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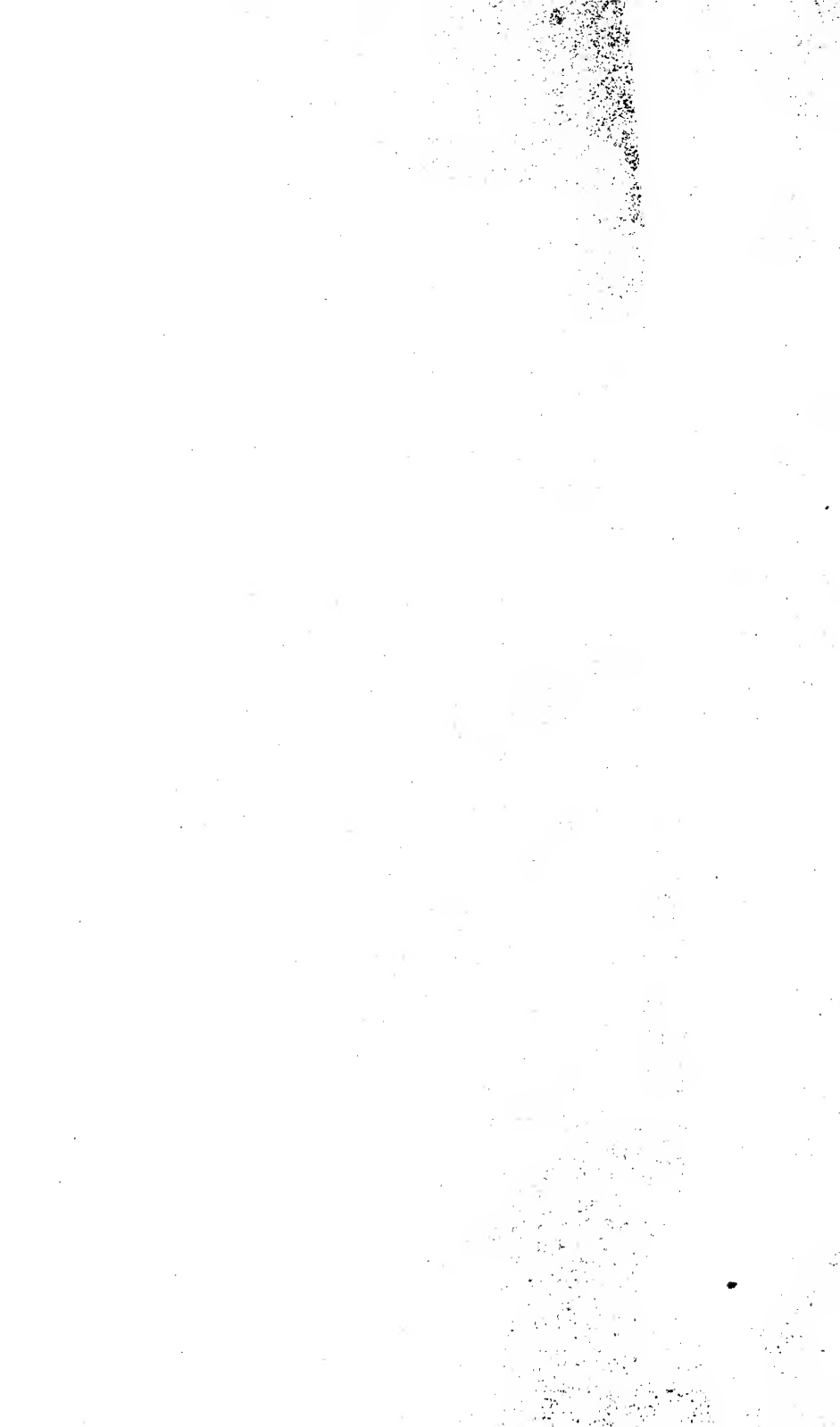
[Separate No. 161]

The Taverns and Stages of Early Wisconsin

By J. H. A. Lacher

[From the Proceedings of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin for
1914, pages 118-167]

Madison
Published for the Society
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Wisconsin Historical Society

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Diligent research has brought to light the activities of the missionaries, voyageurs, and fur traders who frequented this territory during the French occupation and subsequently; the lead miner and the chief events and actors in the formative period of our State have been portrayed; our part in the Civil War has been well covered; while numerous reminiscences have given realistic glimpses of everyday life in the long ago; nevertheless, there are important features of the early history of Wisconsin that have received but scant attention. Comparatively little has been written about the taverns and stage lines of early Wisconsin, yet a thorough understanding of that period is hardly possible without some knowledge of these establishments, for they affected the lives of the people deeply and from many angles.

As already intimated, the early taverns exercised a profound influence upon the lives of the settlers, and it is the purpose of this paper to tell their story and that of their landlords, together with a cursory account of the stage lines, in the hope that they may receive deserved recognition as important factors in the settlement and development of our State. For obvious reasons it is neither possible nor desirable to enumerate all the taverns that once studded the landscape of Wisconsin, or to mention the yet more numerous landlords who at different times presided over them; nor is it necessary to devote much space to the hosts and hostelries of the larger places, because these have generally received due notice in the various county histories. In order to give some idea of their frequency along main roads,

The Taverns and Stages of Early Wisconsin

the writer will give the name and location of approximately all the taverns on a few such thoroughfares. Moreover, since his inquiries have influenced a number of local historians to write about the old taverns of their respective neighborhoods, he finds it unnecessary to cover the same ground. The author has taken great pains to resurrect data on the subject by correspondence and interviews with hundreds of old settlers; by reading scores of local histories, pamphlets, and manuscripts; and by consulting official records and searching carefully through many files of old newspapers at the State Historical Library, he has sought to verify and correct the information thus obtained. Yet he does not flatter himself that his paper will be free from error. Some abler pen should have written exhaustively on this theme years ago, when accurate data would have been more readily accessible; but even then it might have been subject to mistakes.¹

Accustomed to modern life, with its rapid transit, telegraph, telephone, electric light, automobiles, phonographs, moving and talking pictures, metropolitan press, rural free delivery, parcel post, machine-made products, and centralization, we can hardly realize the conditions that prevailed in Wisconsin before the coming of the railroad. The absence of all these conveniences, together with the ever increasing influx of settlers and the constant recession of the frontier, meant a different adjustment of life. It meant numerous ambitious hamlets and villages, many now extinct, where craftsmen made and sold their wares; it meant long lines of teams taking the products of farm, forest, and mine to the lake ports, or merchandise into the interior; it meant droves of live stock moving at a slower pace and the eventful arrival of the stage at a lively canter; it meant tardy news, local amusements, greater self-dependence, and a simpler life; it meant the prominence of the tavern and the wide influence of the landlord. Whether village tavern, or wayside inn, it was the social center of the neighborhood.

¹Alexander Pratt, a Waukesha editor, writing four years after the event, declares that the State's first railroad was formally opened to traffic in that village in March, 1852. See *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, I, 139. The correct date, however, was February 25, 1851. A four column account of the celebration attending the opening is contained in the *Waukesha Democrat* of Mar. 4, 1851.

Wisconsin Historical Society

The tavern of early Wisconsin discharged many functions. It furnished not only food, drink, and shelter, but was also the place for all indoor amusements, such as dances, concerts, lectures, puppet shows and wax figure exhibitions, for which purposes a suitable hall was usually provided. This hall was also the meeting place of secret societies, like the Masons, Odd Fellows, and the Oriental Evanic Order of 1001, the last named a burlesque secret organization then quite popular. Here, too, were held caucuses, town meetings, conventions, and elections. The dearth of churches and public buildings in the communities enhanced still more the importance of the tavern, for in their absence the hall was used for religious services or sessions of the court. The tavern was the place for assemblages of all kinds, even county fairs; while at Fourth of July celebrations, then the event of the year, the landlord was generally the caterer. A perusal of Wisconsin papers published before the days of the railroad will disclose an almost entire absence of what is now known as county news. Since curiosity about the affairs of others is an inherent human trait, our early precursors in the State must have enjoyed a quicker medium for disseminating the news of the neighborhood than the weekly paper. There was indeed such a medium, namely, the taverns that abounded in the villages or were located at frequent intervals along the well traveled highways.²

In the beginning the tavern was usually a story and a half log house, with a barn of like material, but with the advent of the sawmill larger and higher structures of frame were erected. A typical frame tavern of this period was the Exchange of Mukwonago, built by Henry Camp in 1842, and described in a paper read before the Territorial Badgers of that town by his son, Dan L. Camp.³ The original log tavern, where he was

² American landlords had early gained a reputation as news gatherers. Doctor Schoepf, the scholarly German traveler, who toured the United States in 1783-84, observes: "There are no people in the world of more curiosity than the innkeepers throughout the greater part of America." J. D. Schoepf, *Travels in the Confederation* (Philadelphia, 1911), 22.

³ The paper, now in the writer's possession, was published in the Waukesha *Freeman* of unknown date.

The Taverns and Stages of Early Wisconsin

born in 1840, was connected with the new building and used as a barroom. Describing this room, he says:

Tallow 'dips' in tin reflectors hung on the wall near the bar, but usually no other light but that from the fireplace was needed. On one side of the fireplace was piled half a cord of dry maple, and on the other was the sink where the guest of high or low degree performed his ablutions with plenty of hard water and a cake of yellow laundry soap. * * * If we ran out of bar soap there was plenty of soft. Over the wooden sink there was a seven by ten inch mirror, flanked by a comb and a brush suspended by chains.

The new tavern was heated by four fireplaces, two on each floor, placed at each end of the building. There was a small cook stove in the kitchen. How my good mother ever accomplished the cooking for all the hearty eaters that came to our tavern, besides getting supper for forty or more couples that attended the dancing parties, is a mystery to me.

The upper floor was made into one large room except for a long tier of bedrooms, six by seven, on one side of the building, which were reserved for guests of high degree and maiden ladies. The large hall, which my father called the 'steerage,' was lined on one side and down the center with beds, like a hospital ward. When a ball was slated, all these beds had to be removed and placed temporarily on the large veranda at the front of the building. The festivities concluded, my father, who had been a seafaring man, sent everybody aloft to put the beds back in shipshape order, whereupon they 'spliced the main brace' in the aforesaid barroom.

The 'steerage', when thus transformed into a ballroom, and trimmed with cedar boughs, with six candles on each side backed by bright tin reflectors tacked against the wall, together with the light from the fireplaces, presented a most cheerful appearance, and became a favorite resort for dancing parties.

Until 1845 there were few taverns constructed of brick, stone, or grout. In the later forties and early fifties, during their golden period, many large, substantial taverns were built in Wisconsin, with commodious, attractive dance halls. These halls, then called ballrooms, while generally on the top floor of the main building, were sometimes located in a wing. During this period the more pretentious ballrooms were provided with "spring" floors, which were laid independently of the walls and yielded under the feet of the dancers like thin ice. Persons unaccustomed to them, or somewhat inebriated, would be liable to fall, to the amusement of the terpsichorean adepts present. Dancing was the most popular pastime, yet, naturally, the

Wisconsin Historical Society

dances were not the same as those now in vogue. Square dances, such as quadrilles, and contra-dances, like money musk and the Virginia reel, were the favorites; but, despite the opposition of the strait-laced, round dances were introduced from the East and by the Germans, who came in such numbers after 1848. The most popular among these were the polka, mazurka, schottische, and waltz. The waltz, especially, was denounced by pulpit and press as immoral.

During the fore part of the grand dances the fair participants wore dark prints, but at midnight they repaired to the dressing room, provided by better taverns, and donned their party clothes, light colored airy dresses of tarlatan or muslin, or darker ones of delaine or debeige. The élite wore pumps of bronze or black kid, the others dancing in their ordinary shoes or morocco, prunella, or wax calf. Some of the men had pumps, but more wore boots, and occasionally one danced in his stocking feet.

The music, furnished originally by a fiddler, who was sometimes assisted by a manipulator of a bass viol, improved as the larger towns came to boast of excellent cotillion bands; these were in good demand for the important functions of the popular taverns, while local talent was engaged for ordinary events. These "string" bands consisted generally of four instruments, but occasionally of a larger number.⁴ Among the famous cotillion bands of the time were those of Hess of Milwaukee and Severance of Whitewater. Sometimes the landlord himself was a musician or dancing master, or both, as in the case of Jerome B. Topliff of Elm Grove.

New Years, Washington's Birthday, the Fourth of July, and Thanksgiving were the occasions for grand balls, when enterprising landlords made extraordinary efforts to attract a large attendance. A shrewd selection of popular floor managers from the various tributary communities constituted an important part of these carefully planned preparations. These functions were sufficiently numerous to satisfy the most ardent dancer.

⁴ In the Watertown *Chronicle* for December, 1844, John W. Windue advertises that his "Cotillon Band is composed of first rate musicians in good practice and that he can furnish on short notice any number and description of instruments."

INDEPENDENCE PARTY.

Your Company with Lady is respectfully solicited at a Party,
to be given on

**MONDAY, JULY 2ND, 1855, AT THE
MUKWANAGO HOUSE, OF R. W. GIBSON**

MANAGERS.

JOHN SCHNEIDER JAS. JOHNSON
MUSIC, SEVERENCE'S BAND, TICKETS, \$2.50

Sugar Party,

AT THE

MUKWANAGO HOUSE,
R. W. GIBSON, Proprietor.

ON Wednesday Even'g. April 23rd, 1856.

YOUR COMPANY WITH LADY IS SOLICITED.

FLOOR MANAGERS

JOHN W. MUKWANAGO FRANCIS DAVEN, Esq. Preside.
MUSIC, SEVERENCE'S BAND TICKETS, \$1.00

Independence Ball,

AT THE

Mukwanago House, R. W. Gibson, Proprietor,

ON FRIDAY, JULY 4th, 1856.

YOUR COMPANY WITH LADY IS RESPECTFULLY SOLICITED

MANAGERS.

JOHN W. MUKWANAGO FRANCIS DAVEN, Esq. Preside.
MUSIC, SEVERENCE'S BAND TICKETS, \$1.00

The Taverns and Stages of Early Wisconsin

Some of the parties announced in the long ago seem strange enough to us of the present day. During the presidential campaign of 1856 a Frémont ball was held at Alexander's tavern at Bad Axe, Wisconsin. After the sap had run in the sugar bush and had been converted into its several saccharine products, a sugar party was sure to be held in the nearby tavern. The main attraction at a sugar party, aside from dancing, was a supper at which maple syrup and hot biscuits were the *pièce de résistance*; when the weather was opportune, boiling maple syrup was poured upon the snow, forming wax, that most delicious of sweets.

The prevailing price of admission to these parties in 1855-56, supper included, was \$2.50 per couple. Owing to the Crimean War and better marketing facilities, due to the recently built plank roads and the rapid extension of railways, farm products brought at this time far higher prices than formerly; hence these seemingly expensive functions were in part evidences of prosperity.⁵ For the rest the price indicates the characteristic American tendency to extravagance, with the landlords alert to take advantage of it, even as at present. A few years before, the price of admission to these balls was a great deal less.⁶ The taverns were the scene of other entertainments than those already mentioned. Under their hospitable roof amateur comedians staged daily impromptu performances before appreciative, uncritical audiences.

⁵ The Milwaukee *Free Democrat*, Feb. 19, 1855, quotes these prices: Flour \$6 to \$7.75; winter wheat \$1.32 to \$1.40; spring wheat \$1.20 to \$1.28; barley 90 cents to \$1.00; corn 45 cents to 50 cents; oats 34 cents to 36 cents; mess pork \$11; and eggs 22 cents.

⁶ The Watertown *Chronicle* of Mar. 20 1850, has this advertisement:

"Ball at the Buena Vista House.

The public is respectfully invited to a ball at the Buena Vista House, Monday night, the 31st day of April next. Tickets 50 cents for gentlemen, ladies free.

Wm. Wiggernhorn."

It should be noted, however, that this was a German house. For many years the German immigrants to Wisconsin held aloof, socially, from the American element of the population. It is quite possible, therefore, that the price given in this case is lower than the usual price.

Wisconsin Historical Society

Wisconsin was then a country of young men. The outdoor life, the conviviality and comradery of the road, filled them to overflowing with animal spirits, and this exuberance of energy usually manifested itself in pranks, horseplay, and practical jokes. A joke at the expense of the landlord was one most enjoyed, perhaps because it meant a treat for the crowd. J. B. Cable, an early tavern-keeper of Waukesha County, had such a dislike for the Irish that he would not entertain them. One evening a peddler, who occasionally stopped with him, entered disguised and announced in a well assumed brogue that he was going to stop over night, proceeding at once to put up his team. When, after considerable wrangling, the irate landlord discovered that he had been hoaxed, he was obliged to do the usual honors. At another time, when he had gone down cellar to refill his flagons, the hilarious crowd locked the trapdoor and departed with the key. However, these examples of playfulness are mild compared with some that could be given.

Games of chance and for amusement were played generally; yet cards were taboo even at some wet taverns. Ingenuity, however, overcame such a slight obstacle to mild gambling. There was, for instance, crack loc, which was played by tossing up coins, the one whose coin alighted nearest a designated crack being the winner. At the Otis House, Hartland, cards and dice were prohibited, but the patrons gambled nevertheless. Forming a circle in the barroom, each in his turn whirled an empty demijohn; the one at whom the neck pointed after it had come to rest being obliged to treat. Yet even here there was some regard for the proprieties, for whoever indulged beyond his capacity was made to dig a stump out of the nearby swamp before breakfast the next morning.

Apart from financial or culinary ability, the table of the taverns varied with the times and locality. In 1846, when the landlords of southern Wisconsin advertised the "delicacies of the season", the first tavern at Black River Falls served bread and fried salt pork for breakfast and supper, with boiled pork, bread, and bean soup for dinner as a change.⁷ Landlords, particularly during the heyday of the tavern, took great pride in

⁷ Mrs. Bella French, *History of Black River Falls* (La Crosse, 1875).

The Taverns and Stages of Early Wisconsin

their table, and on special occasions tried to surpass one another in providing gustatory pleasures for their guests. Thus Sam Barstow, a noted landlord of Waukesha in the early forties, favored his guests at a Fourth of July celebration by serving them in a large, temporary bower with such rare and delectable dishes of that period as spring lamb and green peas. Old newspapers reveal that the landlords delighted in lauding in print the quality of their table. In 1847 the American House of Watertown boasted of its "wild game"; the Exchange, of the same place, claimed among its "catables and drinkables, everything which the western fields, forests, waters, and markets afford"; while the Three Mile House of Emmet, Dodge County, modestly declared its "creature comforts equal to any west of the lakes".⁸

Possibly the recollection of meals partaken at taverns in the springtime of life, when hard work and exuberant health gave them keen appetites may betray old settlers into exaggeration; but all accounts agree that there were then many good cooks among the women of Wisconsin. While the landlord may have been a good manager and provider, and though his geniality may have captivated all, the quality of his table depended upon his cook, who was generally his wife, with his daughters as assistants. Tradition has it that the reputation for good cheer enjoyed in many taverns was due to wives who were excellent ministers of the interior. They and their daughters were not ashamed to do housework. These verses⁹ advertising Samuel Mallory's tavern at Elkhorn in 1845 bear witness to this:

His table is furnished with the substantial of life,
Cooked and prepared by his daughters and wife,
Myself will attend you and give you the food
With desserts and pastry, which shall be all good.

Needless to say, many items of diet of the present generation were not included in the menus of old, for landlords had not then refrigerator car service to supply their table with unseasonable delicacies; neither were there any canned goods, and rarely ice cream. Game and fish were, however, plentiful, and these

⁸ Advertisements in *Watertown Chronicle*, June 23, June 30, and Aug. 4, 1847.

⁹ From a twenty eight line advertisement in the *Western Star*, Elkhorn, Aug. 28, 1845.

Wisconsin Historical Society

often replenished the scanty larder of the frontier tavern.¹⁰ Turkey, both wild and tame, was the chief attraction at parties, but after the coming of the railway oyster suppers were the feature. Holiday suppers often had a roast pig set at each end of the long table. Then there were hot mashed potatoes, pies, cakes, doughnuts, cookies, pickles, preserves, coffee, tea, and cheese. The hot supper, served at six, was followed by the dance. At midnight plates were passed to the guests seated around the ballroom and a lap lunch of pie, cake, doughnuts, coffee, and sometimes tea, was served. When the program did not include an early hot supper, cold meat was usually served.

Bills of fare served daily at these taverns did not offer the variety set before the fastidious traveler of the present, but they had the home cooking flavor, now so often lacking, and the rates were much lower. Although the prevailing rate was one dollar per day, the charges were by no means uniform. Fierce competition often resulted in price-cutting, when a man was kept for supper, lodging, and breakfast, including feed and stabling for his team, for as low as four shillings, or fifty cents, this price sometimes including a drink. Those occupying the "school section", a large loft, or an outlying apartment, accommodating quite a number, usually had a lower rate. A house was not considered full until every bed held as many as could crowd into it "spoon fashion". When all beds were occupied to their capacity, some landlords gave teamsters who bunked on the floor an allowance of free whisky. Mrs. W. F. Whitney of Waukesha relates that on one occasion in the late forties fourteen ladies slept two in a bed in one large upper chamber of the Hawks House, Delafield, while the men of the party found accommodations of some sort on the ground floor.

Only occasionally do old advertisements of taverns mention their rates. The proprietor of the Union House of Richland City, J. W. Coffinberry, advertised in 1856: "Board by the day, \$1.00, single meals .37½ cents, lodging, .25, board by the week, \$3.00. Horse and hay overnight .25, horse, grain and hay overnight, .37½, including care, .50". His competitor, W. J. Frame,

¹⁰ Mrs. Cawley, who came to Clark County in 1851, and served as cook in a boarding house, says that she cooked twenty-one deer that winter. Interview published in the Neillsville *Republican Press*, Dec. 15, 1910.

The Taverns and Stages of Early Wisconsin

of the City Hotel, quoted lower prices, but was more exacting otherwise. He permits "No gambling or card playing in house or barn, no profane or vulgar language, and sky-larking". His rates were as follows:¹¹

Meals each .25, lodging one night.....	\$.10
Boarding by the week with lodging	2.50
" " " " without lodging	2.00
" " " day with lodging75
Horses to grain, hay and care37½

This, be it remembered, was a period of high prices.

Taking care of the animals--horses, oxen, mules--was the duty of the hostler, so important a personage that one advertisement states that "Robert, the Old Hostler, is on hand and animals are safely entrusted to his care".¹² Of the functionary referred to Dan Camp writes: "The low rates included a tip to the hostler, consisting of a glass of 'red eye', which custom of the time kept that individual in a perpetually pickled condition, not drunk, but simply stalling around and trying to look sober." And yet some hostlers developed into excellent landlords.

According to all accounts much whisky was consumed during the period under consideration. It was generally believed at this time that whisky was a necessary and useful beverage, and that men doing hard work required alcoholic stimulants in order to be efficient. During harvest laborers expected and were supplied with rations of strong drink, and a farmer refusing such allowance was an exception. The numerous teamsters and travelers, who frequented the roads at all hours and in all kinds of weather, were generally afflicted with this prevailing thirst, thereby increasing the patronage of the taverns and providing a great source of revenue to the landlords. The tavern bars were patronized even by the lead teamsters and impecunious drivers who usually camped en route and provided their own food.

While there were a few temperance houses scattered over the

¹¹ Advertisement in *Richland County Observer*, June 3, 1856.

¹² Advertisement of Three Mile House of Emmet in *Watertown Chronicle*, Aug. 4, 1847.

Wisconsin Historical Society

State, the bar was a prominent feature of nearly all taverns. Advertisements generally mention the choice quality of the beverages kept in stock. The following unique announcement¹³ of 1852 was surely a sign of the times:

Planters' House, Hales Corners, Greenfield, Milwaukee County, by William Hale. "A little of the critter to be had if desired."

Another landlord advertises that his low rates include free whisky.¹⁴ But whisky was cheap before the Civil War and distilleries were plentiful in southeastern Wisconsin. Mr. A. C. Vanderpool, a pioneer of Waukesha County, told the writer that once just before harvest he bought five gallons of whisky at a nearby distillery at 12½ cents a gallon, "and," he declared, "it was better than the stuff sold now, because it did not give anybody the headache." The retail price of a drink of whisky was usually three cents.

It goes without saying that the taverns were not promoters of temperance, although the watering of whisky was said to obtain. Yet, strange to relate, when the Order of Good Templars spread over the country in the fifties, a dance hall sometimes served as their lodge room. Overshadowed by the all-absorbing question of slavery, the temperance movement had little effect upon the drink evil compared with the railroads, which reduced the number of taverns by revolutionizing traffic, and the Civil War, which imposed a heavy, deterring tax upon intoxicants. While the use of whisky was general, especially in the lumber regions, it was hardly as pronounced as tradition alleges. Neither was Wisconsin exceptionally intemperate. Of the drinking habits of the second generation of the nineteenth century one able contemporary observer has written: "The vice of intemperance was not, as now, restricted to a few exceptional cases, but was fearfully prevalent. A glass of wine could some-

¹³ Advertisement in the *Western Star*, Elkhorn, June 10, 1852.

¹⁴ "Cottage Inn by Jesse M. Van Slycke, successor to W. Porter, Walker's Point, South Ward, Milwaukee, W. T. Teamsters and Farmers, especially, will find it a good home. His charges will be, Horses to hay overnight, .18, Supper and Lodging, .25, Breakfast .18 and some fixens for nothing at all—you know! His table, Lodgings, Stable and Bar, will not be surpassed on the Point, in the city." Advertisement in *Milwaukee Sentinel*, Oct. 8, 1845.

The Taverns and Stages of Early Wisconsin

times be seen on the desk of a senator while engaged in debate, and the free use of intoxicating drinks by senators was too common to provoke remark. It was still more common in the House: and the scenes of drunkenness and disorder in that body on the last night of the last session [March 3, 1851] begged description."¹⁵ Amusements are a necessary relaxation. Owing to the dearth of theaters and outdoor games during their day, perhaps our forefathers were much addicted to the flowing bowl.

Although the sale of strong drink was usually regarded by the landlord as essential to financial success, an abundant supply of pure water was perhaps the greatest asset of a tavern. While teamsters were not partial to water as a drink for themselves, they were particular to stop at taverns having a copious supply of this precious fluid to slake the thirst of their jaded animals. Landlords fortunate in the possession of inexhaustible wells or springs of good water, made mention of the fact in their advertisements. In some cases the very name of the house indicated the treasure. Cold Spring House was a favorite name for taverns situated near one of nature's fountains. When the supply of water near the house was inadequate to meet the demand, it was sometimes replenished from a distance. The well-known Prairieville House of Waukesha was supplied from a spring six blocks distant, the water being conveyed thence by gravity in basswood pipes. Capt. John Bell, who kept for years the popular tavern on the Mukwonago Road in Milwaukee County, called the passing throng's attention to the superior quality of his well water, and invited all to help themselves freely, by this remarkable sign:

Stop, gentlemen, as you pass by,
My water tank is free,
Its source is on the mountain high,
Its course is to the sea.

It was not unusual for landlords to be engaged in other activities, such as running a livery stable, a stage line, a ferry, a farm, or holding a public office; quite a number conducted gen-

¹⁵ G. W. Julian, *Political Recollections, 1840 to 1872* (Chicago, 1884), 105, 106.

Wisconsin Historical Society

eral stores in connection with their taverns. As storekeepers they were generally benefactors of their respective neighborhoods, because in pioneer days and during the years of crop failure they furnished the necessaries of life to many a poor settler, carrying his account on the books until the day that he should be able to pay. Unfortunately for the merchant-landlord pay day never came with some of these customers, and despite the profits made in the tavern, he was sometimes forced to the wall in consequence of delinquent debtors. Because they are supposed to do business at a profit, in periods of prosperity the public is prone to forget the valuable services rendered by the merchant in extending credit when money is scarce. Inquiries among descendants of early landlords have occasionally elicited the comment that their ancestor was not well-to-do, but that he never refused food and shelter to a person without money. The late Henry B. Bidwell, a pioneer who came to Waukesha in 1836, told the writer that had not Solomon Juneau furnished the early settlers thereabout with food on long credit, they would all have perished.

The foregoing brief description of the taverns of early Wisconsin will suffice to show what important institutions they were to the people of that period, and how variously and deeply they affected their lives. It also indicates that the landlords were generally men of consequence in their communities, and that their genial hospitality and wide acquaintance gave them a vantage for gaining public esteem and increasing their information, as well as making pecuniary profit. It is not surprising, therefore, that this occupation attracted men of character and ability, and that many of them attained prominence in their counties and the State, while a few acquired even a national reputation. Very many landlords held county offices, a large number served in the Legislature, two went to Congress and one, General J. M. Rusk, after being governor of the State for three terms, finished his distinguished public career as a member of the President's cabinet. It is to be noted that several clergymen were among the tavern-keepers of that period, but that their ventures were not signally successful. There were also some physicians and lawyers who engaged in this occupation.

Although a new country is generally very democratic, people

The Taverns and Stages of Early Wisconsin

of the period under consideration seemed to have set great store by political and military titles. A surprisingly large number of the early landlords bore military titles, that of captain predominating; but there were also majors, colonels, and several generals among them. Comparatively few of these ante-bellum military titles were won in battle; instead they were commonly earned by service in the militia, or as members of a governor's staff; and quite a number of captains graduated from the decks of sailing vessels. However, a number of landlords afterward served in the Civil War, and at least two became brigadiers by brevet.

These strong men did much to shape the destinies of their communities. Their energy and enterprise caused the erection not only of the numerous taverns, used for such multifarious purposes; but they also promoted the establishment of industries, schools, and churches; the building of roads, and the organization of new political divisions and the location of county seats. While the landlords were among the chief promoters of plank roads, some of them antagonized the building of railroads. Believing that its construction through their town would ruin their business, the landlords of East Troy opposed the Milwaukee & Mississippi Railway; but when, too late, they realized that its diversion to another route was far more injurious to them, they favored the projected Milwaukee & Beloit Railroad which, unfortunately, was never completed. Conversely, the persistence and resourcefulness of landlord Joseph Goodrich, of Milton, made possible the extension of the Milwaukee & Mississippi and changed its proposed course by way of Johnstown to his town. At a meeting of citizens and promoters, when the project seemed destined to failure for want of funds, Goodrich proposed that the farmers along the route raise the necessary money by mortgaging their farms and purchasing railroad stock with the funds thus obtained. Although Goodrich and hundreds of his fellow mortgagors lost heavily by the venture, because of the subsequent bankruptcy of this and all other early Wisconsin railways, the advent of the railway brought about higher prices for farm products and general prosperity.

The early landlords were principally Americans of New England ancestry and, like the pioneers of Wisconsin, a large pro-

Wisconsin Historical Society

portion of them hailed from New York State, although Vermont and Connecticut were also well represented. There were originally few foreigners among them, but when the great tide of foreign immigration came surging into the State, German, English, Irish, and Scotch landlords made their appearance in ever increasing numbers.

Roads

In view of the fact that the taverns were commonly situated on the principal thoroughfares, a brief mention of these seems necessary. The indifferent military roads, built mainly in 1835, were of minor importance in the development of the State. After the lands of southeastern Wisconsin had become subject to entry in 1836, the ensuing immigration caused the establishment of roads into the interior. Begun with congressional aid in 1838-39, these roads trended west from Southport (Kenosha); west and northwest from Racine, and southwest and west from Milwaukee. They followed the lines of least resistance, avoiding woods, swamps, and rivers, wherever possible, and were extremely bad. Until after 1850 the favorite road from Milwaukee to Fond du Lac was by way of Watertown and Fox Lake, the longest way being the best and most expeditious.

The discomforts incident to travel by stage at this time were due chiefly to the poor condition and character of the roads. At certain seasons of the year they were frightfully bad, as the following item from the *Watertown Chronicle* of Nov. 1, 1848, shows: "The stage road for some weeks past should form a powerful appeal to farmers and traders in favor of the plank road from this place to Milwaukee. The going has never been worse. The road from one end of the line to the other is lined with fragments of wagons, barrels of flour, boxes of goods, etc. The price of freight has more than doubled."

In a few years these territorial roads were extended to the mining region of southwestern Wisconsin, with the result that in 1839 the lead teams began to make their tedious journey across the State to Milwaukee. The drivers did not generally obtain food or shelter at the taverns, but camped and sometimes foraged the cornfields, en route.

WISCONSIN STAGE LINES.



Leaves the General Stage Office, No. 13, Wisconsin street for Galena, via-Prairieville, Delafield, Summit, Concord, Aztalan, Lake Mills, Cottage Grove, Madison, Dodgeville, Mineral Point, and Platteville to Galena.

With a branch running from Watertown, Beaver Dam, Fox Lake, Fond du Lac, to Green Bay.

Leaves the same office for Galena, via New Berlin, Mukwanago, East Troy, Troy, Johnstown, Janesville, Monroe, Wlota, Shullburg, and White Oak Springs to Galena.

With a branch running from Janesville, via Union to Madison, in due connection with the Galena line.

Also a branch running from Janesville via Detroit, Roscoe, and Rockford to Dixon; connecting with the Chicago, and Galena Lines, at Rockford and Dixon.

Leaves Racine every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, for Janesville; Also, leaves Southport for Madison and Galena same days.

Leaves the same office for Chicago, via Oak Creek, Racine, Southport, Little Fort and Wheeling, to Chicago—connecting at Chicago, with the St. Louis and Michigan Stages.

Leaves the same office for Sheboygan, via Mequon, Hamburg, Sankville, Port Washington, and Sheboygan Falls to Sheboygan.

JOHN FRINK & Co. Proprietors.

Milwaukee, 1878

The Taverns and Stages of Early Wisconsin

Stage Lines

As early as 1836 John Frink and Martin O. Walker operated a stage line in the lead region. Theodore Rodolf, who made a trip by stage from Mineral Point to Chicago, by way of Galena, in the fall of 1841, says in his reminiscences: "The means of traveling had by this time so much improved, that instead of the jolting, hard-seated, two horse wagon, we had a regular Frink & Walker daily stage line, with comfortable coaches." In winter sleighs were substituted and plenty of buffalo robes provided. Rodolf made a trip to Milwaukee in January, 1842, going by way of Madison, Janesville, Troy, and Prairieville (Waukesha) and reaching his destination the fifth day.¹⁶

A study of the old stagecoach advertisements reveals the principal channels of travel, while the opening of new branch lines, the shifting of routes, and the improved, quicker service, indicate the rapid development of the State.

In 1845 Frink, Walker & Company advertised a daily line of four horse coaches from Milwaukee to Galena, through in three days. One of the routes, stages leaving Milwaukee, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, was by way of Troy, Janesville, Monroe, Wiotia, Shullsburg, Gratiot's Grove, and White Oak Springs, lodging at Janesville and Shullsburg. The other leaving Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday was by way of Prairieville, Whitewater, Fort Atkinson, Madison, Blue Mounds, Dodgeville, Mineral Point, Platteville, and Hazel Green, lodging at Madison and Mineral Point. A branch ran from Whitewater to Milton, Janesville, Beloit, and Rockford. There was also a tri-weekly line to New Berlin, Vernon, Mukwonago, and Troy; and one to Oak Creek, Racine, Southport, Half Day, Wheeling, and Chicago. These stages connected at Madison with a line to Fort Winnebago, and at Platteville with one to Prairie du Chien. Davis & Moore were agents for this line at Milwaukee.¹⁷

¹⁶ Theodore Rodolf, "Pioneering in the Wisconsin Lead Region," *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, XV, 371-376.

¹⁷ Advertisement in *Janesville Gazette*, May 20, 1845, *Mineral Point Democrat*, September, 1845, and *Milwaukee Sentinel*, 1845.

Wisconsin Historical Society

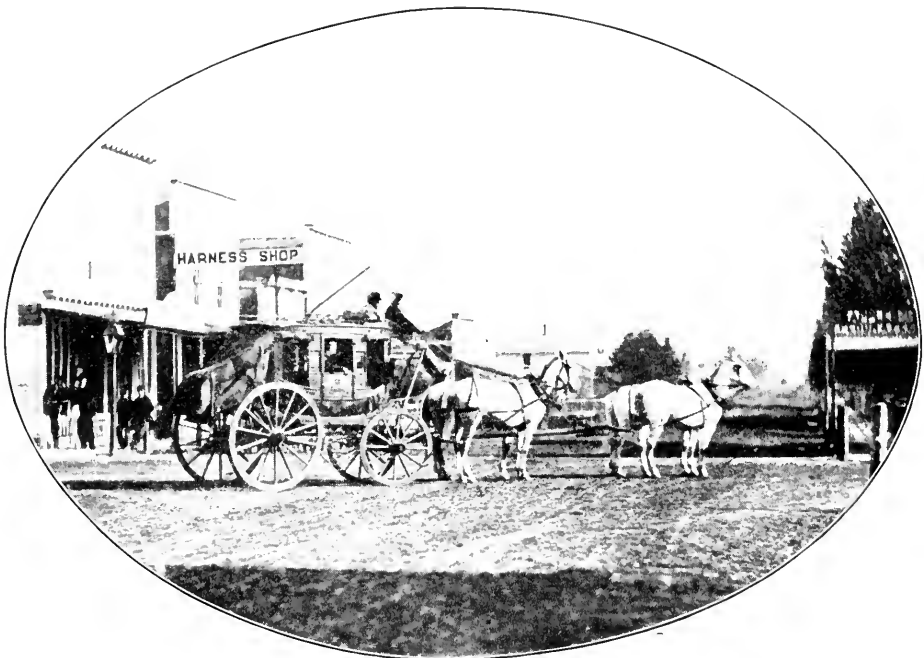
In 1845 Hutchins, Howe & Company entered the field in southwestern Wisconsin, and by 1847-48 they had become strong competitors of the old firm; they advertised two tri-weekly lines from Milwaukee to Galena: a daily line to Janesville, by way of Prairieville, Whitewater, and Milton; a daily line by way of Prairieville to Watertown; a tri-weekly line to Fond du Lac, by way of Watertown, Beaver Dam, and Fox Lake; a semi-weekly line from Fond du Lac to Green Bay; and one from Watertown south to Peru, Illinois, at the head of navigation on the Illinois River.¹⁸

Although Rodolf speaks of "comfortable coaches", the statement should be taken in a comparative sense. Read the following description, by Aaron Rankin, a pioneer of Fort Atkinson, of the stages of this period of mud and corduroy roads.¹⁹

In those days the coaches were heavy, unwieldy things. In it were four seats, running crosswise, intended for eight persons, but more often twelve were squeezed inside. There were no springs under the coach; it was simply suspended by two leather straps, one on each side, extending from the front to the hind axle. When the front wheels dropped down into a hole, its occupants pitched ahead, when the hind wheels dropped down into a hole, we all pitched back; and so we kept it up day in and day out. I do not believe there was a rod in the whole distance, but that some wheel was out of line, either in a hole, or climbing over a stone, stump, or root. If you were fortunate enough to get a corner seat you could brace and hold yourself somewhat, but the middle men had nothing to brace against, and I wonder that their backs were not all unhooked. Frequently we were stalled, and if the efforts of the horses, aided by the whip and profanity of the driver, could not pull us out, we were all ordered by that autocrat to get out. From his orders there was no appeal; his word was law—reckless was the man who ventured any advice or made any suggestion: at all times he was "half-cocked", held only by a hair trigger, and the slightest jar would touch him off. He was master of the English language with its variations and no discount on him. The trouble was generally with the hind end of the coach, the baggage being all lashed to the boot so that most of the weight came on the hind wheels. After we had all gotten into position and the driver had his arms straightened up for a pull,

¹⁸ Advertisement in Milwaukee *Directory*, 1847. An advertisement quoted in *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, XIII, 323, shows that in 1844 Genung & Co. conducted a line of mail stages from Madison to Milwaukee by way of Lake Mills, Summit, and Prairieville.

¹⁹ Recollections of Aaron Rankin. Ms. in possession of the writer.



STAGECOACH ON EAU CLAIRE-BLACK RIVER FALLS LINE

The Taverns and Stages of Early Wisconsin

at the command of the autocrat, we and the horses were expected to pull and lift at the same time, and we generally succeeded in getting it out; but at times we had to get levers and pry it up. While not one of the drivers was a saint, they were not all bad men.

On the road the stage driver is a very busy man—he is lookout, pilot, captain, conductor, brakeman, engineer, fireman, and, to use a slang phrase of today, “the whole thing”. He must always read the road. He knows every stone, stump, root, and hill, but he is frequently deceived in the condition of the ground. Where yesterday he passed over safely, today his wheels break through and he finds no bottom. When he has a bad piece of road, and no way around it, he must go through, trusting to luck and his own skill for success. Approaching the station, or village, while yet a long way off, he blows his horn to notify the small boys and loungers of his coming and for them to assemble at the stage house to receive him. Drawing nearer, he jerks on his lines and presses his foot on the footboard, whip in hand. Every horse is expected to pull his hardest until they arrive at the exact spot, and at the word of command to stop. He is the hero of every small boy and the champion of every lounge. But to see him in his glory is to see him when he starts out in the morning with a fresh team. He comes up in front of the stage house flying; the horses are nervous and uneasy while the passengers are getting aboard, but he is master of the situation; he is happy, for he knows that he is the observed of all by the small boys and loungers gathered to see him off. Baggage all strapped, passengers all in, everything ready, he is prepared to act—he is not yet ready—first he slaps his hat over on one side of his head, gives the ends of his lines a professional swing over on top of the coach, places his foot firmly on the footboard, pulls up his lines, whip in hand, rolls his quid of tobacco around to the right spot, and then issues the command to the horses. Each horse is expected to press into his collar at that instant like the touch of an electric button, and do his best to forge ahead. This speed is kept up until he is out of sight of the loungers and small boys, when he slackens the pace and the regular day's journey has begun.

But the most glorious period of the stagecoach was at hand, when the plank road made going rapid and travel comfortable. Whether impelled by the unbearable losses and discomforts, or by American impulsiveness, plank roads were now being constructed or projected all over the more densely settled portions of the State. In order to note the changes produced by this innovation, a consideration of the Milwaukee and Watertown Plank Road will suffice. Begun at Milwaukee in June, 1849, the road was completed to Watertown, fifty-one miles, during the summer of 1851. On a trip over this road, October 12,

Wisconsin Historical Society

1853, General King of the Milwaukee *Sentinel* tallied 363 teams going east, 283 carrying about 14,000 bushels of wheat.²⁰

Stages to and from Watertown now made connections with Wisconsin's pioneer railroad at the Forest House, three miles northeast of Waukesha, thus shortening still more the time to and from Milwaukee. This was also the beginning of the stage lines shifting their terminals to make connections with the advancing railroads. Here is the announcement for 1853:²¹

For Northwestern Wisconsin.

Stages will leave the Forest House, 16 miles west of Milwaukee, in connection with the Railroad immediately after the arrival of the 7½ o'clock A. M. and 3¼ P. M. trains out of Milwaukee, passing through Pewaukee, Hartland, Oconomowoc, to Watertown, 51 miles on the Plank Road.

Returning leave Watertown in time to connect at the Forest House with the morning train, arriving in Milwaukee 12½ M.

By this arrangement Watertown passengers can leave that place in the morning, and return in the evening, having three hours to do business in Milwaukee.

Leave Watertown at 1½ o'clock P. M., passing through Oak Grove, Beaver Dam, Fox Lake, Waupun, to Fond du Lac, the same evening.

Extras furnished on the shortest notice and on reasonable terms, for all parts of the state. The above lines in connection with the Railroad at the Forest House, are run in good Four Horse Post Coaches.

J. Frink & Co..

General Stage Office, 17 Wisconsin St., Milwaukee.

Although seemingly at the height of its prosperity and efficiency, the end was in sight for the stagecoach. It receded before the invasion of the iron horse, and though lingering for years in sequestered regions, it finally became extinct.

Having described the taverns of early Wisconsin with their varied functions and given a brief sketch of the stage lines, mention will now be made by counties of some of the more prominent hostleries and landlords. It is regrettable that comparatively little use can be made of the great mass of material collected, and that many interesting incidents must be suppressed for lack of space. Some of the minor stage lines of this period will receive casual notice.

²⁰ Watertown *Chronicle*, October, 1853.

²¹ *Ibid.*, April, 1853.

The Taverns and Stages of Early Wisconsin

Green Bay

Green Bay has the distinction of being the site of the first licensed tavern in what is now the State of Wisconsin. Hon. John P. Arndt, a Pennsylvanian of German parentage, opened this house to the public in 1825 and was its first landlord. He conducted it for a number of years, the house being noted for its good cheer and the toothsome German dishes prepared by his wife. An energetic, enterprising man of varied activities, Judge Arndt left his impress upon the Fox River Valley, a fit prototype of the numerous landlords who were so influential in the development of our State. He was a member of the Territorial Council during the years 1836-38.²²

So much has been written about the famous hotels of Green Bay, that a mere mention of them must suffice. Daniel Whitney built the Washington House on the site of the Beaumont about 1829. It served the public for years. In 1853 it was run by I. Parsons. The Astor House, named after its millionaire owner, John Jacob Astor, was opened in 1835. It was a large, square, three-story building, with green blinds and a cupola; with its mahogany furniture, elegant carpets, and silver service, it was not a tavern, but the first hotel in Wisconsin. Famous for years for its fine parties and political gatherings, it went up in flames in 1858. The United States Hotel, the "stage house" of the fifties, stood on the site of the city hall. It was a popular tavern when under the management of G. P. Farnsworth in 1853-55.

The Lead Region

The lead region could boast of a number of noted taverns and landlords. One of the latter was that "staunch, sound man", Col. Ebenezer Brigham of Blue Mounds, who settled in Wisconsin in 1828. One of the earliest traders and tavern-keepers, he was well liked and a prominent figure in territorial days. He served in the territorial council nine terms; he was appointed

²²For a sketch of Judge Arndt's career, see *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, XX, 381.

Wisconsin Historical Society

postmaster by Jackson and held this office until his changed political views caused his removal in 1857.²³

In 1836, when Milwaukee had a population of 206, Mineral Point, the metropolis of the new Territory, claimed 2,000. Mining camp and land office, it was full of miners, teamsters, speculators, gamblers, and strangers, a rough, "wide open" town; but Col. Abner Nichols, the redoubtable, yet popular landlord, had his motley patrons well in hand. He, too, came in 1828 and is said to have been a Cornishman. His tavern consisted of three or four log houses, connected by passageways. When Theodore Rodolf arrived in 1834, he stopped at Hood's tavern, kept by a miner's wife. He said that she kept a good house for those times.

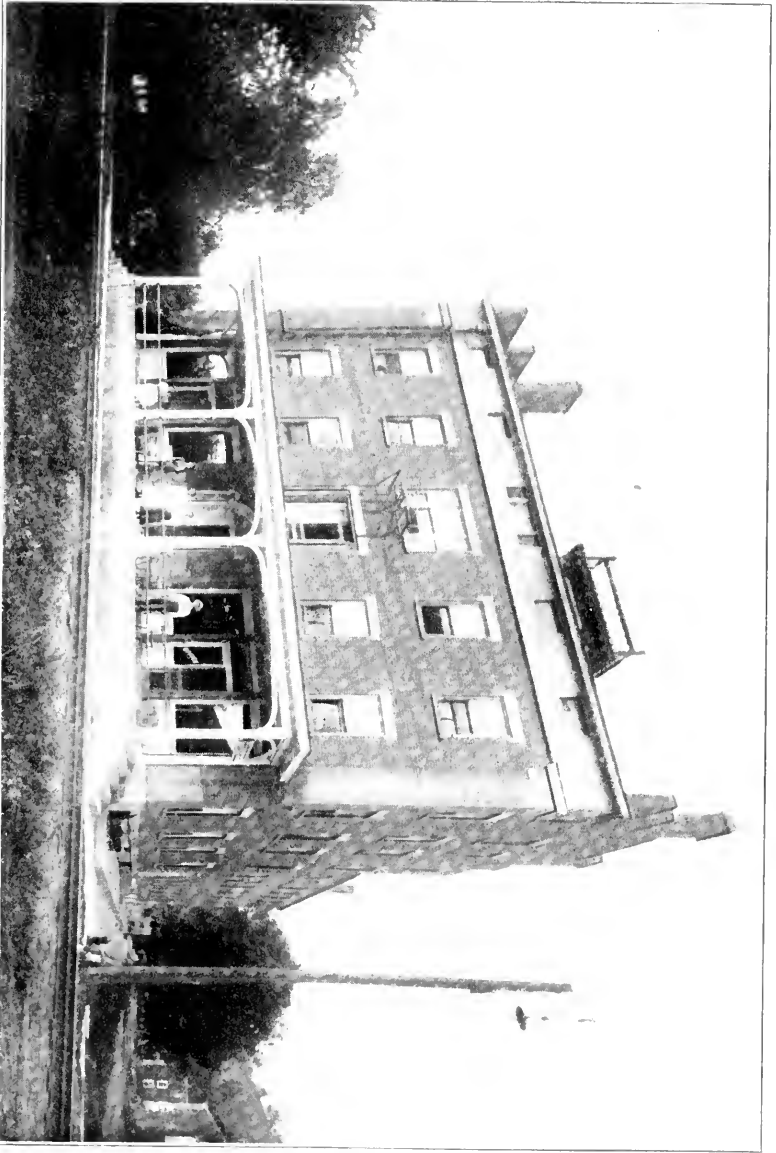
Col. John Moore, who won his title under Jackson, was another noted landlord of this section. Born in North Carolina in 1784, he came to Wisconsin in 1828, and in 1833 built a large tavern adjoining the site of what a few years later became the first capital of the territory, old Belmont. He continued at this stand until a few years before his death in 1847. Colonel Moore was an active, powerful man, standing six feet two and weighing 240 pounds, and though of slight education, he had good, practical sense. Warm-hearted and hospitable, with hosts of friends, no landlord was more popular.

Charles H. Lamar, prominent in early Lafayette County politics, kept a popular tavern on the stage road, two and one-half miles east of White Oak Springs. It was a large, two-story, frame building and the stage changed horses there.

Grant County

Grant County boasts of a tavern with a most unique history. In the fall of 1836 Cassville was a candidate for the capital of Wisconsin Territory, which then extended to the Missouri River, and as a strong inducement its promoters, the New York Company, offered to donate a capitol building; but losing the prize by a vote of 7 to 6 in the council, the structure was then completed for use as a hotel. The panic of 1837 putting a quietus on Cassville's boom, it was used as a warehouse till 1852, when

²³ *Baraboo Republic*, Mar. 23, 1857.



DENTISTON HOUSE, CASSVILLE

The Taverns and Stages of Early Wisconsin

Governor Dewey after his retirement occupied it as a residence. Since 1855 it has been used as a hotel. It was named after Gen. J. W. Denniston, one of the promoters.

The American House at Monroe played an important role in Green County history. In its hall James R. Vineyard was tried and acquitted for killing Hon. Charles C. P. Arndt.²¹ The Monroe House of the same place, when conducted by Joseph Kelley, was a noted tavern. In 1853-54 he advertised²² that the stages from Milwaukee put up at his house three nights a week; the Rockford and Mineral Point stages two nights a week; and the Freeport and Madison stage once a week.

At Prairie du Chien, which also claims the first licensed tavern, and where the Phoenix House and the Prairie House flourished long ago, C. W. Hufschmidt (Charlie), perhaps the last of the old time landlords, closed his long and honorable career. In 1858-59 he was proprietor of the St. Julien, at Reeds Landing, Minnesota, then a gateway of the Chippewa Valley; for many years prior to his death in 1908 he was host of the Dousman House at Prairie du Chien. A big, kindly German, he was everything that makes an ideal landlord. He was loved by all, and despite his nearly ninety years he was young to the end.

Kenosha County

Before the advent of the railroad Kenosha was the market for the rich country back of it as far as the Rock River, but among the many taverns lining its tributary roads the more prominent only are here mentioned. At Truesdell, on the Geneva road, is a tavern still running, which was known in the forties as Kincaid's. On the same road, S. E. 1/4, S. 3, T. Bristol, Sereno Fowler, a native of Connecticut, built a boarding school in 1844, which he converted a few years later into a tavern. Dying in

²¹ Vineyard and Arndt were members of the Governor's Council. In the course of a dispute over the confirmation of one of Governor Doty's appointments to office they quarreled; an altercation ensued, in the course of which Vineyard shot and killed Arndt. The tragedy occurred in the council room itself. Vineyard was tried on a charge of manslaughter. Charles Dickens, who was then touring America, cited this tragedy in his *American Notes* as typical of public life in the West.

²² Monroe *Sentinel*, June 14, 1854.

Wisconsin Historical Society

1848, his widow married James Kellogg, who ran it for some years. Two and one-half miles west of Kellogg's, Jackson, a member of the legislature in 1846, conducted a tavern.²⁶

Two and one-half miles west of Jackson's on the same road, stood the tavern of Dr. Francis Paddock, State senator and father of twelve children. About a mile west was the noted Brass Ball House of Daniel C. Burgess, a native of New York. It took its name from the sign, a large brass ball.

On the town line road, later the plank road, three miles west of the city, was Peter Martin's tavern, a favorite with Kenosha young people for dances during the sleighing season. Wood's tavern, about five miles west of Martin's, was opened September 1, 1850. Built by Uriah Wood, a member of the Legislature in 1847, who died in the fall of 1850, it was continued for four years by his son. Both were natives of Canajoharie, New York.

On the same road, S. E. $\frac{1}{4}$, S. 32, T. Paris, was the tavern of Lyman Dutton. Its popularity may be inferred from this advertisement in the *Kenosha Telegraph* of January 17, 1851:

"Farmers Exchange Fair after the Old English Style, for the purchase, sale, and exhibition of any article of Agriculture or Manufacture will be held at Dutton's Tavern on the last Tuesday in February." In 1850 it was the place of the first annual meeting of the Kenosha County Agricultural Society.

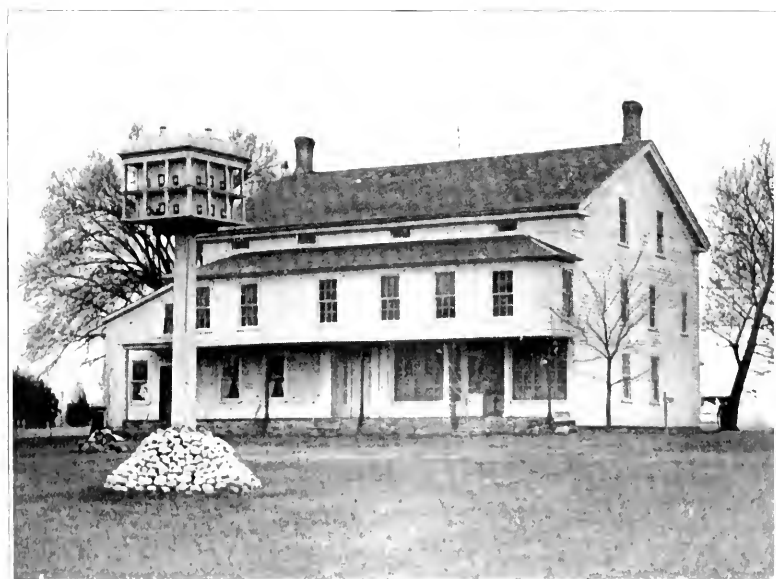
Jonathan Eastman and wife, Phoebe, kept a popular temperance tavern seven miles southwest of Kenosha. Eastman had one of the first bearing orchards in the county. Then there was Coffin's tavern on the Burlington road, S. 17, T. Brighton, and the Wilnot House of Wilnot, opened by Ephraim Wilcox, July 4, 1850 and still running.

Perhaps the most notable tavern in the county was the Ackanuckochowoc House, the name meaning "great bend", erected by Gen. John Bullen in 1837 in S. 18, T. Salem, at the east end of Bullen's bridge over the Fox River, also built by him in the

²⁶ The following news item is taken from *Kenosha Telegraph*, July, 1851. "On July 4, there was a big celebration at A. B. Jackson's tavern, Bristol, S. M. Booth, of Milwaukee, delivered the oration before a thousand persons. Five hundred guests sat down to a well cooked plentiful dinner under an awning. Many toasts and responses were given, but it was a temperance meeting throughout."



UNION HOUSE, ROCHESTER



MARTIN'S TAVERN, CHAMBERLAIN

The Taverns and Stages of Early Wisconsin

same year. The tavern was kept by the General (militia) until about 1847, when he constructed the National Hotel at Kenosha. He was also the chief promoter of the plank road which followed the town line to the S. W. $\frac{1}{4}$ of S. E. $\frac{1}{4}$, S. 34, T. Brighton, thence angling southwest to Bullen's bridge. He died at Kenosha, August 15, 1850, aged sixty-seven.

Racine County

Elisha Raymond Sr., a soldier of the Revolution, who located on S. 24, T. Raymond, in 1835, kept one of the earliest important country taverns in Racine County. He was a man of means and brought with him a drove of live stock.

Capt. John T. Trowbridge built a two-story log tavern in the town of Dover in 1836. A former sea captain, he served Wisconsin as postmaster, justice of the peace, and member of the Territorial Legislature.

In 1836, Levi Godfrey, founder of Rochester, opened the first tavern in the western part of the county. That same year, in this large, double log house the first political convention in Wisconsin was held for the nomination of candidates to the Territorial Legislature. In 1838 Godfrey built a new frame tavern on the site of the present Union House, selling it later to Peter Campbell. In 1843 Campbell built the brick portion of the present hotel, and on July 4, 1856, the stone addition in the rear, with its large ballroom, thirty-two feet wide and sixty long, was dedicated. The popular landlord was cleared of debts by the success of the party, but died three weeks later. The Rochester House, which stood on the east side of the river, was conducted in 1851 by J. H. Hall.

About the year 1839 S. C. Russ opened a tavern just behind the site of the three-story brick Waterford House, which he built in 1845. The latter is now occupied as a dwelling. Ebenezer Soules kept the Fox River House, another popular tavern at Waterford.

On the site of the present Jones House, Burlington, Hugh McLaughlin, a native of Herkimer, New York, dedicated his new tavern, the Burlington House, by a grand ball, January 1, 1840. In 1860 it was acquired by Charles J. Jones, who in 1874

Wisconsin Historical Society

moved it a block south, and erected on its original site the Jones House. The staunch old building is now used as a tenement house.

In going west from Racine in the early fifties one passed these taverns: Dan Benton's, W. A. Foster's Four Mile House, Lute Secor's at Skunk Grove, Roland Ives's at Ives Grove, James Mather's in the S. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ of S. E. $\frac{1}{4}$, S. 7, T. Yorkville, and, a mile beyond, J. D. Searle's famous house, with its large dance hall. The first time a fat man danced on its spring floor he stopped the music in alarm, exclaiming, "Hold on, your floor's got the 'ague'." Then came the place of Robert Hankinson, an Englishman, on S. 17, T. Dover; at the junction of the plank road and the Burlington branch, stood the house of W. H. Ad-dington, prominent in local politics; and about two miles south-west was the house of Joseph Tinker, an Englishman, member of the assembly in 1851 and county treasurer in 1856.

Milwaukee County

The location of several important country taverns of Milwaukee County are now within the city limits. One of these is the Layton House, still used as a tavern, near the entrance to Forest Home cemetery. This three-story brick building was built by John Layton and his son, Frederick, the philanthropist, in 1849. Charles Dewey, previously of the Western, Hale's Corners, was the lessee, after which the Laytons ran it for two years, being succeeded by John Mason, a noted landlord of Oak Creek.

The Dryfoos House, formerly of the Western, Hale's Corner's, is an old tavern. Julius Dryfoos, the proprietor, claims that in 1834 William Shields built the original tavern which forms a part of the present building. Among its noted landlords were Charles Dewey, Col. J. C. Crouse and Joseph Dryfoos, who took possession in 1873 and conducted it until his death at the age of ninety in 1910. Formerly popular with farmers and drovers, it is now patronized by automobile parties from the cities. William Hale, after whom the village was named, built the Planters in the forties. It was later known as the Southside Hotel, and upon its reconstruction after the fire in 1888 it was called Neussel's.

The Taverns and Stages of Early Wisconsin

One of the most popular taverns in the State was that of Capt. John Bell. Born in Otsego County, New York, he settled on S. 7, T. Greenfield, in 1842, opened his tavern in 1850, discontinued it in 1862, and died there in 1886 at the age of ninety-five. He was the embodiment of geniality. An odd character, but successful landlord, was Capt. George Knapp. As early as 1846 he kept the Five Mile House on the N. W. $\frac{1}{4}$, S. 15, T. Wauwatosa. In the fifties he moved a mile southeast on the Lisbon plank road. His place was especially popular with Milwaukee young people. On the occasion of their parties he wore knee breeches, low buckle shoes, and his hair in a queue. He hated the railroads and refused to ride on them even on a pass.

Waukesha County

Until 1846 Waukesha County was a part of Milwaukee County. The astute politicians of the former section, perceiving in the rapid growth of the metropolis an impending loss of influence, anticipated the theory of "squatter sovereignty" by securing the enactment of a law which left the decision regarding separation solely to the votes of the dissatisfied towns. As a result of this successful political maneuver the politicians had not only a larger number of local offices at their disposal, but Waukesha County furnished during the first fourteen years of the State's existence, the governor during six years, a United States senator, a secretary of state, and a state superintendent of public instruction. Since the immense traffic to and from Milwaukee passed chiefly through Waukesha County, it contained more taverns than any other territory of equal size, and, as every one of them was a forum of politics, this was the political hotbed of the State. Fourteen of its tavern-keepers were members of the Legislature, a number serving several terms, and one had been a senator from Racine County.

The scope of this article permits a list of only the more important taverns of this county. Going west on the Watertown plank road one passed the Topliff House at Elm Grove; the taverns of C. C. Dewey and John Henson; the Dousman, later kept by Dan Brown; Brackett's; the Phoenix of John B. Cable; and the taverns of William S. Cloek, Jacob Weitzel, Ezra Maynard, David Arlt, and Theodore Loomis—all in a distance of four and

Wisconsin Historical Society

one-half miles. Turning northwest on the plank road one passed the Forest House, Mosley Clark's tavern at Pewaukee, and the Burr Oak and Otis's and Frey's taverns at Hartland; Francis Schraudenbach's tavern at Nashotah, Israel McConnell's at Okauchee, Joseph Mann's at the river, and the La Belle House at Oconomowoc. Going west from Loomis' one passed E. P. Maynard's, Tubb's, Crombie's, the Hawks, and Barber taverns at Delafield, and C. L. Annis' and J. D. McDonald's in Summit. At Waukesha were the Prairieville, Exchange, and American houses; at Genesee, Gabriel Corwin's and Major Treadway's Gifford's at North Prairie, Oliver Gibson's at Eagleville, Jerry Parson's at Jerico, Howe's in S. 32, T. Eagle, and the Adams House at Waterville. Beginning at the county line and traveling southwest on the Mukwonago plank road, these were encountered: the taverns of William S. Parsons, S. Hunkins, P. V. Monroe, Captain F. W. Putney, L. McLean, J. W. Fritz, and W. A. Vanderpool. At Mukwonago there were the Exchange, the Mukwonago House, and J. Stockman's tavern, with L. Stockman's a good mile beyond. Traveling southwest on the Janesville plank road, one passed George Green's tavern, Senator "Vic." Willard's at the foot of Little Muskego Lake, Martin's tavern at Chamberlain, Aaron Putman's at Big Bend, and Jesse Smith's. The principal taverns on the Lisbon plank road were those of Francis Bell at Butler and Captain W. W. Caswell at Merton.

Among such an array of landlords and taverns it is hard to single out a few for special mention. Matthew Kilmister, of the Forest House, a little Englishman, who, with his musical family, had been brought to America by P. T. Barnum, was one of the jolliest, wittiest entertainers, and his table was beyond criticism. He and his daughters gave musical and dancing parties which were attended by persons prominent in Waukesha society; but farmers, teamsters, and railroad men were also his loyal patrons. He died in 1882, aged seventy-five. In cheering the lives of thousands, he was, like others of his kind, a true benefactor of the race, and the world was brighter for his presence.

Leonard Martin, whose large tavern, shorn of its wings, survives as a farmhouse, played an important role as pioneer, landlord, merchant, farmer, and politician.

The Taverns and Stages of Early Wisconsin

“Uncle” Jesse Smith, a pioneer of 1837, built a frame tavern on S. 33, T. Vernon, in 1842, which, destroyed by fire, was replaced in 1847 with one of stone, now used as a farmhouse. It was provided with a spring floor ballroom in the third story, a stone oven with a capacity of forty pies, and water conveyed by gravity from a nearby spring. His family did the work in the house and on the large farm, the wife knitting the stockings for all. He served three terms in the Legislature.

Genial, intelligent Samuel H. Barstow, who came from Connecticut in 1839, was equally efficient as landlord and office-holder. His principal charges were the Prairieville and American houses, at Waukesha. He was a brother of Governor Barstow.

Capt. F. M. Putney kept a tavern a mile northeast of Prospect Hill from 1845 to 1848, the stage from Milwaukee stopping for breakfast and changing horses there. Later he acquired the Exchange House, at Waukesha. He was a successful business man, doing much to build up the place.

The Prairieville House, at the junction of Main street and White Rock avenue, was for years the leading tavern of Waukesha. Popular as a place of entertainment, it was the scene of political plots and gatherings, the resort of lawyers and slave hunters, and when the territorial road was at its zenith, the stage house. Its other famous landlord was Peter G. Jones, a strong, unique character. Though very portly, he was a fine dancer; a stylish dresser, he wore ruffled shirts after they were out of fashion. The railroad and the shifting of the business center at length caused the tavern's decline.

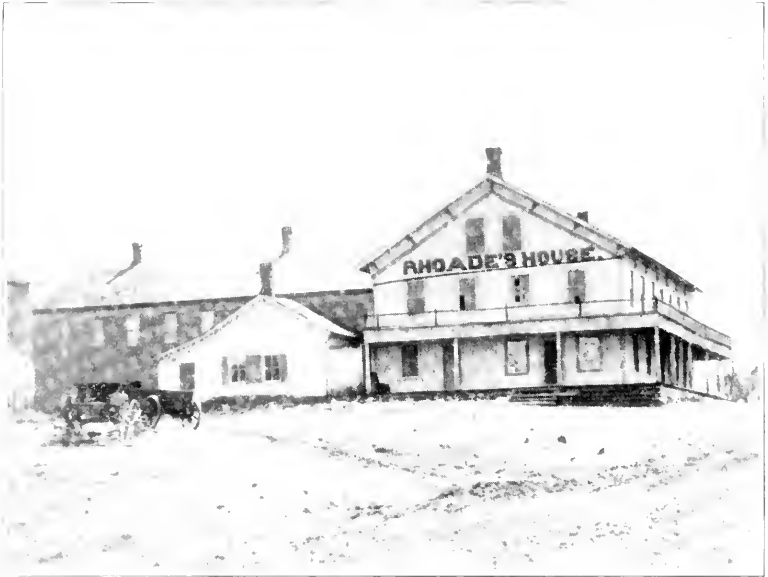
Before the railway and the Watertown plank road had diverted traffic from the territorial road, Delafield had three taverns, foremost of which was the Hawks House. A keen politician, a practical joker, a capital story teller, and a good provider, landlord Nelson P. Hawks, while a resident of Aztalan, had also the distinction of being the builder of the first steamboat constructed in Wisconsin.

Wisconsin Historical Society

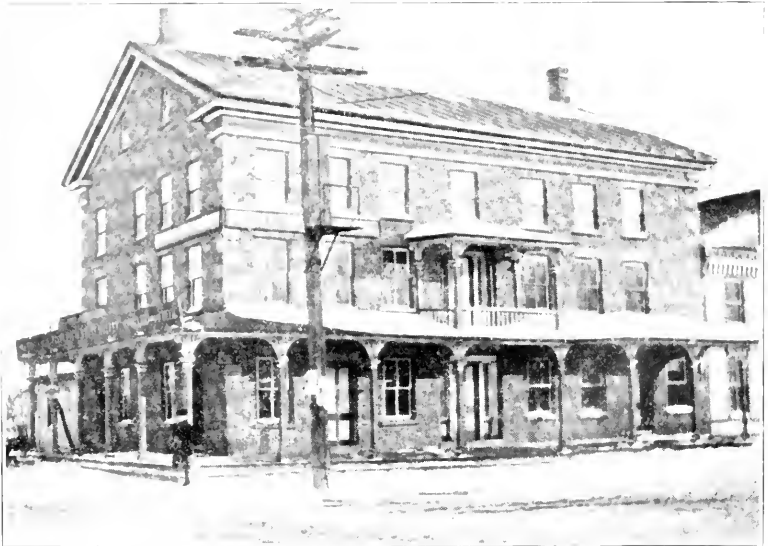
Walworth County

Since the various histories of Walworth County mention its leading taverns their notice here is brief. Maj. Jesse Meacham, a veteran of the War of 1812, kept a popular tavern at Troy until that place was eclipsed by East Troy. The latter had two famous taverns: the East Troy House, founded by Austin McCracken in 1836 and attaining its highest renown under the régime of Emery Thayer, 1842-53, and the Buena Vista House. The three and one-half story cobblestone house was built by Samuel R. Bradley, a former Milwaukee landlord, who with his one-horse wagon collected all the stone used in its construction. Notwithstanding its grand opening about 1847-48, when many distinguished persons were present, misfortune overtook the proprietor. Although the mortgage against the property was satisfied in 1848 and recorded in 1851, Bradley and his wife mysteriously disappeared soon afterward and were never heard of again. Both houses are still running, the Buena Vista as good as new under the management of Bullion and Himebaugh.

Among other taverns on the Janesville road was J. H. Stewart's, half a mile east of Troy, and Simpson Dart's just beyond that village; two miles west of Mayhew was the Lafayette House of Ralph Patrick, commonly called the "Gravel Tavern"; at the junction with the Racine road Samuel D. Hastings kept the Wisconsin House in 1848; then came Samuel H. Tibbitt's popular stage house, and a mile west, on S. 10, T. Sugar Creek, was Freeborn Welch's gravel tavern, originally conducted by John D. Cowles; then came Joseph Barker's on S. 9; Solomon Finen kept a tavern north of Turtle Lake, and Perkins S. Childs one at Richmond. Winslow Storms had a tavern at Vienna, Dr. A. A. Hemmenway one at Spring Prairie, and Adam E. Ray, who served a number of years in the Legislature, one at Little Prairie. Still other taverns were those of Captain Chamberlain northeast of Potter's Lake, of George C. Smith and Hilkieah Lilly at Lyons, of Newton McGraw at Darien, and of C. Douglass at Douglass Corners.



RHOADE'S HOUSE, MEDINA



BUENA VISTA HOUSE, EAST TROY

The Taverns and Stages of Early Wisconsin

Rock County

Hon. Joseph Goodrich, previously mentioned, was one of the most enterprising tavern-keepers of Wisconsin. He was the founder of Milton and its college, its first landlord, merchant, treasurer, and postmaster. In 1855 he was elected to the Legislature without opposition. In 1838 he built a log house 16 feet wide and 20 feet long, in which he lived with his family of thirteen, and kept store and tavern in it besides. The governor, members of the Territorial Legislature, and leading lawyers stopped with him there. The makeshift table was taken out at night and guests slept on the floor or on improvised beds. His rates at the time were a shilling (12 ½ cents) for a meal and the same for lodging. In 1845 he erected a large gravel (grout) tavern which he conducted until his death at the age of sixty-seven in 1867.

According to Ellery B. Crane, of Worcester, Massachusetts, an early resident of Beloit, the Beloit House was the first tavern in that city. After several landlords, Otis P. and Charles H. Bicknell took charge in 1844, and from that time until 1852 it enjoyed its greatest popularity. It was the stage house. The Rock River House opened in 1840, passed into the possession of Samuel G. Colley and H. W. Cator in 1845. The former became sheriff and assemblyman, the latter, sheriff. In 1855 the building was removed and on its site Prof. J. J. Bushnell erected a new hotel, the Bushnell House; in 1868 it was bought by S. G. Goodwin who changed its name to the Goodwin House.

An account of the taverns on the stage route between Janesville and Madison has been written by Byron Campbell of Evansville, which renders a notice of them here unnecessary. At Johnstown Center, at one time an important point on the Milwaukee stage road, Henry B. Johnson conducted a fine tavern, with a large, spring floor ballroom, while at old Johnstown John A. Fletcher ran one. He was one of four men, all named John, who laid out the township, hence the name, Johnstown. A mile and a half west of Johnstown Center stood David MeKillip's tavern.

At Clinton Corners, a mile west of the present Clinton Junction, Griswold Weaver kept a public house, and at Summerville,

Wisconsin Historical Society

four miles east. Bill Hillsdale was the most popular landlord between Beloit and Darien. In 1848 A. Warner was landlord of the Green Mountain House, six miles north of Janesville, and E. D. Woodbridge of the Spring Valley House, in S. 3, T. Spring Valley. The arrival of the railroad and the passing of the stage line to Racine are indicated by Levi Spears in 1857, when he offers his Emerald Grove House for sale. It was a two-story brick building, 36 by 50 feet, with a wooden annex, 24 by 36 feet and a stable 30 by 60 feet.²⁷

Jefferson County

After the completion of the plank road, Watertown, early a place of promise, became the second city in the State and a bonanza for taverns; their story, however, has been well told in local histories. People and produce from the country to the west and north for many miles passed through Watertown to Milwaukee, and land seekers made it their headquarters. J. B. Van Alstine, for years the popular landlord of the Exchange, declared that he thought business dull in those palmy days unless he had a hundred guests and as many horses to care for. Two of the old taverns are still running, the Watertown House, now the Commercial, and the Buena Vista, which was opened in February, 1848, by Capt. Henry Bogel, a veteran of the Mexican War. During the régime of William Wigggenhorn and his son, Eugene, the Buena Vista was the rendezvous of German revolutionist refugees, among them Carl Schurz and Emil Rothe, while on Sundays German services were held in its hall.

The present Jefferson House, at Jefferson, occupies the site of an older house of the same name which served in the early days as a temporary courthouse. Its most distinguished landlord was Capt. Daniel Howell, state senator in 1854-55.

The Green Mountain House, now a part of the Hotel Fort, of Fort Atkinson, was opened in 1848 by Milo Jones. There was a grand celebration at this house, July 4, of that year, at which Aunt Sally (Mrs. Jones) served a meat dinner, a meat supper and, *mirabile dictu*, ice cream and cake at three o'clock A. M.

²⁷ Advertisement in *Janesville Gazette*, March, 1857.

The Taverns and Stages of Early Wisconsin

Two miles east of Watertown stood the Wisconsin House, "with its never failing supply of water";²⁸ next came the Maple Grove Tavern of Hamilton Hastings at Ixonia; and a mile east of it was Vicksburg, on the Rock River, with its Sacramento House. At Concord was Austin Kellogg's place; at Johnson's Creek Charles Bell held forth; at Aztalan, where four stages made connections for the cardinal points, the Aztalan House served its numerous patrons; at Milford was Nute's popular stand; at Lake Mills, J. L. Manville (whig sheriff) and E. Baldwin kept the American House; and at Waterloo John Walker was landlord of the Waterloo House. At Golden Lake Ortiges Bullwinkel, a droll German, who later removed to Helenville, was tavern-keeper and brewer. In S. 4, T. 6, R. 14, stood William Torrey's Yellow Tavern; four miles northwest of Fort Atkinson was Jared Crane's public house, while in S. 17, T. 6, R. 13, Erastus Snell kept the "temperance" Cedar Lake House, where the stage changed horses. In 1850 Wilcox and Braee ran the tavern at Sullivan, then in S. 25, T. 6, R. 16, and advertised: "No money required of Pedlars for their bills by their choice."²⁹ This was evidently a bid for their good will.

Dodge County

Only a few of the country taverns of large, fertile Dodge County can be given. The names of those along the Watertown stage line were obtained chiefly through Mr. J. E. Sawyer of Horicon, Wisconsin.

Town of Oak Grove: Major Pratt built the first log house and tavern in 1841, in the N. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ of N. E. $\frac{1}{4}$, S. 31; E. Owen's place was a half mile north in the S. W. $\frac{1}{4}$, S. 32, and the Caldwell House in the S. E. $\frac{1}{4}$, S. 19. Sam Stanton, who arrived in 1843, ran the popular house in the N. W. $\frac{1}{4}$ of N. W. $\frac{1}{4}$, S. 8. Stages changed horses there. Thomas Marshall's tavern stood on the N. W. $\frac{1}{4}$ of N. W. $\frac{1}{4}$, S. 7.

Town of Burnett: Smith's Inn, on the S. W. $\frac{1}{4}$ of S. E. $\frac{1}{4}$, S. 32, the favorite on the line, was conducted by Ranslow Smith.

²⁸ Advertisement in *Watertown Chronicle*, February, 1851.

²⁹ *Waukesha Democrat*, Jan. 1, 1850.

Wisconsin Historical Society

who arrived in 1844. At the southwest corner of the town Isaac Noyes kept tavern. George Smith, a brother of Ranslow, ran the house at the intersection of the roads, N. W. $\frac{1}{4}$ of N. E. $\frac{1}{4}$, S. 32. A mile and a quarter north, on N. W. $\frac{1}{4}$ of S. E. $\frac{1}{4}$, S. 20, Lyman Smith, another brother, kept tavern. His daughter married Sherman S. Booth the Abolitionist editor.

Town of Trenton: On the N. E. $\frac{1}{4}$, S. 15, James McCallum was landlord of the famous Buckhorn Tavern. He was born in Pennsylvania in 1816, and came to Wisconsin in 1844. He opened the tavern the same year, discontinued it as such in 1856, and died in 1888. G. C. Gunn kept the house at the S. W. $\frac{1}{4}$, S. 4, and David Bruce one at the S. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ of S. E. $\frac{1}{4}$, S. 29, Town of Chester. About twelve miles north of the Buckhorn was the Red Hen.

In January, 1850, Daniel B. Douglas opened a tavern at Neosho. H. G. Phelps was the popular landlord at Mayville, beginning in 1847. Hustisford, which still depends on a stage, had William T. Ward and Sam Herriek successively as landlords. The massive Rock River House at Theresa, still in service, was built in 1858 by Theodore Husting and John Langenbach, and was long famous for its dinners of fish and game.

Washington and Ozaukee Counties

Philip Laubenheimer, who located at Richfield in 1842, kept the first tavern in Washington County. George N. Irish was a famous host of early West Bend, but of more permanent influence was B. Goetter, who was also a merchant and brewer. Timothy Hall kept the popular Half Way House on the Fond du Lac stage route, one and one-half miles northwest of Schleislingerville. The Webster House at Newburg, built for Lyon Silverman in 1849, was kept by D. F. Lytle in 1856; subsequently it was conducted by Charles Kletzsch, later of the Republican House of Milwaukee.

Traveling north in Milwaukee County toward Cedarburg, the wayfarer was greeted by jovial Ernst Knauth's tavern sign, "Zum Braunen Hirsch", or The Brown Deer. A couple of miles over the line, in Ozaukee County, was Mequon, then a flourishing village. M. Silverman, merchant and landlord, kept the Mequon House in 1850-51; Griffin's was the stage house

The Taverns and Stages of Early Wisconsin

in 1852, while Giles B. Posson ran the Franklin House. William F. Opitz, a member of the assembly, also kept tavern here during this decade, and later one near Saukville. At Cedarburg, Col. Conrad Horneffer, sheriff in 1859, conducted the Washington House for years. At Grafton, formerly Hamburg, John Simon was the landlord of the Wisconsin House. At Saukville Joseph Fischbein kept the Pulaski House, and William Cooper the Saukville House. In 1848-49 Orlando Foster was the proprietor of the Washington Hotel, and in 1857 George F. Mecklem advertised the Mecklem House, corner of Main and Franklin streets, Port Washington.³⁰

Sheboygan County

The stage route from Sheboygan to Fond du Lac was a great thoroughfare, and after the completion of the plank road early in the fifties, J. Frink & Company had eighteen four-horse teams in service on this line, except in winter when four sufficed. Leaving Fond du Lac at seven o'clock, A. M., the stage changed horses at Newton Kellogg's excellent tavern, twelve miles east; crossing the county line it next passed John Ehle's place; at Greenbush it stopped at Sylvanus Wade's Half Way House, the best on the road, where the west bound passengers took dinner. The house is now run by his son. One-half mile east was Russel and Miller's tavern; then came Henry Giffin's Valley House, and two miles beyond, at Plymouth, dinner was taken at John W. Taylor's Cold Spring House; later Monroe Flint's Quitquioc House, now the Commercial, got this patronage. About five miles east was James Little's tavern; Samuel McComas held forth at Sheboygan Falls, and Warren Hill kept the stage house at Sheboygan.

Eberhard Schlaich, a college bred German, who came to Plymouth in 1850, was landlord and postmaster there for a number of years. A rare tribute was paid him in 1868, when his native town, Hepbach, Wurtemberg, wanted him for mayor, his father and grandfather having held that office for many years, but he preferred to remain in America.

³⁰ Ozaukee County *Democrat*, December, 1857.

Wisconsin Historical Society

At Howard's Grove, Ernest Schlichting, called "Busehkoeking", because of his large holdings of woodland, kept the Washington House; and at Rhine Center, August Bruss, a mighty hunter, was landlord of the Flag until succeeded by Louis Senglaub, who was also a great shot.

Calumet County

The more important taverns in Calumet County were M. Ortlieb's and the Chilton House, at Chilton. Advertisements of the latter show James Robinson in possession in 1854 and Asaph Green in 1859.³¹ The rival town of Gravesville had Dennis Sharon at the helm of the Gravesville House in 1858, and I. C. Aldrich in 1895.³² Rudolph Puchner, who opened the first tavern at New Holstein in 1849, built a store and tavern combined in 1857. He was a German poet and writer of some note. He died in 1913, aged eighty-four, and was buried in Milwaukee, the Deutscher-Press Club conducting the services.

Manitowoc County

Advertisements in the *Manitowoc Herald* show E. R. Smith as proprietor of the National Hotel in 1854; but from 1856 to 1863 the name of Thomas Windiate appears. Fred Langenbach is given as the landlord of Franklin Hall from 1853 to 1860, while the McCallum House of 1856 changes significantly to Germania Hall in 1857, with Schlueter and Troemel as proprietors.³³

E. M. Thorpe who was also a physician and dentist, appears at the head of Thorp's Hotel from 1857 to 1859. In 1856 Alexander McCallum offers his new hotel at Two Rivers for sale. In December 1857, William Stearne announces the opening of the new Fond du Lac and Manitowoc Stage Route, by way of Calumet and Chilton.

³¹ *Manitowoc Herald*, Apr. 1, 1854; *Chilton Times*, Aug. 13, 1859.

³² *Gravesville Republican*, August-September, 1858-59.

³³ During the Civil War Herman Schlueter became major of the 9th Wisconsin Volunteers, while his partner in the Germania Hall served as a lieutenant in the 26th Regiment. After the war and until his death in 1873 the latter conducted a German Republican paper, *Die Manitowoc Zeitung*.

The Taverns and Stages of Early Wisconsin

A famous tavern on the road to Green Bay was that of Clifford King, near the Maribel caves. But the most popular tavern in the county was that of August Teitgen, six miles southwest of Manitowoc, which was opened in 1852. The landlord, an educated, broad-minded, forceful German of great executive ability and sound judgment, became the counselor as well as the host of his newly-arrived countrymen. His wife was gentle and sympathetic, a friend to all in distress. The table, the rooms, the atmosphere, were all so attractive that even after its founder's death in 1885, the place was continued as a public house until 1909, when his son and successor passed away.

Charles Brandis, for years a successful landlord at Kewaunee, conducted the Steamboat House as early as 1859. In 1861 he advertised a Fourth of July ball, with tickets at \$1.50 and supper served at seven o'clock P. M.³⁴ In 1859, Mr. Simon, notary and postmaster, was proprietor of the Metropolitan House of Ahnapee (Algoma).

Only a few of the many German taverns north of Milwaukee have been mentioned. In a recent letter to the *Sheboygan Herald* an old-timer speaks appreciatively of them. He had come from the army weak and emaciated, but during the intensely cold winter months of 1863-64, he slept warm in the comfortable feather beds of these taverns and gained thirty pounds in six weeks on their substantial fare.

Fond du Lac and Green Counties

James Ewen, proprietor of the Lewis House, Fond du Lac, was one of the leading men of this city during the stirring decade from 1850 to 1860, when several plank roads and a railroad reached it. Ripon, too, had a landlord of great energy and daring enterprise, Capt. D. P. Mapes, who built two large hotels there, and was one of the founders of Ripon College. Peter V. Sang, a German, who had served eight years as a soldier at Fort Winnebago, started a tavern at Lamartine in 1843. He was successful and held many local offices. E. F. Underwood, now in his ninety-second year, opened the first tavern at Oakfield in 1855; he was the first postmaster, justice of the peace, and sta-

³⁴ Advertisement in *Kewaunee Enterprise*, May 15, 1861.

Wisconsin Historical Society

tion and express agent (1856). Cromwell Laithe conducted the Waupun Exchange, 1853-56.

The principal taverns on the stage line from Ripon to Portage were the Center House, eight miles out; Dantz's, nine miles northeast of Kingston, and Albert Greenleaf's Kingston House. Austin McCracken, the founder of East Troy, built the Yosemite House at Markesan and became a power there. In 1856 Kingsbury's stage line was established from Portage to Oshkosh, by way of Kingston, Princeton, and Berlin. At Princeton was the American House; at Berlin, the Fox River House, Love's and Forsythe's; but names of taverns often changed with their proprietors.

Waushara, Portage, Wood, Juneau, and Waupaca Counties

After the completion of the railroad to Berlin in 1857, Davis & Moore's daily stage passed respectively the Four, Six and Eight Mile houses, then common appellations for wayside inns; it also passed Fuller's and the Spring Lake House to Wautoma, stopping at "Eb." Martin's or at "Old Nat" Boyington's.³⁵ Proceeding, Lloyd's was passed eight miles out, then Wigginhorn's at Buena Vista, and C. A. Loomis', at Plover. The journey ended at Stevens Point, where the stage put up first with "old man" Lloyd (Nelson B.) but later with Joseph B. Phelps, until William Avery's City Hotel became the stage house.

Leaving the railroad at New Lisbon, where W. P. Carr kept the stage house, the stage passed George Salter's Half Way House, six miles, proceeding thence to William Palmer's tavern at Yellow River (Necedah); ten miles beyond the latter dinner was taken at Sarles' Lone Pine House; twenty miles farther the stage was ferried across the river to Grand Rapids, where R. H. Grace, a man of weight (three hundred and forty pounds) kept the Grand Rapids House, J. X. Brands, the Magnolia, and D. F. Emerson, the Wisconsin; from Grand Rapids the stage proceeded to Plover and Stevens Point.

About the year 1856 Myers and Worden established a daily four-horse stage line from Stevens Point, by way of Plover, Nel-

³⁵ Wautoma *Journal*, May 25, 1858.

The Taverns and Stages of Early Wisconsin

son Blodgett's tavern at Stockton, Alexander Gray's at Badger, and A. E. Smith's excellent house at Waupaca, to Weyauwega and Gill's Landing, where, in season, boats arrived every evening from Fond du Lac and Oshkosh. The Landing was connected by a two-mile plank road with Weyauwega, assuring a good patronage to the latter's public houses. The Weyauwega House was especially popular under the régime of Maj. A. C. Worden of the stage line. He subsequently made a splendid war record and became sheriff of Waupaca County and chief of police at Oshkosh. He died at the latter place in 1912, at the age of eighty-five. The La Dow House did not fare so well. In 1856, G. A. Spurr, later of New London, and W. C. La Dow were proprietors; in 1859, J. C. Knox. The North American, now known as the Lake View House, was run by W. Baxter in 1855.

Going from Weyauwega with Young and Reas' stage a detour was made to Fremont, where A. J. Mayo kept the Fremont House in 1857; thence via Readfield past Theodore Spengler's tavern to Medina, where Capt. William Young officiated for years as landlord and stage operator. He won his title in the Civil War and was also State senator. Though quiet, he was strong physically and mentally. His firm also ran a stage line to Oshkosh, and later from Appleton to Shawano. It is said that on one occasion, to drive out competitors, he carried passengers free and gave them their dinner besides. He died in 1890, aged sixty-nine. There was another popular tavern at Medina, the Rhoades House, built by Andrew and Elias Rhoades in 1855. It was discontinued upon the death, in 1903, of Andrew, the surviving brother, at the age of eighty-eight.

At Winneconne C. R. Hamlin and A. C. McIntyre kept taverns. Later the indomitable Capt. D. P. Mapes came from Ripon and left his impress as landlord, hotel builder, and promoter of the railroad and the West Side. Two and one-half miles east was Julius Ashby's place; and at Butte des Morts, once a close contender for the county seat, Thomas R. Petford, an Englishman, who died in 1908, kept tavern for sixty years.

The earlier stages to Green Bay took the military road skirting the eastern shores of Lake Winnebago, but the development of the country west of it caused the establishment in the fifties of a stage line by way of Oshkosh and Neenah. The completion

Wisconsin Historical Society

of the plank road from Green Bay to Kaukauna, together with the opening of the Fox River Canal, gave an impetus to this section, and in 1858-59, two rival lines of Concord coaches competed for the traffic between Green Bay and Oshkosh. The principal hostelrys on this line were M. Griffin's stage house and Col. R. P. Edgerton's Winnebago Hotel, at Oshkosh; R. C. Weeden's tavern at Neenah; M. Burrough's American House and E. B. Northam's tavern at Menasha; Thomas Hanna's National Hotel, and the taverns of A. B. Bowen and Col. R. P. Edgerton, at Appleton; Peter Martin's tavern at the foot of the Kaukauna Rapids; Wright's tavern at Wrightstown; and W. P. Call's American House at Depere.

On the line to Shawano Lucius Collar kept the tavern at Hortonville. At New London, in 1858, E. P. Perry conducted the Perry House "on the south side of the river near the steamboat landing",³⁶ and W. W. Hull, the Angier House, of which Lutsey was at one time proprietor. The New London House was built shortly after by Henry Ketchum, who was succeeded by George Spurr, an experienced, genial landlord. At Shawano the Traveler's Home was erected in 1855 on the site of the present Murdock House by Hiram Westcott, who conducted it till 1870. A native of St. Lawrence County, New York, he settled in this unbroken wilderness in 1853; before his death, which occurred in 1900 at the age of eighty-two, he saw a wonderful transformation in the surrounding region. He was a credit to his occupation.

Northern Wisconsin

The data about the following taverns were gleaned chiefly from contemporary numbers of the *Wausau Central Wisconsin*. From 1853 to 1874 Charles Andrew Singles advertised the Forest House of Wausau. "It was a good tavern for that country," said "Hod" Davis, of Berlin, Nestor of stage drivers, "though we did sit on benches in the dining room." In 1854-60 John LeMesuriere presided over the Washington and Superior houses, respectively, and managed a band. In 1857 S. Mitchell was proprietor of the United States Hotel, at Wausau; he was succeeded

³⁶ Advertisement in *Shawano Venture*, Oct. 15, 1858.

The Taverns and Stages of Early Wisconsin

by S. Kronenwetter in 1861. At Knowlton, Jacob X. Brands kept the tavern in 1856; in later years it was conducted by Leonard Guenther Sr. C. A. Loomis, afterward at Plover, founded the Twin Island House, midway between Wausau and Stevens Point, conducted by J. W. Babeock. At Falls City, George W. Kollock was proprietor in 1857-58. He was succeeded by W. G. Blair, whose widow kept the tavern as late as 1875. At Mosinee S. Kronenwetter held forth in 1859-61. At Eau Plaine, fourteen miles north of Stevens Point, M. Wylie advertised the Plymouth in 1856 as "new" and that "passengers from the steamer dine here daily". The tavern remained in his family until destroyed by fire a few years ago. About four miles south was Hall's place.

In 1860 O. C. Wheeler operated a daily stage line between Stevens Point and Wausau. Including stops it made the run in ten hours. Just before the railroad reached Wausau in 1874, D. P. Bentley ran this line as far as Merrill (Jenny). The hotels at this place during the seventh decade were the Eagle of A. Space, the Poesey of Jules Poesey, and the Jenny House of Alanson C. Norway, who served for thirteen years as county judge.

Columbia County

The portage on the old waterway from Green Bay to Prairie du Chien has been so generously treated by the historian, that little need be said about the early taverns of that vicinity. The Franklin House furnished "royal entertainments" to officialdom at Fort Winnebago, while among the half dozen hotels at Portage during its boom in the fifties, Uncle Dick Veeder's tavern was the most conspicuous. Those were years of golden harvests for Portage landlords, its population increasing from a few hundred in 1850 to 3,000 in 1854, and, it is averred, 10,000 persons crossed the Wisconsin River at this point in 1855. In 1852 John B. Dubay opened a tri-weekly stage line to Stevens Point, using "two horse elliptic spring carriages. Fare going \$3.50; returning, \$3.00."⁷⁷ Myers, Kollock, and Wigginhorn,

⁷⁷ Advertisement in *Portage River Times*, July 12, 1852; September, 1853.

Wisconsin Historical Society

of Buena Vista, advertised a similar line in 1853. Dubay also operated a stage line to Madison. In 1853-54 the steamer "Clarion" plied between Galena, Portage City, and Dell Creek.

Among prominent Columbia County tavern-keepers were Wallace Rowan at Poynette; A. P. Birdsey, Columbus; Freeman Simmons, Lodi; and Major Dickeson at Wyocena.

Marquette, Sauk, and Richland Counties

The town of Oxford, which has recently been resuscitated, was quite a place in 1859-60, with two lawyers, two doctors, and twelve business houses. B. N. Smith and Henry Farnham were the landlords.²⁸ In 1861-62 Montello secured the supremacy in Marquette County; its tavern, the American House, was kept by Mark Derham, "that old popular landlord." George M. Davis ran the stage to Pardeeville.

Sauk County was tavern territory until a late date, for the Chicago & Northwestern Railway did not cross it till 1872. The American House, at Baraboo, was conducted by A. Q. Adams in 1855, P. Van Wendell in 1856, and W. C. Warner in 1859; the Baraboo House, by Lyman Clark in 1855-56, and Hiram T. Mason in 1857. The Western Hotel, at the northeast corner of the public square, built and formerly managed by Col. E. Summer, was kept by W. Wallace in 1856-58; the Exchange House by Volney Moore in 1857-59. At Reedsburg the Mansion House, built in 1855 by Dr. Mackey, was conducted from 1856 to 1859 by J. and A. Smith, who also owned the stage line to Baraboo. The Alba House, built in 1856 by Alba B. Smith, was bought in 1857 by Reuben Green, who also had the stage line to Kilbourn. At the Baxter House, Prairie du Sac, D. K. Baxter in 1857 and for years thereafter maintained the good name established by Steinmetz and Fife. O. Elmer ran the Cottage Inn at Delton, and Q. J. Adams, previously of Baraboo, the Dell Creek House at Newport.

The American House, the first tavern at Richland Center, was built by Ira S. Haselton, the founder of the village, who was later elected to Congress from Missouri. He was succeeded by

* Advertisement in Oxford *Republican Press*, Sept. 3, 1859.

The Taverns and Stages of Early Wisconsin

Albert Neff in 1855-56, who was followed by Hiram Wilsey, and he in turn by Neff in 1861. In 1857 McCune and Terry's stage line, by way of Richland City, made connections with the new railroad at Lone Rock.

Vernon County

The following description of Vernon County taverns was supplied by Gen. Earl M. Rogers, of Viroqua, shortly before his death, which occurred in January 3, 1914.

The first tavern in Viroqua was the Dunlap, a story and a half log building. It changed landlords often and finally was destroyed by fire. In 1852 Bullard and Terhune built the Buckeye. In 1855 the late General J. M. Rusk, but recently elected sheriff, became its landlord. Being a genial host, the Buckeye was always full and prisoners seemed pleased to be arrested by him. In the summer of 1852 Luther Nichols built the North Star; S. C. Lincoln was its landlord until the autumn of 1857, when Rusk took the management and made the North Star the popular stopping place.³⁹

In the spring of 1856 E. Alexander came to Bad Axe, later known as Liberty Pole, and having a fiddle, he saw an opportunity to apply his talents as a dancing master in a region where the contra dance was the principal amusement. He built the Wisconsin House, with the office, dining room, kitchen, and a bedroom on the first floor; the second floor contained a ballroom and two small bedrooms. He catered to the popular amusements of the time, fiddling for a while classic music, but as that did not move the souls to inspiration, the dancers employed local talent, one who could round up with "Old Dan Tucker" and the "Buffalo Girls," where all could join in the chorus: "I danced with a Buffalo girl, whose heel kept arocking and had a hole in her stocking." Belated travelers arriving on a night of such a "merry-go-round", were obliged to go to Viroqua.

Albert Bliss built a store and tavern combined at Readstown, in the Kickapoo wilderness. The meals prepared by Mrs. Bliss were the talk of the country.

³⁹ The following announcement appeared in the Viroqua *Western Times*, Nov. 19, 1856: "The Buckeye House—This well known stand formerly kept by J. M. Rusk, has been thoroughly repaired, and will hereafter be kept by the 'Old Proprietor' himself in person. J. M. Rusk." In 1857, in advertising a rate of 75 cents a day for board at this house, he signs himself "J. M. Rusk, High Sheriff of Bad Axe County." On Oct. 14, 1857, he announces he has taken charge of the North Star Hotel.

Wisconsin Historical Society

De Soto was settled in 1856 by Boston people, cultured but short of capital. A Mr. Trott built the quite pretentious Bay State House, where the Bostonians met to talk of Hawthorne, Longfellow, and Emerson; most of them boasted of a personal acquaintance with Sumner and Wendell Phillips. They are gone; the river refuses a landing; the Burlington Railroad stops only a local at De Soto, but the old Bay State House still stands.

Old advertisements confirm the foregoing account and add the Victory House of John Sellers, and the Eagle Hotel of Eddy and Wetherbee, at Victory; and John Britt's tavern at Franklin City.

Relative to stage lines General Rogers writes:

The first stage line was established in 1848, supplying Mount Sterling, Badger, and Springville. Later the line was extended to Sparta, Black River Falls, Eau Claire, Menomonie, Hudson, and Stillwater, Minnesota, where it connected with another line running to St. Paul. During the winter of 1856-57, after the close of navigation, all mail and passengers passed over the "Overland" Black River road. Mail was brought from Galena to Prairie du Chien, whence it was forwarded in one bag to Stillwater over the above route. Passenger traffic was heavy. General Rusk was the contractor for the line from Prairie du Chien to Sparta. He was only an occasional driver, taking the reins when he went over the lines to settle bills, but this, no doubt, gave rise to the tradition that he had been a stage driver. In 1858, when the railroad reached La Crosse, the overland traffic on this line became quiet. [Yet in November 1858, Hurd and Rusk's advertisement of their stage, mail, and express line, appears for the first time as a "New & Short Route to St. Paul and all Points North, Through to St. Paul in Three Days."]

La Crosse County

In 1853 the Western Enterprise, built by J. M. Levy, corner of Front and State streets, La Crosse, was conducted by that "old, experienced, and widely known landlord", Simeon Kellogg; G. H. Willson, a famous host, formerly of the Onalaska House of that place, managed the pretentious New England House at Front and Main streets; while Tallmadge and Gridley ran the Tallmadge House at Third and State streets. The Augusta House, on the northeast corner of Front and Pearl streets, also built by J. M. Levy, was conducted in 1859 by E. Bicknell and Company. In 1854 Douglas and Price advertised a stage

The Taverns and Stages of Early Wisconsin

line from Black River Falls to La Crosse, "through in one day, fare, \$2.50". In 1856-57 H. B. Herriek, of Viroqua, ran a daily stage line between that place and La Crosse. There was also a stage line to Baraboo, and one to Portage before the construction of the railroad.⁴⁰

The best known tavern in Trempealeau County during the fifties was the one built by Alexander McGilvray, a Scotchman, in 1854, who also established a ferry across Black River, on S. 16, T. Caledonia. The tavern was in a busy place called Scotia, on the old Burbank stage route from La Crosse to St. Paul and the freight and mail route to old Whitehall.

Before the completion of the railroad from Green Bay to Winona, in 1871, Trempealeau was a great grain market and had several prosperous taverns. Among these were D. W. Gilfillan's Vermont House, the Trempealeau House, the Melchior House of Jacob Melchoir, and Frank Utter's tavern. Melchoir was the first brewer of the county. The Two Mile House of John Arnt and Simon's Four Mile House, had bar, dance hall and bowling alley.

Buffalo and Monroe Counties

In 1856 John Buehler conducted the Wisconsin House at Fountain City; C. W. Gilbert kept Gilbert's Hall and J. Bronnenkant, the Washington House. A little later and until 1894 Albert Scherer set the best table in Buffalo County, as the writer can attest. In 1858 J. R. Hurlburt was the proprietor of the Alma House, at Alma.

Sparta, at the intersection of two great stage lines, was a good place for taverns, but these have been described in local histories. In 1859 a big Fourth of July celebration was concluded with a dinner, "one of the grandest ever prepared, by S. B. Aylesworth of the Warner House." The twelfth toast, "The North and South: Let no other line than Crinoline divide them", was responded to by Prof. L. C. Morse.⁴¹ D. M. West kept tavern at Leon, in 1854 a close rival of Sparta for the county seat. Adam Russel was an early tavern-keeper near the site of Cash-

⁴⁰ *La Crosse Democrat*, April, 1854.

⁴¹ *Sparta Democrat*, July 13, 1859.

Wisconsin Historical Society

ton, and Adrian Cole in Cole's Valley. The taverns of Sam Bacon, Hugh Gallagher and Pitts, and Tom Emory's tavern at Cataract, were on the Black River Falls stage road.

Jackson County

While the tavern-keepers have their Rusk whom they must share with the stage men, the latter can boast of a man who was "lumberman, lawyer, judge, legislator, merchant, banker, and operator of most undaunted nerve and unimpeachable character". This was William T. Price of Black River Falls, who at the time of his death was a member of Congress. Besides operating the line to La Crosse, already mentioned, he was the contractor for the link in the "Overland" between Sparta and Hudson.

Black River Falls was the habitat of the lumberman long before the coming of the farmer, and the Shanghai House of that place was opened in 1846 with a characteristic celebration, people attending from a great distance. Dancing continued for fifty-one hours and quantities of whisky were consumed. At a meeting of this house to secure a clergyman for the place, after a drink all around, the vote taken favored a Methodist. The first services were held in the dining room, and the poker game in the adjoining barroom was interrupted long enough for one of the players to start a hymn.

At Melrose, on the La Crosse stage road, Hugh Douglas Sr., a Scotchman, built the Douglas House in 1852. It was a popular stand for years. Miss Margaret Price procured the names of these taverns on the "Overland" route in Jackson County: Allen's at Pole Grove, George Markley's in Garden Valley, Davis' four miles beyond, and Garwin Green's in Tamarack; south of the town were Fisher's tavern, and, at Pine Hill, that of Dave Robinson.

Clark County

The O'Neill House of Neillsville, which was, until its destruction by fire several years ago, the leading hotel of Clark County, was built in 1858 by James O'Neill, the founder of the city. He was its landlord for a long time. He was born in Lisbon, New York in 1801, and came to Black River Falls in 1839. In 1849

The Taverns and Stages of Early Wisconsin

he located at Neillsville, where he died in 1882. He was a lumberman as well as tavern-keeper and served two terms in the Legislature. Two miles north, at Weston Rapids, an early rival of Neillsville, there was a large tavern; while L. R. Stafford, a notable character, kept one in connection with his store at Staffordville, situated between the two places. Stafford's widow afterward kept the Reddan House, at Neillsville.

Eau Claire County and Northern Wisconsin

Although Eau Claire was credited with only a hundred people in 1855, Adin Randall had faith in the location and built the large Eau Claire House in 1856, and installed A. W. Bosworth as landlord. L. Slingluff and Son, proprietors in 1859, announced that "Stage lines leave this house daily for Menomonie, Hudson, Stillwater, Black River Falls, and Sparta, making sure connections with the Milwaukee & La Crosse R. R. Leave for Alma and North Pepin three times a week."² In 1857 the Niagara House on the West Side was opened by G. A. Buffington, who became later a wealthy lumberman. In 1858 the Chandler House, formerly the Northwestern, was kept by Chauncey Chandler, and the Eau Claire Exchange by John Taylor.

On the Black River Falls route the leading tavern was that of George McLellan, which stood in the S. W. $\frac{1}{4}$ of S. W. $\frac{1}{4}$, S. 18, T. 25, R. 7, Eau Claire County. Here the stage changed horses. McLellan who was born at Woodstock, New Hampshire, in 1829, conducted the station from 1857 until the discontinuance of the stage in 1870. He was a blacksmith and ran a shop in connection with the house, where he died in 1908. Silkworth's tavern on this road was in S. 2, T. 24, R. 7, Trempealeau County.

The *Daily Independent* of Chippewa Falls published in its issue of January 14, 1914, an interesting article by its president, Mr. T. J. Cunningham, on the early tavern and stage lines of the Chippewa country, which covers that field quite thoroughly.

Menomonie, in Dunn County, was early the scene of lumbering activities. Its first place for the entertainment of strangers was Knapp and Black's (later Knapp, Stout and Company) mill

² Advertisement in Eau Claire *Free Press*, Apr. 23, 1859.

Wisconsin Historical Society

boarding house, opened June 1, 1846, and long under the management of Lorenzo Bullard and wife. In 1859 Levi Vance built the Vance House, and the following year the Menomonie House was erected by Nathan Eytcheson. He soon sold it to Knapp, Stout and Company, who enlarged it. It was first conducted by the builder, who was succeeded in turn by T. S. Heller, M. E. Jones and William McKahan. It is now a students' boarding house.

In the early fifties Amos Colbourn and, later, Landlord Maccauley kept taverns at Dunnville, and on April 21, 1858, Knapp, Stout and Company opened their new Tainter House at that place. At Waneka, in S. 7, T. 27, R. 11, Fowler's tavern which later passed to D. A. Slye was the principal stopping place on the stage road to Eau Claire. A few miles to the east stood D. B. Fuller's tavern. Near the mouth of Elk Creek Charles Bolles kept a stopping place, and at Fall City, in S. 30, T. 27, R. 11, Mr. Morton kept one as early as 1855. In July, 1866, Burbank and Company secured the stage contract between St. Paul and Eau Claire, which had previously been held by Woodbreek and Price of Black River Falls.⁴³ In the same year the steamer "Pete Wilson" made daily trips from Reed's Landing to Dunnville, connecting there with stages to Menomonie.

Pepin and Pierce Counties⁴⁴

Before the introduction of light draft steamboats on the affluents of the upper Mississippi, North Pepin, being the nearest shipping point, was the gateway to the Red Cedar and Chippewa hinterland. During this brief period North Pepin was a busy place and its taverns flourished. In 1858 C. H. Granger conducted the Granger House, later known as the Chippewa, and B. T. Hastings, the Lake House. In the same year, G. B. Rickard, afterward of Stockholm, was landlord of the North Pepin House. Here also was the stage office of the North Pepin and Chippewa Falls Stage Company. The Fountain House at Stockholm, on the riverside stage road to Hudson, was kept in 1858

⁴³ *Dunn County News*, July 7, 1866.

⁴⁴ The facts concerning the taverns of Pepin County have been gleaned from the files of the *Pepin Independent* for 1858 and 1859.

The Taverns and Stages of Early Wisconsin

by J. H. Alcott. In 1859 James H. Carlton was proprietor of the Garden City House, Frankfort, half way between Dunnville and Pepin. At Durand the popularity of Prindle's Little Inn continued into railroad days.

Prescott, Pierce County, was a bustling town in the late fifties, with a number of taverns. In 1858 J. C. Hyatt kept the Hyatt House on the levee; J. Bloom, the Prescott House on Orange street; and O. P. Barnard, the American Hotel near the public square. The Lake House, near the ferry landing, was conducted by P. Bott in 1859. In the same year H. H. Byington ran the Greenwood House, River Falls, his rates being \$1 per day, or \$3.50 per week.⁴⁵

St. Croix County

Hudson, on the picturesque St. Croix, enjoyed one of its booms in the middle of the last century. James A. Andrews, retired, who came to Hudson in 1853, has furnished the following data about its hostelries of that period. Although taverns were not regarded as first class risks, especially after their patronage had declined, nevertheless it is remarkable that the early hotels of Hudson all met destruction by fire.

The Hudson House was kept in 1853 by Curtis Bellows. On his death he was succeeded in 1855 by H. A. Bass. The hotel was burned in 1866. Curtis Simonds presided at the American House in 1853. After his death, in 1855, Jim Munson ran it. It was destroyed by fire before the Civil War. The Coit House, near the steamboat landing, was the stage house under Daniel Coit as well as during the management of his successor, Ralph Taylor, who changed the name to the Taylor House. It was burned in the fall of 1866. Charles H. Lewis, who conducted the Lewis House, was followed by E. B. Livingston in 1855. This hotel was burned on July 4, 1858. The Revere House met the same fate ten years later. In 1854 Daniel Anderson, afterward landlord of the City Hotel, kept a tavern to which he gave his own name. It was patronized by lawyers and other prominent people. It fell a prey to fire on April 26, 1855.

⁴⁵ Advertisement in *Prescott Transcript*, 1858-59.

Wisconsin Historical Society

The Hoyt House, built in 1856 by Capt. Miles H. Van Meter, was conducted by him until 1860. It was headquarters for the Lake St. Croix & Superior Railroad promoters, and the formal beginning of grading was the occasion for a grand celebration at the Hoyt House at which "joy and juice were unconfined". After Van Meter, Moses Noyes conducted the house until it was consumed by the great fire of May 19, 1866. John Mann, a successful grain dealer, built the City Hotel in 1856 and ran it for a few years. In 1859 John C. Henning was in charge, but its most noted landlord was Frank Catlin. He was jolly, full of stories, and well liked, but he would forsake desk and guests any time at the call of the elusive brook trout. After Catlin came Anderson, and then Boyden. The City Hotel also passed out of existence in the big fire of 1866.

According to Attorney S. J. Bradford of Hudson, the first tavern east of Hudson on the stage road to Menomonie, was Marsh Tueker's Inn, in the center of S. 18, T. 28, R. 17, W. It afterward became the Britton House, belonging to Charles Britton. The next place was Baker's (Becker's) tavern, later known as Shaesby's (John), at the northeast corner of S. 24, T. 28, N., R. 24, W. Then came Hinman's tavern at Brookville, in S. 24, T. 28, N., R. 16, W. Later changes are recorded by the editor of the *Dunn County News*, who in the spring of 1866 made the trip from Menomonie westward. The stage stopped for supper and a change of horses at the Pioneer Hotel, Brookville, the proprietor of which was John Galhart. It arrived at William's Station about midnight, and from thence proceeded to Hudson.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ *Dunn County News*, June 2, 1866.

The foregoing survey of the taverns and stage routes of Wisconsin, while not as comprehensive as might be desired, will nevertheless show the general distribution of the former and the principal courses of the latter. Although the author has been able to use but a fraction of the material gathered by him, and to repeat comparatively few of the biographies and anecdotes of landlords in his possession, he yet hopes that his purpose in writing this paper will be realized, and that the tavern and its keeper will become recognized as potent factors in the development of early Wisconsin. He is under obligations to hundreds of persons for information kindly given, and thanks them one and all; but he is especially grateful to the following men and women, not mentioned heretofore, for material and assistance: The Old Settlers Club,

The Taverns and Stages of Early Wisconsin

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