

## **The town of Norway, then and now: a bicentennial project.**

Palmer, Barbara; Pederson, Jim  
[Wind Lake, Wisconsin]: Town of Norway Bicentennial Committee,  
1983

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## OLD MUSKEGO

### THE TOWN OF NORWAY THEN AND NOW

Under the leadership of John Luraas, forty  
Norwegian immigrants came to Muskego Lake from Norway  
for the most important  
in Norwegian-American history.  
Temporary set-backs, the settlement  
here through the leadership of  
Even Heg, Johannes Johanssen, Soren Bache,  
Elling Ellsen, James Reymert and Claus Clausen,  
who sent glowing reports to Norway and  
encouraged a large movement to this country.

This settlement gave rise to the first  
Norwegian Lutheran congregation organized  
in America (1843) and published the first  
Norwegian-American newspaper. Old Muskego  
became a BICENTENNIAL PROJECT colony to

other settlements, schools and churches  
springing from them. Countless  
wagonloads of new settlers topped here before  
continuing west.

Nearby Heg Park commemorates Colonel  
Hans C. Heg, one of Wisconsin's Civil War heroes.

Erected 1963

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The Town of Norway, then a



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Published by  
Town of Norway  
Bicentennial Committee  
1983

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## PREFACE

**Dedicated to the residents of the  
Town of Norway  
whose chronicles, anecdotes, and pictures  
form the structure of this history.**





## PREFACE

This booklet is a history of the Town of Norway, Racine County, Wisconsin. The area in northwestern Racine County which is governed as Norway Township can be found by locating a 936.19 acre body of water called Wind Lake on the Wisconsin state map. Although this history is intended to include all of the 36 square miles of the township, most of the information centers around the northwest corner of the township, which has the heaviest population.

The history has been written as a Bicentennial project. Norway Township actively participated in the 1976 nationwide celebration with four major activities. These included a Bicentennial flag presentation program involving skits by many local students and speeches by visiting dignitaries; two musical programs in Heg Park; and a grand, old-fashioned 4th of July parade and picnic. Many organizations and individuals contributed not only to the success of these programs, but also to helping raise the funds that made this publication possible.

Many other citizens have in the past years helped with the research and organization needed to gather material for a comprehensive history. Especially helpful was the history written by Melvin Johnson of Wind Lake, a former Town Chairman. Much of what Mr. Johnson wrote has been included in these chapters. Information for this book has been gathered from printed material available as well as interviews with local residents. Not all of the "facts" agreed. What seemed the most authentic was used.

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The search for historical facts should not be considered finished with the publication of this booklet. There are many subjects that are incomplete because information was unavailable. It should be a goal of residents of the town to continue to search out what has not been found, to change what is incorrect, and in all ways preserve the evidence of the past. Preservation of town records, artifacts, and information continues with the efforts of the Town of Norway Historical Society, organized in 1978 as a result of the Bicentennial projects.

Barbara Palmer  
Jim Pederson

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# INDIANS

## WHEN THE WHITE MAN CAME

Lakeshore living was as popular with the Indians 5000 years ago as it is with Town of Norway residents today. Indians liked the region for its fish, game, and wild edible plants. Now, of course, recreation is of more importance.

In the late 1600's and during the 1700's, white men first began to explore Wisconsin, looking for minerals, furs, and land. Nicolet, a French explorer, noted in 1634 that the Winnebago Indians inhabited this part of Wisconsin. The Winnebagos were considered part of the Sioux nation, which lived farther to the west.

Later explorers recorded that a large Potawatomi Indian village existed around the shores of Wind Lake. Historians believe that the Potawatomi were members of the Algonquin nation that had been pushed out of the eastern states by white settlement.

The Potawatomi bands mentioned by the explorers didn't permanently inhabit any particular site. They moved in and out each season as their needs changed. Perhaps one group would move in for the spring migration of water fowl found in the marshes and lakes. After this group had moved on, another group might move in for the harvest of berries, nuts, and wild rice. If the Indians planted crops of corn, squash, or pumpkins, they would remain long enough to harvest those crops. In some cases, they might even remain at one site for a number of years.

The Indians led a nomadic life, returning only when they felt like it. Possibly years would go by between each visit to a village site. In the mean time, other Algonquin tribes, such as the Sauk, Fox, Kickapoo, Mascouten, or Miami might join other Potawatomi groups in using an area.

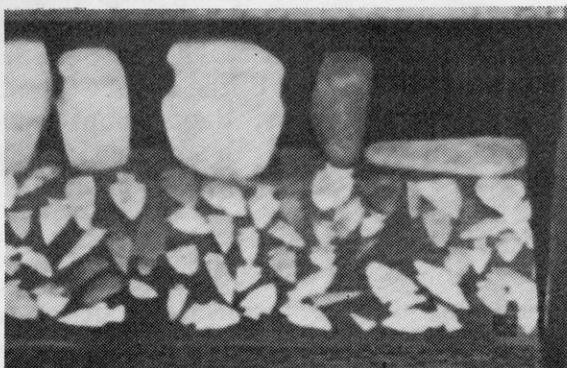
## HOW THE INDIANS LIVED

The woodland tribes living here were mainly hunters, following the animal herds. They made their weapons and tools from stone, bone, and wood. They gathered plants such as wild rice, berries, nuts, and seeds from the forests and prairies. Fish and water fowl were taken from the lakes and marshes. Cultivated crops, such as corn, squash, beans, and pumpkins, were also harvested.

The Indians lived in wigwams, circular dome-shaped houses with a framework of saplings covered with cattail and birchbark mats. They used stone implements and birchbark and pottery containers. Canoes were used on the lakes as a swift means of transportation. Extensive trading was done for articles that the tribe might lack. Artifacts prove that local Indians traded with other tribes as far away as the Gulf of Mexico and the Rocky Mountains.

## PREHISTORIC CULTURES

There is evidence that Indians inhabited this area for over 5000 years. Many Town of Norway residents have collections of arrowheads, stone axes, spear points, awls, stone knives, and scrapers found on their land. Older farmers tell how, as they walked behind their teams of horses while plowing, they found many of these artifacts. Arrowheads are still being found in those areas that have not been drastically changed by the white man.



Area farmer's Indian artifacts, collected while plowing

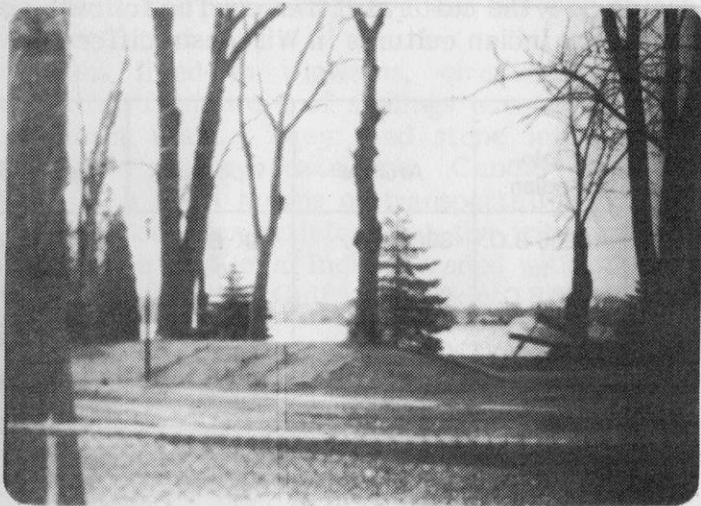
Archaeologists can date these artifacts by looking at their shape and how they were worked. They have dated these tools back to many cultures of Indians that lived in Wisconsin at various periods of time. Cultures of Indians differ in the ways they chipped their tools, built their homes, gathered their food, and honored their dead. By looking at the style of the artifacts found, archaeologists can decide how the cultures differed. The following chart shows how the Indian cultures in Wisconsin differed.

	Paleo-Indian	Archaic	Woodland	Mississippian
Time Period	10000 B.C. to 6300 B.C.	8000 B.C. to 900 B.C.	900 B.C. to 1800 A.D.	1300 A.D. to 1800 A.D.
Settle-ments	Temporary Campsites	Campsites; A Few Villages	Semi-Permanent Villages	Large, Permanent Villages
Food	Big Game Hunting; Nut and Berry Gathering	Small Game Hunting; Fishing; Shellfish; Plants	Mixed Hunting; Fishing; Gathering; Gardening	Mixed Hunting; Fishing; Gathering; Gardening
Tools	Chipped Stone; Some Bone	Chipped and Ground Stone; Bone; Shell; Some Copper	Stone; Bone; Shell; Copper; Some Pottery; First Use of Bows and Arrows	Stone; Bone; Shell; Pottery Common
Religion	Unknown	Death Rituals; Goods Buried; Bodies Painted before Burial	Burial Mounds Common; Many Items in Graves	Important Ceremonies; Some Temple Mounds



## INDIAN MOUNDS

Cultures of Indian Mound Builders are of major importance to the Town of Norway. Though much of their work has been destroyed, mounds of these ancient Indians can still be seen along the shores of Waubeesee Lake.

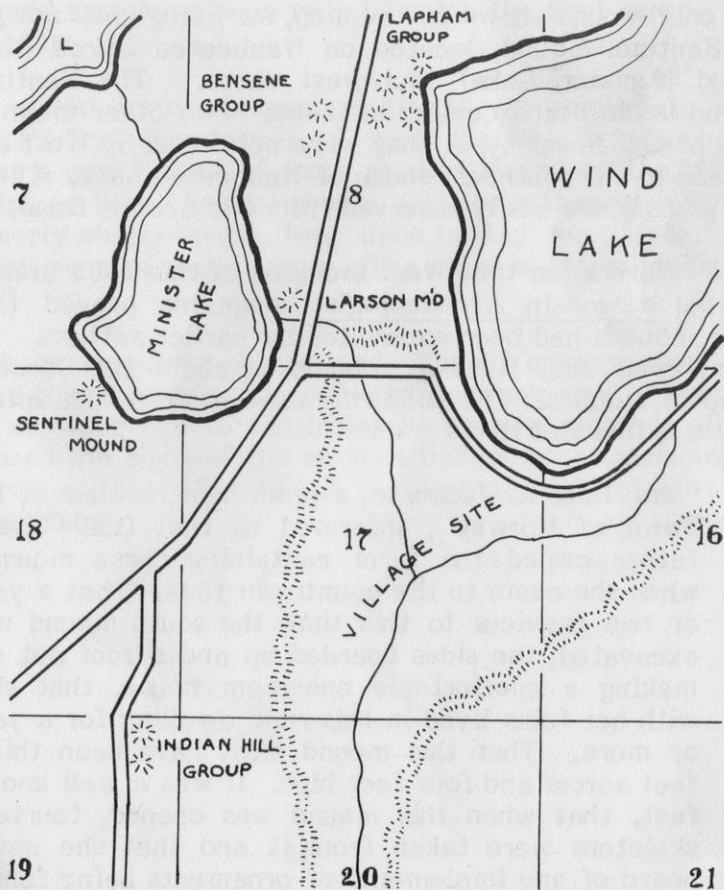


Linear Indian mound on south shore of Waubeesee Lake  
as seen from Loomis Road

One type of mound is the burial mound of the Hopewell Indians which existed in Wisconsin during the Middle Woodland Period, from about 500 B.C. to 500 A.D. Another later culture built linear mounds. These smaller mounds were built during the late Woodland Period, 500 to 1600 A.D. Not all mounds were used for burial purposes. Historians do not know why some mounds were built to bury the dead and some weren't.

The Hopewell burial mounds, according to historians, were not necessarily built near their villages. Probably people from different villages gathered to hold ceremonies and to bury the dead. At this time, the mounds were built.

Indians placed bodies, bones, or cremated remains in log tombs or pits in the ground. The dome-shaped mounds were built over such pits. Sometimes ear spoons, beads, or celts (axes) of copper were put in the graves. These artifacts are rarely found in villages. They were special items, not everyday objects, but still were considered important enough to be needed in the after world by the dead. Even then, only important persons were given special treatment including burial within a mound after death. These people might have been village or religious leaders.



Map showing mounds located by George West in 1903

Mounds are often located on low flat lands along main streams. They are usually dome shaped. Some are as high as twelve feet. The linear mounds are much lower and more oblong in shape.

At one time there were numerous mounds in the Wind Lake area. Now only three mounds exist. Archaeologists in 1903 located many others that have since been leveled as people built homes. The map on the preceeding page shows the mounds that were located and mapped by George A. West in 1903.

The only mound shown on the map, surviving until now, is the Sentinel mound, located on Waubeesee Lake's (then called Minister Lake) southwest shore. The Sentinel mound is large and conical in shape. Two other mounds, both of the linear type, that were not found by West can be seen on the southeast shore of Waubeesee Lake. These two mounds are easily observed from Old Loomis Road.

Some information that West included in this 1903 article in the Wisconsin Archaeologist magazine proved that other mounds had been excavated by earlier settlers. He interviewed Mrs. Hans A. Jacobson about the Bensene group of mounds. The following excerpt from this interview was included in his article.

"Mrs. Hans A. Jacobson, a prominent resident of the Town of Norway , informed us that Col. Heg's father owned the farm containing these mounds, when she came to the country in 1844. That a year or two previous to this time the south mound was excavated, the sides boarded up and a roof put on, making a comfortable one-room house, that she, with her folks lived in this rude dwelling for a year or more. That this mound must have been thirty feet across and four feet high. It was a well known fact, that when this mound was opened, fourteen skeletons were taken from it and that she never heard of any implements or ornaments being found. Several other old residents were interviewed and each corroborated the statement made by Mrs. Jacobson."

## WHAT THE INDIANS LEFT

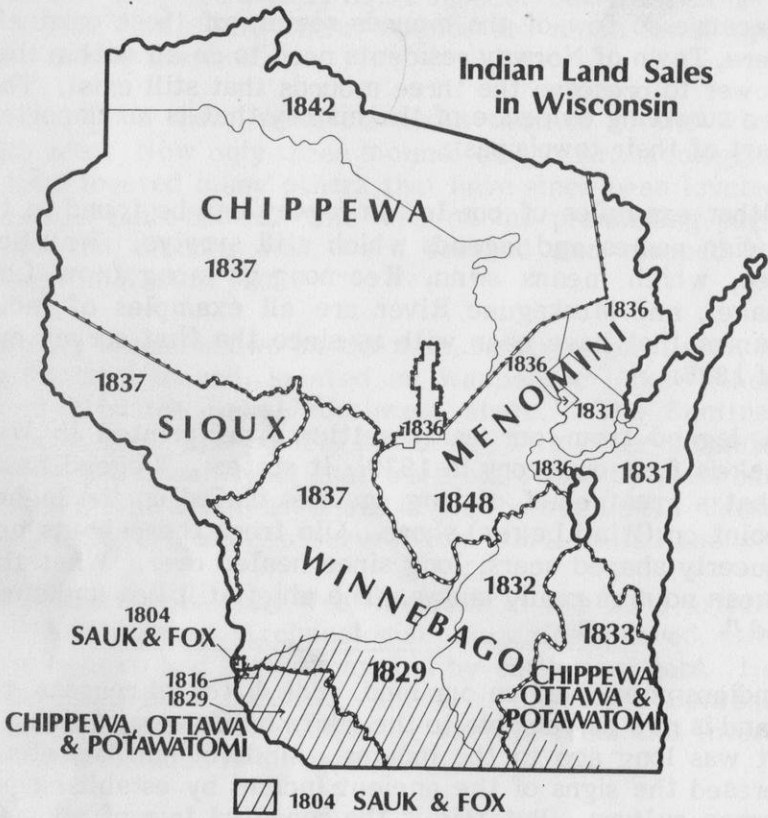
Because so few of the mounds remain of those originally here, Town of Norway residents need to do all within their power to preserve the three mounds that still exist. They are surviving evidence of the history that is an important part of their town's past.

Other examples of our Indian legacy can be found in the Indian names and legends which still survive. Wau-bee-see, which means swan, Kee-nong-ga-mong (now Long Lake), and Muskeguac River are all examples of Indian names that have been with us since the first survey map of 1836.

A legend from our early settlers was printed in Wind Lake's first directory in 1939. It states: "Legend has it that a great chief of long ago lies buried on the highest point on (Wind Lake's) shore. Old trees thereabouts bear queerly shaped scars, long since healed over. What they mean no man really knows. The chief still lies undisturbed."

Indians once lived on our land. For different reasons, this land is now as valuable to the white man's way of living as it was long ago to the Indians. Modern man has almost erased the signs of the ancient Indians by establishing an urban culture. But this is the repeated tale of all man's past history.



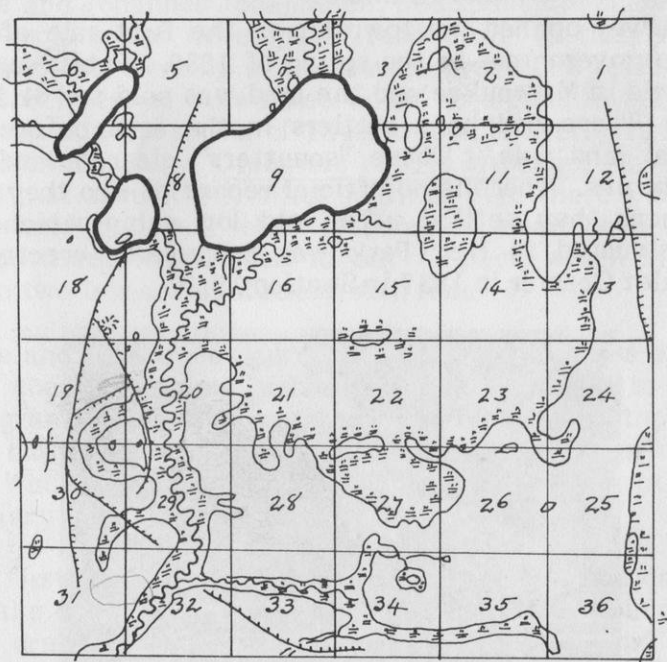


# IMMIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT

## THE FIRST SURVEY

Few white men had seen what is now the Town of Norway until the government contracted for a survey of the boundaries of the township in 1835. These boundaries were surveyed in December of 1835.

On December 1, 1835, Elisha Dwelle contracted for the division of the interior of the township. With his chainmen and his marker, Dwelle started on May 1 and completed the job on May 16, 1836. The surveyors received \$2.75 for each mile surveyed. Posts and mounds which these men erected determine the boundaries of all real estate in the town. In 1873, the original markers were replaced with substantial limestone monuments.



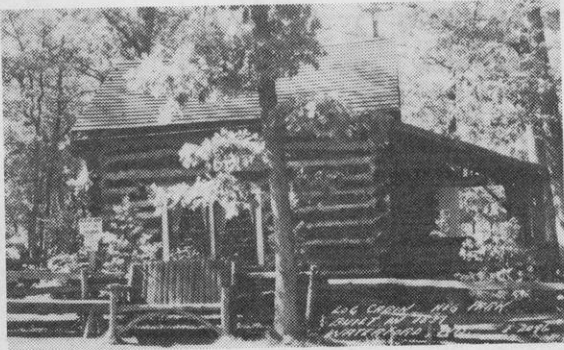
Map from Elisha Dwelle's survey notes, 1836

Dwelle's survey notes include references to the kind of land he observed. He found the region to be of broad, low, timbered uplands, prairies and considerable lowland areas of peat and swamp. He found the uplands thinly timbered with black, red, burr, and white oak. The natural drainage was poor.

Dwelle's notes also hint at the Indian occupation. He mentions entering an "Indian Clearing" between Sections 31 and 32. He also placed a marker at an "Indian Wigwam" in Sections 19 and 20. Also mentioned and drawn on the original survey map are Indian trails existing at that time. Although the treaty which ended the Blackhawk War in Wisconsin in 1833, provided for the removal of the Indian population to an area west of the Mississippi, some Indians did remain in the area and continued to use the land that had been theirs for centuries.

#### **LAND SALE AND SETTLEMENT**

The survey opened the township to the first sale of land by the government in the spring of 1839. Public auction was held in Milwaukee and the land was sold for \$1.25 an acre. There had been settlers in the area before this official land sale. These "squatters" cleared land and built homes. There is no official record of who they were or where they settled. The old log cabin which was reconstructed in Heg Park was supposedly erected by Eliphalet Cramer in 1837 in Section 19.



**Cramer Cabin, Heg Park**

The first permanent settler of record was Thomas Drought of Irish descent. In 1838, he and his sister drove a pair of oxen from Canada and located in the northeast quarter of Section 12. In 1838, James Ashe and George Drought also entered tracts in Section 1. These early settlers bought their land in 1839, when the government land office was opened.

### NORWEGIAN SETTLEMENT

In the fall of 1839, a group of forty immigrants, led by John Nelson Luraas of Tinn, Norway, were persuaded by Milwaukee merchants to settle near Muskego Lake instead of Illinois as they originally intended. The following spring, however, they found the low lying, swampy land to be flooded. Some of the Norwegians, including Luraas, eventually moved south and west to the Town of Norway and other areas to find more workable lands.

Two other Norwegians from Drammen, Norway, Soren Bache and Johannes Johannesen, had spent the summer of 1839 looking for developable land close to their fellow countrymen. Hearing of the Luraas group and feeling the land southwest of Milwaukee would be a good investment, they came in the spring of 1840 to look it over. As Bache states in his diary, Chronicle of Old Muskego, "...we had heard that about three miles south of here there was very good land not yet sold. Finding it even beyond our expectations, we decided to buy a piece which lay between two lakes well stocked with fish."

Bache and Johannesen purchased around 240 acres of land from the government, which they later resold to other immigrants. They lived in a sod hut for a short time and then built a more permanent home in an Indian mound near Waubeesee Lake. The following is an excerpt from the diary of Soren Bache:

"Our first job now was to build a house. We had decided to make use of a mound out on a fine plot of ground with good drainage in all directions. Johannesen and I had already started working, and with the aid of Heg and his



companions the job was soon completed. The mound was so large that by excavating down to the level of the surrounding ground we got a room twenty-four feet long, eighteen-feet wide, and seven-feet high. This first story was entirely underground. Over it we built a loft five logs high which rested on six pillars about seven feet in height. The walls of our dugout were so firm that there was no danger of a cave-in, and we merely needed to provide it with a wainscot in order to get a good, warm dwelling. On one side of the main room we excavated a kitchen, which also was provided with boarded walls and a roof resting on pillars. Considering the circumstances, we now have a house which for comfort surpasses our expectations.



Soren Bache's Hut, originally located on east shore of Waubeesee Lake. Photo taken about 1949 on Fries farm

"The mound proved to be an Indian grave. At the bottom we found twelve or fourteen skulls and some other bones which indicated that these had been tall people. By now these burial customs have doubtless been discarded. In the past, however, the Indians are supposed to have used this manner of burial for those killed in battle - an indication that they were formerly more enlightened in some ways than they are at present. Judging by these customs, they must have had a culture similar to that of pagan times in our own country, as is witnessed by the big mounds in Norway which can, in some ways be compared to this one. There are many such mounds here, undoubtedly all burial places primarily for warriors. Many bodies were piled up on the ground and then covered with earth

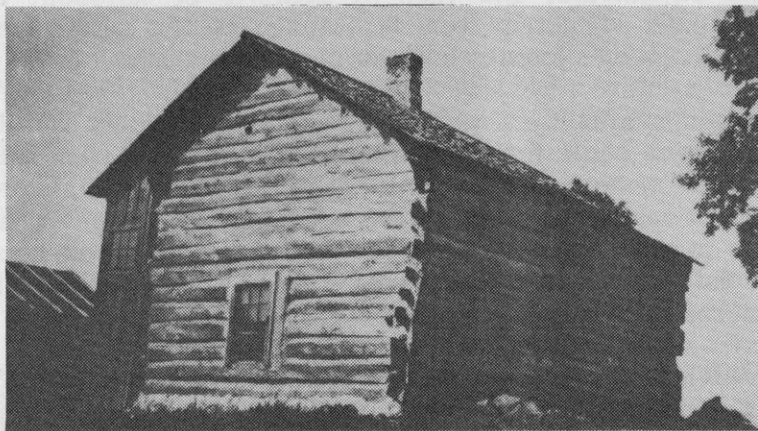


The Mattias Ingebretson House, still used as a residence by Mr. and Mrs. Art Showers. Mrs. Showers is a descendent of Mattias Ingebretson

to the height already mentioned. It was evident that the earth had been brought some distance. This particular mound must have been built many years ago, because fair-sized oak trees, the largest twelve or fourteen inches in diameter, were growing on it."

#### THE HEG GROUP

Influenced by Bache and Johannesen, a group arrived that fall from Drammen, Norway and also settled in Norway Township. This group was under the leadership of Even Heg, a former innkeeper near Drammen.



Bergen Cabin. Once on Malchine farm, a portion is now shown in the Racine County Historical Museum, Racine.

The stormy trip from Norway experienced by these new immigrants on an iron cargo ship had taken eleven weeks. An interesting episode of this voyage is related in "Historic Heg Memorial Park," a booklet written by Ella Colbo in 1940.

"Among the passengers was Tosten Kleven, a lad of sixteen. When the sailing vessel was a few hours out of New York harbor he was stricken with the black plague, given up for dead and preparations were made for his burial at sea. The Even Heg family intervened and were given permission to bury their young friend on land. They took him to the establishment of a New York undertaker. Here he awakened from the coma which had been mistaken for death, and though it was some time before he fully recovered his health, he lived to become seventy-four years of age. At the age of nineteen, he helped build the first church."

The trip to the new land was a long, dangerous journey. The ocean crossing, by sailing vessels crammed with immigrants and their belongings, was a 10 to 16 week journey or more, depending on the weather. Upon arrival in America, few immigrants could speak the language. They had to arrange travel from New York by river and canal to Buffalo, and then by steamer or sail boat to Milwaukee. The trip from Milwaukee to the settlement was a long day's journey on a hard, strange trail.

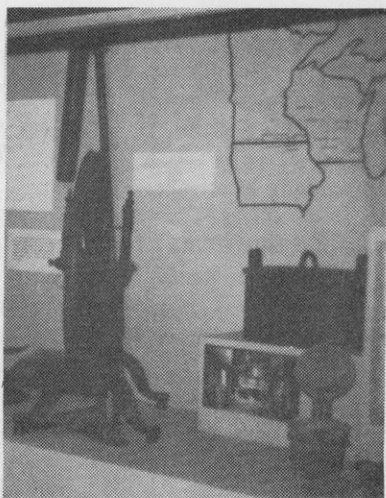
The immigrants were a brave people. They left family and friends back in their homeland. They came with only the bare necessities, leaving many of their possessions behind because of the limited space aboard ship. They came to a new land, rich only in the strength of their hope and faith and their ability to hew a home out of the wilderness.

#### **POVERTY AND HARSHIPS**

Of the Norwegian immigrants, Even Heg, Johannesen, and especially Soren Bache were men of means and bought several sizable tracts of land. They sold the land in small

parcels on favorable terms to poorer settlers. Many of these immigrants were very poor and the poverty of the Norwegians seems to have been responsible for the division of land into small tracts.

An American clergyman who visited a Muskego cabin in 1844 wrote: "Aside from the tea kettle, we saw but one article of furniture and that a wooden bowl partly filled with what I took to be shorts, kneaded and prepared for baking. This, as near as I could learn, was all they had in the house to support life."



Town of Norway  
Historical Society exhibit  
in State Historical Society  
Museum, Madison

The new settlers found many hardships — their poverty, uncleared lands, inadequate housing, a strange language, and recurring diseases that often struck the community. There were continuous fevers and illnesses from cholera, typhoid fever, tuberculosis, and malaria. The death toll was appalling. The fact that they did not dig wells accounted for the contaminated water which they drank. Three major cholera epidemics nearly eliminated the entire settlement. The summer of 1849 was described by a settler as "the awfulest summer I have ever experienced." Another said: "We had all we could do to carry them out of the houses and haul them to the graves with our oxen, while others dug the graves."

Following is a translation of a letter written by Anders Klove to his mother in Norway. It shows the remarkable fortitude of the new settlers. The original is in the possession of Mrs. Charlotte Elliott of Cherry Valley, Illinois, a great granddaughter of Anders Klove. Mr. Klove settled on the land south of the parsonage. This letter is taken from the "Old Muskego Saga," a church paper.

December 22, 1843

Anders Klove  
Racine County, Wisconsin

Dear Mother:

You must not be worried, dear unforgettable mother, that I have waited so long before you and also my other relatives hear how I and my family have been getting along since we came to America.

The 29th of July last, I sent a letter from New York to our brother-in-law, David Lemme, in which I told how we had fared while crossing the ocean; also about our stay in New York, which I hope he has received. I will, however repeat the following:

We had been three weeks on the ocean and had come a good way past the Shetland Islands, there broke out an epidemic of typhoid fever. Two of my children died on the ocean of the disease, Ingelbright and Karl.

We arrived in New York, July 13, when 20 of our company were brought to the hospital, five of whom were my children. We stayed in New York until July 29 and during that time our daughter Ingeberg died, also Nels Dragsvold died. We left New York July 29 at 7 P.M. by way of steamboat and arrived at Albany the 30th. The 31st of July we left on a canal boat drawn by two horses and came to Buffalo August 7th. The 10th we boarded a steamboat and went on the Erie Canal to Milwaukee; came there the 14th and the 15th, we arrived here in Muskego, Racine County, Wisconsin. Here I have purchased a piece of land.

There has this summer and fall been a great epidemic of ague and fever which has not only taken hold of the Norse, but also the native American and many have died. The 5th of December our little Britta died of ague, so you can understand we have had much sorrow, which has been our lot since we left Voss. Heavy as our sorrow has been, "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord."



But not this alone, but the day our daughter died, my wife took sick and daughter Christine about the same time, and three weeks later our son Andrew took sick and they have been sick till now. I thought they were more likely to die than live, which made it look pretty dark for me.

Except for our sorrow having so many of our children die, I and family are well pleased in having come to America. If the Lord will bless us with health, I think life will be pleasanter and easier here than in Norway.

Now I must tell you about my business investments here in Racine County. The day we left Milwaukee I happened to lodge that night with a man named Even Heg from Drammen, Norway. This man already knew me by name and wished I would settle in this neighborhood. He directed me to a man from Hedemarkgen, who wished to sell his land. This farm, being one and half miles from Even Heg's place and 20 miles from Milwaukee and about the same distance from Racine and 1,450 miles from New York. I therefore went to look at it and found it some what like what I would like to have and within a few days bought the property which consists of 100 acres of land, of which 60 acres were enclosed with fence and eight or nine acres which had been broken. I sowed six acres of winter wheat this fall. The house I can hardly call more than one room. There is also a dairy barn, but not according to what I would like to have. Since there was quite a bit of improvements on the place, it was therefore somewhat expensive. I paid 425 dollars for the property. I purchased another 40 acres for which I paid 150 dollars. On this there is also a small house and some fence and ground broken. I have enough timber for our use and will have some wood to sell. I have earlier bought a team of driving horses for \$48, two milk cows for \$24, five lambs for \$6, twelve hogs for \$19. I have butchered four hogs for which I paid \$4. One of these weighed 650 pounds and the hide 96 pounds. The price of feed is somewhat higher now than it was in the fall. A barrel of flour costs \$2, a barrel of wool 36¢. I can also let you know we have a Norwegian preacher by the name of Claus Clausen, who is an extraordinarily able and good man. He lives with Even

and Johannes Heg. He also holds services in their living room. The services are conducted exactly in the same manner as we had them in Norway. He also has begun to instruct a class of children in the catechism for confirmation, but my children have not started yet. The pastor thought they had better wait till they get stronger after having been sick for so long. The pastor has visited us several times. His land joins into mine, so he will be my nearest neighbor. My nearest neighbor will then be about the distance as I had at Klove farm in Voss, Norway.

Eight days ago today the Norse here in this settlement had a meeting at Even Heg's to see what could be done about organizing a congregation. There were 100 men who signed their names as charter members. There were four men of Racine County and four of Milwaukee County elected who were to meet soon and decide what the minister's salary should be, also see about building a church. I, too, had the honor of being one of this committee. The church is to be built near the cemetery we already have and my home will be right near the church.

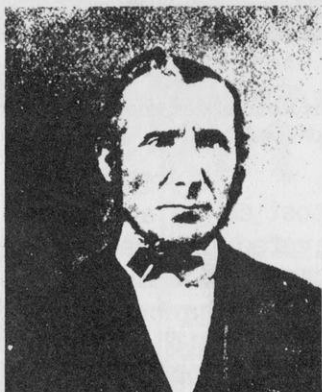
May the Lord be with you, dear mother and brothers and sisters, also the relatives and friends. King's greetings and may you all have a blessed New Year.

Your beloved son,  
Anders Klove

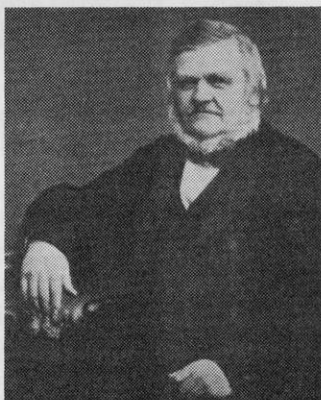
## FAMOUS "OLD MUSKEGO"

This settlement established by Norwegian immigrants has been called "Old Muskego" by the many historians who wrote about its importance to the Norwegian pioneers. But the events that made it famous really occurred in Norway Township, Racine County.

The settlement earned its distinction from the outstanding leadership of the men who lived there in the 1840's — men like Soren Bache, Johannes Johannesen, Even Heg, and Pastor C. L. Clausen. As a result of the initiative of these men, Muskego boasts many "firsts" in Norwegian-American history: 1. The Muskego settlement became the mother colony and helped Norwegian immigrants form other settlements on the frontier; 2. The first Norwegian Lutheran congregation was organized and the first Norwegian Lutheran church was built in the U.S.; 3. The first strictly Norwegian newspaper in America helped the immigrants become involved in the events and ideals of America; and 4. The democratic influence of the colony helped nurture the growth of Hans C. Heg, one of the first Norwegians to earn political and military fame in America.



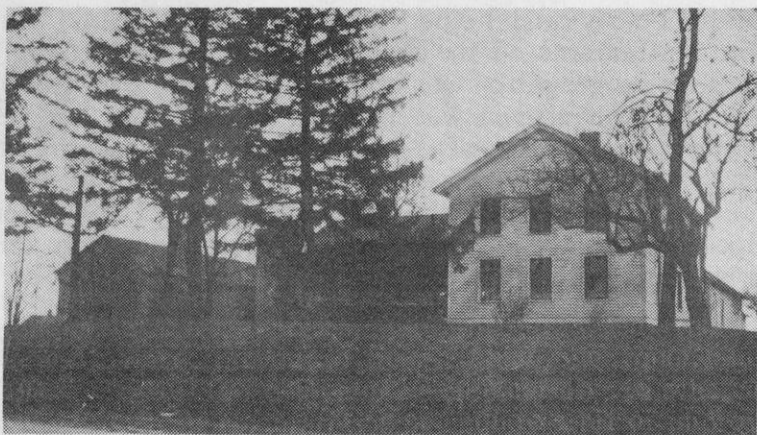
John Luraas



Soren Bache

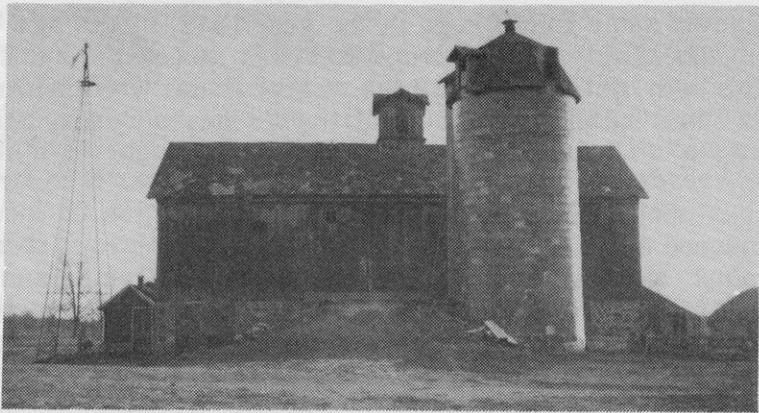
## THE MOTHER COLONY

The center of the new community seems to have been the Even Heg barn located near Waubeesee Lake. Heg, a wealthy inn-keeper from Drammen, Norway, purchased the farm of John Luraas and erected a barn in 1843. Here, hundreds of new immigrants could stop and receive hospitality, information, and assistance before continuing on to their destination. The barn served as a religious and social center too. Claus Clausen, who came to the community to teach school and remained at the request of the settlers to preach, organized his congregation in the Heg barn and held his Sunday School there until the first church was completed. During the cholera outbreaks of 1849, 1850, and 1852, the barn was converted into a fifty-bed hospital.



Even Heg's farm, located on Loomis Road about one block north of Long Lake Road

Another gathering place was a post office and store. A large Indian mound had been excavated and boarded inside and this served the purpose. It was also used as a hotel. Johannes Johannesen was in charge. Johannesen was the author of the famous "Muskego Manifesto" of 1845. It was signed by 80 residents of the community and sent to Norway informing their relatives and friends in the homeland that in spite of sickness, hardship and suffering they



Barn on Heg farm, built with timbers from original Heg barn

were still glad they had come to the United States, and faced the future with confidence." Johannesen died during one of the later cholera outbreaks.

## THE FIRST NEWSPAPER

James Denoon Reymert, an attorney, led an unusual and helpful life in the community. He was the editor of the first Norwegian newspaper in America called the "Nordlyset" or Northern Lights. Mr. Reymert was instrumental in getting a plank road built from Janesville to Milwaukee. To him belongs the credit of being the first Norwegian in America to be elected Assemblyman. He later became a federal judge.



Portion of first issue of Nordlyset, July, 1847



Reymert came to Muskego in the year 1842, at the age of 21. The first copy of *Nordlyset* was struck off in Mr. Heg's barn, dated July 29, 1847. Later issues were printed in a small building just south of the Waukesha County Line near Lake Denoon. The publishers were eager to make their readers well-informed American citizens. The first issues contained translations of the Declaration of Independence and Constitution. *Nordlyset* took a strong stand against slavery and was a champion of temperance. Reymert sold *Nordlyset* in 1849, but it did not survive more than a year and a half after that.

The first Temperance Society of the Norwegians was organized in Muskego on January 31, 1848, at the home of Even Heg. Heg was elected president, and his son Hans C. Heg, at 18, secretary. Members pledged to abstain from liquor and to promote temperance generally.

One notable early event was the visit of the world renowned violinist, Ole Bull, in 1851. He arrived with a party of friends from Milwaukee, only to find that fire had just destroyed the home of his friend, James Reymert, where he had expected to be entertained. The settlers gathered beside the smoking ruins and he gave his concert as scheduled, playing for them "The Carnival of Venice."



James Denoon Reymert

## HANS HEG

Hans C. Heg, son of Even Heg, came to America at age 11 and actively participated in the events that made the Muskego colony unique. By the time he was twenty-two, he had won the respect and admiration of the settlers and was considered a rising young politician. He believed in freedom, equality and brotherhood and affiliated himself with the Free Soil Party.

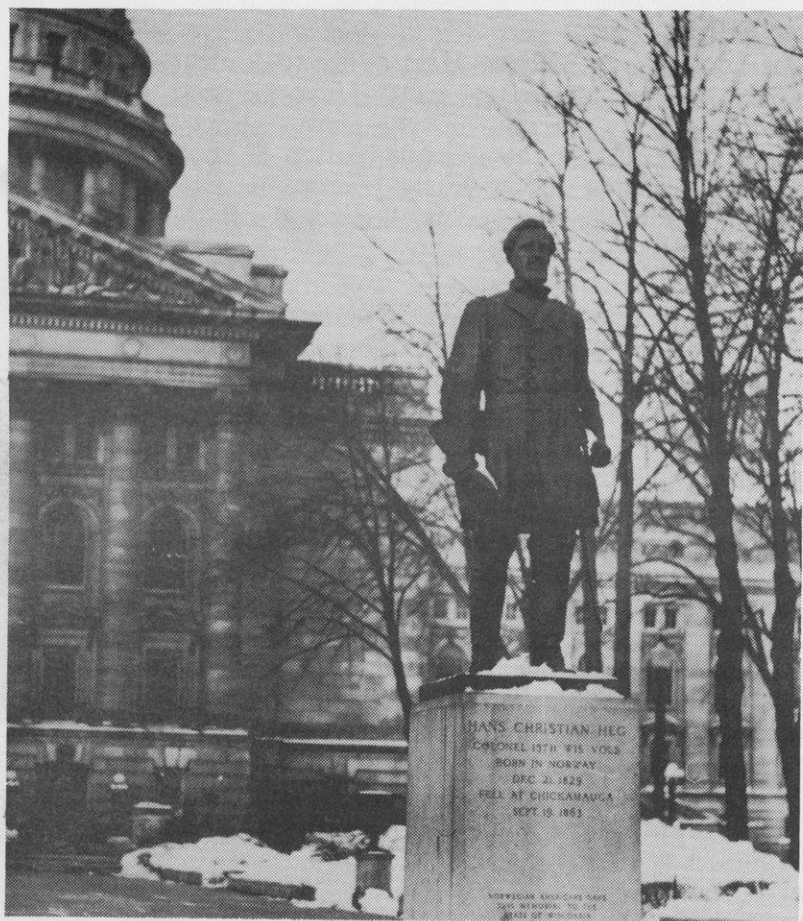
Heg became a member of the Norway Town Board in 1852 and served on the Racine County Board of Supervisors until 1857. He was appointed by the governor to serve as a warden at the state prison in Waupun in 1860.

In 1861, Governor Randall of Wisconsin appointed Heg as Colonel of the Fifteenth Wisconsin Volunteers. Heg recruited a Scandinavian regiment to help preserve the Union during the Civil War. Appealing to all young Norsemen, he said, "The government of our adopted country is in danger. It is our duty as brave and intelligent citizens to extend our hands in defense of our country and of our homes." The final tally shows that 115 of 890 men enrolled in his regiment answered to the first name of "Ole."

The Fifteenth Wisconsin Volunteers were trained for a period of sixteen days before starting for the Southern battlefields. During the next two years as Heg fought and lived with his men, he gained their respect and devotion. In the battle of Chickamauga, Colonel Hans C. Heg was killed on September 20, 1863, becoming the highest ranking Wisconsin officer to lose his life in the Civil War. His grave is in the Norway Hill cemetery.



Colonel Hans Heg



Colonel Heg's statue at east entrance to State Capital, Madison

It was to honor his memory that the Colonel Heg Memorial Park was established on a twelve-acre plot in Norway Township. It was dedicated as a county park in 1928. A museum there has many historic objects relating to the early Norwegian settlement as well as to Hans Heg. Other memorials to Heg include a statue designed by Paul Fjelde, a famous Norwegian-American sculptor, which stands at the east entrance to the Capitol building in Madison. Replicas of this statue stand at Heg Park and Lier, Norway, his birthplace. A cannon ball memorial marks the spot where Heg was wounded at Chickamauga.

# GOVERNMENT

## STATE AND NATIONAL

Prior to 1838, the Indians were the only permanent residents of what is now the Town of Norway. Though first the French and then the English had laid claims to the territory, neither of these governments made land grants or in any other way encouraged settlement. In fact, the only white men living in the entire area south of Green Bay and east of the Rock River during the French and English occupation, were four French fur traders.

In treaties that concluded the Revolutionary War, England ceded all of the territory east of the Mississippi River and south of the Great Lakes to the United States. At that time, both Virginia and Massachusetts laid overlapping claims to land that included southeastern Wisconsin. When the new federal government assumed the states' war debts, these claims were dropped and the area became part of the federal domain. Congress, also needing cash to pay the war debts, planned the sale and settlement of this wilderness then known as the Northwest Territory.

Expansion westward from the the existing states started slowly and then quickened with the close of the War of 1812. The area that is now Wisconsin was included in the Territory of Indiana in 1800, then in the Territory of Illinois in 1809, and finally in the Michigan Territory in 1818. During this early territorial period, eastern Wisconsin was roundly ignored. The area for all practical purposes remained Indian Territory, while southwestern Wisconsin, because of its lead deposits, was occupied and settled. However, that settlement was in turn responsible for the settlement of the remainder of the state. In 1832, difficulties in the lead mining region caused the Black Hawk War, that brought the entire area to the attention of the federal government.

At the close of the Black Hawk War, treaties were negotiated with the Indian tribes in the Northwest Terri

tory. The treaty with the Potawatomi Tribe was of special interest because this band of Indians controlled Southeastern Wisconsin as well as northern Illinois and Indiana and southern Michigan. According to terms of the treaty, the Indians were given new lands in the Kansas-Oklahoma region along with promises of food and clothing. In return, the Indians gave up all claims to land east of the Mississippi River.

With its entire area open for settlement, Wisconsin was separated from the Michigan Territory in 1836 and organized as a new territory. The original Wisconsin Territory included all of the present day state as well as that of Iowa and Minnesota and portions of both North and South Dakota. Two years later, the areas west of the Mississippi were reorganized as the Iowa Territory. Wisconsin with its present boundaries remained a territory until 1848 when it was admitted into the Union as a state.

## **COUNTY**

Settlement of southeastern Wisconsin proceeded inward from port settlements built along Lake Michigan. These ports including Milwaukee, Racine, and Southport (Kenosha), by virtue of their size, became the seats of the county governments.

Settlement of the present day Racine County began in 1834. Reports of the soil fertility in the area created great excitement in the eastern states. As a result, many settlers arrived and by 1835, hundreds of settlers had established farms in the eastern part of the county. In response to the settlement, the Territorial Legislature detached Racine County from Milwaukee County. The original Racine County included the present day Kenosha County, which was not detached and organized as a separate county until 1850.

Racine County was named after its principal city. The city, first called Fort Gilbert after one of its early real estate developers, is named after the river entering Lake Michigan at its harbor. This river, now called Root River, was named "Chipppecotton", which meant "root", by the



Indians because of the intertwining roots that grew in great numbers from its banks. The name "Racine", a French translation for "root", was applied to the river by French Jesuits who established missions in this region.

Throughout the years, the county government has provided the major government services for this area. These services include courts and other offices that make up the legal system, highway construction and maintenance, an agricultural extension agent, an extensive park system, welfare and social services, and police protection through the office of the county sheriff.

## **TOWN**

Town governments were established to provide government services on a more local basis. The Town of Norway was created by an act of the Territorial Legislature in 1847. On April 6th of the same year at the first town meeting, the local citizens organized their town government. The minutes of that meeting as recorded on page one of the official town minutes follow:

At an Election held at the house of Jacob Jacobian the Town of Norway and County of Racine on the first Tuesday in April A.D. 1847 agreeable to an act of the last Legislature of the Territory of Wisconsin to enable the people of Norway to organize as a Town. The meeting having come to order Jacob Jacobian was called to the chair and P.L. Cheves appointed clerk. The board being duly qualified by William Adams a Justice of the Peace in and for the County of Racine and Territory of Wisconsin, and notice being given by the clerk of the election that the polls were open they then proceeded with the election.

### Resolution

Resolved that the town clerk shall receive as a compensation for services the ensuing year Fifteen Dollars "\$15.00."

Resolved that day officers whose fees are not specified by law shall receive as a compensation for services Seventy Five cents per day "\$0.75."

Resolved that Thirty Dollars shall be raised for the support of the poor "\$30.00."

Resolved that Timothy Mildownie, James Dalrell, and James Ash shall serve as fence viewers.

Resolved that Joseph Lenone serve as overseer of Highways in road district No. 15.

Resolved that Timothy Mildownie shall serve as overseer of Highways in District No. 13.

Report of Committee

Resolved that any Stud Horse over one year old running at large the owner shall forfeit the sum of Twenty Dollars for every such offense - \$20.00.

Resolved that any Bull over one year old running at large the owner shall forfeit for every such offense the sum of Five Dollars \$5.00.

Resolved that any Ram over six months running at large from the first day of August to the first day of December the owner shall forfeit the sum of Ten Dollars for every such offense \$10.00.

Resolved that any Boar over three months old running at large the owner shall forfeit the sum of Five Dollars for every such offense \$5.00.

It is interesting to note the lack of Norwegian names in the above minutes. Quite likely, the Norwegians had not yet gained citizenship in any large numbers or did not understand the principles of their new government. It is also apparent from the minutes that roaming farm animals and fencing were considered the most serious problems of that day.

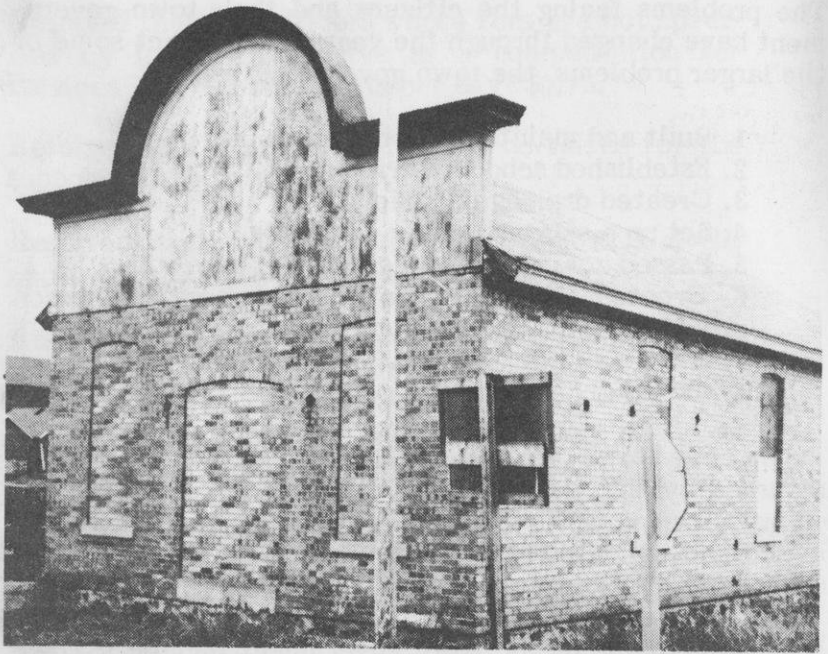
The problems facing the citizens and their town government have changed through the years. To correct some of the larger problems, the town government has:

1. Built and maintained local roads.
2. Established school districts.
3. Created drainage districts.
4. Set up a sanitary sewer district.
5. Passed zoning ordinances.
6. Created a police force to supplement protection provided by the county sheriff.
7. Hired building and health inspectors.
8. Assessed property and collected taxes.

Today, the town government is run mostly on money returned by the state government from taxes it collects on sales, income, fuel, and utilities. The property taxes levied and collected by the town are used to pay county and school district assessments.

Elected officials of the town government include a Town Chairman and two Supervisors, all elected at large, that form the town board. Other elected town officials include an Assessor, a Town Clerk, a Town Treasurer, a Constable, and a Justice of the Peace. The Town Board runs the Town Government on a day-to-day basis. To do this, it passes laws, issues licenses, and directs the activities of town employees. Citizens, however, have a direct means of establishing priorities and policies as well as laws for the town. Once a year, at the annual town meeting, the citizens meet to discuss and resolve problems. This annual town meeting is normally held in April shortly after the spring elections. Another annual town meeting is now held in the fall for the purpose of preparing and approving the budget for the following year.

For almost 70 years, town board meetings as well as the annual town meeting were held in private homes. It was not until 1916 that a town hall was built to house these meetings. The building, which no longer serves its original purpose, is located at Black Hawk Corners, the intersection of County Highways "K" and "S."



Original Town Hall, built in 1916 at intersection of present  
county highways S and K

In 1960, the town purchased the Colonel Heg School building, located north of the Norwegian Lutheran Church. This building was remodeled and became Norway's Town Hall. In addition to town government offices, it also contains several large meeting rooms, which are used by civic and youth groups.

# SCHOOLS

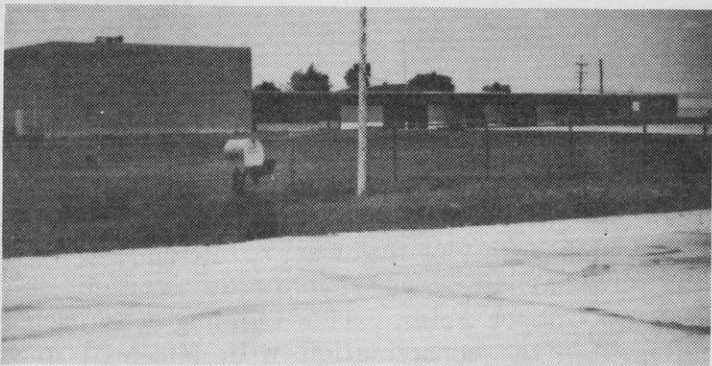
## SUMMARY

There were five schools dating from the earliest pioneer times of Norway Township. These were located in sections 1 (Drought), 5 (Lake Denoon), 18 (Norway or Colonel Heg), 29 (Riley or Hillcrest), and 35 (Waltermire or Apple). There was some overlapping of boundary lines of districts in other areas too. Students from other townships and Waukesha County attended schools in Norway Township and some Norway students attended schools in Raymond and Waterford Townships.

Now there are two schools still in use within the township. They are Drought in Section 1, a part of the Waterford Union High School District, and Lakeview in Section 8, a part of the Muskego-Norway Consolidated School District. Both of these schools are elementary schools. Norway residents generally attend high school in either Waterford or Muskego.

## DROUGHT, DISTRICT 7

In 1850, Thomas Drought donated land and built a log schoolhouse where his mother, Mrs. Mary Ann Drought, was the first teacher. She had taught school in her home until the first school building was erected. In 1869, the original building cost \$756.71.



Present day Drought School, located on highway G



A new school was built in 1952, west of the old school, which was sold for \$1,015.00 and moved from its original location. To handle increased enrollments, an addition to this school was built in 1954.

Vandals from outside the area caused a fire which burned the school to the ground on August 23, 1961. Drought students attended school at North Cape while a new building was erected. The new building, of brick construction, was completed the following year. Since then, several rooms and a gymnasium have been added to the original building. Drought is now a K-8 school that is part of the Waterford Union High School District.

### LAKE DENOON, DISTRICT 9

In 1851, sections 4, 5, and 6 separated from the Norway school district and formed the Lake Denoon School. The first school was on land west of Highway Y, but north of Denoon Road close to Lake Denoon. This school, almost in Waukesha County, burned down.



Group posing on steps of original Lake Denoon School,  
destroyed by fire in 1930

A brick building west of Highway Y, but quite a bit south of the original site, was eventually erected on land donated by Gilbert Fries. This building was used as a school until after consolidation with Muskego in 1960. When it was no longer needed, it was sold. It is now being used as a residence.

## NORWAY - COL. HEG - LAKEVIEW, DISTRICT 1

The first schoolhouse of record was a small 19 by 19 foot log building. It had one room and was located on Loomis Road, a short distance south of Waubeesee Lake. This was the first public school in District #1 and was built in 1849 or 1850. It is known that around 1845, a private school where both English and Norwegian were spoken was conducted by a young man named John Tvedt.



Norway District No. 1 school, built in 1874

In 1874, a new frame building, bricked up on the outside was built to replace the original log school. This new school was erected at a new location, the spot where the monument of Colonel Heg now stands in Heg Park. This school building cost \$670.

In 1927, the Colonel Heg School was built directly across the road from the existing school which was torn down with the land being donated to the Heg Memorial Park.



Original Col. Heg School. Construction of addition in process.

Due to yearly increases in enrollment, this building again became overcrowded and in 1939 an addition equal in size to the original building was built.

A more centrally located 6-room school was built in 1953 between Wind Lake and Waubeesee Lake. At the same time, the name of the school was changed to Lakeview. The building became too small for the entire enrollment even before it was completed and rooms still had to be used at the Colonel Heg School. Additions were made to the Lakeview School in 1955, 1960, and 1968. The building now has 21 classrooms and about 400 students. In 1960, this district through consolidation, became the Muskego-Norway School District.

## **HILLCREST - RILEY, DISTRICT 2**

This school district was established by an act of the Town Board on December 4, 1847. The first school was of log construction and was located on the John Nelson farm. Water was carried from a spring northeast of the school.

The second school was erected at a site purchased in 1862 from Christian Christianson. This building was called the Riley School. It cost, with site, about \$200. School was

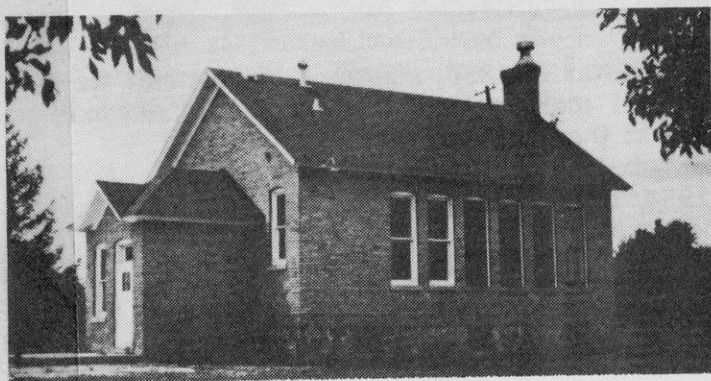
taught in three sessions. The older children and adults, including immigrants, found the winter sessions convenient because the field work was finished. This session was taught by a male teacher at a salary of \$26 per month. Fall and summer sessions were usually taught by a female teacher who received a salary of \$18 per month. At this time, a school month consisted of 22 weekdays and every other Saturday.

In 1880, the Canada thistle must have been a problem as the district paid \$1.00 to have the "Kanady Tisle" cut on the school grounds.

In 1884, the term of the school year was changed to 8 months; 5 months in the winter and 3 months in the summer. By 1889, the teachers salary had reached \$35 and the tax levied was \$125.

The third school building, which is still standing, was built in 1915. This building, of brick construction, cost \$2,450. In 1918, the name of the school was changed to the Hillcrest School.

At a special meeting on September 24, 1928, the voters turned down a proposal to install electricity, but four years later approved a similar measure. In 1960, the district voted to send the seventh and eighth graders to the Waterford Junior High at Rochester.



Hillcrest School, now used as a residence

After defeating an attempt by Waterford to dissolve Hillcrest district and attach it to Waterford, the District voted to consolidate with Apple School effective July 1, 1963. The Hillcrest School has since been sold for use as a residence.

### APPLE - WALTERMIRE, DISTRICT 3

The Apple School District was organized on January 28, 1848, at the home of George Waltermire. The school was built just west of Waltermire's house and became known as the Waltermire School. About 1856, the name of the school was changed to the Apple School in honor of Adam Apple, who had bought the farm on which the school was located.



Apple School, built in 1848

In the winter of 1886, adults of the district were invited to attend night school. Mathematics was one subject taught at the night school sessions.

In 1954, due to the large enrollment, another room was added. This addition cost \$22,500. At that time, the school became a state graded school. In 1963, the district joined with the Hillcrest District, and then later in the same year with the North Cape District in the Town of Raymond. The Apple School property has since been sold. Like many other former school buildings in the township it is now used as a residence.



## CHURCHES

### NORWAY LUTHERAN

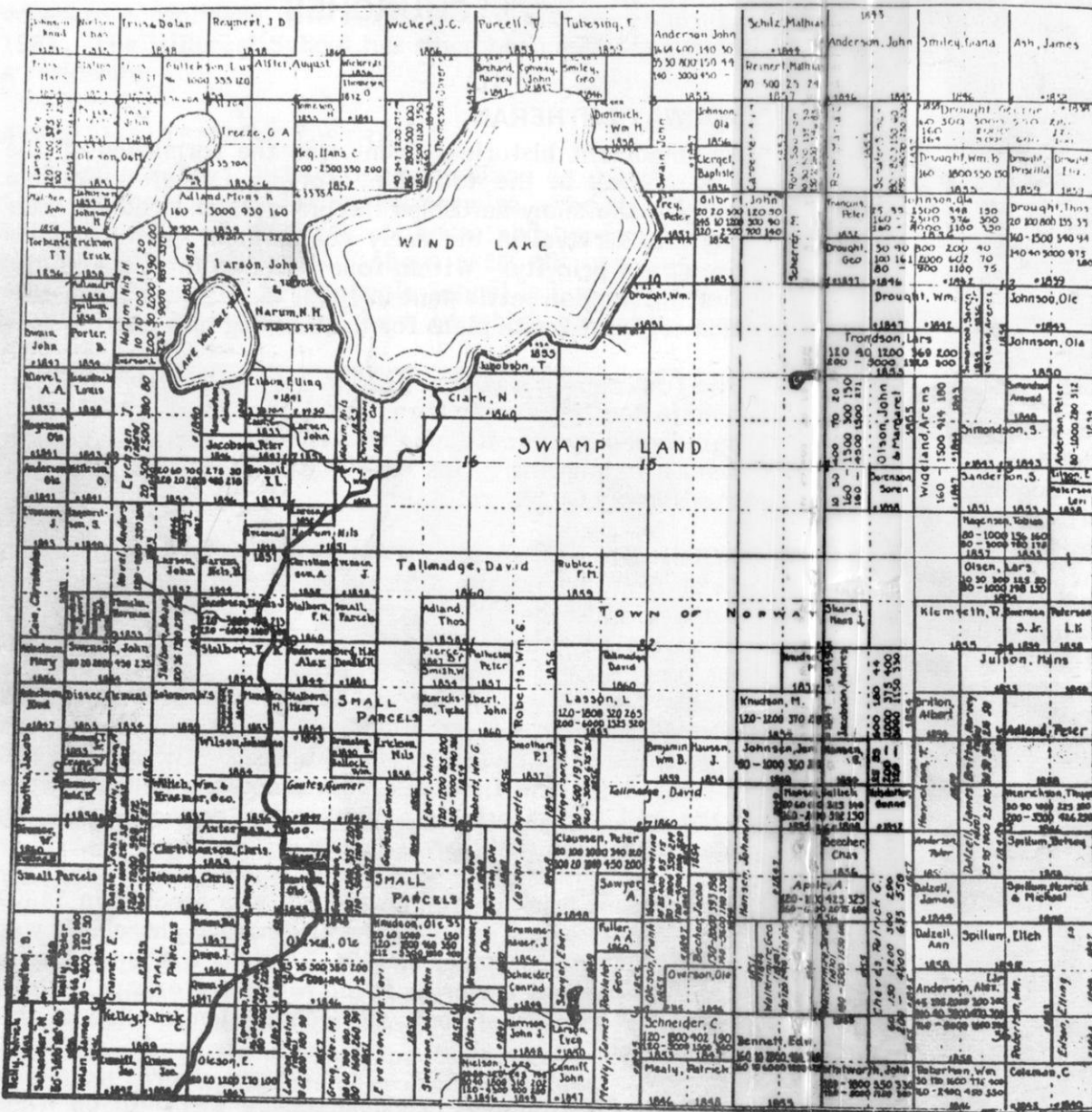
An important historical event was the formation of the first church in the township, Norway Lutheran Church. Despite the many hardships the pioneers endured for their physical survival in the early years, their spiritual needs became a priority. Within four years of the time of the first Norwegian settlement in 1839, there was a congregation organized with plans for the building of a church.

The first church was organized in 1843 with services being held in the Heg family barn. On September 13, a letter of call signed by seventy men was given to Claus Clausen, a Danish immigrant. This date marks the official birth of the Norway Congregation.

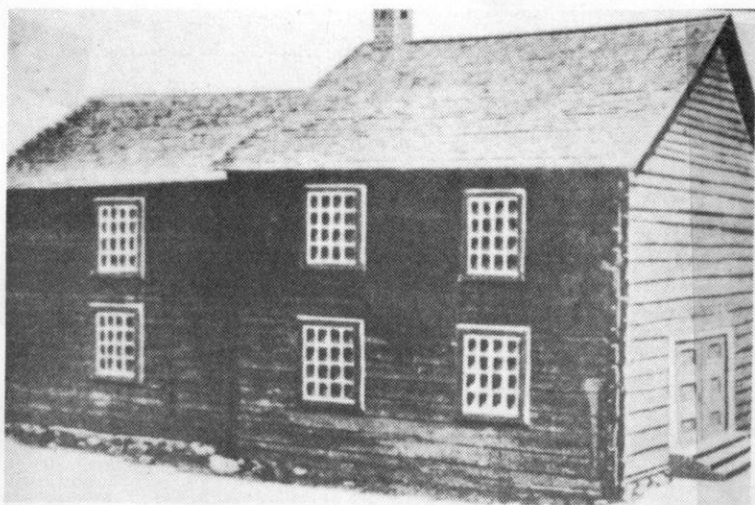
Indian Hill was chosen as the site of the church. With \$420 from friends in Norway, construction of the first Norwegian Lutheran Church in America was begun. The congregation cleared the site, felling giant oaks and molding them into logs. The double front doors were made of black walnut, as was the pulpit built high above the floor and the heavy columns supporting the galleries across the front and sides of the church. The church was unheated for the first five years, and the benches were hard and uncomfortable. Dedication services were on March 13, 1845 with Rev. Clausen officiating.

The present brick church on the hill was erected in 1869-1870 just two feet north of the original log church. It was dedicated on September 3, 1871. Although it is built of a totally different material, it did retain the original pulpit, altar rail, baptismal font, and communion chalice of the log church.

A new cream-colored brick parsonage was built on Wau-beesee Lake in 1878. In 1889, the present parsonage land



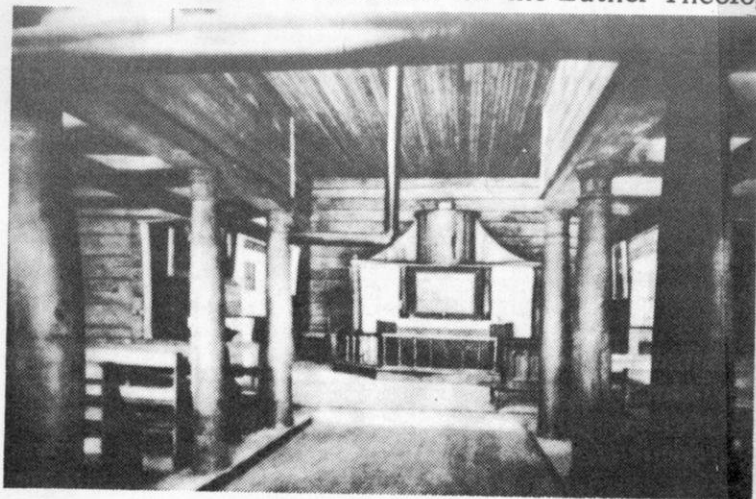
An 1860 plat map of the Town of Norway. The map shows the owner of the land in 1860 and the date he bought the land.



Exterior of original Norway Lutheran Church

of ten acres across from the church was acquired in exchange for the brick parsonage and ten acres of land on Waubeesee Lake.

In 1904, the original log church, which had fallen into disrepair, was transported to St. Paul, Minnesota, where it was reconstructed. It now stands on the Luther Theologi-



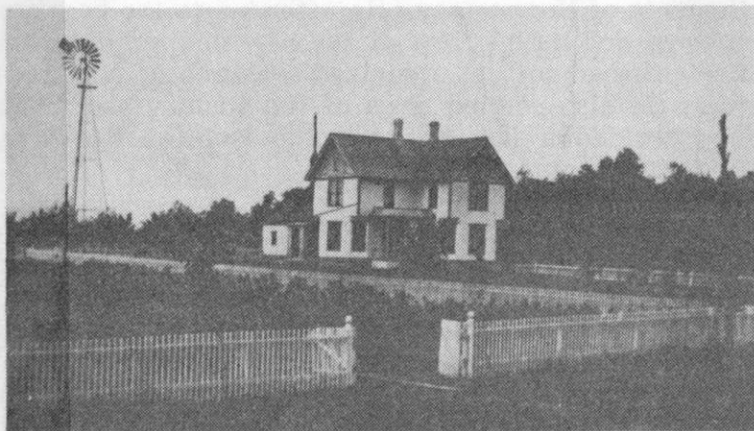
Interior of original Norway Lutheran Church



Second Norway Lutheran Church. Steeple shown was replaced about 1913

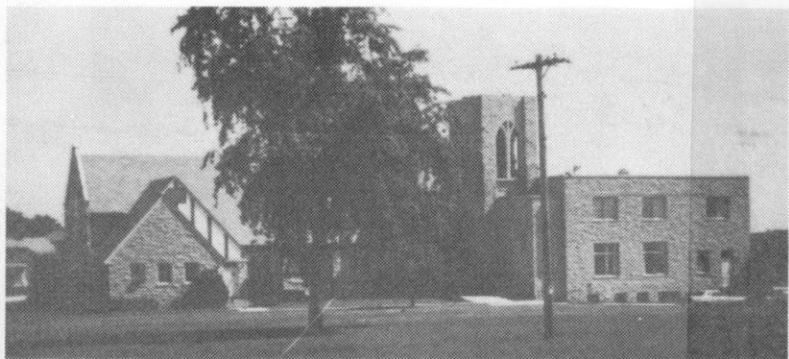
cal Seminary campus as an example of the first church of its kind in America.

On June 20, 1939, Crown Prince Olav and Crown Princess Martha, Norwegian royalty, visited Norway Church and Heg Park. Over six thousand people attended the festivities held in the park. In 1943, the Centennial of the congregation was held for five festive days.



Located across road from church, this parsonage was destroyed by fire in 1916





**Present Norway Lutheran Church**

A new educational unit for the church was completed in 1954 on land just north of Norway Hill. Church services were held in the large auditorium of this unit. The new church, attached to the educational unit, was completed in 1964. It was dedicated on June 7, 1964.

### **THE WHITE CHURCH**

An important early Norwegian Lutheran religious leader, Elling Eielsen, established his ministry headquarters in Norway Township. After Eielsen's arrival from Norway in 1839, he traveled throughout the midwest as a lay minister, bringing religious guidance to the far-flung settlements of Norwegians. He attended to the baptisms, marriages, and burial rites of the new immigrants whose settlements had not yet organized a church or acquired a pastor. He also carried news of the country and friends which provided a link between the isolated Norwegian settlements throughout America.

In 1841, Eielsen walked from Rock County, Wisconsin to New York City to have his English translation of Luther's catechism published.

Eielsen became an ordained minister on October 3, 1843 and spent the remainder of his life in open dispute with traditional Norwegian Lutheran doctrines. In 1846, he formed his own synod and churches of that denomination were built throughout the Midwest.



A separate church of Eielsen's synod, The White Church, was constructed in Norway Township about 100 yards north of the Norway Church site on Norway Hill. The White church remained a separate Lutheran church throughout its existence (1852 - 1890).



Elling Eielsen

Eielsen has been considered a great evangelist, with more influence over the Norwegian settlers than any other Norwegian clergyman. Because of his national importance, the Eielsen home, now located in Heg Park, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on July 17, 1980. It was nominated for the National Register by the Norway Historical Society along with the log cabin in Heg Park and the old Norway Church on the hill.

#### **NORTH CAPE LUTHERAN:**

In 1850, Norwegian settlers built a log church west of the present Highway 45 in section 24 of the Town of Norway. Because of the difficulty in traveling to the church on Norway Hill, North Cape area residents formed their own congregation with an original membership of 115 people.

The name of the original church, the Yorkville Evangelical Lutheran Church, was changed in 1879 to the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church of North Cape. A brick structure replaced the original log church in 1884. In the early years, one pastor served the North Cape and Norway churches, as well as a church in the Town of Vernon, Waukesha County.

In 1957, the congregation voted to move the church from its original site in the Town of Norway across Highway 45

into the Town of Raymond. On June 29, 1958, dedication services for the removed, enlarged, and remodeled church were held at its present site.

### **UNION METHODIST**

The first Methodist church in the area was located in the eastern part of the township on Union Church Road. Thomas Drought, the first known settler, donated land and helped to build the Union Methodist Church. The church building burned down several years later and the site was abandoned. The church was shown on the plat maps of 1887, 1908, and 1924.

### **SAINT CLARE CATHOLIC**

On September 10, 1965, the Town of Norway was visited by Archbishop William E. Cousins, Archbishop of the Milwaukee Archdiocese, and was officially given permission to establish a parish in Wind Lake. Rev. John Kapellan was appointed the first pastor on September 17, 1965.

Because no official church building was available, Sunday masses were first held at Pagel's (now LeMay's) Resort. The parish was given the name St. Clare in honor of the mother of Father Kapellan.

In April 1966, St. Clare purchased a house on Katherine Street which is still being used as the church rectory and office. The church itself was built on Fritz Road. Here, the first mass was celebrated in March of 1969. The church was officially dedicated on September 28, 1969.



**Saint Clare's Catholic Church**

## ORGANIZATIONS

Many civic, social, and religious organizations have played important roles in the development of the township. Especially important were those groups that met to reform or improve conditions within the town. The formation of a Temperance Society of Norwegians at the Even Heg barn in 1848 was an early example of an influential organization.

During the 1870's, the North Star Debating Society brought issues of a political or social nature before the public.

The fishing clubs of the late 1800's and early 1900's publicized the recreational value of the lakes area and gave an impetus to growth around Wind Lake.

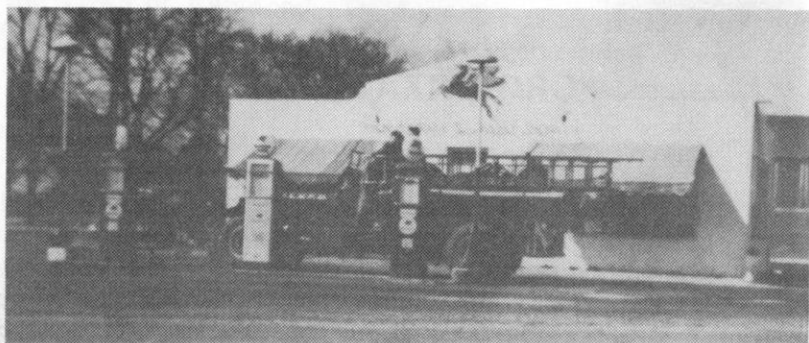
The Wind Lake Improvement Association, established in 1936 and incorporated in 1938, was dedicated to the improvement and growth of the lakes area. Early accomplishments of this organization included the assignment of a house numbering system for the town and publishing a town directory in 1939.

Other organizations created to benefit the town include the Wind Lake Lions formed in 1966, the Wind Lake Chamber of Commerce established in 1969-1970, the Tri-Lakes Conservation group organized in 1974, and the Jaycees also begun in 1974.

### WIND LAKE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

A disastrous fire at Uyvari's Resort in August of 1946 stimulated a group of dedicated Wind Lake residents to form a volunteer fire department. It had taken fire equipment from neighboring departments thirty minutes to reach the fire and the resort had been largely destroyed.

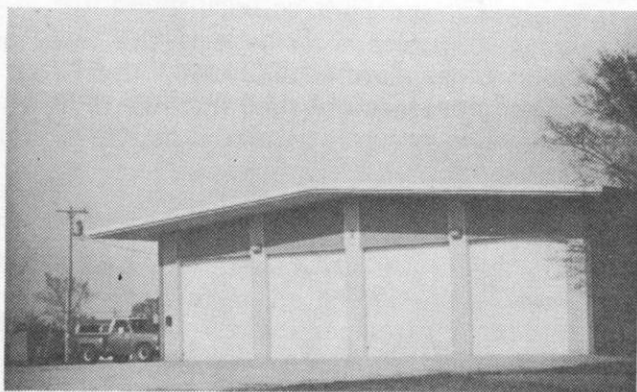
## *Organizations*



The first fire truck, Old Sparky

The first organizational meeting of the volunteers was held on June 17, 1947. The new organization held many fund raising activities, including an annual parade and picnic.

The first piece of fire equipment was bought in 1947 for \$450 and dubbed "Old Sparky." The ground breaking ceremony for the first fire house was held April 17, 1948 on land donated by Oliver Hoganson of Wind Lake Lumber. The work and materials for building the fire house were donated by volunteer members and many other concerned individuals. The first fire house is now being used by Human's Home Modernizing.



New fire house



Trucks in front of original firehouse. Photo taken in 1951. Men in picture from left to right are Jacob Laupan, Harry Cohen, Lloyd Human, Rudy Satterstrom, Al Fischer, unknown, Eugene Huckman, Harvey Flancher, Nick Braun, Chief Bert Collard, Davis Witty, Frank Zenisk, and S.J. Kirchgasker.



## *Organizations*

As the fire department acquired new equipment, there was a need for a larger structure. A new fire house was built at its present location and a dedication ceremony for this new building was held on April 27, 1968. Still later, a second station in the southern portion of the township (Highways S and K) was created in a former town garage.

The fire department has through the years acquired much sophisticated equipment for both rescue and fire fighting. The men are extensively trained in the use of this equipment and in life saving techniques.

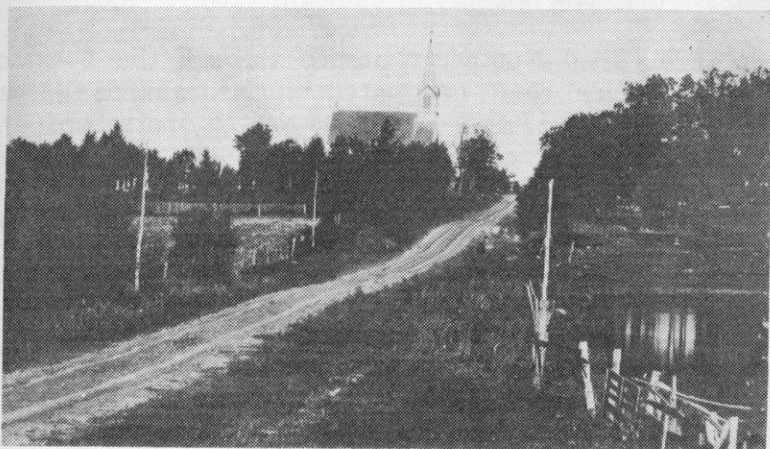
The fire department remains a volunteer organization with many dedicated members on a 24-hour alert. The Town of Norway has in recent years subsidized equipment purchases and operational expenses.

# TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES

## ROADS

The Town of Norway was settled during the transition from the canal era to the railroad age. Because neither of these transportation forms was in a great building stage at the time of settlement, roads were the chief and only means of transportation inland from the port cities along Lake Michigan.

The earliest settlers, either walking or traveling in light but sturdy wagons, simply struck out across the open prairie. Detouring only as needed to avoid marshes or to cross streams, these settlers often followed trails left by the Indians.



Highway 45 with North Cape Lutheran Church in background

As the population increased the need for roads grew. One of the first acts of the Territorial Legislature was to establish a system of roads. Three such acts were passed in the first session alone. An additional 243 territorial

roads were authorized before statehood was achieved. A typical territorial road act required that a survey be made and filed with the district court in each county affected and that mileposts be placed along the road. To accomplish this, the act would also call for employment of a surveyor and his chain carriers at the rate of \$3.00 per day and a group of commissioners at the rate of \$2.00 per day. The latter individuals were directed to make estimates of the cost of bridges and other improvements needed to make the roads useable.

Though the Territory and the County governments created the roads, neither were required to pay the costs. Instead the burden fell on the townships, who in turn levied property and poll taxes. These taxes were generally paid in labor, the going rate being \$2.00 per day of labor. However, a person who supplied a plow or wagon and a team of horses or oxen when requested by the road supervisor, received credit for three days of labor for each day actually worked.

Territorial Road Number 6 passed through the Town of Norway. This road originated in Milwaukee, passed through the town, and continued on to Waterford and beyond. Like other early roads, part of this road followed the trails left by the Indians that were later used by the first settlers. This road was numbered as Highway 30 when the state trunk system was created in 1918. Paved in 1922, the same road was renumbered as Highway 36 in 1927. Replaced by a new highway in 1968, portions of the original territorial highway are now called Loomis Road or Rustic Road No. 5.

Financing roads by taxes paid in labor resulted in very poor roads. Loads of any size could not be hauled except by using two, three, and even four teams of oxen. Even then, the trip from Milwaukee to the Norwegian settlement was a two-day venture.

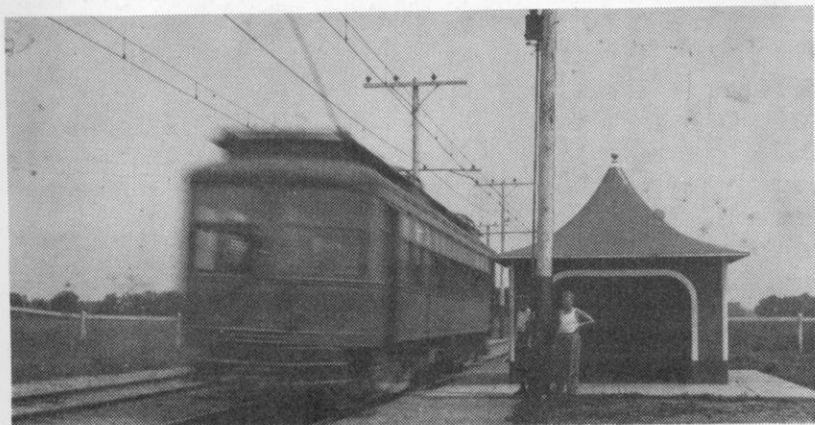
To provide more reliable transportation, privately owned plank roads were constructed throughout the region. Construction and upkeep costs as well as a profit for the

owners were obtained from tolls paid by users at toll gates along the road. One such road passed through Muskego along the route of the present Highway 24. James Reymert, one of the more prominent residents of the local Norwegian community, received permission to build a plank road from Muskego to Waterford. However, information that would indicate if this plank road had ever been completed could not be found.

The town government and individual citizens also constructed numerous roads within the town boundaries. Generally, these roads followed property lines between farms and were therefore built along section and quarter-section survey lines. At first, these roads were simply patches of ground that had been scraped level. In the spring of the year, when the frost left the ground, such roads became nearly impossible to travel by wagon, beast, or foot. As time passed, however, these roads were built up with gravel to form firmer roadbeds which have since been paved. Today, the only remaining dirt roads within the town are privately owned.

### THE ELECTRIC RAILWAY

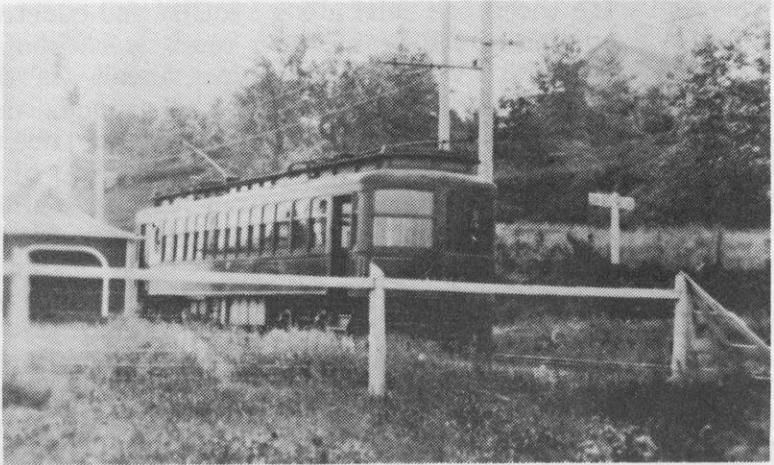
An electric railway originating in Milwaukee and terminating in Burlington was built through the Town of Norway roughly parallel to the present Highway 36. Chartered to The Milwaukee Electric Railway and Light Company for



Wind Lake waiting station about 1916

passenger service, the railroad was also used to haul coal, lumber, and produce to and from steam railroad junctions at both ends of the line.

The first passenger car service was begun in 1908. Passenger waiting stations were placed at four sites within the town. These stations were known as Wind Lake (located near Highway 36 and Loomis Road), Edgewater (located next to the Edgewater Resort, now known as Shad's), Waubeesee (located near the present intersection of Highway 36 and South Wind Lake Road) and Norway Hill (located at the east base of the Norway Church Hill).



Norway Hill station

The railroad provided fast, reliable passenger service to downtown Milwaukee. The rail cars, reaching speeds of 60 to 70 miles per hour in the better sections, could make this trip in as little as 45 minutes. Owners of the railroad built it not with local transportation in mind, but rather to profit from recreation excursions from Milwaukee to resorts at Wind Lake and Burlington. Because the Edgewater Resort was a popular spot for charter excursion trips, tracks in the area of this resort were doubled to provide a siding where cars could bring passengers to the area and then wait until the end of the day for their return. Word has it that the excitement for the city folk at the Edgewater included slot machines.



The railroad, by providing city residents with a means of transportation to and from the lake recreation areas, was responsible for the first development around the lakes in the northeast corner of the township. It was also responsible for the first electrical service in the township. Electric lines to homes and businesses were first installed along Loomis Road in 1908 and then gradually extended to the rest of the town.

Begun at a time when automobiles were gaining in popularity and the roads were being improved to permit their use, the line to Burlington never became a profitable venture for its owners. Prevented by government regulations from expanding its freight service, the owners decided to abandon the line from Burlington to St. Martins Junction in 1937. The rails and ties were then removed for salvage, but the electric company retained the right of way for its electric lines. Today, much of the right of way and even one of its most spectacular features, the large cut at the base of Norway Church Hill, no longer remain as they were destroyed during construction of new Highway 36.



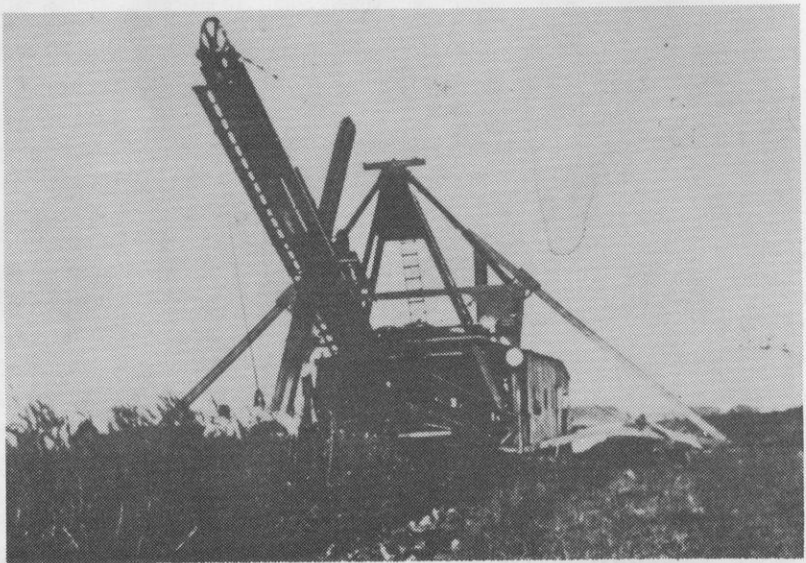
Norway Hill cut, destroyed by construction of new highway 36

## DRAINAGE DISTRICT

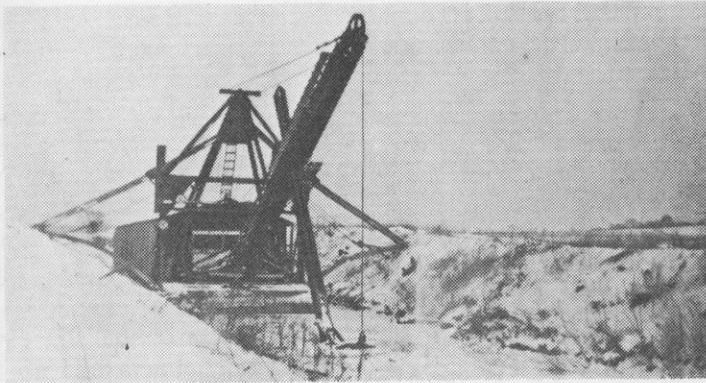
Land around the outer edges of the township is high and well drained. Ideally suited for farmland without extensive improvements, this high land was bought and settled quite rapidly. At the same time, swamp and marsh land nearer the center of the township remained the haven of prairie chickens and other wildlife.

Because the swampland remained unclaimed, the state deeded this land to the township in 1861. Money obtained from the sale of this land was to be devoted to drainage improvements that would make the land usable for farming. Though this land was priced by the township at only \$1.25 per acre, it was not sold quickly or easily.

Wind Lake, north and west of the unsold area, flooded each spring and covered the land. Flooding was severe because the lake was drained through a narrow creek that flowed through low spots to the Fox River at Rochester. In 1887-88, a dredging company was hired in an attempt to reduce the flooding. The company assembled a floating



Floating dredge widening canal

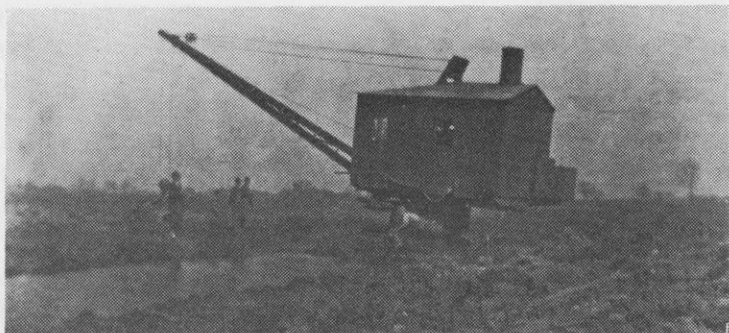


Arms extending from side anchor floating dredge in place

dredge at the outlet of Wind Lake and began to straighten and deepen the creek into a canal. However, this company completed dredging only as far south as Highway K before going bankrupt. The company's dredge was then taken apart and returned to Chicago, making it necessary to hire a second company to complete the dredging to Rochester. Successful in the end, this project reduced the flooding, but also lowered the level of Wind Lake by about four feet.

In 1891, private enterprise entered the scene. The James Reynolds Company, a name that can be found in the abstracts of much property around Wind Lake, was granted permission to make a second dredging of the canals from Big Muskego Lake to Rochester. The act passed by the State Legislature giving them this permission, also granted the company title to all land that it thereby drained. The dredging completed by the company lowered the level of Wind Lake another four feet. However, the State Supreme Court in 1896 declared that the legislature lacked the power to grant the land title and thereby invalidated the company's land claims.

Having seen the loss of shore line beauty created by dredging, local property owners decided to build a stone dam at the outlet of Wind Lake. This dam was not



First dredge, a steam-operated unit

effective. The Milwaukee Electric Railway and Light Company, with the aid of local farmers in 1903, then built a concrete dam upstream from the stone dam. The concrete dam raised the water level four feet, returning the lake to its level prior to the second dredging. The second dam remained in use until 1973, when it was replaced by a much improved dam built by the Town of Norway.

With a good main canal to Rochester completed, it was then possible to drain much of the swamp and marsh land. In 1908, farmers gathered at the town hall to form the Norway-Dover Drainage District. Three commissioners, namely Hans Jacobson, Adam Apple, and Ole Hanson, were elected and engineers were hired to make surveys and recommend placement of canals. Assessments, based on resulting improvements, paid for construction costs of about 40 miles of canals in the Towns of Norway and Dover. Completed in 1915, the main canals were dug by a floating dredge while the smaller canals or laterals were often dug by hand.

Further dredging of the laterals was done in 1940 and again in 1954. The main canal from Wind Lake to Rochester was widened and deepened in 1957. These improvements combined with improved dams at Wind Lake and Rochester turned land that no one wanted into some of the finest, most productive farmland in the state.

## TELEPHONE COMPANY

The first local telephone company was formed in 1902. At that time, stock in the company was sold to local residents for \$5.00 per share. Money raised in this manner paid for the installation of six lines, one in each direction from a switchboard located in a local grocery store. These lines were numbered as follows: 1 - Waterford, 2 - Norway, 3 - DeNoon, 4 - Tichigan, 5 -North Cape, and 6 -Dover.

Wires for the lines were not insulated and were strung on oak or tamarack poles. The poles, bought locally, were often exchanged for stock of the company. As a public convenience, one phone was installed on each line. Individuals wishing phone service bought their own phones and paid \$5.00 per year for use of the line.

In spite of such low rates, the company prospered. In 1946, the Wind Lake Telephone Company purchased the Burlington, Rochester and Kansasville Telephone Company. The combined corporation with two exchanges, one at Wind Lake and the other at Waterford, was named the Southeast Telephone Company of Wisconsin.

Handcrank phones continued in use until 1955. Dial phones which made their appearance in the Wind Lake exchange in 1959 were introduced in the Waterford exchange in 1962. Today, the company services more than 4,000 subscribers with approximately 6,000 telephones.



The Rev. Schmidt of Norway Church, who organized the company and strung the telephone lines



## **SANITARY SEWER DISTRICT**

When people fail to learn from the past, bad historical events recur. But often, people do learn from history. An example of such learning here in the Town of Norway is the sanitary sewer district.

The early Norwegian settlers had obtained drinking water in their homeland from pure, rushing mountain streams. Here, in their adopted homeland, they continued to use simple groundwater sources for their drinking water. These sources, the lakes and marshes, were too stagnant and soon became polluted. As a result, periodic outbreaks of cholera and typhoid devastated the community until the settlers learned to dig and use wells.

As time passed and indoor plumbing came into general use, a new threat appeared. That threat, overflows from septic systems used for sewage disposal at individual homes, began to pollute our lakes. These same conditions, as pointed out in a two-year study authorized by the Town Board and the State Department of Natural Resources, would eventually contaminate even the wells.

Armed with these facts, the town board under the leadership of Melvin Johnson, a descendent of Norwegian settlers, authorized the start of preliminary plans for a sanitary sewer system in the more urbanized lake section of the town. By 1969, the plans had proceeded to a point that allowed formation of a Sanitary Sewer District.

Further engineering and planning continued while the search for the needed funds began. Though construction loans and some grants were obtained quickly, large grants from the state and federal governments were not made available until 1976. Soon after, the people approved the project and bids were let. Construction contracts were signed in November of 1976. A year and a half later, in May of 1978, construction of the system was completed at a cost exceeding \$5,500,000.

## EMPLOYMENT

### SUMMARY

Prior to 1900, Town of Norway residents depended almost entirely on farming for their source of income. In 1908, passenger trains on the electric railroad which came through the township brought many city people to the area. To meet their recreational needs, resorts and other supporting local businesses were opened, creating a second major source of income and employment.

As automobiles became popular, more cottages were built on the shores of the lakes. First used only as summer or weekend cabins, many of these cottages became full-time homes for their owners during the great depression era. The movement of people into the town accelerated even more after World War II. The newest residents, generally working in the cities of Milwaukee and Racine, built many new homes. Some of these homes were built along the shores of the ever-popular lakes. Many others, however, have been scattered in subdivisions throughout the remainder of the township.

Through the years, the chief sources of employment and income for local residents have been farming, local businesses, and employment in the cities. Because the latter is a recent development and is too broad for coverage in a booklet this size, only the history of farming and local businesses will be covered further in this chapter.

### HIGHLAND FARMING

Farming, the first important occupation in Norway Township, began in the highland areas. At first, much of the farmland was bought and held by the wealthier Norwegians. That these individuals were motivated by the wish to create a Norwegian community and not by the desire for wealth was later proven when they sold land at very

reasonable terms to the poorer settlers. Many of these sales took place during the 1850's and 1860's and were accompanied by rapid development of the land for farming. Between 1850 and 1880, the population increased by one-third, to peak at just over 1,000 people while the number of farms increased from 93 to 156. Improved land during this same period increased almost nine-fold from 2,471 acres to 21,499 acres. During two censuses of this period, Norway ranked number one in the state in the percentage of improved versus unimproved land per farm.

Three notable farming changes have occurred since the beginning of the settlement. These changes were: (1) a shift from growing things for home use to the growing of



Horse drawn binder in a wheat field

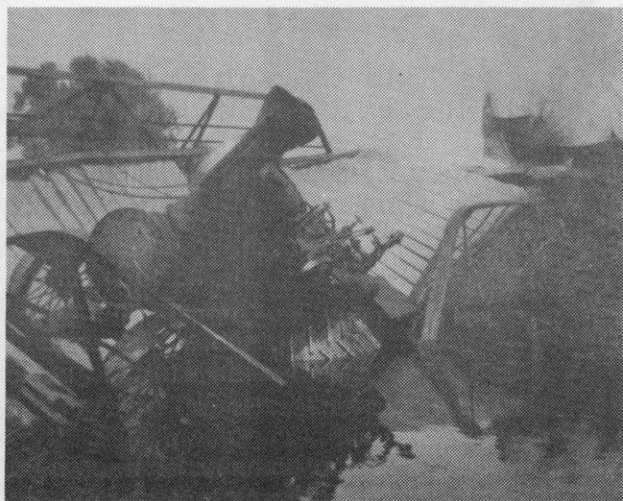
cash crops, mainly wheat, (2) the change from wheat growing to dairy and butter production, and (3) the development of truck and sod farms in the lowland areas.

Early settlers quickly cleared some land during their first year in order to plant a crop. The first year's crop usually consisted of corn, potatoes, turnips, and other table fare. Even then, the food raised often fell far short of the actual needs of a family on even the most rigid of diets. To supplement this crop, the family had to rely on stores of flour and other staples brought with them or turn to hunting for game.

Of course, table crops did not pay for land, animals or supplies. To buy these necessities, farmers had to raise and sell something in order to obtain cash. Because prairie land could be quickly converted to wheat production and because soil conditions were ideal for its growth, wheat was an overwhelming choice of most settlers as a cash crop. However, a few farmers raised corn while even fewer raised pigs.

Wheat was shipped in wagon caravans to Milwaukee or Racine where it was bought on the street, placed in warehouses, and then transported to Buffalo or other eastern cities. With the price as high as 50 cents per bushel as early as 1840, wheat production paid for many of the farms in the area. By 1860, Norway ranked in the top twenty townships in the state in the production of both wheat and corn. At the same time, it ranked extremely low in swine and cattle production.

The great reliance on a single crop, wheat, depleted the soil and led to a decline in yields throughout the state



Steam engine and thrasher collapsed bridge over canal at Wind Lake

beginning about 1870. Norway, spurred by a similar change made by Danish farmers in the eastern part of Racine County, turned to milk and butter production before the decline had drastic effects here. By the census of 1870, Town of Norway farms ranked second in the state in average butter production per farm. The trend to dairy farming continued through the late 1800's and early 1900's. Cost and price considerations have since forced many of the highland farms into raising corn as a cash crop.

### LOWLAND FARMING

According to the plat map of 1860, the swamp land in the Town of Norway consisted of about 1840 acres located in the central part of the township, sections 10, 11, 14, 15, and 16. This land remained with the state until April 2, 1861, when a state act ceded the land to the town for the "town to dispose of said land and apply the proceeds arising from the sale thereof to draining the same."

The town board offered the land for sale at \$1.25 an acre, but the land remained useless until adequate drainage was provided.

Drainage was started with the dredging of a major canal from Wind Lake to the Fox River near Rochester that was completed in 1891. Further dredging in 1914 of lateral canals and finally the installation of field tile laid by hand began to open up the land for limited use in the 1920's.



Spinach harvest on Horner Farms in 1939





**Horner Farms celery harvest**

The drained land proved particularly suitable for vegetable and truck farming. By the 1940's and 1950's, many acres of land were producing vast amounts of vegetables. Because so much of the work was by hand, hundreds of migrant workers were brought in from Mexico and Jamaica for the seasonal work. During World War II, POW's were also a source of seasonal labor.

In a Racine Journal-Times news article in 1953, Everett Horner of the Horner Farms at Wind Lake said that of the 600 acres farmed, most had been swamp less than 25 years before. This formerly useless land produced 75,000 bushels of onions, 22,000 bushels of onion sets, 80,000 bushels of potatoes, 1500 tons of carrots, 1500 tons of cabbage, and 1000 tons of red beets that year alone. The \$40,000 for fertilizer and \$80,000 in wages and salaries spent in 1953 proved what a big business lowland farming had become.

The burgeoning housing growth in Chicago, Milwaukee, and Racine in the 1950's gave rise to a major new crop: sod. The Burmeister Farms cut its first sod in 1957 and sod continues to remain an important crop of the lowland farms. Farmers now rotate sod crops with vegetable production depending on the available market. It was estimated in 1979, that 1498 acres in the town were used for commercial sod production.

## BUSINESS

The earliest businesses in Norway Township were directly related to farming. Among the early settlers were a number of craftsmen. One of these craftsmen, Ollie Anderson, operated a blacksmith shop. Another, Ole Hoganson, was a wagonmaker. Still another, a Mr. Hansen, better known for his untiring care of the ill and dying during one of the cholera epidemics, ran a tinsmith shop on the farm of Ben Dahlen.

Any listing of early businessmen would not be complete without mention of Even Heg and James Reymert. The two, as noted in another chapter, combined to publish a Norwegian language newspaper. Heg, an innkeeper in the old country, is reported to have operated a trading post while using his barn as an unofficial inn for newcomers. Reymert set up and ran a sawmill and soda factory near Silver Lake, now called Lake Denoon. In addition he reportedly employed up to 100 men building streets and log cabins for a city that he had planned for the same area.

By 1850, five other men had trades other than farming. These men and their trades were:

Nels Narum	Carpenter
Andreas Johnson	Carpenter
George Lawson	Blacksmith
Ole Heg	Printer
Syvert Ingebretson	Shoemaker

In 1852, the government established a post office at Wind Lake. Charles Jacobsen, who lived in a dugout and ran a general store, was the postmaster. During the 1880's, two factories were operated within the township. One located in the North Cape area made and sold cheese. The other, located on Wind Lake near the present auto parts store, manufactured drain tile.

The plat map of 1887 shows a general store in North Cape. That store, run by George Spillum, was part of a



Wind Lake drainage tile factory, built about 1885 by Thompson and Eilert Friis

larger business community there. However, many of the North Cape businesses were located within the Township of Raymond.

Another business district was located entirely within the Town of Norway. Like North Cape, this business district featured a nearby church. It is also known that this business district had not one, but two blacksmith shops to



Main Street in North Cape, 1908

serve as additional drawing cards for the patronage of the surrounding farm community. Further featuring two general stores, this business district was located at the intersection of the present Loomis and Pioneer Roads. One of the general stores, begun by Bendick Bendickson and later operated by the Finnault and Krogstad families, was housed in the building that now serves as The Country Kettle Restaurant. Directly across Loomis Road was the second store, Palmer and Thompson's. It is this store that served as the home of the first telephone switchboard operated by Naomi Thompson. On the same side of the street were the two blacksmith shops run by members of the Rasmussen and Knutsen families. One of these blacksmith shops later became a gas station and auto repair shop before it was demolished in the late 1960's.



General Store operated by Bendickson, Finnault, and Krogstad

The same or another member of the Rasmussen clan built a grocery store at the corner of South Wind Lake Road and Loomis Road. This store, like the grocery departments of the previously mentioned general stores, featured goods that could be bought in quantity to suit the needs of the year-around residents. The common sized package of that era, as recalled by Gilma Dukleth, was the keg. If

you bought the standard oatmeal package, you needed the type of kitchen cabinets that still grace many of the farm homes in this area.

The Rasmussen store and most other businesses in Norway have changed hands many times over the years. Indeed, some of the buildings have housed entirely different businesses. Rasmussen's store, as an example, later became a resort and is now a tavern. To list, let alone research and locate all businesses and their owners would be an impossible task. Keep this in mind as you read the remainder of this chapter which attempts to chronicle some, but not all of the business ventures that have called Norway home.

Businesses covered up to this point depended chiefly on the farming community for their support. A second set of business establishments, based on recreation and residential development, started much later in the town's history but eventually became at least equally important.

When and where the first business related to recreation began in the township is a question that is not easily answered. Because fishing and hunting were popular pastimes even among the first settlers, it is likely that the first recreation related business catered to people interested in this sport. Schaefer's Resort fit this description. Located near the intersection of North and East Wind Lake Roads, this resort provided cottages, boats and other necessities for hunters and fishermen. Schaefer's, in an ad placed in the 1939 directory published by the Wind Lake Improvement Association, claimed to have been in business for 45 years. Based on this ad, the resort must have opened its doors in 1894.

Another early resort was Dorne's. Available information places this resort in Section 35. If this information is correct, Dorne's would have had to be in the North Cape area, probably on Goose Lake.

The Wind Lake Hunting and Fishing Club may have spurred building of the first privately owned cottages. Members of the club, which had a clubhouse near the



present boat landing on South Wind Lake Road, were known to have built cottages on both West Wind Lake Road and South Wind Lake Road.



**Bathers**

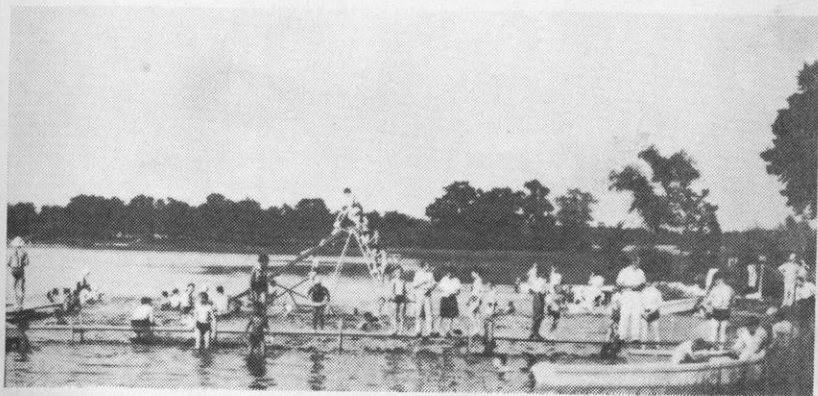
**Ellen Thompson Mehring, Ragna  
Krogstad Fries, Grace Fries,  
and Anna Fries Jacobson**

Access to any cottages and resorts from the city in the 1890's and early 1900's was limited by transportation problems. Mrs. Clara Packard, a summer resident, recalled her parents, the Schillings, talking about their first trip to Wind Lake in 1903. To get to their cottage from Milwaukee, the Schillings took the electric railway train to St. Martins, then a stopping point on the East Troy line. The remainder of the trip from St. Martins to Wind Lake had to be negotiated on the back of a farmer's wagon.

With the completion of the electric railroad from St. Martins through Norway to Burlington in 1908, the transportation problem ceased to exist. One resort, the Edgewater, now known as Shad's, was important enough to warrant its own stop and waiting station. Other resorts in this same area along the west shore of Wind Lake included Hoganson's and Gumpert's. The former was located near Frontage and Loomis Roads while the latter was located on the site of the present bowling alley.

Resorts along the north shore of Wind Lake in 1939 included Zenisek's, Frank Bruck's, and The Idle Hour. Resorts along South Wind Lake Road at the same time period included Krause's, Mengert's, and Peterson's. Mengert's was largely known for its dance hall while the other two featured picnic and beach areas.

The Waubeesee Resort was always the main attraction on that lake. The Tropics (Frank Turna's) at the intersection of South Wind Lake Road and Loomis Road, though listed as a tavern, provided many of the services normally expected only of a resort. In the late 1920's, the Uyvari family began operation of a resort on Long Lake. This resort, since operated by Pagel's and LeMay's, specialized in the hosting of company picnics.



Long Lake Beach, Uyvari's Resort

A typical resort provided cottages, groceries, drinks, ice for the icebox, and other supplies as well as facilities for picnicing, boating, and swimming. The resorts, by drawing people to the area for temporary stays, also created a desire for lakeshore living that quite often culminated in the building or buying of a summer cottage. Later, especially during the depression and the years immediately after World War II, this interest spread to the purchase or remodeling of homes for year-around living. Though it wasn't always love (of the area) at first sight, the case of the Landos, who until recently ran the local bakery, might be typical. As Mrs. Lando remembers, "We came out for a two-week vacation in 1947, liked it, and just never returned to the city."

Combined the summer and year-around residents created the need for another set of businesses that supplemented and even competed with some facets of the resort busi-

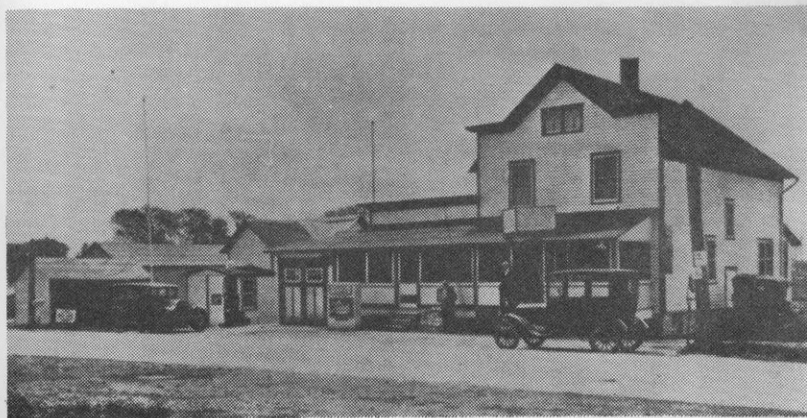
ness. Many of these businesses located along Loomis Road from the north end of Frontage Road to Waubeesee Lake Drive, and thus formed the only true remaining business district in Norway.



Looking west on Wind Lake's main street, 1937

Businesses outside the main district included a service station and restaurant in the Heg Park area. The restaurant, once known as the Norway Inn, was later called Mabel's and is now known as The Country Kettle. The service station was located directly across the road in a former blacksmith shop and was run by Henry Posbrig. Another service station has long been run at the intersection of Loomis Road and Highway G. There were also two grocery stores outside of the main business district. One located on the curve of South Wind Lake Road above the boat landing was run by Benzeka and then by Landos. The other, located on West Wind Lake Road (then Fries Lane), was called the Bungalow.

Two grocery stores were located in the main business district. Both were started by the Kebbekus family. The first, located on the south side of Loomis Road near the present Frontage Road, was destroyed in a fire. Though they rebuilt and operated this store for a short period,



**Ircink's General Store**

they were not at ease due to the loss of a son in the fire. Consequently, they built a new store directly across Loomis Road from the original store. This new store was later operated by Harts for 35 years and is now known as Don's Wind Lake Grocery. Kebbekus's original store was later run by Ircinks, Hogansons, Geskes, and Johnnie Sorensen. The latter moved the business to a new location near the junction of Highway Y and Loomis Road when new Highway 36 was built and has since converted the store to a beer and liquor depot.



**Hart's Store about 1954. Note ladder on side of ice house in rear**



Huckstorf's Garage with Wadham's gasoline pumps

Also located in the path of the new highway and forced to move to new locations were Goetz's Wayside Tavern, The Wayside Garage, and a barber shop. Other businesses located in this area included Hoganson's lumber yard and Huckstorf's service station. Today, the business district also includes a bank, home improvement center, beauty shop, bakery, hardware store, bowling alley, another service station, and a restaurant.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Esther Malchine  
William Stolz

Copies of the history may be purchased from the Town of Norway Historical Society, Norway Town Hall, 6419 Heg Park Road, Wind Lake, Wisconsin, 53185.



## TOWN OF NORWAY BICENTENNIAL POEM

THE SONGS OF HISTORY RING ACROSS THE LAND  
SOMETIMES SAD AND SOMETIMES GRAND.  
WE SING OF FREEDOM LOUD AND LONG  
WE BRING A MESSAGE IN OUR SONG.  
IT'S THE TALE OF PEOPLE WHO CAME TO STAY  
IN THIS TOWN OF NORWAY.

LONG AGO BEFORE ANY MAN CAME,  
OUR LAND AND LAKES WERE FULL OF GAME.  
ANIMALS AND BIRDS CALLED THIS HOME  
THEY WERE ALONE AND FREE TO ROAM.  
THEN THE WINNEBAGO TOOK THEIR STAND  
AND BUILT THEIR WIGWAMS ON THIS LAND.  
THEY LIVED OFF BOTH FISH AND BEAST  
UNTIL FORCED OUT BY TRIBES FROM THE EAST.  
THESE WERE THE POTAWATAMI, SAUK AND FOX  
WHO LEFT THEIR MARKS UPON OUR ROCKS.  
THE TRIBES LIVED AS OTHERS BEFORE  
LEAVING US LEGENDS AND INDIAN LORE.  
BURIAL MOUNDS SHOW THEY PASSED THIS WAY  
THEY'RE FOUND HERE TO THIS VERY DAY.

THE SONGS OF INDIANS RING ACROSS THE LAND  
SOMETIMES SAD AND SOMETIMES GRAND.

IN THE 1830'S THE INDIANS MOVED OUT.  
THEN CAME OUR FIRST SETTLER, THOMAS DROUGHT.  
FROM CANADA TO WISCONSIN HE CAME  
A HOME TO BUILD, A WILDERNESS TO TAME.  
FROM NORWAY FAR ACROSS THE SEA  
CAME MEN NAMED HEG, CLAUSSEN AND BACHE.  
WORD OF THE LAND NEW SETTLERS WOULD FIND  
SAW MANY LEAVING THEIR HOME COUNTRY BEHIND.  
THEY PACKED THEIR TRUNKS AND SET SAIL  
FOR THIS NEW LAND ON THE PIONEER TRAIL.  
THESE NORWEGIANS FOUND A STRANGE LAND.  
WITH COURAGE THEY BUILD THEIR HOMES BY HAND.  
THEY BUILT THEIR CHURCH UPON A HILL  
ALWAYS TRUSTING IN GOD'S HOLY WILL.  
THEIR LIFE WAS HARD AND AT TIMES CRUEL.  
COLD AND SICKNESS WERE A LIFE AND DEATH DUEL.  
YET THROUGH IT ALL THEY STRIVED  
TO KEEP THE LAND FOR THOSE WHO SURVIVED.

THE SONGS OF PIONEERS RING ACROSS THE LAND  
SOMETIMES SAD AND SOMETIMES GRAND.

THE 1860'S FOUND OUR COUNTRY SPLIT  
OUR SETTLERS WERE BRAVE AND FULL OF GRIT.  
THE NORWEGIANS ANSWERED THE UNION'S CALL  
WITH COLONEL HANS CHRISTIAN HEG TO LEAD THEM ALL  
THESE BRAVE MEN OF NORWEGIAN NAME  
BROUGHT TO US BOTH HONOR AND FAME  
THEY ALL FOUGHT HARD AND SOME DIED  
FIGHTING FOR FREEDOM IN WHICH TO ABIDE.  
THROUGH THE YEARS OTHERS HAVE HAD TO FIGHT  
TO KEEP THE TORCH OF LIBERTY SHINING BRIGHT.  
TOWN OF NORWAY MEN HAD A PART IN HISTORY  
IN KEEPING THIS LAND OF OURS FREE.

THE SONG OF FREEDOM RINGS ACROSS THE LAND  
SOMETIMES SAD AND SOMETIMES GRAND.

JUST LIKE AMERICA WE HAVE GROWN  
ACROSS OUR LAND HAVE WALKED COUNTLESS UNKNOWN.  
AMONG THE NORWEGIAN NAMES CAN BE HEARD  
IRISH, POLISH, GERMAN, ENGLISH AND SERB.  
PEOPLE OF EVERY NATIONALITY AND RACE  
WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY HAVE FOUND A PLACE  
MAY WE ALWAYS HOLD OUR FREEDOM DEAR  
IN THIS OUR BICENTENNIAL YEAR.

THE SONGS OF HISTORY RING ACROSS THE LAND.  
SOMETIMES SAD AND SOMETIMES GRAND.  
WE SING OF FREEDOM LOUD AND LONG  
WE BRING A MESSAGE IN OUR SONG.  
IT'S A TALE OF PEOPLE WHO CAME TO STAY  
IN THIS TOWN OF NORWAY.

WRITTEN ESPECIALLY FOR  
THE TOWN OF NORWAY BICENTENNIAL

CARYLE WESTERN  
MARCH, 1976

## THE BICENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

The Norway Town Board established and funded a committee in early 1975 to work towards a townwide Bicentennial celebration. This committee fluctuated with differing members from local organizations attending. The following list is that part of the committee that was involved in most of the year-long planning that led to the celebrations of July 3rd and July 4th, 1976.

Edie Degner	William Rockwell
Ruth Dilley	Tom Sabatino, Sr., Chairman
Arthur Gibes	Gilbert Tojek,
Patricia Huckstorf	Anita Tubiszewski
Angela Lovrek	Marion Wargolet
Irene Morgenroth	Julie Ziemer
Barbara Palmer, Secretary	
Jim Pederson	
Mary Pederson	
Doris Rockwell	

A special thanks from the committee goes to Jerry Jensen, who donated a handcrafted grandfather's clock to be used for fundraising by the Bicentennial Committee. Chances were sold on the clock and the winner was Joyce Jones of Muskego.

It was a decision of the committee to present a free copy of this booklet to the household of each property owner within Norway Township. The remaining books printed were donated to the Town of Norway Historical Society.





Presentation of Bicentennial Clock  
Left to right in photo: Doris Rockwell, Joyce Jones (winner  
of clock), Jerry Jensen, Tom Sabatino, Sr., Annita  
Tubiszewski, Gilbert Tojek, and Angela Lovrek.

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