associated with another major Irish community in Dane County. His wife, Mary O'Malley, was part of a large family from north of Madison in the Town of Westport.<sup>116</sup>

At the same time Irish Lane settlers were coming into contact with outside areas, they also sought to nurture their own community life. Quilting bees and evening dances held in the residents' homes were important social activities. Traditions such as making social calls at neighbors' houses on Sundays enhanced the unity and camaraderie of the Irish Lane community.

From 1840 to 1860, the Irish Lane Settlement area developed into a large immigrant community in central Fitchburg. Like ethnic neighborhoods in big cities, Irish Lane became an ethnic enclave with its own locational identity and legendary heroes. The residents of this widespread settlement were entertained by the capers of people like John Hawkins as they made the psychological and cultural changes from Irish immigrants to American citizens.







Fitchburg pioneers sold produce at the grocery markets and railroad yards of Madison. John Hawkins, like the young man in the photo, drove a multi-purpose oxen cart. The eldest son in each household had the duty of hauling potatoes and other goods to town, where adventures often awaited them.





The Moses and Maria Lacy family in front of their house in the 1880's, before additions were made on the structure. The farmhouse is located northwest of the intersection of Lacy and Mutchler roads. Their log cabin, built around 1851, stood a half-mile southeast of this house. Left to right: Libby, Will, Moses, Ellen, Maria, Mary, Margaret, John.



## Stoner Prairie Settlement

While the pioneers of the Fox and Irish Lane settlement areas were building thriving communities during the years from 1840 to 1860, a third Irish immigrant area was developing in western Fitchburg. The Stoner Prairie area was settled beginning in 1848 by a number of Irish families, most of whom were fleeing the Famine. Some of the original families were the Barrys, Byrnes, Gradys, Lacys, McQuillens, Sweeneys, and Whalens.

The Stoner Prairie Settlement was significant to the growth of the Irish community in Fitchburg not only in that these Irish worked some of the most fertile land in the township but because the settlement continued to expand through the late nineteenth century as the Irish purchased farms from Yankee families. Stoner Prairie was also desirable because it had few stones, especially compared to the moraines. The settlement area grew along Seminole Highway, West Lacy Road, and Mutchler Road until it covered about two and one-half square miles of land, which continue to be farmed by Irish Americans today. The treeline that bounds the prairie is shown on the 1861 plat map of Fitchburg on page 31.

The Stoner Prairie Settlement area developed in two parts—first the earlier eastern community, and later the western sector. In 1848, the Irish entered eastern Stoner Prairie, where today's Mutchler Road is located, when James and Elizabeth Barry moved onto a tract of prairie land there. Similar to the pioneers of the Fox and Irish Lane settlement areas, a number of the Irish of the Stoner Prairie area came to Fitchburg seeking better farmland than they had found in the north-eastern states, where they had lived for a time after their arrival from Ireland. The Barry family, who emigrated in 1834 from Aghada Parish, County Cork, lived first in Cornwall, Canada, and later on a stony farm near Potsdam in St. Lawrence County, New York, until they moved to Fitchburg. Their Fitchburg prairie farm was not located on the Seminole Highway stage

route, so many earlier arrivals bypassed this land thinking that it was not only isolated but less fertile than woodland. When the prairie turned out to be very good for raising crops, the Barrys capitalized on it. By the time of the 1860 census, they owned real estate worth as much as many of the “old money” Yankee landowners' properties.<sup>117</sup>

The mother, Bridget, and three brothers of James Barry also came to Fitchburg in 1848. Michael, one of the brothers, bought land on Adams Road south of Stoner Prairie. Their holdings gradually expanded as the Barrys worked together to buy a farm first for one brother and then for another. The Barrys later bought properties near Oak Hall, including the Nott family's 1856 Italianate stone house on County M one mile east of Fish Hatchery Road.<sup>118</sup>

The first Stoner Prairie neighbors of the James Barry family were Irish who bought school section property from the state. The Thomas and Ann Byrne family and the John and Hanorah Sweeney family purchased land and built log cabins just inside the woods where the Milton Moraine meets Stoner Prairie. John Sweeney had relatives living near the Byrne Road marsh and the Cullen farm in the southern part of the Irish Lane Settlement area. The Stoner Prairie Byrne family who arrived in 1853 may also have come from County Wicklow, Ireland, as did the Sweeney and Cullen families in 1849.<sup>119</sup>

The Sweeney's Wicklow homeland was located near the border of County Carlow, Ireland. Hacketstown, County Carlow, is situated on a piece of Carlow land that extends into Wicklow leaving Hacketstown surrounded on three sides by Wicklow townlands. The Sweeney families lived in the Wicklow Townlands of Rathshanmore (meaning “large old fort”) and Rathduffmore (“large black fort”), and attended Mass at the Roman Catholic parish in Hacketstown.<sup>120</sup>

Another early Irish family on Stoner Prairie near Mutchler Road was the Moses Lacy family, which started a farm on the





The “upright” part of the Edward and Ellen Byrne house was constructed with lumber from the 1857 St. Mary’s Catholic Church, which was dismantled after a new church was built in Oregon in 1886. The Byrne house staircase was made from the old choir loft stairs, and the bannister incorporated part of the communion rail. The Byrne house is located on Whalen Road hill, southeast of Stoner Prairie. Photo taken in 1890’s.

school section in about 1851. Moses emigrated from Ireland in 1849. He was employed on a farm near the present day Whitney Way and Mineral Point Road intersection in Madison. He married Maria Nolan in January, 1851, in the third wedding to be recorded at St. Raphael’s Church in Madison.<sup>121</sup>

To the south of the school section homesteads of the Sweeneys, Byrnes, and Lacys was the James and Mary Whalen farm. James Whalen came from a long-time Johnston, New York, family who spelled their name “Whelan.” His great-great-uncle, Rev. Charles Whelan, fought in the American Revolution with LaFayette’s army. Rev. Whelan, who was a Capuchin,

established the first Catholic church in New York City in 1785, where St. Peter’s stands today on Barclay Street.<sup>122</sup>

While the Whalens were starting a homestead in the Irish settlement on the eastern part of Stoner Prairie, the prairie’s western part, better known for its early Vroman and Stoner farms, had only one Irish family living on it in 1860—the James and Mary Grady family. The Gradys lived on Lacy Road a half-mile west of the Seminole Highway stage road. A relative of this family, Martin Grady, came from Glandree Seakle, County Clare, Ireland, and began farming on Stoner Prairie in the 1900’s.<sup>123</sup>





The old cheese factory on the left side of the barn originally stood at the Seminole Highway and Lacy Road intersection, a few hundred feet from where it is today. When the turn-of-the-century cheese factory closed it was moved to serve as an extension to the O'Brien barn. Photo taken in 1990.

In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, the O'Brien and Dunn families bought a number of farms on Seminole Highway. Today, Irish Americans still own most of Stoner Prairie.

Michael and Catherine O'Brien emigrated from County Cork, Ireland, in the late 1820's. The O'Briens had an infant son with them, but a law restricted taking babies under one year of age out of the country. The family wanted to leave together, so the father put baby John in a potato sack, slung it over his shoulder, and walked out past the customs officials onto the ship! Since few vessels were available for carrying immigrants to the New World at that time, the O'Briens bought passage

on what was at hand—a cattle boat. In the following years, the O'Briens operated businesses in Caracas, Venezuela, New York City, and Luzerne County, Pennsylvania. The parents eventually died, and when John was in his twenties he brought his younger siblings including Cornelius from a Pennsylvania orphanage to an Oregon township farm in 1853. Members of the family bought land on Stoner Prairie by 1890.<sup>124</sup>

Similar to the O'Briens, the Dunn family of Stoner Prairie originated in County Cork and left Ireland before the Famine. The Duns immigrated in 1837 and settled in Pennsylvania before moving to the Town of Middleton around 1843. Descendants bought land near Stoner Prairie in 1919,





The Martin and Janett McKenna family built this stone barn on their Seminole Highway farm which they purchased in 1856. Note the twentieth century addition of the gambrel roof, which added space to the hayloft. The barn is now owned by Gerald and Ruth Dunn. Photo taken in 1990.

although relatives had lived by Dunn's Marsh in Fitchburg since the 1850's.<sup>125</sup>

The Irish family of Martin and Janett McKenna established a homestead in 1856 on the east side of Seminole Highway north of Lacy Road. In the 1860's and early 1870's, the McKennas developed a substantial stock farm by purchasing neighboring Yankee homesteads where the soil had become exhausted from years of intensive wheat farming. They built a large stone barn on the original land. (The only other Fitchburg Irish family known to have built substantial stone buildings before 1860 was the Fox family.) The stone for the McKenna barn was probably quarried to the east of the intersection of Lacy and

Fitchrona roads. Also in the area was the Yankee John Mann's stone barn and house (now Quivey's Grove Restaurant) on Nesbitt Road, northwest of Stoner Prairie.<sup>126</sup>

In the years following 1860, a few Irish families moved to western Fitchburg and lived in areas other than Stoner Prairie. The David and Rosa Byrne family moved shortly after 1860 to the Waterman farm on County M in southwestern Fitchburg, having worked as tenant farmers on Matthew Fox's Irish Lane property. This Byrne family emigrated from County Wicklow, Ireland, before 1830. They lived in Vermont until 1854, and then went west to Milwaukee and rode on the first passenger train from Milwaukee to Madison.<sup>127</sup>





David and Rosa Byrne left their home in Vermont where they had resided for over a quarter of a century to move to Fitchburg in 1854. These Irish immigrants rented land for a number of years and then bought a farm near Fitchburg Village.

Southwestern Fitchburg was also home to the Patrick and Bridget Purcell family who left Ireland during the Famine. After living in Ontario and New York, they took up residence on what is now Purcell Road in Fitchburg shortly before 1880.<sup>128</sup>

Another family that moved to western Fitchburg but lived some distance from Stoner Prairie was the McKees. Dennis McKee left Ireland near the end of the Famine in 1855 and married Bridget Garen. In 1864, they moved to a Fitchburg farm on today's McKee Road a mile to the west of the intersection with Fish Hatchery Road. The McKees later became related through marriage to families of the Stoner Prairie Settlement area.<sup>129</sup>

The Stoner Prairie Irish families built a strong community on the eastern part of the prairie and the beginning of a settle-

ment on the western side between 1848 and 1860. The community was different from the earlier Fox and Irish Lane settlements because its ongoing expansion was not complete until the twentieth century. The Stoner Prairie Irish initially improved their farms with profits from raising wheat on land that many of the Irish and Yankees had dismissed as not sufficiently fertile just a few years earlier. The settlement continued to grow when a number of neighboring Yankees moved away after the end of the wheat era. The Stoner Prairie Settlement and the outlying Irish farms of the western half of the township became integral parts of the Irish community of Fitchburg.







St. Mary's Catholic Church, located west of the gate of the current Oak Hill Correctional Institution on County Highway M, had a large Irish congregation which drew from Fitchburg, Dunn, Rutland, and Oregon townships during the years 1857 to 1886.



# Frontier Worship

The Irish pioneers of the Fox, Irish Lane, and Stoner Prairie settlement areas made fulfillment of their spiritual needs a high priority. Nearly nine out of ten of the Irish in Fitchburg professed the Roman Catholic faith. Families brought in missionary priests from Madison and other places to celebrate Mass in log cabins until churches were built—first the wood-frame St. Raphael's Church in Madison and later St. Mary's Church in Fitchburg. The Irish Protestants of Fitchburg were a small but active minority who constructed a meeting house that was largely attended by Yankee homesteaders as well as Irish. Most Catholics and Protestants did not even consider intermarriage during the mid-nineteenth century. So one's church was a likely place to meet a future spouse. From 1840 to 1860, the two congregations of Fitchburg helped define much of the social, economic, and political fabric of the township.

In 1844, George and Catherine Fox and Andrew and Mary Jane Kinney began having priests say Masses in their log cabins. The Reverend Martin Kundig and Bishop John Henni of the Diocese of Milwaukee were known to celebrate Mass in Fitchburg. Two other priests who said Mass were Norbertine Fathers—the Reverend Max Gaertner from Sauk City and the Reverend Adalbert Inama from Roxbury, communities northwest of Madison along the Wisconsin River.<sup>130</sup>

Visiting missionary priests said Masses in the territorial capitol in Madison as early as 1842. In 1850, the small St. Raphael's Church was built in Madison. Most baptisms, marriages, and funerals of Fitchburg Catholics were performed there until township residents completed their own church, St. Mary's, in 1857. The twenty-by-twenty-four-foot St. Raphael's Church was the forerunner of the stone building completed in 1862 that stands today on West Main Street. The Reverend M. E. Smyth and the Reverend Francis X. Etschmann of St.

Raphael's periodically celebrated Mass in homes in mission communities, including Fitchburg, from 1850-1856.<sup>131</sup>

The 1850's were a crucial decade in the development of a county-wide identity for the Catholic community as well as its Irish and German subsets. People traveled to St. Raphael's from many of the outlying Dane County townships for Sunday Masses. The Fitchburg Irish befriended other Irish families from settlements such as Westport. The choice of marriage partners reflected this change in community orientation, with more of the young finding spouses from distant parts of Dane County.<sup>132</sup> Thus, the tiny St. Raphael's Church helped to alleviate the isolation of rural Irish settlements and promoted new friendships and family bonds. Feelings of goodwill first spawned in the mid-nineteenth century at St. Raphael's are still present today among the Irish Americans of Fitchburg, Westport, Madison, and other Dane County communities with long-standing Irish populations.

Fitchburg's era of regular religious worship with Irish from distant townships came to an end in 1857 with the completion of its own church. In 1856, Barney and Ann McGlynn gave two acres of land on County M for the consideration of one dollar for a place to build a Catholic church. St. Mary's Church, its parsonage, and its graveyard were established across the road and east of Lake Barney. The church site was west of the gateposts of the present Oak Hill Correctional Institution. The first pastor was the Reverend Hugh McMahon, whose parishioners came from the towns of Fitchburg, Dunn, Rutland, and Oregon.<sup>133</sup>

In 1886, a new and larger church, Holy Mother of Consolation, was completed on the southwest corner of County MM and Netherwood Road in Oregon. The old St. Mary's church was dismantled and the lumber was used to build the Edward and Ellen Byrne farmhouse southeast of the intersection of





A larger church was built in Oregon in 1886 to replace the dilapidated St. Mary's in Fitchburg, and the parish became known as Holy Mother of Consolation. Located on the southwest corner of Main Street and Netherwood Road, this church was destroyed by fire in 1961. The rectory was moved to Whalen Road east of the Fish Hatchery Road intersection in Fitchburg.





The present Holy Mother of Consolation was built in Oregon in 1962 on the lot where the previous church stood.

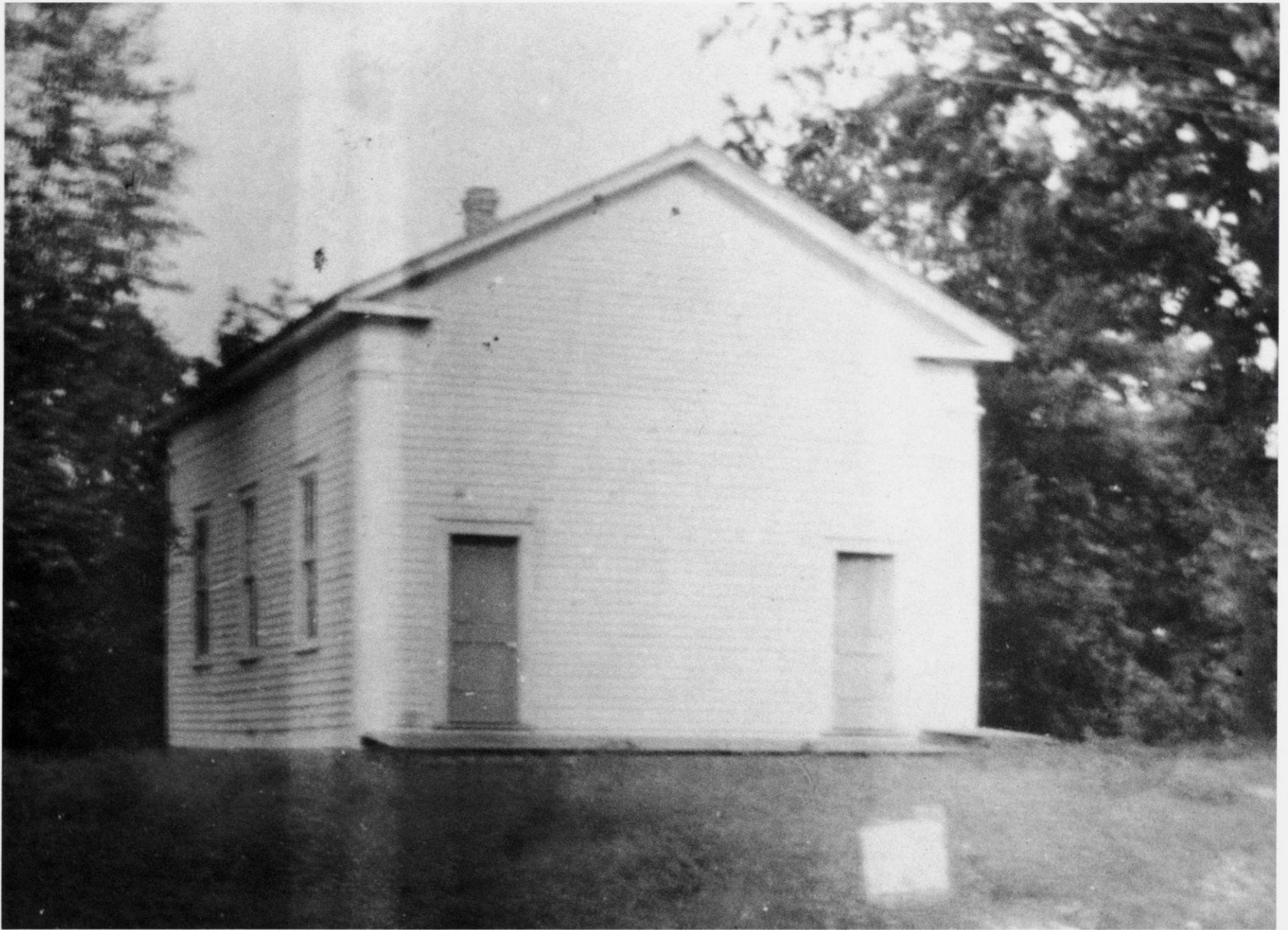
Whalen and Mutchler roads in Fitchburg. The new church burned in 1961 and was replaced in the following year by the current structure. The parish had a grade school from 1954 to 1968, which was staffed by the Dominican Sisters from Sinsinawa, Wisconsin—an Irish-dominated, English-speaking order.<sup>134</sup> (Several German parishes in Dane County were served by the so-called Racine Dominicans who retained a German-language tradition well into the twentieth century.)

Deceased members of the Fitchburg community have been buried in a number of different places. Early burials are said to have taken place on family farms, but the bodies were usually moved to consecrated cemeteries when the latter were established. The first known Roman Catholic graveyard in the Madi-

son area, founded in 1852, was the Greenbush Cemetery on Brooks Street. When St. Mary's Hospital was built on the Greenbush Cemetery site in the early 1900's, the bodies were moved to Resurrection Cemetery on Regent Street.<sup>135</sup>

From 1857 to 1898, most Fitchburg Irish were buried at the old St. Mary's Cemetery on County M. In 1898, four acres of land, south of and adjacent to the Protestant Prairie Mound Cemetery on County MM north of the Village of Oregon, were purchased for a cemetery from Samuel and Helen Brothwell. The first burial at this new St. Mary's Cemetery was that of the Fitchburg Irishman Daniel Cullen in 1898. Some of the bodies in the old St. Mary's Cemetery on County M were moved to Oregon or Madison, but others remain there even though the





Fitchburg's Protestant-Irish minority built this Presbyterian meeting house in 1855 on County MM north of Lake View. In 1873, the church was moved to Swan Creek where it served the Syene Methodist Society.



crumbling gravestones were removed in 1970.<sup>136</sup> The location of these gravestones is not currently known, but a partial listing of the inscriptions is included in Appendix H.

The Protestant community also conducted its church services and established graveyards in the area. Methodists attended the services led by William Maine Fox, an itinerant preacher who lived at the Fox Settlement and established congregations throughout south-central Wisconsin beginning in the 1840's. His son, Matthew Fox, a Presbyterian minister, gathered his flock of mostly non-Irish Presbyterians for services in homes and in a log school house. In 1855, the Irishman Hugh Cathcart gave a parcel of land on the northwest corner of the intersection of Irish Lane and County MM to the Presbyterians for the consideration of one dollar "so long as it is used for church purposes." A meeting house was located on this site and was well-attended by Fitchburg and Dunn township families.<sup>137</sup>

In 1873, the Presbyterians began meeting in Oregon, and the Fitchburg building was moved to a lot on the Terwilliger farm to the southeast of the intersection of County MM and East Lacy Road. The Syene Methodist Society occupied it and the meeting house became known as Swan Creek Church until it was vacated around 1928. Nothing remains of the church at the Swan Creek site.<sup>138</sup>

In the pioneer days, most Irish Protestants buried their dead at what is now Prairie Mound Cemetery in Oregon, located on the border of Fitchburg. In 1848, Amasa Salisbury of Oregon sold land to the Presbyterian Congregation for a cemetery a half mile south of the intersection of County M and County MM. Also, a cemetery was started in 1853 that was the final resting place of many Yankee pioneers and is located in Fitchburg three-quarters of a mile west of Oak Hall.<sup>139</sup> Few Irish were buried there.

Both the Catholic and Protestant Irish settlers of Fitchburg made early and persistent efforts to institute the comforts of their respective religions. A significant benefit of traveling to St. Raphael's in Madison for Mass was the tie—a sense of

wider community—that the county's Irish developed with one another. In building their meeting house, Irish Protestants, too, established a vehicle for communications and connections with Fitchburg's Yankee residents. But the Irish led Fitchburg from 1840 to 1860 in organizing the first two churches in the frontier township.







River crossings were dangerous for pioneer wagon trains, particularly if the water was high from spring rains.



## Departures from Fitchburg

In the 1850's, a number of the Irish settlers of Fitchburg needed to expand their farms so that they could raise more acres of wheat and other cash crops. All of the land in Fitchburg had been purchased from the federal government by 1853. Young, growing families on small farms in the Fox, Irish Lane, and Stoner Prairie settlement areas were feeling economic pressure to buy adjacent fields from neighbors or to leave Fitchburg for less expensive government land in northwestern Wisconsin. When Irish families chose to leave, they usually sold their land to those who were also in need of expansion, and all parties benefited from the exchange. The process that led to some of the first departures began in 1854 with the purchase of land in Pierce and St. Croix counties in northwestern Wisconsin, and extended throughout the rest of the nineteenth century as families bought land in Iowa, Minnesota, the Dakotas, and other states.

The latter part of the century brought a slight decline in Fitchburg's population. Although the number of residents in the township was stable in the decade before 1870, the population dropped from 1152 to 978 by the year 1880 before it leveled off again (see Appendix A.) The 1870's was the decade when less wheat was planted due to pestilence, soil exhaustion, and reduced prices. A number of Yankees and some Irish moved away in hopes of buying government land in the West. Increased farm mechanization allowed grown children of both the Yankees and the Irish to leave for cities like Madison, Milwaukee, and Chicago in pursuit of job opportunities. By this time, the first generation of settlers were reaching old age, and farming technology had improved to the point where fewer persons were required to farm the same acreage they had so laboriously hewed from forest and prairie. Fitchburg's population soon stabilized, in part because many of the young Irish chose to stay on the family farm, in part because of Madison's good produce market, and in part because the area proved

ideally suited to the kind of scientific dairy farming promoted so successfully throughout the state by agriculture experts and the university.

The roots of this pattern of departure, population decline, and re-stabilization in Fitchburg can be traced to some landowners' dissatisfaction with their farms as early as the 1850's. Fitchburg Irish who farmed on the rocky, hilly, ice-age moraine that ran between the Fox and Irish Lane settlement areas were some of the earliest pioneers to obtain land in northwestern Wisconsin. In the autumn of 1854, Lawrence Hawkins, his sons-in-law Michael Caffrey and Patrick Shields, as well as a friend, James McLaughlin, purchased property in the Town of Pleasant Valley, St. Croix County. The Hawkins, Caffrey, and Shields farms in Fitchburg were located southeast of the intersection of Caine and Whalen roads. One of the houses was built partially into the side of a hill. Their farms were extremely hilly and the fields were later nicknamed "The Alps" by a twentieth-century Swiss-American farmer, Otto Amherdt. In the spring of 1855, these families undertook an arduous overland journey to reach St. Croix County. Because theirs was one of the early caravans to travel north, they had to blaze their own trails through the woods and ford rivers over which bridges had not yet been built. One harrowing experience occurred just north of what some called "the desert at Sparta" (because of its sandy soil). When the families reached the Black River, they found it was swollen with spring rains. While crossing it, the wagon box in which Mrs. McLaughlin and her baby were riding came loose from the undercarriage and began to drift down the river! The men eventually floated them to safety.<sup>140</sup>

After many days of traveling, these pioneers reached Pleasant Valley only to discover that their properties would be more difficult to settle than they had anticipated. Unlike Fitchburg's mixture of prairie, woods, and meadows, their Pleasant Valley land was covered by a woods that was dense with trees





The Hawkins clan built two houses in 1852 southeast of the intersection of Caine and Whalen roads. A semi-earth house was built into the side of a hill on the Milton Moraine to block northerly winds. Elizabeth Kinney and Mary Ann Pattison, fifth and sixth generation descendants of Lawrence and Cecily Hawkins, are pictured at one of the house sites in 1992.

and underbush. It was difficult to walk through this forest, and even more of a challenge to drive a wagon through it. For years after their arrival at what was to become known as the "Hawkins Settlement," or "The Thicket," the Irish were still chopping down trees and grubbing out stumps to expand their forest gardens into what could be called fields. When these pioneers had cleared enough acres, they planted wheat cash crops as they had done in Fitchburg, and during the winter the wheat seed for the following spring was kept in a box in a corner of the log cabin. Flax was raised for linen, and the women spun sheep's wool to be used for making warm clothing.<sup>141</sup>

While the Hawkins Settlement was forming in Pleasant Valley, more Fitchburg Irish began the journey north to St. Croix, Pierce, and Pepin counties in the late 1850's and early 1860's. For instance, three Fitchburg families—Cullen, Byrne, and Sweeney—had members who moved there. So did Edmond Kinney, taking one-third of the farmyard stock and leaving the remainder for his two younger brothers at their Irish Lane farm. In 1860, he and his wife Catherine moved to a farm less than a mile from the Hawkins Settlement but across the St. Croix County line in Martell township, Pierce County. After a few years of struggling to carve a farm out of "The





The northwestern Wisconsin homestead of Michael Caffrey and Bridget Hawkins Caffrey in Kinnickinnic township, St. Croix County. This family left Fitchburg in 1855 and helped found the Irish Hawkins' Settlement in the Pleasant Valley/Martell township timberland called "The Thicket." The Caffreys soon joined their neighbors in moving to better lands nearby, such as the farm in this photo.

Thicket," they moved to a better tract a short distance away. In 1877, Edmond and Catherine again used their farm earnings to "trade up" and bought a 480-acre farm in Hudson township.<sup>142</sup>

Another Irish Lane family, the McFaddens, also went to northwestern Wisconsin. They left an eighty-acre Fitchburg farm which had thirty-five tillable acres and forty-five acres of hills and kettles on the Milton Moraine. The McFaddens' exit, in turn, provided an additional farm for the expanding Whalen clan of Stoner Prairie. A family such as the McFaddens could till far more acres than they owned, as they had a good number

of healthy boys and girls. Children were often considered golden assets on the westward-shifting frontier.

The James Fox family, who had lived just south of the Fox Settlement, headed northwest with their wagonload of children in 1859. They moved to the Durand area in Pepin County. By 1860, the largest Irish settlements in northwestern Wisconsin were located in the Eau Claire area, east central Pierce County, Hudson and Erin townships in St. Croix County, and St. Croix Falls in Polk County. Among these areas, Erin township had the greatest number of Irish families, with others living in the surrounding townships of Emerald, Hammond, Warren, and





The ruins of a pioneer family's stone house on West Lacy Road. Nearly a century and a half after masons crafted these walls, the stones are returning to the earth from which they came. Photo taken in 1990.

Richmond. John Hawkins, of train-dueling fame, farmed in Hammond in his later years.<sup>143</sup> (Two other groups from Dane County also sent settlers to this area: the Norwegians and the Germans. Many families in Pierce, St. Croix, Eau Claire, Chippewa, Dunn and Pepin counties have Dane County relatives to this day.)

Unlike those in Fitchburg, the first Irish settlers in Erin and other St. Croix County townships were railroad workers who were laid off when construction halted on the Superior and Bayfield Railroad. Railroad failures occurred in 1857, and many unemployed laborers who were living in Hudson decided to begin farming.<sup>144</sup>

Besides northwestern Wisconsin, areas to which the Fitchburg Irish moved in the latter half of the nineteenth century include Minnesota, Iowa, and the Dakotas. (Again, Norwegians and Germans did the same.) When Mrs. Flora Keenan's brother James returned from the Civil War in 1865, he went west and established a farm in Spring Valley, Minnesota. James and Mary Fox moved in 1880 from Pepin County, Wisconsin, to the wheat-growing prairies of Brookings County, South Dakota.<sup>145</sup>

A number of families from Irish Lane moved to the Dakotas in the 1880's. In 1883, James and Harriet Matthews moved to Osceola township, South Dakota. They lived across the border from Harriet's cousin, Catherine, and her husband





The North Dakota prairie homestead of William and Catherine Halpin in Ellendale township, Dickey County. The Halpin family left Fitchburg in the late nineteenth century, and these abandoned buildings are persistent reminders of these pioneers. Carole Kinney, research editor, and Tom Kinney, author, in this contemporary photo.

William Halpin who resided in Ellendale township, North Dakota. The Irish families found their Dakota properties to be different from their Fitchburg homesteads in that there was not a tree in sight on the endless prairie. As a part of receiving title, the government required settlers to plant trees on their Dakota farms. The Irish families' homesteads became profitable with successful wheat crops on the fine prairie soil.<sup>146</sup>

Fitchburg became an anchor point in the late nineteenth century for Irish families that had moved to new homes on farms and in cities throughout the upper Midwest. Most westward-bound Irish left siblings or cousins at the Irish settlements in Fitchburg, and they wrote letters and visited their

relatives and friends in later years. In the early twentieth century, some Irish Americans (including Stephen N. Hawkins) recorded stories of their childhood days in Fitchburg, leaving valuable records about the lives of the Irish pioneers from 1840 to 1860. Today, large numbers of Irish Americans across the Midwest recall that their immigrant ancestors spent their first years as Americans in Fitchburg, Wisconsin, where the work was hard but where the financial, familial, and social rewards made it all worthwhile.







Robert Fahey working on fences on his Irish Lane farm with his shepherd dog Tippy at his side. Robert's great grandparents, James and Bridget Monks, began farming on Irish Lane in 1855. Photo taken in 1983.



## Fitchburg in the 1990's

From 1840 to 1860, the families of the Fox, Irish Lane, and Stoner Prairie settlement areas formed a substantial Irish community in the township. It is a credit to these founders that, more than 150 years later, a strong Irish-American presence continues in these areas. Since 1860, about 30 percent of farmland owners in Fitchburg have been Irish Americans. Many of the present owners are descendants of the original settlers.

Over the past century and a half, some members of the pioneer families have moved to newly opening territories in the West, including the Dakotas. The expanding job markets of large cities have lured others. But there are those who stayed to take up the family farms, and recently a number have built houses on the old homestead woodlots and commute to work in Madison.

In the 1990's, Fitchburg remains mostly rural with some housing developments. Fitchburg's population steadily grew as people sought to live in the township and work in Madison. The number increased from 1058 in 1930 to a total of 15,648 in 1990 (see Appendix A). The township incorporated as a city in 1983 to prevent Madison from annexing business and residential areas in northern Fitchburg.

Despite this new city's rapid growth, reminders of the long-time Irish presence still abound. Irish Americans today are quick to point out the number of major roads, in or bordering Fitchburg, named after Irish families, including Byrne, Caine, Lacy, Lalor, McCoy, McKee, Purcell, and Whalen. Wetlands named after Irish pioneers are Lake Barney on County M and Dunn's Marsh on Seminole Highway.

While the Irish Americans retain much of their pioneer ancestors' land on roads that their forebears once cut through the forests, the social fabric of Fitchburg has undergone dramatic changes since the frontier days. The gradually growing commercial centers near Fitchburg—Madison, Oregon and

Verona—have drawn churchgoers, schoolchildren, and shoppers in three different directions. The growth of the villages in the towns of Oregon and Verona was assured in the heyday of the railroads in the late nineteenth century because these villages boasted both railroad depots and major highways to feed commerce.

In the twentieth century, the one-room schools consolidated. By the 1960's, the children of the Fox Settlement and the eastern Irish Lane area were bussed to Oregon. The children of the western part of the Irish Lane area were sent to Madison, and those from Stoner Prairie were assigned to Verona. In addition, a number of Catholic parents sent their children to parochial and private schools outside Fitchburg. Parents often belonged to churches near to where their children were educated. Today, while children know many of the other Irish-American offspring through school, church, 4-H, family relationships, or next-door proximity, the familiarity is not at the same level as in the pioneer days, when nearly 90 percent of the Irish youth attended Sunday Mass at St. Mary's Catholic Church.

One of the strongest bonds the Irish Americans of Fitchburg enjoy today is that many of them have neighbors of the same heritage. Two vast ribbons of land tracts that are owned by Irish Americans stretch across Fitchburg. One series of adjacent Irish farms runs from County M in the Fox Settlement, through the Irish Lane area, to the intersection of Fish Hatchery and Lacy roads. The other ribbon of farms covers much of Stoner Prairie.

The Fox, Irish Lane, and Stoner Prairie settlement areas retain in the 1990's some similarity to their nineteenth-century composition, although changes have taken place. For instance, at the Fox Settlement members of the Fox family continue to reside at Fox Hall, which is on the National Register of Historic Places. The farmland has been sold to the State of Wisconsin which operates a correctional institution on the property. Irish-





American families such as the Dunns, Kivlins, Sheils, and Sweeneys also own farmland in the area. Descendants of the Keenan pioneers currently live in the Village of Oregon.

At the Irish Lane Settlement, the Kinneys remain on the original homestead. A number of the other current residents descend from the Irish settlers of 1840-1860. For example, the Faheys, Greens, and Hartys are descendants of the Monks family. Onetime log cabin sites can still be found on Irish Lane, such as those of the Monks, Lynch, and Kinney families. Irish-American families that own farmland in the 1990's include Baxter, Byrne, Caine, Fahey, Gallagher, Gorman, Green, Harty, Kinney, McGibbon, O'Brien, and Sweeney.<sup>147</sup> The Gorry homestead was bought in the early twentieth century by University of Wisconsin Professor Benjamin H. Hibbard, who authored in 1904 *The History of Agriculture in Dane County, Wisconsin*. This farm is owned today by Bill and Muriel Stoneman. Outside of the Irish Lane Settlement, the Gill family continues to own farmland at Swan Creek. The Cohee and White families own tracts on County MM, between Swan Creek and Irish Lane.

In the 1990's, the Irish Lane area remains mostly farmland, although it now has three housing developments—Hillside Heights, Tarpleywick Hills, and the Greenfield Park neighborhood. Another development, Byrnewood, connects the Irish Lane Settlement with the Stoner Prairie area. Two of the parks are named for pioneer families who once owned the properties—Gorman Wayside near the Fitchburg City Hall, and McGaw Park on Lacy Road.

Fish Hatchery School, or Dogtown School, was conducted in this building on the hillside north of Dogtown village between 1873 and 1919. The 1911 photo (top) includes Irish-American children of the Gill, Lacy, and Purcell families. The building then became used as a storage garage (middle) until 1989, when the Gormans moved it to Whalen Road and restored the schoolhouse (bottom).





The McCoy House, located on Syene Road near the intersection with Clayton Road, is an Italianate brick home that was built during the years 1857-1861 and was first owned by the McCoy family in 1893. The cupola was built so that supervisors could oversee workers in the fields below. The Tony and Mickie Schmudlach family purchased and restored the vacant house in the early 1980's. Photo taken in 1990.

In recent years, the Gorman family has succeeded in preserving a nineteenth-century one-room schoolhouse, which some of the Irish children once attended. Fish Hatchery School, built in 1873, was located a half-mile north of the old Dogtown stagecoach stop at the intersection of Fish Hatchery and Lacy roads, and was nicknamed "Dogtown School."<sup>148</sup> In the late 1980's, the dilapidated schoolhouse was obstructing an expansion of Fish Hatchery Road. On behalf of McKee Farms which owned the site, Lyman McKee gave Dogtown School to the Gary and Kevin Gorman families who moved the building to

their property on Whalen Road a half-mile east of the intersection with Fish Hatchery Road. The schoolhouse has been restored to its original appearance.

The McCoy House is another building that has been renovated in the 1980's. McCoys were farm laborers in 1860 according to the census. They eventually bought the large house at the Hiestand tobacco farm on Syene Road, north of the Irish Lane area. A descendant, Elizabeth McCoy, who became a world famous biochemist and worked at the University of Wisconsin, lived in the old house from 1949 to 1978. After her





Stoner Prairie Elementary School is located on Devoro Road, near West Lacy Road. The school was built in 1988 on a farm once owned by Moses and Maria Lacy of the Irish Stoner Prairie Settlement. Photo taken in 1992.

death, the McCoy House was saved from demolition and fully restored by the Tony and Mickie Schmudlach family. This house, too, is now on the National Register of Historic Places.

On the western side of Fitchburg in the Stoner Prairie area, Irish families can still be found farming the onetime prairie land described in Lorin Miller's 1833 survey. With the notable exception of the Vroman property, almost the entire Stoner Prairie is owned by Irish-American families. Current landowners include the Dunn, Grady, Lacy, O'Brien, and Richardson families. Farmland owners south of Stoner Prairie include Gundlachs and Geraths, who are descendants of the

Whalen pioneers. Some Irish-American clans who own land in other parts of western Fitchburg are the McKees and Purcells.

Over the years, some Irish families moved away from Stoner Prairie and others moved into the area. The Barry surname is no longer found on Stoner Prairie, but members of the family live near Oak Hall corners in southern Fitchburg, and Barry Stables is located on County M. The nearby stone "Barry House" is now owned by the Reddan family. Some Irish names are memorialized by parks in western Fitchburg, such as Byrnewood Park and McKee Farms Park.

The Irish immigrants of 1840-1860 succeeded in establishing an enduring presence in Fitchburg. Pre-Famine and Famine-era settlers engaged in years of hard work as homesteaders, and as a result Fitchburg became a vigorous southern Wisconsin Irish community. Almost all of the old Yankee families of Oak Hall and Lake View, as well as the German settlers near the intersection of Seminole Highway and McKee Road, have moved away from Fitchburg in search of new opportunities. But the Irish who came to Fitchburg to establish new homelands for their clans remain. During the years 1840 to 1860, the Fox, Irish Lane, and Stoner Prairie settlements were home to families who built a thriving Irish-American community in Fitchburg that has continued to this day.





# Appendix A: Population Tables

Table A-1

| Population of Fitchburg†<br>1850–1990 |            |
|---------------------------------------|------------|
| Year                                  | Population |
| 1850                                  | 598        |
| 1860                                  | 1,177      |
| 1870                                  | 1,152      |
| 1880                                  | 978        |
| 1890                                  | 958        |
| 1900                                  | 1,004      |
| 1910                                  | 971        |
| 1920                                  | 1,059      |
| 1930                                  | 1,058      |
| 1940                                  | 1,257      |
| 1950                                  | 2,315      |
| 1960                                  | 2,880      |
| 1970                                  | 4,704      |
| 1980                                  | 11,973     |
| 1990                                  | 15,648     |

†U.S. Census Office, *Statistics of Population, 1850–1990*

Table A-2

| Population of Fitchburg and Selected Neighboring Communities†<br>(Milwaukee shown because of its large Irish population) |                     |              |                     |              |
|--|---------------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Towns  | 1850                |              | 1860*               |              |
|  | Heads of Households |              | Heads of Households |              |
|  | Total               | % Irish-born | Total               | % Irish-born |
| Dunn   | 66                  | 6%           | 173                 | 24%          |
| Fitchburg**  | 103                 | 23%          | 213                 | 30%***       |
| Madison  | 63                  | 11%          | 140                 | 25%          |
| Madison (City)   | 243                 | 12%          | 1,344               | 24%          |
| Oregon   | 120                 | 3%           | 225                 | 12%          |
| Rutland  | 155                 | 0%           | 219                 | 5%           |
| Verona   | 70                  | 0%           | 197                 | 8%           |
| Milwaukee (City)   | 4,083               | 18%          | 9,041               | 16%          |

†Additional population statistics for the Irish in Dane County can be found in: Sister M. Justille McDonald, *History of the Irish in Wisconsin in the Nineteenth Century* (Washington, D.C., The Catholic University of America Press, 1954), p. 262.

\*The increase of Irish families by 1860 in Dunn, Madison, and Madison (City) is partially due to the settling of Irish railway workers.

\*\*Name changed from Greenfield to Fitchburg in 1853.

\*\*\*The 1860 census lists 30 percent of Fitchburg heads of households as having been born in Ireland, but 36 percent of families are of Irish descent when one also considers both the nativity of the spouse who is not listed as the head of household as well as the Irish ancestry of spouses who were born in Canada or the United States.



Table A-3

| Fitchburg, Wisconsin*—Major Groups by Birthplace†<br>(Heads of Households) |      |         |       |         |      |         |      |         |
|--|------|---------|-------|---------|------|---------|------|---------|
| Birthplace   | 1850 |         | 1860  |         | 1870 |         | 1880 |         |
|  | No.  | Percent | No.   | Percent | No.  | Percent | No.  | Percent |
| New England**  | 24   | 23%     | 32    | 15%     | 21   | 10%     | 14   | 7%      |
| New York   | 36   | 35%     | 61    | 28%     | 43   | 21%     | 36   | 20%     |
| Pennsylvania   | 7    | 7%      | 12    | 6%      | 17   | 9%      | 9    | 5%      |
| Other U.S.   | 1    | 1%      | 12    | 6%      | 12   | 6%      | 27   | 15%     |
| TOTAL U.S.   | 68   | 66%     | 117   | 55%     | 93   | 46%     | 86   | 47%     |
| Ireland  | 24   | 23%     | 65*** | 30%     | 69   | 34%     | 56   | 31%     |
| Germany  | 1    | 1%      | 8     | 4%      | 9    | 5%      | 10   | 6%      |
| Other Europe   | 3    | 3%      | 11    | 5%      | 13   | 6%      | 13   | 7%      |
| Canada   | 7    | 7%      | 12    | 6%      | 18   | 9%      | 17   | 9%      |
| TOTAL FOREIGN  | 35   | 34%     | 96    | 45%     | 109  | 54%     | 96   | 53%     |
| GRAND TOTAL  | 103  |         | 213   |         | 202  |         | 182  |         |

†Based on *U.S. Census, Population, 1850–1880*.

\*Fitchburg was named Greenfield until 1853.

\*\*New England states include: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont.

\*\*\*The 1860 census lists sixty-five Fitchburg heads of households as having been born in Ireland, but seventy-six families are of Irish descent when one also considers both the nativity of the spouse who is not listed as the head of the household as well as the Irish ancestry of spouses who were born in Canada or the U.S.



# Appendix B

## Town Officer Election, April 6, 1847

(Source: Town Clerk Records, vol. 1, p. 3-4)

*Note:*

This was the first election to be held in the township. The name of the township Greenfield was changed to Fitchburg in 1853.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Chairman of Supervisors . . . . .        | Joseph Vroman                                  |
| Supervisors . . . . .                    | George L. Dike<br>Stephen Varnal               |
| Clerk . . . . .                          | Robert W. Salisbury                            |
| Treasurer . . . . .                      | William H. Fox*                                |
| Collector . . . . .                      | John McWilliams*                               |
| Constable . . . . .                      | John McWilliams*                               |
| Roads and Schools . . . . .              | Robert C. Bennett                              |
| Commissioners of Highways . . . . .      | Joseph Vroman<br>Stephen Varnal                |
| Commissioners of Schools . . . . .       | Robert W. Salisbury<br>William Quivey          |
| Assessor . . . . .                       | Isaac Eaton                                    |
| Fence Viewers . . . . .                  | Andrew Kenney*<br>John Keenan*<br>David Travis |
| Sealer of Weights and Measures . . . . . | Lewis S. Augur                                 |

\*Town Officer of Irish Descent

## Town Officer Election, April 3, 1860

(Source: Town Clerk Records, vol. 2, p. 2-3)

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Chairman of Supervisors . . . . .        | John Keenan*                                     |
| Supervisors . . . . .                    | William Vroman<br>John Kurtz                     |
| Clerk . . . . .                          | C. W. Steward                                    |
| Treasurer . . . . .                      | William Hamilton*                                |
| Superintendent of Schools . . . . .      | John Kiser                                       |
| Justice to fill vacancy . . . . .        | P. S. Nott                                       |
| Justices for full term . . . . .         | A. S. Mann<br>Edwin Spooner                      |
| Assessor . . . . .                       | John G. Mutchler                                 |
| Sealer of Weights and Measures . . . . . | S. B. Judkins                                    |
| Constables . . . . .                     | Jasper Hawes<br>J. H. Salisbury<br>John E. Paine |
| Pound Master . . . . .                   | H. Nutting                                       |

\*Town Officer of Irish Descent



# Appendix C

## Territorial Roads

The following are detailed locations of some of the transportation routes of southern Dane County.

### Road from Mineral Point to Milwaukee via Montrose

This road crossed through the Dane County towns of Perry, Primrose, Montrose, Oregon, Rutland, Dunkirk, and Albion. The road from Mineral Point entered the southwest corner of Dane County in the Town of Perry and used substantial parts of the following roadbeds: Lee Valley Road, County JG, Ridge Drive, Montrose Road, County PB, Frenchtown Road, County A, Rome Corners Road, Old Stone Road, Leslie Road, the east section of Hammond Road, Bliven Road, Albion Road, and Goede Road. The road then left the southeast corner of Dane County and continued on to Whitewater and Milwaukee.<sup>1</sup>

A now-obliterated road, which was probably a branch of this lead trail, ran northeasterly from the Town of Dunkirk to Rockdale (Clinton). Lead teamsters were said to have crossed Koshkonong Creek at Rockdale on their way to Milwaukee.<sup>2</sup>

### Roads from Mineral Point to Verona

The road from Mineral Point entered the southwest corner of Dane County in the Town of Perry and took today's Lee Valley Road east to the Town of Primrose. In Primrose the lead teamsters began their swing north to avoid the Sugar River by taking today's County JG and County G. The road crossed Deer Creek (the "middle branch" of the Sugar River) at Mount Vernon in the Town of Springdale and continued northeast parallel to and a mile to the south of County G and U.S. Highway 18 and 151 in Verona. The lead trail probably merged with U.S. Highway 69 near the intersection of Valley Road. It continued

northeast to join U.S. Highway 18 and 151, which also brought lead wagons from Ebenezer Brigham's mines at Blue Mounds.<sup>3</sup>

Teamsters hauling lead from Blue Mounds and Dodgeville were following the Old Military Road that connected Prairie du Chien to Green Bay, but many turned off the road to go to Milwaukee via Madison. Others went east from Mount Horeb on today's U.S. Highway 18 and 151 to meet the southern Dane County lead trail at Verona.<sup>4</sup>

While maps do not reflect the old route from Mount Vernon to Verona, a pioneer wrote that he lived from 1843 to 1846 with his parents at a cabin that was frequented by travelers on the road from Mineral Point to Janesville. The home appears to have been located in the northwest quarter of section 28 in southwestern Verona. A number of today's farmsites are located off modern roads along the old lead trail.<sup>5</sup>

In 1851, a road that is now known as County G was completed from Wiota in Lafayette County to Verona. This road probably replaced the old Mount Vernon-to-Verona route through southwest Verona township because County G runs north of a ridge that wagons on the older trail had to climb in sections 31 and 32 of Verona.<sup>6</sup>

At the intersection of Main Street and U.S. Highway 18 and 151 in Verona, a tavern was built around 1850 to serve travelers going between Mineral Point and Milwaukee as well as Galena, Illinois, and Green Bay, Wisconsin. The latter travelers may have been using the U.S. Highway 18 and 151 roadbed in an effort to go northeast through Madison to reach Green Bay.<sup>7</sup>

The United States Congress appropriated funds in 1838 to build a road across southern Wisconsin, which included the roadbed of U.S. Highway 18 and 151 in Verona and the north-



west corner of Fitchburg. The road went from Dubuque, Iowa, to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, by way of these Wisconsin villages: Belmont, Dodgeville, Blue Mounds, Verona, downtown Madison, Cambridge, and Waukesha. Although the road took a number of years to build, much of the road was probably used by lead teamsters when it was completed.<sup>8</sup>

#### Road from Madison to Beloit

The northern part of this road shared the roadbed of the Old Janesville Road. The Beloit Road took Fish Hatchery Road out of Madison until just north of the intersection with Netherwood Road. The road then went southeast diagonally across what is now farmland until it joined with Glenway Road just south of the intersection with Lincoln Road. At the intersection of Glenway and Locust Grove roads, the Beloit Road went southeast cross-country to meet with Union Road on its way to Beloit in Rock County.<sup>9</sup>

#### Road from Madison to Janesville via the Town of Dunn ("New Janesville Road")

This road followed or paralleled the roadbeds of Park Street in Madison, County MM in Fitchburg, County B in the western part of the Town of Dunn, a now-abandoned stretch in central Dunn, and Harkinson Road in southern Dunn on its way to the town of Rutland, the village of Dunkirk, and Janesville.<sup>10</sup> The county also gave the Lake View-to-Oregon village path—now part of County MM—the status of a road in 1843.<sup>11</sup>

## Appendix D

### Wisconsin Territorial Census of 1846 Irish Families in Fitchburg

*Note:*

Approximately 10 percent of the population in what was to become the town of Fitchburg was Irish in 1846. The following list of Irish is in the order that the census taker recorded the names. The census taker's spelling is used. The categories below are the only ones included in the 1846 census.

| Male Head of Household | Males | Females |
|------------------------|-------|---------|
| Keenan, George         | 3     | 3       |
| McGlin, Barney         | 3     | 4       |
| Kenney, Michael        | 1     | 3       |
| Kenney, Andrew         | 4     | 2       |
| Fox, Mathew            | 3     | 2       |
| Hamilton, William      | 1     | 2       |
| Fox, William           | 3     | 5       |
| Fox, George            | 3     | 5       |



# Appendix E

## Federal Census of 1860 Irish Families in Fitchburg

### Note

This appendix lists only heads of households, while the census included children, day laborers, and others. At least one spouse is of Irish descent. The following list is in the order that the census taker recorded the names. The census taker's spelling is used.

Lucas, Michael and Hannorah  
McKinney, Christopher and Margaret  
Clark, William and Mary  
Grady, Michael and Bridget  
Dunn, S. and Ellinor  
Dunn, Martin and Mary  
Grady, F. M. and Antoinette  
Mahar, Dennis and Mary  
Grady, James and Mary  
McKinney, Martin and Janett  
Lacy, Moses and Mary  
Barry, James and Elizabeth  
McQuillen, Alex and Mary  
McQuillen, Barney and Mary  
Barry, Thomas and Margaret  
McCormick, Martin and Catherine  
Barry, Jeremiah and Mary  
McGill, Ignatius and Bridget  
Grady, John and Bridget  
Eson, Margaret  
McCune, Samuel and Mary  
Barry, Michael and Mary  
McKechney, Robert and Agnes  
Keenan, John and Flora

Quirk, Dennis and Mary  
McQuillen, Hugh and Margaret  
Cullen, Daniel and Ann  
Pierce, William and Mary  
Ralaha, Michael and Catharine  
Flemin, Michael and Elizabeth  
Fox, William and Cornelia  
Fox, George and Kate  
Coughlin, John and Bridget  
Murphy, Patrick  
Kelly, Patrick and Catherine  
Lally, James and Margaret  
Chrane, Patrick and Bridget  
Gary, James and Catherine  
McWilliams, John and Catherine  
Hayes, Michael and Mary  
McWatty, William and Sarah  
Cain, Peter and Bridget  
McAvoy, Daniel and Mary  
McAvoy, Elizabeth  
Gielland, James and Jane  
Burns, Michael and Mary  
Halfpenny, William and Mrs.  
Burns, Michael and Ann



## Appendix E *(continued)*

Burns, James and Margaret  
Sweeney, Patrick and Bridget  
Sweeney, Edward and Margaret  
Murphy, John and Joanna  
Gorman, William and Ellen  
McConnell, Henry and Luanda  
Sweeney, John and Hanorah  
Burns, Edward and Catherine  
Monks, James and Bridget  
McFadden, T. and Eliza  
Sheridan, James and Margaret  
McGaw, Samuel and Mary  
Mathews, James and Harriet  
McManus, Albert and Caroline  
Hamilton, William  
Lynch, Patrick and Catherine  
Burns, David and Rose  
McLaughlin, Michael and Ellen  
Fox, Mathew and Elizabeth  
Cathcart, Hugh and Susan  
Gill, Eli and Margaret  
Finnegan, Mary  
Warrell, William and Roseana  
Farrell, Patrick and Nancy  
McMullen, C. E.  
Gorry, Mathew and Margaret  
Gillbooly, John and Ellen  
Keesan, John and Alice

## Appendix F

### Schools of Fitchburg 1848 to Present

|                       |                   |                   |
|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Lake View .....       | 1848-1930....     | District 5        |
| Syene .....           | ca.1850-1952....  | District 1        |
| Oak Hall .....        | 1850-1949....     | District 4        |
| Stoner.....           | 1850-1938....     | District 7        |
|                       | 1953-1964         |                   |
| Prairie View.....     | 1850-1937....     | District 8        |
| Swan Creek.....       | 1855-1925....     | Joint District 2  |
|                       |                   | (With Dunn)       |
| Camp Badger.....      | 1857-1964....     | District 10       |
| Fitchburg Center .... | ca. 1860-1962.... | District 6        |
| Fish Hatchery .....   | ca. 1860-1962.... | District 9        |
|                       | "Dogtown"         |                   |
| Maple Corners .....   | 1864-1964....     | Joint District 12 |
|                       |                   | (With Verona)     |
| Stoner Prairie .....  | 1988-Present....  | Verona School     |
|                       |                   | District          |

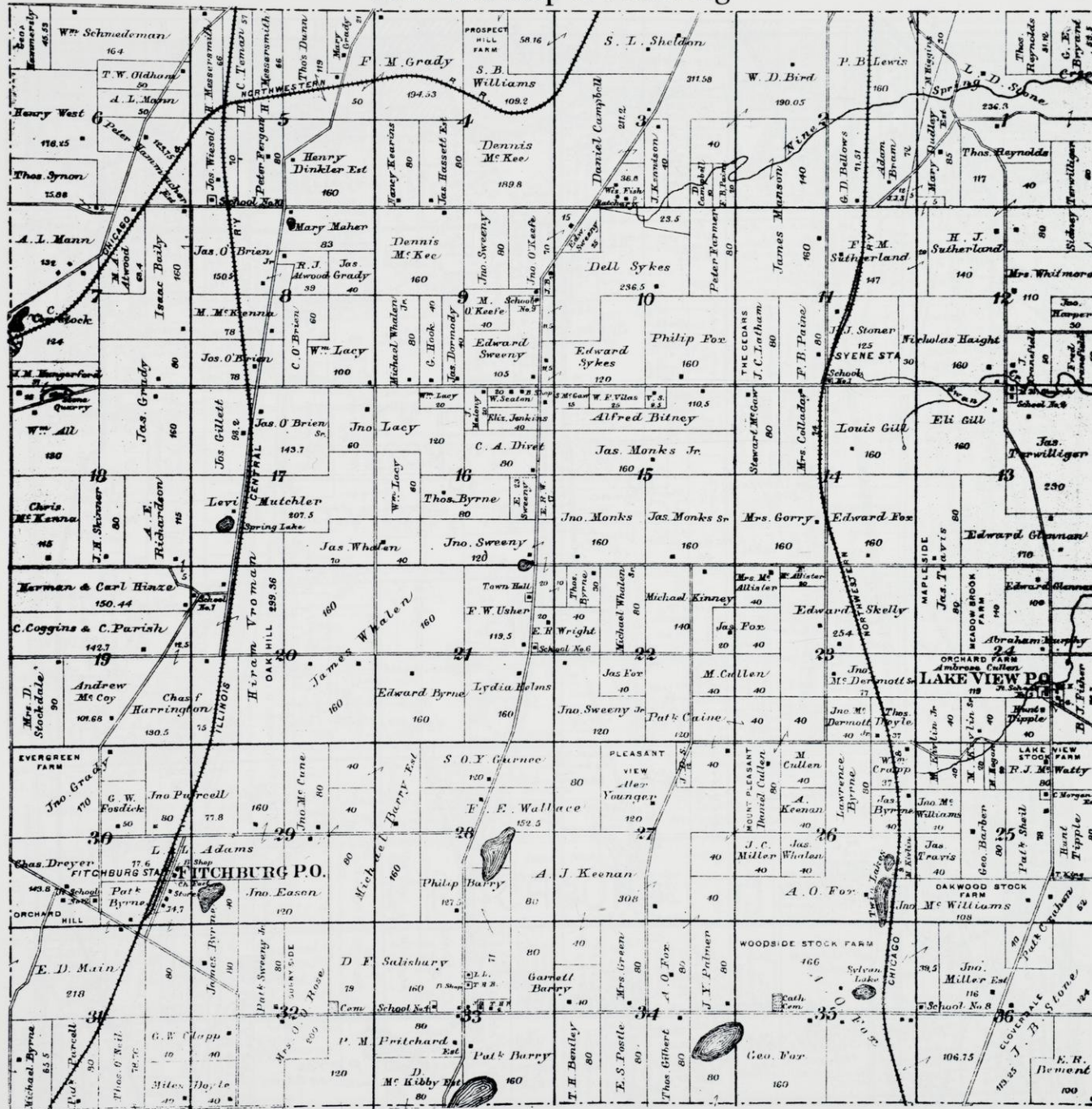


## 1873 Plat Map of Fitchburg





# 1890 Plat Map of Fitchburg



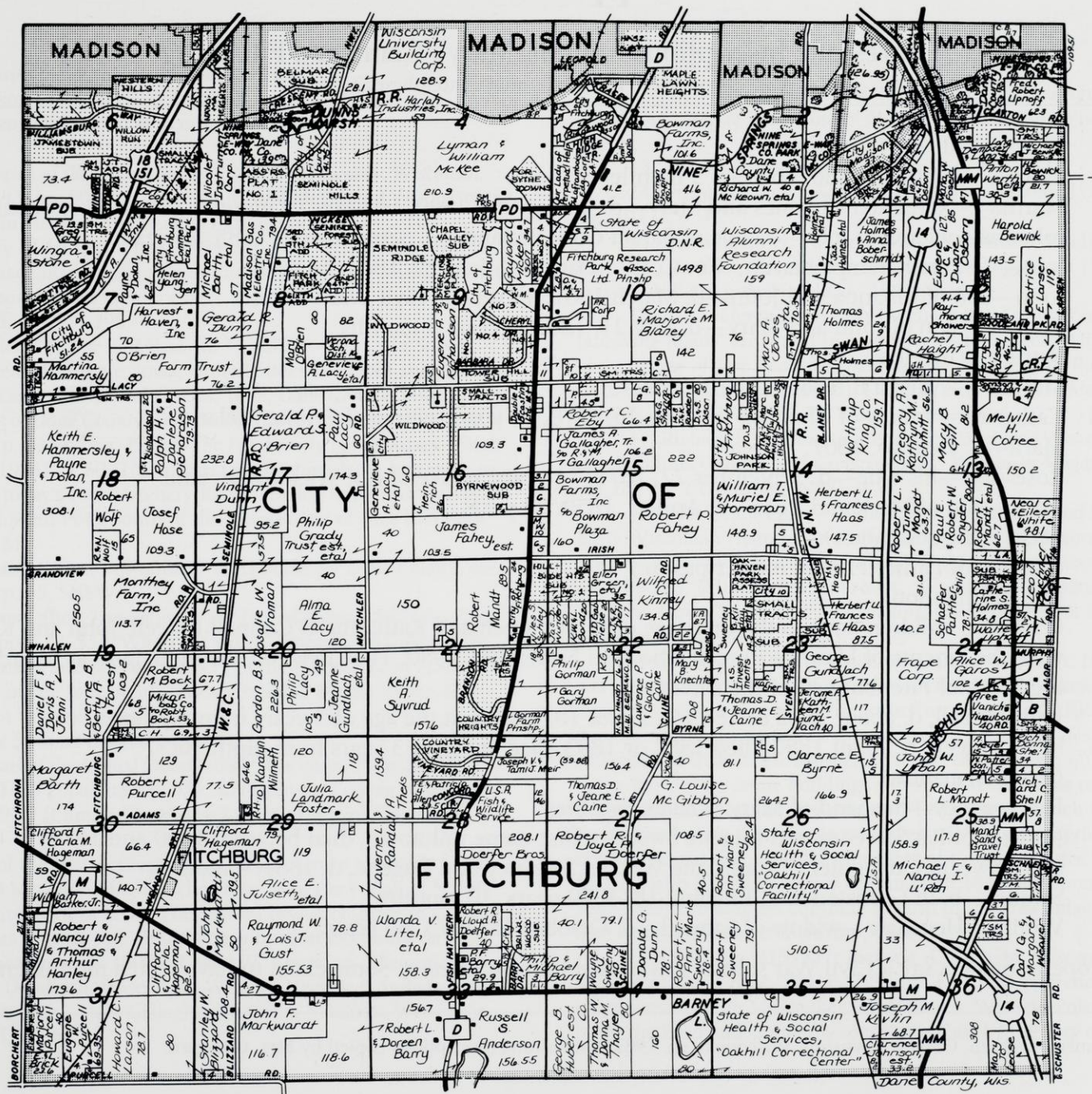


# 1940 Plat Map of Fitchburg





# 1993 Plat Map of Fitchburg



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# Appendix H

## Gravestone Inscriptions from St. Mary's Cemetery, Fitchburg\*

(Compiler's comments are in parentheses.)

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| BURKE    | Thomas—d. 1887, 56 years<br>Patrick—d. July 2, 1886, 66 years 3 months   |
| WHALEN   | Martha J.—daughter of James and Mary—d. January 14, 1880, 14 years 10 months, (Remains moved)  |
| MURPHY   | Johanna—widow of John—native of Parish Cork, Ireland—d. September 7, 1885, 73 years<br>John—of Parish Templemartin, Co. Cork, Ireland—d. July 29, 1862, 54 years<br>John—son of Johanna and John—d. March 1887, 45 years, (Civil War veteran)  |
| MULLOY   | Thomas—son of John and Mary—d. July 21, 1861, 9 years 5 months<br>Patrick—(illegible)  |
| WELCH    | Matthew—August 8, 1866, (50/70 years?)   |
| McFADDEN | Catherine—widow of Thomas—d. June 26, 1878, 30 years, native of Tyrone, Ireland  |
| KERWIN   | Mark—d. Dec. 16, 1867, 75 years<br>Rose Ann—his wife—d. September 22, 1871, 74 years, native of Co. Wicklow, Ireland<br>Mark—son of Mark and Rose—d. April 2, 1859, 23 years<br>(Also had a son James)   |
| FARRELL  | (Parents of Father Farrell, former pastor.)  |
| STARRY   | (No information)   |
| PURCELL  | (First two children born to the marriage of John Purcell and Katharine O'Connell Purcell. John and Katharine were the parents of Maurice Purcell who died November, 1980. They lived on the same farm as Maurice did in the Town of Fitchburg all of their lives.)<br>John Purcell, d. about 1882 or 1883, b. about 1878, died at the age of 5 years from diptheria.<br>Mary Purcell, b. about 1880, died 1882 or 1883, died at age of 3 years from diptheria. |
| BROWN    | (No information)   |
| SWEENEY  | Pat Sweeney—husband of Mary Whalen Sweeney<br>(a sister of Pat Sweeney and Eugene Sweeney, first name unknown, died between 1860 and 1870)<br>Mary Sweeney, daughter of Catherine Whalen Sweeney and Eugene, d. 1881, 4 months   |
| COLE     | Samuel—b. in Gloustershire, England 1814, 79 years, 10 months<br>Winifred Henshaw—widow of Samuel—d. October 25, 1873, 60 years  |

(Previous property owners say a Civil War soldier was buried in this cemetery. Some claim to have seen a monument.)

\*Compiled by Maurice O'Brien, Oregon township, Wisconsin, ca. 1982. Gravestone inscriptions copied by Mrs. Corsgard.



# Notes

## Abbreviations

DCLRR Dane County Land Regulation and Records

FHS Fitchburg Historical Society—Archives

SHSW State Historical Society of Wisconsin—Archives

1. *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Dane County, Wisconsin, Population, Volume 3*, pp. 90-119; Sister M. Justille McDonald, *History of the Irish in Wisconsin in the Nineteenth Century* (Washington, D.C., The Catholic University of America Press, 1954), pp. 3, 8. The words town and township will be used interchangeably in this book. Both terms will refer to a rural area as opposed to an urban center.

2. McDonald, pp. 254-298.

3. Lorin Miller, "T. 6N. R. 9 East 4th Meridian—1833," in *Survey Plat Maps, Series 698* (Dubuque, Iowa, United States General Land Office, 1851) SHSW; *Wisconsin Territorial Census, 1842, Dane County*; Butterfield, C. W., ed., *History of Dane County, Wisconsin* (Chicago, Western Historical Company, 1880), p. 1254; Fox, Philip, *The Fox Family of Kilcoursey* (Fitchburg, Wisconsin, 1984), p. 60. The Indian trail running from Janesville to Madison includes today's Fish Hatchery Road. The log hotel was Quivey's inn on the edge of Swan Pond south of the intersection of Fish Hatchery Road and County M.

4. Federal Land Office, Milwaukee, *Tract Books for Dane County*, vol. 30, T. 6N.-R. 9E., p. 65, SHSW.

5. U.S. Census Office, *Population of the United States, 1860* (Washington, D.C., 1864), pp. 532, 534; When the word "pioneers" is used in this text, it refers to settlers and not to members of the Pioneer Total Abstinence Association of late nineteenth-century Ireland. People within that society pledged not to drink alcohol.

6. *Milwaukee Sentinel* (March 19, 1843).

7. *Sixth Census of the United States, 1840, Wisconsin, Population, Volume 1*, p. 185; *1860 Population*, p. 539; Kathleen N. Conzen, *Immigrant Milwaukee, 1836-1860* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1976), p. 14.

8. Pioneers of the Irish settlement in Cottage Grove township included John and Martha Gallagher who came from the Parish of Schull, Rock Island, County Cork in 1855. They raised twelve children in Cottage Grove. Descendants of their son Thomas have lived in Fitchburg on Fish Hatchery Road since the early 1900's. Elisha W. Keyes, ed., *History of Dane County, Wisconsin* (Madison, Wisconsin, Western Historical Association, 1906), p. 306. Reference—Nola Gallagher McGann, Madison, Wisconsin.

9. McDonald, p. 262.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 74.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 262.

12. *1860 Population*, p. 534; McDonald, p. 262; August Ligowsky, "Madison," *Map of Dane County, Wisconsin* (Madison, Wisconsin, 1861), SHSW.

13. *Wisconsin State Journal* (November 20, 1854).

14. *Oregon Observer, Souvenir of Oregon Centennial* (Oregon, Wisconsin, 1941), p. 45.

15. Dr. William H. Fox and William Vroman, "Fitchburg," William J. Park, ed., *Madison, Dane County, and Surrounding Towns* (Madison, Wisconsin, William J. Park and Co., 1877), p. 462.

16. Early references to Fish Hatchery Road's previous name, "Old Janesville Road," are found in a number of documents. *Minutes and Plat of the Survey of Two Roads Intersecting into the Janesville Road*, Map (Dane County, Wisconsin Ter., 1845), DCLRR; *Greenfield/Fitchburg Town Clerk Records*, vol. 1 (1848), p. 22, FHS.

17. Richard D. Durbin and Elizabeth Durbin, "Wisconsin's Old Military Road: Its Genesis and Construction," *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, vol. 68, no. 1 (Autumn, 1984), p. 6.

18. Orin Grant Libby, "Significance of the Lead and Shot Trade in Early Wisconsin History," in *Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin*, ed. by Reuben Gold Thwaites (Madison, Wisconsin, 1895), pp. 314-315, 319; Charles N. Brown, "Christiana," William J. Park, ed., *Madison, Dane County, and Surrounding Towns* (Madison, Wisconsin, Wm. J. Park and Co., 1877), p. 355.

19. *Wisconsin, Map* (Philadelphia, Carey and Hart, 1842), SHSW; *Plat and Minutes of the Survey of a Territorial Road from Whitewater to Mineral Point*, Map (Dane County, Wisconsin Ter., 1846), DCLRR. The lead trail that crossed northern Green County passed by lead mines that employed a number of Irish in the southeastern part of the Town of Exeter near the Sugar River. Two stone buildings still stand at what was once a mining town referred to on the 1842 map as "Livingston," which was located near Doyle Road more than a mile northwest of Attica. An agricultural community developed that included a number of County Antrim Scotch-Irish families who settled in Exeter beginning in 1849. McDonald, pp. 70-71. Irish-American families continue to farm in the area today. Reference—Dan Kinney, Brooklyn township, Wisconsin.

20. Libby, pp. 315, 317; Increase A. Lapham, *Wisconsin* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin, P. C. Hale, 1844), SHSW, p. 139. One reference to the lead shipments through Milwaukee is as follows: "Mineral Point—From this point the Lead and Copper is sent to the East by the way of Milwaukee



and the Lakes; this route is becoming a greater favorite than the one by way of Galena and the rivers." *Milwaukee Courier* (October 26, 1842). The article is referring to Galena, Illinois, and presumably the Fever and Mississippi rivers.

21. *Road from Whitewater to Mineral Point*, Map; Dane County, Map (New York, Horace Greeley and Co., 1855), SHSW; August Ligowsky, "Primrose," "Springdale," "Verona," *Map of Dane County, Wisconsin* (Madison, Wisconsin, 1861).

22. "Road from Madison to Janesville," *Local Acts of the Legislature of Wisconsin, 1838-39*, no. 19 (Milwaukee, Wisconsin Ter., 1839), p. 20, SHSW. One of the roads described by the act was to begin near the Old Military Road's seventy-five mile post, which was probably in the vicinity of today's Mount Horeb.

23. H. A. Tenney, "Madison," J. Park, ed., *Madison, Wisconsin, Dane County, and Surrounding Towns* (Madison, Wisconsin, William J. Park and Co., 1877), p. 552; Fox and Vroman, pp. 450-451.

24. I. A. Lapham, *The State of Wisconsin*, Map (Milwaukee, Wisconsin, I. A. Lapham, 1850), SHSW; Ligowsky, "Verona," Map.

25. "Road from Madison to Freeport," *Acts of the Special Session of the Legislature of Wisconsin Territory, 1838*, no. 29 (Burlington, Wisconsin Territory, 1838), pp. 355-356, SHSW; *Plat and Minutes of Survey of Alteration in the Road from Madison to New Mexico*, Map (Dane County, Wisconsin Ter., 1842), DCLRR; Dane County, Map (1855).

26. Fox and Vroman, p. 448.

27. *Tract Books*, p. 60; *Road from Madison to New Mexico*, Map; Fox and Vroman, p. 457.

28. *Tract Books*, p. 60; Fox and Vroman, p. 457. The brothers George, William, and Joseph Vroman moved on the land in the fall of 1839. In 1840, Joseph married and brought his wife Mary to the farm. She was the first woman of European descent to live in Fitchburg. Butterfield, p. 1259.

29. *Wisconsin Herald* (June 10, 1848).

30. The lead diggings were located in the west one-half of the southeast quarter of the northeast quarter of section 31 in the Town of Verona. This Fritz Road parcel is currently owned by Walter F. Batker.

31. Fox and Vroman, p. 448; *Oregon Centennial*, p. 45.

32. This stretch of the lead trail, which is now overgrown with weeds, can be found on the east side of the northwest quarter of the northwest quarter of section 28 in Fitchburg. Efforts to find remnants of the lead trail have been made by using aerial photos. They are on file at Fitchburg City Hall. *Town 6N.-R.9E., Aerial Photographs* (Dane County Regional Planning Commission, 1980).

33. Wagon ruts of this lead trail can be seen in a wood lot located between Shady Bend Road and County M in the Town of Verona. Refer-

ence—Richard Doerfer, Verona township, Wisconsin. This lead trail probably developed after the main Verona-Fitchburg-Oregon lead road because it was not mentioned in a pioneer's description of the area roads as they existed in 1842. Fox and Vroman, p. 448. Information was gathered from a map of County M. The road started from a point in the Runey's tavern-to-Madison road and went west to Vromans' and Wheeler's Mill. *Minutes and Plat of Survey of County Road from Road from Runey's to Vroman and Wheeler's Mill*, Map (Dane County, Wisconsin Ter., 1844), SHSW.

34. Miller, *Survey Plat Maps*. The Indian Trail left the path of today's Fish Hatchery Road to go around the west side of the hill where the Byrnewood housing development is located. The 1861 plat map shows two log cabins located approximately where the Indian trail was in section 16. Ligowsky, "Fitchburg," Map.

35. "Road from Madison to Big Foot Prairie," *Local Acts of the Legislature of Wisconsin, 1838-39*, no. 9, pp. 12-13; *Field Notes of Territorial Road from Madison to Bigfoot Prairie via Hume's Ferry on Rock River*, Map (Dane County, Wisconsin Ter., 1839), DCLRR; M. G. Davis, *Wisconsin Highways 1835-1945* (Madison, Wisconsin, 1947), pp. 223-224; Fox and Vroman, p. 450. Janesville was an important link between Madison and Chicago because a ferryboat operated by a man named Jane transported wagons across the Rock River. Janesville was named for its first ferryman.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 449-450. A third Indian trail went from the site of an Indian village on the west side of Lake Kegonsa through section 36 in the southeast corner of Fitchburg and on to Belleville.

37. *Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, Dane County, Wisconsin, Population*, p. 257. Despite much research, the nation(s) from which Quivey's ancestors came have not been determined. On the other hand, a New York Quivey family that may have been related to William Quivey came from Scotland. *Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, Wayne County, New York, Population, Volume 102, Enumeration District 117*, p. 18.

38. Mrs. Frank Dreher, "The Old Lead Trail," *Oregon Observer* (1941), article on file at the Oregon Historical Society Archives; *Oregon Observer Centennial*, p. 7. Quiveys lived in Fitchburg according to 1850 census, p. 257.

39. *United States Post Office Records*, nos. 204, 287, 295, 332, 450, 628 (Washington, D.C., 1920), SHSW. The Fitchburg Post Office was established August 26, 1842, with William Quivey as the first postmaster.

40. *Oregon Centennial*, p. 54.

41. *Ibid.*

42. Fox and Vroman, p. 459.

43. *Journal of the Board of Supervisors of Dane County* (Madison, Wisconsin), SHSW.

44. "Abstract of Special Election of May, 1843," *Dane County Clerk: Election Records 1837-1867*, Dane Series 36, SHSW.



45. Tract Books, p. 65; 1850 Census, pp. 257-258.
46. Fox and Vroman, p. 50; 1842 Census.
47. Survey of Two Roads Intersecting the Janesville Road, Map.
48. Post Office Records, nos. 286, 287, 295, 332, 403, 450, 628.
49. Supervisors.
50. Post Office Records, no. 204; Fox and Vroman, p. 456; Cassidy, p. 57.
51. Ibid., p. 148.
52. "An Act to Change the Form of Government of the County of Dane," *Laws of the Territory of Wisconsin, 1846*, (Madison, Wisconsin Ter., 1846), pp. 28-30, SHSW; "An Act to Organize Certain Towns Therein Named," *Laws of the Territory of Wisconsin, 1847*, (Madison, Wisconsin Ter., 1847), pp. 170-176, SHSW; "An Act to Change the Name of the Town of Greenfield in Dane County," *Private and Local Acts Passed by the Legislature of Wisconsin in the Year 1853*, (Madison, Wisconsin, 1853), Chapter 176, p. 162, SHSW. The name "Fitchburg" also applied to a smaller election precinct that replaced the name "Quivey's Grove" in reference to the polling place at Quivey's hotel. Fitchburg Precinct existed from 1844 to 1846, and was discontinued when Rome was created. Supervisors; "Poll book of an Election—1844," *Dane County Clerk: Election Records 1837-1867 Dane Series 36*. Though Fitchburg township was known by prior names, for clarity it is referred to as "Fitchburg" throughout this book.
53. Tract Books, pp. 58, 60; Wisconsin Territorial Census, 1847, Dane County.
54. 1860 Census, pp. 115-117.
55. Survey Bill of Plat of an Alteration in the Beloit to Madison Road, Map (Dane County, Wisconsin Ter., 1843).
56. Ibid; Dane County, Map. (1855); Madison to Big Foot Prairie, Map; Dreher (1941).
57. Butterfield, p. 1248.
58. W. L. Ames, *History of Oregon and Trade Territory* (Oregon, Wisconsin, 1924), p. 13.
59. Lapham, Map.
60. Road from Whitewater to Mineral Point, Map; I. Howe and T. E. Thompson, "Oregon," William J. Park, ed., *Madison, Dane County and Surrounding Towns* (Madison, Wisconsin, Wm. J. Park and Co., 1877), pp. 505, 513. The Wisconsin territorial legislature in the 1842-43 session authorized a territorial road from Mineral Point to Whitewater to Milwaukee. Parts of this lead trail were probably in use before the legislature acted. The road was fully opened by the end of 1846. See Davies, pp. 11, 223, 225; Wisconsin, Map (1842); I. A. Lapham, *State of Wisconsin*, Map (Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1850), SHSW; Dane County, Map (1855); Brown, p. 355.
61. Road from Whitewater to Mineral Point, Map.
62. Reference—Mark O'Brien, Oregon township, Wisconsin.
63. Ames, p. 8; Park, p. 97; Howe, p. 510.
64. Butterfield, p. 1248. *Oregon Centennial*, p. 54.
65. Howe and Thompson, p. 506.
66. *Oregon Centennial*, p. 54.
67. Minutes and Plat of Survey of Road from Madison to County Line in Direction of Janesville, Map (Dane County, Wisconsin Ter., 1843), DCLRR; Plat of the New Janesville Road to Madison, Map, Public Series No. 235 (Madison, Wisconsin Territory, 1847), SHSW.
68. Tract Books, p. 62.
69. 1850 Census, p. 253, 264; Biographical Review Publishing Company, *Biographical Review of Dane County, Wisconsin* (Chicago, 1893), p. 488.
70. Frederic G. Cassidy, *Dane County Place-Names* (Madison, Wisconsin, University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), p. 170.
71. Lorin Miller, "T. 6N. R. 9 East 4th Meridian—1833," in *Field Notes of Land Survey* (State of Wisconsin Commissioners of the Public Lands).
72. Wisconsin Territorial Census, 1846, Dane County; 1860 Census; McDonald, p. 8.
73. 1860 Census.
74. The Kinney family was in Trois Riviere, Canada, in 1831. *Census of Canada, Quebec Province, Trois Riviere, 1831*.
75. Benjamin H. Hibbard, *The History of Agriculture in Dane County, Wisconsin* (Madison, Wisconsin, University of Wisconsin, 1904), pp. 105-113.
76. Ligowsky, "Fitchburg," Map; County Road from Road from Runey's to Vroman and Wheeler's Mill, Map; Tract Books, pp. 56-66.
77. David Mollenhoff, *Madison: A History of the Formative Years* (Dubuque, Iowa, Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1982), p. 11.
78. "School and University Lands," Chapter 24, *Revised Statutes of the State of Wisconsin* (Southport, Wisconsin, C. Latham Sholes, 1949), p. 210; Richard N. Current, *The Civil War Era 1848-1873* (The History of Wisconsin, Vol. 2, ed. by William F. Thompson, Madison, Wisconsin, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1976), p. 56.
79. 1860 Census, p. 112; Deeds Register, vol. 23, p. 573; Reference—Jim and Mary Gill.
80. Patrick O'Donoghue, "Opposition to Tithe Payment in 1830-31," *Studia Hibernica*, no. 6 (1966), pp. 72-74; Reference—Margaret Lalor, Town of Dunn, Wisconsin.
81. William Lalor, Letter of May 12, 1843 (National Library of Ireland, Manuscript No. 8567).
82. Ligowsky, "Dunn," Map.
83. *United States Statutes at Large*, vol. 5 (1841), pp. 453-458. Arthur O'Neill Fox, "Memories of Happenings Among the Pioneers" (Madison, Wisconsin, 1936), pp. 9-10, 24.



84. 1850 Census, Agricultural Schedule, pp. 57-62; 1860 Census, Agricultural Schedule, pp. 27-34.

85. Fox and Vroman, pp. 450-451; Tenney, p. 552; Ligowsky, "Dunn," Map; "Fitchburg," *Atlas of Dane County, Wisconsin*, Map (Madison, Wisconsin, Harrison and Warner, 1873).

86. *Ninth Census of the United States, 1870, Dane County, Wisconsin, Population, Volume 2, Agricultural Schedule*, pp. 633-640.

87. *Ibid.*

88. *Ibid.*; Michael P. Conzen, *Frontier Farming in an Urban Shadow* (Madison, Wisconsin, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1971), p. 92.

89. *Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, Dane County, Wisconsin, Agricultural Schedule, Enumeration District 71*, pp. 1-16.

90. 1850 Census; "Unused Notes for Oregon Centennial Souvenir" (Oregon, Wisconsin, 1941).

91. K. Conzen, p. 60. The man who read to neighbors was Michael Kinney, son of Andrew and Mary Jane Kinney.

92. It is not known whether the Fox Settlement Flemings were relatives of Edward Fleming who lived on a farm west of Stoner Prairie in the twentieth century. Edward died at the age of 101 years in 1980. Reference—Mary Kinney, Fitchburg, Wisconsin; Agatha Fleming, Duluth, Minnesota.

93. Fox, *Family*, p. 28. Eleanor Loftus Lynn Fox was born at Dungulf Castle in County Wexford, Ireland. *Ibid.*, p. 24. Ancestors of the Foxes were lords of the Barony of Kilcoursey in northern County Offaly throughout the Middle Ages. The English seized the barony in the 1640's in response to the Foxes' participation in a rebellion. *Ibid.*, p. 1-9.

94. John Anslow Keenan II, "John Keenan—America" (1983), pp. 2-3. A copy of this manuscript is in the hands of Robert and Janet Keenan of Oregon, Wisconsin. Little is known regarding the Keenans' connection to Irish gentry. Oral tradition holds that John's maternal grandmother was referred to as "Lady Anslow." *Ibid.*, p. 3.

95. Alga Hellman, "A History Sketch of the Township of Rutland," in *John Quincy Emery Papers* (1898), p. 5, SHSW.

96. George Fox, *Diary of 1857* (Fitchburg, Wisconsin, 1857). George Fox sold grain reapers which were invented by George Esterly of Whitewater, Wisconsin. G. Fox kept a diary of his sales transactions. In this diary, he also included a cure for the bite of a mad dog. The diary is in the possession of Philip and Anna Fox of Fitchburg, Wisconsin.

97. A. O. Fox, pp. 13-15.

98. *Greenfield/Fitchburg Town Clerk Records*, vol. 1 (1847), p.3; "Constitution of Wisconsin," *Revised Statutes of the State of Wisconsin* (1849), p. 45; Milo M. Quaife, *Wisconsin: Its History and Its People* (Chicago, S. J. Clarke, 1924), p. 240.

99. *Greenfield Records*, p. 3; William J. Park, ed., *Madison, Dane County, and Surrounding Towns* (Madison, Wisconsin, W. J. Park and Co.,

1877), pp. 656-657; L. H. D. Crane, *A Manual of the Customs, Precedents, and Forms in Use at the Assembly of the State of Wisconsin* (Madison, Wisconsin, 1859), pp. 8-9, 19-20, SHSW.

100. Flora's parents, David and Jane McKee, who were from County Down, Ireland, lived in Dunn township near the border with Fitchburg. Keenan, pp. 11-12. They are not believed to be related to the Dennis McKee family of McKee Road in Fitchburg.

101. *Greenfield Records*, p. 3; Butterfield, p. 1256.

102. Keyes, pp. 801-802.

103. Keyes, pp. 512-513. Today's Kivlin farmland owners in Fitchburg are descended from John's younger brother Michael Kivlin. Reference—Joe and Mary Kivlin, Fitchburg, Wisconsin. The Dane County histories include a number of references to Irish that lived in Rutland, Vermont, moving to southeast Fitchburg—especially in the 1860's and 1870's.

104. Reference—Mary Icke, Madison, Wisconsin. Although the County MM Lake View village was founded by non-Irish Pennsylvanians, by 1873 six out of the eight heads of household living in and around Lake View were Irish, including Fisher (hotelkeeper), Hamilton (farmer), Hayes (blacksmith), Hogan (shoemaker), McLaughlin, and McWatty (farmer). "Fitchburg," *Atlas of Dane County, Wisconsin*, Map (Madison, Wisconsin, Harrison and Warner, 1873); *Ninth Census of the United States, 1870, Dane County, Wisconsin, Population, Volume 1*, pp. 432-433; *Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, Dane County, Wisconsin, Population, Enumeration District 71*, pp. 19-20.

105. "Marriages of Swinford Parish," Register No. 1 (Swinford, Ireland, Roman Catholic Church, 1808-1846); Newcastle Townland, Meelick Parish, Barony of Gallen, County Mayo, *Tithe Applotment Books* (1833), p. 25; (See Note 126 below.); *Census of Canada, 1831*; (Regarding the immigration of the parents of Michael and Andrew to Canada, see Thomas P. Kinney, "The Kinney Family of Irish Lane" (Fitchburg, Wisconsin, 1993).); "Marriages," vol. 3 (Salisbury, Connecticut), p. 146; *Sixth Census of the United States, 1840, Litchfield County, Connecticut, District 31, Salisbury*; *Tract Books for Dane County*, p. 62. The 1861 plat map shows James Sheridan, a son-in-law of Michael Kinney, owning eighty acres of the original Kinney farm. Ligowsky, "Fitchburg," Map.

106. 1850 Census; *Greenfield Records*, pp. 3, 51.

107. *Ibid.*, pp. 82, 164. The steadily growing number of road districts had reached fifteen by 1860. *Ibid.*, p. 154.

108. *Tract Books*, p. 62. While Patrick and Bridget Gorman lived only a year in Fitchburg before moving to Dunn, their son Arthur returned in the mid-1890's to the Fitchburg farm, where some of his descendants live today. Lucille Veronica Gorman, "My Life" (1928), pp. 1-3. This manuscript is held by Phil and Gladys Gorman of Madison, Wisconsin. A series of poems that mention Gormans and many other Fitchburg families that



lived in the township in the late 1800's and early 1900's was written by Joe Wallace, who was part Irish. Joseph Wallace, "Songs of a Badger," reprinted by Connie Darling and Jean A. O'Brien in *Fitchburg: A History* (Madison, Wisconsin, Countryside Publications, 1976), pp. 47-62.

109. 1850 Census; Richard E. Sweeney, "Sweeney History, Parts 1-3" (Madison, Wisconsin, 1989); *Oregon Observer* (October 20, 1898); "From Sec. 30, T 1N. -R 9E, State Line to Madison," *Laws of the Territory of Wisconsin, 1841-1842*, no. 32 (Madison, Wisconsin Ter., 1842), SHSW; *Plat and Minutes of Survey of a Territorial Road from County Line to Madison*, Map (Dane County, Wisconsin, 1843), DCLRR; Fox and Vroman, p. 448.

110. 1847 Census. Among Patrick Lynch's extended family that joined him in Fitchburg, his mother, Rose, immigrated to America about 1850 after the death of her husband Thomas in Ireland. Peter, Patrick's brother, was preceded in his arrival by two of his children—Alice, age 15, and Thomas, age 13—who crossed the ocean and came to Irish Lane in 1852. Members of the present-day Lynch clan live in both Fitchburg and Madison. 1850 Census; Keyes, pp. 736, 943; Kinney, "Family"; Reference—Howard Lynch, Madison, Wisconsin.

111. 1860 Census, p. 109; Keyes, pp. 486-587.

112. Kate Fahey, interviewed by Connie Darling (Fitchburg, Wisconsin), July 9, 1976, FHS. Reference—Ellen Green, Fitchburg, Wisconsin.

113. Stephen N. Hawkins, *The Hawkins Settlement, Saint Croix County, Wisconsin, June 4, 1855* (New Richmond, Wisconsin, 1915). Reference—Mary Ann Pattison, Durand, Wisconsin.

114. Gorman, pp. 1-2.

115. *Deeds Register*, vol. 16, p. 552; Hawkins, pp. 16-17. Although the train stopped in time for John Hawkins, other Irishmen were not so fortunate. Laborers commonly walked to and from work along the railroad because the tracks provided convenient shortcuts. St. Raphael's death records include a substantial obituary of the Famine-era immigrant Patrick Landers, who was killed by a train while walking home from a job near today's fairgrounds on Rimrock Road in Madison. To compound the tragedy, his young son was on the train! "Deaths" (Madison, Wisconsin, St. Raphael's Church).

116. *Deeds Register*, vol. 49, p. 177. Timothy Kinney owned a forty acre Irish Lane farm from 1859 to 1864, before selling it to Peter McAllister. Regarding his Madison hotel: see *Wisconsin State Journal* (July 11, 1875; November 26, 1895). Aldermanic role: see City of Madison, Clerk, *Council Proceedings*, Dane Series 182 (1856-1859); *Wisconsin Patriot* (February 8, 1861); *Wisconsin State Journal* (January 1, 1886). Life and family: reference—Helena M. Speed, Burbank, California. See also Kinney, "Family."

For a history of the O'Malleys that dates back to their aiding France in its eighteenth century war with Britain, see Biographical Review, pp. 162-166.

117. Butterfield, p. 1253; Fox, *Family*, p. 86; *Tract Books*, pp. 60, 61; 1860 Census; Reference—Winnie Lacy, Fitchburg, Wisconsin.

118. *Tract Books*, p. 63.

119. For more information about the Stoner Prairie Byrnes, see Winnie Lacy, "The Byrne Family" (Fitchburg, Wisconsin).

120. Sweeney, "Parts 1, 7."

121. "Marriages" (Madison, Wisconsin, St. Raphael's Church); Reference—Winnie Lacy, Fitchburg, Wisconsin.

122. Thomas F. Meehan, "Records and Study of America's Catholic Past," *America* (November 12, 1938), p. 129. Reference—Catherine Markee, Madison, Wisconsin.

123. 1860 Census; Reference—Ruth Grady, Fitchburg, Wisconsin.

124. Butterfield, p. 1246; Reference—Gerald O'Brien, Fitchburg, Wisconsin; Mark O'Brien, Oregon township, Wisconsin.

125. 1860 Census; Reference—Mary Dunn, Fitchburg, Wisconsin.

126. *Deeds Register*, vol. 36, p. 185; 1860 Census. Despite the similarity of names, McKennas are not believed to be related to Kinneys of Irish Lane. The McKennas are thought to be from counties Tyrone or Monaghan in Ireland. Keyes, p. 592. Most McKennas in those areas were connected to the McKennas who were lords of the Barony of Trough in County Monaghan in centuries past. In contrast, the Kinneys came from an area in eastern County Mayo which was within a population dispersion pattern of people with the Kinney (Kenny) surname that emanated out of southern Roscommon. *Index to Tithe Applotment Books; Index to Griffiths Survey* (1856). Before the wars with the English, Kinneys were lords of the Barony of Moycarn and resided at Shenny (Kinney) Castle. "Ui Maine," Map, in John O'Donovan, *Tribes and Customs of Hy Many* (Cork, Ireland, Tower Books of Cork, 1976); see also pre-1700 maps of Ireland, Department of Special Collections, Memorial Library, University of Wisconsin—Madison; Kinney, "Family."

127. 1860 Census; Keyes, p. 135.

128. 1880 Census; Reference—Robert Purcell.

129. Rose McKee Everson, "The Dennis McKee Family, Pioneer Dane County Residents" (Madison, Wisconsin, 1986); Keyes, pp. 589-592; see also *Deeds Register*, vol. 48, p. 371.

130. Hazel Caine, "Our Sweetness," in *Holy Mother of Consolation Church, 1856-1956* (Oregon, Wisconsin, 1956); Philip Fox, *A History of Holy Mother of Consolation Church* (Oregon, Wisconsin, 1986), pp. 1-2; Alois Zitterl, *Meine Dreissig: Ahrigen Erfahrungen Els Priester in Madison, Wisconsin* (Madison, Wisconsin, 1907). The Irishman Reverend Hobbs, pastor of St. Mary's of Fitchburg from 1866-1869, had served earlier as a missionary for Catholics in many parts of the Northwest Territory. He is believed to have celebrated Mass in the Fitchburg area in the pioneer days. Rev. Charles D. E. Monroe, "Historical Highlights in Our Parish," in *Holy Mother of Consolation Parish Directory* (Oregon, Wisconsin, 1975), pp. 6-7.



131. "Baptisms," "Marriages," "Deaths" (Madison, Wisconsin, St. Raphael's Church); *St. Raphael Cathedral Parish Photo Album and Directory* (Madison, Wisconsin, 1972), p. 11; Caine, p. 1. A common tradition among the Irish immigrants was that families would kneel together around beds at nighttime and pray the rosary in the Gaelic language. Hawkins, p. 10.

132. "Marriages" (St. Raphael's).

133. *Deeds Register*, vol. 39, p. 260; Monroe, p. 8.

134. *Deeds Register*, vol. 130, p. 105; vol. 130, p. 482; *Oregon Observer* (August 12, 1886); Caine, p. 3; Fox, *H. M. C.*, pp. 4-5.

135. *Deeds Register*, vol. 18, p. 91; David Mollenhoff, *Madison: A History of the Formative Years* (Dubuque, Iowa, Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1982), p. 405. For a partial list of those buried at Greenbush Cemetery which includes some Irish, see *Wisconsin State Journal* (March 15, 1902), p. 3.

136. *Deeds Register*, vol. 170, p. 139; *Oregon Observer* (October 20, 1898); Monroe, p. 12.

137. *Deeds Register*, vol. 29, p. 320; Fox, *Family*, p. 31, 35; Keenan, p. 12; *Oregon Observer* (October 25, 1883).

138. Connie Darling and Jean A. O'Brien, *Fitchburg: A History* (Madison, Wisconsin, Countryside Publications, 1976), pp. 70, 92.

139. *Deeds Register*, vol. 7, pp. 452, 525; vol. 21, p. 414. For more about the Oak Hall Cemetery, see Fitchburg Historical Society Cemetery Committee, "Fitchburg Cemetery/ Oak Hall Cemetery" (1988).

140. *Deeds Register*, vol. 16, p. 552; Catherine Kinney, "Some Incidents of My Ancestors," reprinted by Mary Ann Pattison and Greg Kinney in *From County Mayo to St. Croix County: A History of the Northern Branch of the Kinney Family* (Hudson, Wisconsin, 1983), p. 77.

141. *Ibid.*; Pattison and Kinney, p. 59; Hawkins, p. 14.

142. Pattison and Kinney, pp. 16-17, 55-63; Reference — Mary Ann Pattison, Durand, Wisconsin.

143. Fox, *Family*, p. 45; McDonald, p. 64, 106-108, 290; Hawkins, p. 17.

144. McDonald, p. 106.

145. Keenan, p. 21; Fox, *Family*, p. 46.

146. Catherine married William Halpin (Halfpenny) after the death in 1864 of her husband, Patrick Lynch (see Note 110). Keyes, p. 736. Catherine's widowed sister Margaret Sheridan also joined the westward movement by taking up residence in Fargo, North Dakota, in the early 1900's. Kinney, "Family." The maiden name of Harriet, Catherine, and Margaret was Kinney, and they grew up together on the Irish Lane farm in the 1840s.

147. Although the McGibbons are of Scottish descent, the family lived in Ireland before coming to the United States. Professor Henry McGibbon bought a farm on Byrne Road in the twentieth century.

Several Irish families, such as Skellys and Doyles, moved to the Irish Lane vicinity after 1860. They no longer own farm land in the area today.

148. The Fitchburg Town Board held a special meeting September 9, 1872, "pursuant to a call from School District Number (9) Nine for the purpose of locating a schoolhouse site." *Fitchburg Records*, vol. 2, p. 157. Edward Sweeney sold a lot on the hill to the school district on March 31, 1873. *Deeds Register*, vol. 95, p. 171. The Dogtown School is believed to have been built on the hill in the latter part of 1873 after the plat map was made which shows a schoolhouse at the old location down in the village. An extant school record book begins in 1873 and lists a series of unusual expenditures that summer. School District Number 9, *Account Book* (Fitchburg, Wisconsin, 1873-1937), FHS.

## Notes for Appendix C

1. *Road from Whitewater to Mineral Point*, Map.

2. Wisconsin, Map (1842); Lapham, Map; *Dane County*, Map (1855); Brown, p. 355.

3. *Road from Whitewater to Mineral Point*, Map; *Dane County*, Map (1855); August Ligowsky, "Primrose," "Springdale," "Verona," Map.

4. Brown, p. 355; Howe and Thompson, p. 505, 513; Cassidy, p. 92; Durbin, Map, p. 10; Lapham, Map; Ligowsky, "Blue Mounds," "Springdale," "Verona," Maps.

5. Donald MacDonald and J. T. Hawes, "Verona," William J. Park, ed., *Madison, Wisconsin, Dane County, and Surrounding Towns* (Madison, Wisconsin, William J. Park and Co., 1877), p. 586.

6. *Field Notes of State Road from Wiotia, Lafayette County, through Lafayette, Green, and Dane Counties, to Verona, Dane County*, Map (Madison, Wisconsin, 1851), SHSW.

7. Kenneth Behnke, *Verona Area History 1847-1972* (Verona, Wisconsin, The Verona Press, 1972), p. 24.

8. "An Act Making Appropriations for Certain Roads in the Territory of Wisconsin," Chapter CXC, *United States Statutes at Large*, vol. 5 (1838), p. 303; Davis, pp. 4-7.

9. *Alteration in the Beloit to Madison Road*, Map; *Dane County*, Map (1855); *Madison to Big Foot Prairie*, Map.

10. *Road from Madison to Janesville*, Map (1843); *New Janesville Road*, Map.

11. *Plat and Minutes of Survey of Road from Runey's to Intersect Road Leading to Madison from Janesville*, Map (Dane County, Wisconsin Ter., 1843), DCLRR.



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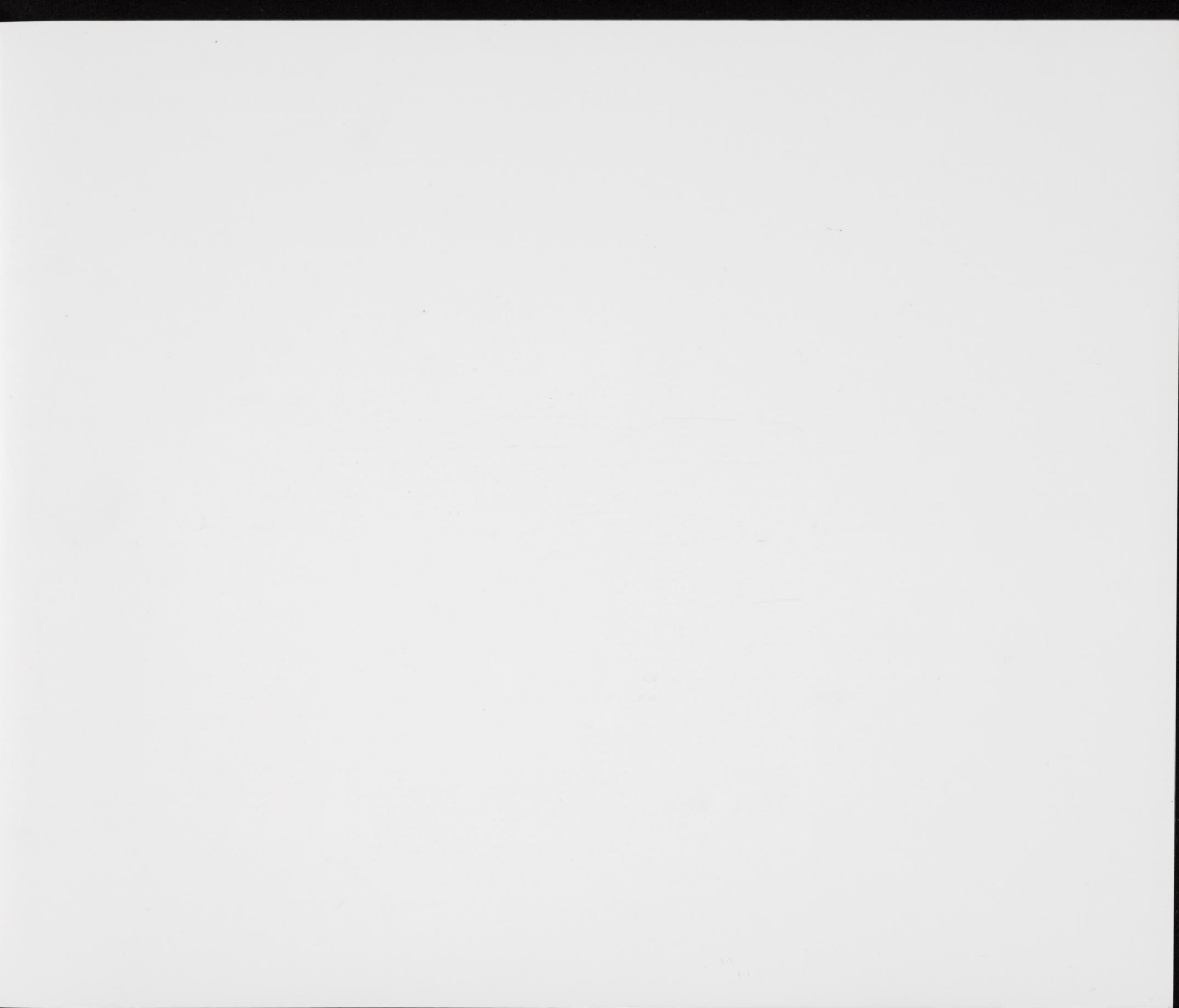


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Contemporary photographs by Thomas P. Kinney









In the years 1840-1860, the Fox, Irish Lane,  
and Stoner Prairie settlements together formed  
a thriving Irish-American community in Fitchburg  
that has continued to this day . . .

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