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## Three Chapters in Wisconsin Local History

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Wisconsin State Historical Society

[From the Proceedings of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin for 1909,  
pages 232-272

Madison  
Published by the Society  
1910

# Some Reminiscences of Early Grant County

By Jonathan Henry Evans, in an interview with  
the Editor<sup>1</sup>

## Arrival in Wisconsin

I came to Wisconsin with my parents when I was in my sixteenth year, arriving May 15, 1846. We settled on government land in the town of Kendall, then in Iowa, but now in Lafayette County. Previous to removing to Wisconsin my father had had varied experiences, with differing degrees of fortune. He had lived near Philadelphia when the Pennsylvania Railway was projected and built (1832-35), and being a blacksmith and machinist, established a small factory to build freight-cars.

The State had undertaken a system of internal improvements from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh: a railroad from Philadelphia

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<sup>1</sup> Jonathan H. Evans was born near Philadelphia, October 29, 1830. After serving as a printer's apprentice at Shippensburg, Pa., he came West with his father in 1846, as here narrated. After attending Platteville Academy (1851-52), he taught country school for a term and entered the mercantile business at Platteville. He was register of deeds of Grant County (1857-1861), and during the War of Secession was sutler of the Thirty-third Wisconsin Infantry. Reëntering business life, he held many local offices, such as president of the village of Platteville (1870) and county supervisor for several terms.

He has been a director and vice-president of the First National Bank of Platteville, since its organization (1891), and for many years was actively engaged as a dealer in real estate. During this time he surveyed and platted over twenty subdivisions to the city of Platteville. Chosen in 1872 a member of the Board of Regents of State Normal





JONATHAN HENRY EVANS



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to Columbia on the Susquehanna, thence a canal, following the watercourses to the headwaters of the Juniata at Hollidaysburg; from this point a railway, by a series of inclines, five up and five down, carrying the boats over the mountain to Johnstown, where the craft again took to the water for Pittsburgh. These boats were built in three water-tight compartments, each of which could be floated on to trucks and thus pulled over the mountains. The freight cars were first constructed to run on four wheels, and about a third the length of the modern cars. This was the style built by my father, who was one of the pioneer car builders in the United States. The State owned the railway and canal; individuals or companies owned the rolling stock and boats, paying toll to the State. The first rails were iron bars about the size of an ordinary wagon tire; these were spiked on wooden string-pieces, perhaps six inches square. For the first two or three years the motive power was horses driven tandem. Soon, however, steam supplanted horses. Larger cars, with eight wheels, were built in Philadelphia, and my father's small factory was put out of business, so he removed to central Pennsylvania, and engaged in canal-boating on the Juniata and Susquehanna. He was one of many individuals who owned boats and paid toll to the State.

We left Pennsylvania in April, 1846, travelling by canal to Hollidaysburg, thence by rail over the mountains to Johnstown,

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Schools, he served as such for a long period, being for many years president of the board. Mr. Evans has also been prominent in the Masonic order of the State, and has devoted much time to the study of natural history, especially mineralogy. In 1855 he married Miss Sarah Kilbourne of Columbus, Ohio. For some years past, he has lived in retirement, but still retains a keen interest in educational and other public affairs.

On August 11, 1908, the Editor of the Society's publications visited Mr. Evans at his home in Platteville, and through the medium of a stenographer obtained the verbal recollections herein set forth. The method of securing this data accounts for its lack of literary form, and somewhat disjointed character. So far as is practicable, Mr. Evans's exact words are here preserved. We should have preferred to have him work over the material into a connected article; but this he has found it impracticable to do. He has, however, revised the sketch as here presented.—R. G. T.

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whence we floated by canal to Pittsburgh. There we boarded a steamer down the Ohio to Cairo, and up the Mississippi to St. Louis, where we changed to another boat which brought us to Galena. The journey that then took twenty-one days could now be accomplished in one.

At some place below Louisville we saw a steamboat anchored in mid-stream. It proved to be a "wrecker" at work recovering salvage from a sunken steamer. Our boat stopped, and we watched them working with a diving bell. A man went down in it and sent up all kinds of stuff. We were told that many lives had been lost; but all we saw was a lot of merchandise hauled up from the wreck.

My first impression of Platteville (1846) was that of a village located in a dense forest; its area was perhaps forty acres. The buildings were mainly frame, but some were of log, and there were two or three unpretentious brick structures. There were probably seven or eight hundred inhabitants, chiefly men engaged in lead mining. It was noticeable that there were but few old people, all being of middle age or under. As my acquaintance grew, I was much impressed with the general intelligence of the people, who had a much higher average than those of central Pennsylvania whence I came. At the time I could not account for it, but subsequently learned that most of the people who came to southwest Wisconsin were attracted thither by the reports of the fabulous mineral wealth of the district. As the means of communication from the East and South at that time (1827-46) were few and difficult, none but venturesome spirits, endowed with energy and enterprise, would emigrate to this region, so remote from the comforts of civilization. The travelled route was mainly by water down the Ohio and up the Mississippi; hence the earliest settlers were from points contiguous to those waters—Virginia, Kentucky, Missouri, Indiana, and Illinois furnished the majority, while New York and other Eastern states sent small contingents.

At this early date most of the land was uncultivated; both prairie and timber were in primitive condition, hence there were many old Indian trails to be seen. I remember one in particular; it came from the east, passing south of the mounds, thence through the ravine northwest of the village, and down the waters

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of the Platte towards the Mississippi. There had been an Indian camping place on the limits of the present city; but as far as I know, no regular native village on the site. For years after we came, Indians were frequently seen here, mainly Potawatomi and occasionally Winnebago. They were all removed to eastern Nebraska about the time of the admission of the State (1848). I have seen as many as eight hundred here at one time, probably when they were gathered for removal from Wisconsin. They usually camped where there was plenty of water, either on the Peekatonica or Platte. In their intercourse with the whites they were peaceable; but living a kind of gypsy life, they would steal pigs and other domestic animals such as dogs and calves, that came in their way during the night. They were inveterate beggars, never omitting to ask for whisky.

### Watching a Wheat Field

In this connection, a little incident happened to me when I was a lad. In the fall of 1846, a man named Brown had taken up a claim and sown a field of about twenty acres of wheat, a few miles from the nearest settlement. He then left to get a winter's job and did not return in the spring to look after the crop. The wheat grew finely, and being unfenced was open to roving stock that began to graze upon it, the wheat being more fresh and tender than the surrounding prairie grass. A neighbor with whom Brown had worked the previous year, declared it was a great pity to have such a fine crop spoiled by the cattle; that it would pay some one to watch the crop until it was ripe. I was doing nothing at the time, and said, "If you will give me half, I will watch it until it is ripe." This was agreed, and on the next Sunday my father, my brother, and I went out to the field with a yoke of oxen and built a sod cabin. I camped there that night, and staid four months alone, my only companion being a good and faithful dog. My door was a blanket. One night a big buck Indian poked his head through this portière and grunted at me. I was so startled that I grabbed my gun. My first thought was to shoot him; fortunately I did not, or his kinsman might have scalped me.

About the 10th of August, Brown returned and assisted in threshing the wheat. There were six hundred bushels, worth

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sixty cents a bushel. My father got three hundred bushels of this, which was a pretty good thing in those early days.

My father did not follow his former business very long. Although raised a Quaker, he was much of a military man, having been lieutenant-colonel of a militia regiment in Pennsylvania. He was good looking, and prided himself on his military bearing. Although of little education, he was, like Rountree, a natural leader of men. As early as 1840 he used to go out and lecture on temperance in country school-houses—he was a radical temperance man, never using either tobacco or alcohol. My mother was of Pennsylvania-German stock, and was raised a Lutheran. Neither of them remained in their religious sects, however, after they were married.

### Stage Lines

All the mails and most of the passengers in northern Illinois, eastern Iowa, and southern Wisconsin, were carried by a large firm named Frink & Walker, whose headquarters were in Galena. The coaches used by them were of the big old Concord variety, and there were frequent relays, so that passengers were carried quite expeditiously and at reasonable rates. I went to Madison in 1855 to sit on a federal jury, riding from Platteville all the way in one of these stages. Coaches left Galena—twenty-five miles away—in the morning, arriving at Platteville about nine or ten o'clock, and reaching Madison about ten o'clock that night. The old ridge road was followed. We struck the military road at Dodgeville, and proceeded over it to Blue Mounds, and thence to Madison. This is much the same route as is now followed by the Chicago & Northwestern Railway, at least from Dodgeville into Madison. The coach itself went on from Madison to Milwaukee. There were relays of horses about every ten miles, and we went along at a full swinging trot. The firm issued regular time-tables, and kept pretty well to their schedule. Another line of stages went to Milwaukee by way of Janesville.

When going from Platteville to Chicago, the coaches first went to Galena. From there, was a splendid line right through, by way of Freeport and Elgin. The line to Prairie du Chien was also important; this went by way of Lancaster.

I have spoken of the old military road to Madison. This went across the State along the best line of travel, following a well-

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beaten Indian trail. Like all primitive peoples, Indians kept to ridges and watercourses in their trails, which was easier than going in straight lines, like our modern "section roads." Westward from Madison, this military road lay on the watershed between waters running into Wisconsin River and those flowing southward—thus it went through Blue Mounds (Ebenezer Brigham's old place), Ridgeway, Dodgeville, and Montfort.

### Hauling Lead

This was one of the old roads for carrying lead between the mines of southwest Wisconsin and the lakeport of Milwaukee. The ore was smelted at the local furnaces in close vicinity to the mines, and run into pigs ready for market. Some copper was likewise smelted at Mineral Point, and run into circular pans, when it was hauled away in the same manner as lead, reaching the same markets. The lead went by ox-teams, in great canvas-covered wagons, the load being rated at about a ton of metal to each yoke of oxen. As such a team accomplished a good day's work if it travelled twenty miles, the distance between Platteville and Milwaukee was covered in eight to ten days. Sometimes tramps and others "down on their luck" would travel with the lead caravans, but travellers generally regarded it as too slow a method.

It should be understood, however, that most of the pig lead and copper from Wisconsin mines went to Galena, whence the bulk of it was dispatched by steamers down the Mississippi, seeking New Orleans and New York markets; some went up the Ohio to Cincinnati and Pittsburgh, or was distributed along the Ohio River route. How large a proportion of the output went overland to Milwaukee, by caravans, to meet lake vessels that carried it to Buffalo and other Eastern markets, I have no means of knowing; it was doubtless a rather small percentage.

### Early Roads

Many of the roads through this region were made before I came into it. The road from Potosi was open when we came, also that from Platteville to Lancaster, New Diggings, and Benton—those were all mining places, and there was constant communication between them. There were few farms then; just a

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vast prairie between here and Shullsburg. Such roads as there were, followed, as I have said, the lines of least resistance, winding along the ridges and then through the valleys. Later, after the federal surveys between 1833 and 1835, the roads went at right angles, following section lines.

There were, of course, no railroads in the pioneering days of southwest Wisconsin. Platteville was wholly dependent on the common roads to get its goods and ship out its minerals. Most of our merchandise came by way of Galena. Milwaukee was then a relatively small town—not so large as Platteville; but it was a lakeport, with Eastern connections by water, and that made it important. I was for several years in the mercantile business in Platteville. It generally took a day for us to get a load of goods from Galena by horse-team, and two days by ox-team. The wagons came by way of Hazel Green. This overland hauling by wagon added greatly to the cost of merchandise.

A great many goods came to us from Dubuque by ferry. We did not then consider those slow methods of transportation inconveniences, but took them as they came. Dubuque was an important centre, but not so much so as Galena. The latter quite outdistanced Dubuque until the railroad came. Galena subscribed liberally toward building the road, while Dubuque would subscribe nothing, with the curious result that while Dubuque was helped by the new highway of steel, Galena was irretrievably damaged by it.

Steamboating on the Mississippi River was a profitable business before the war and the general shifting of transportation to the railways. The amount of money made by the steamboat companies was something truly magnificent. My business affairs took me up and down the river a great deal, in those days. I was always filled with admiration of the splendid organization of the service, and the picturesqueness of the voyage, which was varied with interesting incidents.

There is nobody alive now, who was in business here at the time I was. I do not know how it happened that I survived all the rest of them; but here I am. I attribute my good health to the good habits and splendid constitutions of my father and mother.



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## A Wisconsin Giant

During the early years of our residence in Wisconsin, my father's nearest neighbor was Randall, a Scotch giant, seven feet six inches tall, who in the summer time travelled with Barnum's circus. Randall lived between Mineral Point and Platteville, eight miles from the former and twelve from the latter. He was in many respects a remarkable man. Most giants are monsters—not well proportioned; but he was a splendidly-proportioned fellow, and although weighing 420 pounds, had no extra avoirdupois tissue. From his thumb to the end of his little finger he would span thirteen and a half inches. One day he came to my mother and wanted to get a setting of ducks' eggs. He was bare-headed, and when she asked him what he had to carry them in, he said that one of his hands was sufficient—and indeed he did carry that whole setting back home in his hand. Randall had bookish tastes, and many of his friends gave him books. Among others he had Rollin's *Ancient History*, which I borrowed from him and read during that summer when I was watching Brown's wheat-field. I believe that those four months I spent in watching the wheat was as good literary training as I ever put in. I had good company in books, as well as my good dog.

In winter time, when the circus business was shut down, and Randall had nothing to do in his own line, he used to haul lead. He would load up the metal with his bare hands, picking up pigs weighing from seventy to seventy-five pounds and easily piling them up. His wife was a giantess, too—six feet, four inches in height—and she also travelled with Barnum. Charley Stratton, popularly called "Tom Thumb," was one of their companions; he emphasized the giant stature of the Randalls by his own diminutive size.

## Game

I never saw a happier lot of persons in my life than were the pioneers of this region. Yet we never had fresh fruit. I had been in Wisconsin three or four years before I saw a peach, and I came from a peach country. We did not have canned fruit, either. We used to get blackberries and crab-apples from the

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woods. There was, however, a great abundance of game; everybody went out to hunt. The first winter we were here, there was a great snow, and deer were plentiful. Hunters brought venison into Platteville, and so great was the supply that they never thought of bringing the forequarters. Generally, they brought only the saddles, and sold these for two or three cents a pound. Prairie chickens abounded, and sometimes wild ducks. Wolves, too, were quite numerous.

### Decadence in Lead Mining

The slump in the lead-mining industry began in 1849 or 1850, when the gold fields of California began to attract the miners to what promised to be a more lucrative region. This decadence came suddenly. There were from three to four hundred men mining here, and two hundred and fifty of them went to the gold fields, which made quite a difference in our population. Our miners were chiefly Cornish, and good miners they were, too, making first-class citizens. The falling off in mining in this region continued until 1854, when the bottom pretty well dropped out.

I attribute the decadence very largely, in addition to the loss of miners, to the increase in the value of the land itself. Owners are very reluctant to have their land prospected. John H. Rountree owned thousands of acres around Platteville. Some of his property decreased in value over fifty per cent by reason of mining debris left on the ground. I seldom allowed anybody to do any mining on my own property, because I did not want to damage the land for sale. A prospector says, "I want to explore your ground for zinc." He makes a contract to be permitted to drill an eight-inch hole. If he finds good showing, he makes a further contract to sink a shaft down to the mineral, and then the owner of the land gets a tenth of the proceeds. Take a big zinc mine, and right at the shaft they irrevocably destroy an acre or two of land. Unless a man gets a pretty good royalty, it is better to preserve the land. I know of a tract south of here, that is so dug up that it does not amount to anything. Generally, one can raise crops more valuable on top, than below.

Here is an instance of good profits made by a landowner, in

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our own day, when zinc mining has been revived and prosperity has returned to the region: This man owned a three-cornered piece of land, and wanted to sell it for \$3,000. The neighboring mine-owners would not buy, but contracted for it for mining. Boring a hole, they found it rich, and wanted to know what the owner would take for it. His price was now \$6,000, which they declined to pay. The following March, after paying \$6,000 in royalty, they wanted to know what he would then take for the property. His price was now \$30,000, which they would not agree to. But they had to pay him over \$30,000 in royalty, so that he was well paid for his ground. While you can find lead and zinc on every lot in this town, mining is nevertheless a gambling game. I once put \$400 into a mine, and that is the last I ever saw of the money.

I well remember the excitement in 1865 about the alleged discovery of oil in this region. It was a downright fraud. Some parties bought a barrel of oil, and boring a hole in the ground put the oil into it. They then put more oil in barrels, and said it came out of the well, and on the strength of this sold shares in their company. The same year, over in Crawford County, the gang worked the same trick. Major Rountree was greatly excited over the supposed discovery. He owned about five thousand acres in Crawford County, and I sold it for him. There was no oil ever found on it. No man who understands geology would advise any one to put any money into oil-stock in this section.

### James Gates Percival

I knew James Gates Percival, who came here in 1863 as our State geologist. He was one of the most interesting men I ever listened to. Percival used often to stop with Major Rountree, and being a relative of the family I met him there. Percival was then an elderly man, and dressed in very shabby clothes, his suit not costing over ten dollars. However, despite his very plain garments, he was neat about his person. He wore shoes when most people wore boots. At I remember him, he was not more than medium size, with rather sharp, narrow, spare features, a little stoop-shouldered, and looking much like a laboring man, save for his strong face. He had wonderful eyes. I do not remember their color, but should say they were blue.

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On the whole he was a pleasant-looking old man. But to hear him talk—there was the charm. He was not inclined to be cordial with people in general. Unless approached in the proper way, he had nothing at all to say. To see him at his best one should meet him at the tea-table and get him into familiar conversation. He impressed you as a man of power. Whatever he said meant something.

### John H. Rountree

As for Major John H. Rountree, I knew him well from his middle age to his death, and was at his house when he died. The Major was very popular in this region. He was a man of strong intellect, without much education. Such learning as he had, was largely acquired through contact with educated men. Being prominent in this locality, he was in the legislature for many years and ran for lieutenant-governor and county judge. Mixing with all sorts of people, he had naturally rubbed off some of the rough corners. He was a splendid man to his family, and had a devoted, loving wife, who was a Southworth—Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth's sister-in-law. I did not myself know Mrs. Southworth, the novelist, for she left Wisconsin before 1846.

Major Rountree left a good many papers, but I hardly think they are of much value. There are some at his house now. Those that came into the estate, which I settled, his son and I sorted over, saving what we thought were valuable and burning up bushels and bushels of others, some of which might have brought other people into trouble. I still have a bunch of letters in my safe. They often mention public men such as Governor Dodge.

### Other Notables

I was acquainted with Henry Dodge, by sight; but a boy of seventeen or eighteen years of age is not apt to get on intimate terms with the governor of his State. I saw him first, during his second appointment as Territorial governor (1845-48). He was quite popular hereabout, because of the considerable number of Southerners. In fact, the first people in our lead region were from the South, from Missouri and Kentucky; later, came Yankees from the East.

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George Wallace Jones, our first Territorial delegate to Congress, was also one of my acquaintances. I saw him in Platteville only a short time before his death, which occurred in 1896. A nice-looking old gentleman, he was polished in manner, always well-dressed, and had many desirable accomplishments. A Virginian, he cultivated all the arts of social life, and would not permit too much familiarity. His memory was marvelous. He had not seen me for ten or twelve years, but when we met at a public gathering he seemed easily to recall my name.

Nelson Dewey, our first State governor, I also knew. Indeed, he lived more years in Platteville than in Cassville; but resided at Lancaster before being elected governor. He used to come to Belmont to see Miss Kate Dunn, whom he married.

Other prominent men who lived in Platteville or the vicinity were Charles Dunn, the first chief justice of the Territory; Ben C. Eastman, a member of Congress; Orsamus Cole, for many years chief justice of the State; James R. Vineyard, an early legislator of the Territory; and J. M. Goodhue, a lawyer and journalist, later the founder of a leading newspaper in St. Paul, Minn. These pioneers had much to do with making history for Wisconsin and shaping early legislation for the Territory and State.

### Old Belmont

In the days when I knew Belmont, where the first Wisconsin Territorial legislature met in 1836, there were still some five or more houses in the already decaying village; although today there is nothing there save the old capitol, that is now used as a barn, and Judge Charles Dunn's house (now a farmhouse). I used to be told, as a boy—and that was only ten years after the session—that the senate met on the ground floor of the old capitol, and the assembly upstairs. In 1848, while I was still a minor, I was tally clerk of the presidential election that was held for our precinct in this building—Zachary Taylor, whom many of the neighbors had known when he was commandant at Prairie du Chien, was running for president.

### Recollections of U. S. Grant

General Grant was also an acquaintance of mine in the *ante bellum* days. His father, Jesse, was senior (and absentee)

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partner in the firm of Grant & Perkins, leather merchants at Galena. Ulysses had been in the army, down at St. Louis, and married Julia Dent. He tired of army life, however, as our best military men do in time of peace. His father-in-law gave him some land and he rented a house, but made a most signal failure of farming—indeed, he almost starved. Then he applied for a place as civil engineer in St. Louis, but somebody else with more political pull got the job.

Old Jesse Grant had several sons. Among them was Simpson, who cared for his father's interests at the store in Galena. Simpson died at St. Paul, while on a business trip, and Jesse thought he would now have to do something for Ulysses. He wrote to him to go from St. Louis to Mr. Perkins at Galena, and do whatever he was bidden. Meanwhile, Jesse had written to Perkins that he was going to send Ulysses to take Simpson's place, but that Perkins should pay him only what he thought he was worth.

When Captain Grant appeared in Galena, Perkins set him at work, and after awhile wrote to Jesse: "Ulysses is here, and I have put him to work. I think he is worth about forty-five dollars per month, but he is drawing more." Indeed, I used to be told that he drew about ninety dollars a month, to pay his rent and support his family. But old Jesse paid the balance himself—I don't know whether Perkins knew this or not.

If you ever go to Galena, go down Main Street, then up Bench Street for a short distance. There you will find a little story-and-a-half brick house that would perhaps rent in Platteville for ten dollars a month—that's where Ulysses lived at that time. After the siege of Vicksburg, the citizens of Galena built a residence for him, but he never lived in it.

Captain Grant used to come up through this region to represent the firm. He rode in a one-horse open buggy, in which he carried leather samples, not only seeking trade but collecting bills. In those early days he was not at all impressive in appearance, being a short man, and rather spare. If he had not afterwards developed into a great man he would have quickly passed from one's memory.

The first time I ever met him I didn't see him. It was a starlit night in January, 1861, just before the war. Col. John G. Clark and I were county officers, and were riding to

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Lancaster, the county seat, having been at Madison during the senatorial contest between Randall, Howe, and Washburn. Where Fennimore now stands, was then but a wide expanse of prairie, with no houses in sight. We there met a team struggling through the snow drifts, from which two men hailed us, asking how and when they could get to Widow Philbrook's. We replied that they were about a mile and a half off the road. One of the men said, "Ain't you Evans?" He said he was Mark Brown, travelling for a liquor dealer named Lorraine, and added, "I want to introduce Captain Grant." That gentleman said, "You'll have bad news when you get home, gentlemen." He explained that Mr. Hyde, landlord of the Mansion House at Lancaster, had dropped dead, and everything was in such confusion that they had decided to come up to Philbrook's and spend the night there.

Grant was often in Platteville after the war. I remember chatting and talking with him in 1868, in my store, and giving him a cigar. He took it and put it in his mouth—but he didn't smoke it, only chewed on it, as Sheridan also used to do.

## The Settlement of Arcadia

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By Eben Douglas Pierce, M. D.

The valley of Trempealeau River must have been known to the early French garrisons who occupied a post among the Sioux; for more than once they wintered near Trempealeau Mountain, and dispersed throughout the surrounding region in search of game, or followed bands of Indians for trading purposes.<sup>1</sup> The east bank of the Mississippi was common hunting ground for the Menominee and Winnebago; and when the Chipewea moved south and west from Lake Superior, in the third quarter of the eighteenth century, they did not dispossess these tribes of their preserves, but confined their own hunting to the regions north of the river called by their name. The Trempealeau River and its tributary streams were noted for large game, both elk and deer abounding; and buffalo were not uncommon in the vicinity, as geographical names testify. No accounts of Indian or French visits to this valley are, so far as known, recorded, and it is not possible now to tell who were the first to visit the site of the present village of Arcadia.

According to Winnebago tradition, Augustin Rocque had hunted and trapped on the Trempealeau as far back as 1820. Rocque was probably but one of many half-breeds who made headquarters at Wabasha's Sioux village, on the site of the present Winona, and sallied thence in search of game and furs in the pleasant valley of the Trempealeau. But to Americans this region was not open for settlement until after the purchase of the Indian rights to all this territory, and this did not occur until Wisconsin was separated from Michigan, and erected into a territory of its own.

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<sup>1</sup> For the French in this region, see Wis. Hist. Soc. *Proceedings*, 1906, pp. 246, 247.



## Settlement of Arcadia

After the flood of new settlers that poured into Wisconsin at the close of the Black Hawk War had taken up the best lands in the southern portions of the present State, covetous eyes were turned to the upper Mississippi region, and the government was importuned to extinguish the Indian title. Accordingly in the autumn of 1836 the chiefs of the Winnebago were called together at Portage, and Gen. Henry Dodge, governor of the new Territory, and likewise general Indian agent, entered into a long series of negotiations with the tribesmen for a sale of their lands north of Wisconsin River. This they refused to do, alleging that these were their homes, and that they had no more land that they wished to sell to the whites. The council thereupon broke up without results.<sup>2</sup>

The following summer (1837), a band of twenty of the younger chiefs was induced to go to Washington, under the conduct of Thomas A. Boyd, sub-agent at Fort Winnebago, and Joseph Moore, Joseph Brisbois, and Satterlee Clark, traders of influence among them. Nicolas Boilvin, Antoine Grignon, and Jean Roy accompanied the delegation in the capacity of interpreters. The chiefs declined at first to make a treaty, saying that they were not authorized by their tribe to do so; they at length yielded to pressure brought to bear upon them, and on November 1 signed a treaty conveying away all their lands in Wisconsin for about \$1,500,000 to be paid in annuities. The agreement was that the tribe was to remove from Wisconsin within eight months after the signing of the treaty; although it is claimed by some of their friends that the signers understood that they were to have eight years in which to make the change.<sup>3</sup> The removal of these tribesmen was accomplished, therefore, with great difficulty. Many of them straggled back to their old haunts, and for years wandered in the northwestern and central counties of the State, where some of their descendants may yet be found in scattered bands.

The title to Trempealeau valley was thus cleared, but it was several years before actual settlement took place. James Reed,

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<sup>2</sup> *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, viii, p. 318.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*, vii, pp. 359, 393; *Indian Treaties* (Washington, 1904), pp. 498-500; *Niles's Register*, liii, p. 146.

to whom the settlement of Trempealeau city is credited,<sup>4</sup> made several journeys up the river in quest of furs, soon after the treaty of 1837. The Bunnells came to this region in 1842. Willard B. Bunnell hunted and trapped on some of the tributaries of the Trempealeau in the autumn of the same year, naming Elk and Pigeon creeks because of his successful hunts thereupon. In the autumn of 1843, the two brothers Bunnell, in company with Thomas A. Holmes and William Smothers, ascended the Trempealeau as far as the present village of Independence, where the party camped and spent several days hunting elk in the surrounding country.<sup>5</sup>

The valley had been a favorite hunting ground of the Indians long before the coming of white hunters, and tradition concerns itself with some of the principal landmarks, such as Barn Bluff; but the occasional hunters and trappers who penetrated into the interior, enjoying their wild life of adventure, had no purpose to settle the country, and little dreamed the low marshy grounds along the Trempealeau River would ever afford a site for a village such as Arcadia is at the present day.

When the first settlers arrived at Arcadia (1855), they found a defence of breast-works, proving that some time soldiers had visited the place. The apparent age of the excavations at that time indicated they had been built several years before. Julius Hensel, a veteran of the War of Secession and an early settler in Arcadia, reports that the Indians claimed that a company of soldiers came up the valley shortly after the Black Hawk War, and near the present village of Arcadia met a band of Indians. No hostilities occurred, but the soldiers deemed it prudent to be prepared in case any evidence of enmity on the part of the tribesmen should be shown, and therefore erected breast-works. Where the soldiers were going, or what their mission may have been, has never been ascertained, and any effort to gain more information concerning their movements has thus far been futile.

The first permanent settlement of Arcadia came about in the autumn of 1855. Collins Bishop, George Shelley, and James Broughton had made the journey by team from Southern Wis-

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<sup>4</sup> Wis. Hist. Soc. *Proceedings*, 1907, pp. 252, 253.

<sup>5</sup> L. H. Bunnell, *Winona and its Environs* (Winona, 1897), pp. 237-240.

## Settlement of Arcadia

consin to Fountain City, driving with them a herd of fifteen cattle. At La Crosse they learned of vacant land located in the town of Preston, which then included the present town of Arcadia. A few weeks were spent at Fountain City, during which time Mr. Bishop took up some swamp and State land. But the desire to visit the large tract of unoccupied land in Trempealeau valley still possessed the minds of the homeseekers, and on an autumn morning fifty-three years ago they set out afoot for the new country. The party was composed of Collins Bishop, George Dewey, George Shelley, and James Broughton, and they followed an Indian trail that connected the Mississippi with the lands on Black River.

They hit the trail with eager feet, for their hopes were high, and before them drifted visions of future homes of peace and plenty. Over hills and through valleys, across streams and through dimpling meadows of wild grass they worked their way, and in a few hours Glencoe Ridge was reached. Here they were overtaken by a lone footman, who was also looking for land. The new companion was Noah Comstock, a tried and faithful pioneer who brought with him the experience of a "forty-niner," and whose knowledge of surveying was a valuable aid to the land-seekers. The party journeyed on until the late afternoon, when they arrived at the home of George Cowie, where they passed the night. Early the next morning they set out for their destination, and, inspired by the fresh autumn air, and the exhilaration of adventure, the distance to Trempealeau River was soon covered.

When the river was reached they drew cuts to see who should wade the stream and find a fording place. This was easily accomplished, for the water was but a little more than knee-deep, and a fording place was found a short distance from where the bridge now stands. From the river to the hill they followed an Indian trail that led over nearly the same ground as the present Main street. When the summit of the hill was reached, a tree was sighted, and owing to the scarcity of trees the land-hunters decided to utilize it for a bearing tree. They were not disappointed, for when they came to the oak it proved to be just what they anticipated; and not far from it was a hole in the ground, which after examination Mr. Comstock concluded was a section-post mark.

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The day was spent in looking over the new country, and examining its soil and general features with a view of locating. At night the men returned to Cowie's home, and the next day came back prepared to take each a quarter section of land, and select a favorable building spot. This done, they returned to Fountain City well satisfied with the prospects of the new country.

Late in the same autumn Collins Bishop hired James Broughton and a Mr. Davis to build a house on his quarter-section. They erected this near the bearing tree, the site chosen by Mr. Bishop, and used logs for the main part, with boards for the roof. This was the first house in Arcadia, and some of the boards from the old cabin are still doing service on Mr. Bishop's barn in East Arcadia. The old tree under which the cabin was built, still stands, a majestic landmark and rustic monument commemorating the coming of the first settlers in 1855.

The next spring Mr. Bishop took possession of his new home and broke several acres of land. This was the first soil cultivated in Arcadia, and the crop gathered in the autumn was encouraging to the infant settlement. During the spring and summer of 1856 other settlers came, and by winter several houses had been built, and the little community had made itself known to the neighborhood. The settlers petitioned (1856) the county board that Preston township be divided, and a new town formed. Then it became necessary to decide upon a name for the rising village. Previous to this time it had been known as Bishop's Settlement, while some called it Barntown, on account of the number of barns erected by the early settlers. The petition regarding the formation of the new town was granted, and so one winter day the pioneer neighbors met at Bishop's cabin to name the town. To the women this privilege was granted, and Mrs. David Bishop (later Mrs. Charles Mercer) offered the name Arcadia, suggested by Noah Comstock, which was accepted.

Arcadia, with its new name, grew steadily, and with the growth came the inevitable changes incident to our Western mode of rapid development.

Mistaken identities were responsible for the names of two of our prominent bluffs. Noah Comstock's mistake in regard to the section-post mark in the ground near the old bearing tree, gave

## Settlement of Arcadia

him a bluff in East Arcadia. He was not compelled, however, to retain the quarter section containing this waste of land; but ever since the error was discovered, the bluff has been called by his Christian name, Noah's Bluff. Barn Bluff was called "Gage's Barn" until the railroad was built, when it took its present name. Mr. Gage on his way across the hills from Trempealeau one moonlight night saw in the distance what he supposed to be a barn, and arriving at Bishop's house mentioned what he had seen and asked whose barn it was that had attracted his attention, and caused him to turn towards the lighted cabin window, where he found a hearty welcome. From that day until the railroad came the bluff was called Gage's Barn.

Few towns the age and size of Arcadia have yet in their midst the first settler of the place. But the venerable pioneer who saw the dawn of Arcadia, and who paved the way to our present prosperity still helps to till the soil on the old place he took as a homestead fifty-three years ago; and although the snowy hand of winter has touched his brow, he still possesses a clear and active mind that reflects the wholesomeness of a full-orbed life. His fibre is akin to the old oak under which he reared the first cabin in the town, and with a memory enriched by a variety of interesting experiences, he enjoys recounting events of the pioneer days gone by. He is the last survivor of the first settlers, and in looking back over the departed years he can see the contrast between the early awakening of the little settlement, and the progressive and modern town of today.

The dream of the pioneer has been more than realized. He has seen this county changed from a favorite hunting ground of the Indian, to a rich agricultural land; from a low, marshy swamp to a beautiful and prosperous village; from a wilderness, to a populous community, where instead of barren hills and valleys in a wild state of nature, we have the cozy homes of a contented people, nestled among the woodlands, where silence has departed and left in her stead the song of the housewife and the plowboy.

# Settlement of Green Lake County

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By Richard Dart<sup>1</sup>

## Exploration

About the last of April, 1840, my father, Anson Dart, started southward from Green Bay with Samuel W. Beall<sup>2</sup> to explore the Green Lake country, which, having been purchased from the

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<sup>1</sup> The following narrative was secured by Rev. Samuel T. Kidder of McGregor, Iowa, in 1906, when president of Ripon Historical Society. Mr. Kidder had several interviews with Richard Dart, and much of the narrative is in the latter's own phrasing. Afterwards, when in manuscript, it was carefully revised by him. Richard Dart, son of Anson and Eliza Catlin Dart, was born May 12, 1828, in New York city. His removal with his father's family to the township of Dartford, Wis., is herein narrated. Mr. Dart still lives in the vicinity in excellent health, and with a remarkable memory for his early Wisconsin experiences.—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> Samuel W. Beall was of Maryland birth (1807), and educated at Union College. After his marriage in 1827 he removed to Wisconsin, where in 1834 he was appointed receiver of public lands at Green Bay. At the expiration of his term of office he went East, but in 1840 returned to Wisconsin in order to locate there permanently. After several years in the Green Lake country he removed to the neighborhood of Fond du Lac, where he was agent for the Stockbridge Indians. He served in both constitutional conventions, and was lieutenant-governor in 1850-52. After locating at Denver, Colo., for a few years (1859-61), he volunteered for service, was chosen lieutenant-colonel of the 18th Wisconsin regiment, and severely wounded at Shiloh. At the close of the war he removed to Helena, Mont., where he was shortly afterwards shot and killed in an altercation.—Ed.



ANSON DART, 1797-1879

From a daguerreotype in possession of the family



RICHARD DART





## Settlement of Green Lake County

Winnebago Indians,<sup>3</sup> had been surveyed in 1839 and opened to the market in 1840. Beall having been in the land office at Green Bay was interested in this Green Lake country, rumors of whose fertility and attractiveness had reached his ears. Half-breeds and others were telling what a beautiful region it was. So Beall and Dart started on horseback up the great double Buttes des Morts trail.<sup>4</sup> From Knaggsville (now the Algoma district of Oshkosh) they followed the trail southwest until they reached the place where it ran a mile or two south of Green Lake. There they remained some weeks exploring. Both picked out land that they approved.

Father chose an eighty-acre tract half a mile south from Green Lake Sandstone Bluff, on a little stream that ran in from Twin Lakes, just east of Spring Lake. The stream was much larger then than now. The lakes have receded, and the outlet is now nearly dry. Father and Beall went entirely around the lake, exploring with a view to settlements. There were no settlers

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<sup>3</sup> Mr. Dart says that the rank and file of the Winnebago knew nothing of this government purchase. It was effected by agency men, who got the chiefs drunk and secured the cession papers. The government paid no principal, but ninety-nine years' interest with no entail to the Indian's family or children after his death. The rate of interest was small, and mostly eaten up in advance through the Indians getting trusted at Fort Winnebago agency for adulterated and poisonous whiskey. Mr. Dart considers that the Indians were badly treated by rascally traders and agents.—S. T. K.

<sup>4</sup> The big Butte des Morts trail ran from Green Bay along the northwest bank of Fox River to Knaggsville (now the Algoma district of Oshkosh), thence southwest past the site of Ripon; thence westerly to Marquette, the seat of Marquette County; thence to Fort Winnebago, at Portage. There were no settlers in the Ripon or Green Lake region as yet. One branch of the trail struck off to Powell's spring and Le Roy's plantation.

Dr. H. L. Barnes of Ripon says that the trail crossed his father's farm, now owned by Almon Bradley, three miles northwest of Markesan. Thence it went over the hill, past the old Whittier place; it then passed near Satterlee Clark's, and across to Deacon Staple's farm on Grand Prairie. A son of John S. Horner recollects that this trail passed by the Steele and Foltz farm and kept near the timber line along the edge of the prairie, and that Satterlee Clark lived nearly a half mile north.—S. T. K.

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there as yet, only wigwams of the Winnebago grouped or scattered round the lake. There was no timber there then, but oak and clay openings, with Green Lake prairie to the south.<sup>5</sup>

### Settlement

On returning to Green Bay, my father and brothers bought a large, wide skiff, something like a Durham boat, big enough to hold a ton of merchandise. This we loaded with provisions and supplies, and my father, my two brothers, Putnam and Charles, and myself, then a boy of twelve, started up Fox River. We worked our way slowly, rowing, poling, or towing by line. It was hard work because of the rapids. At the little and great Kakalin or Chutes,<sup>6</sup> the government had military stations, equipped with wide-wheeled, low carts, supplied with tackle; and, for a consideration, they hauled up boat, load and all, around the rapids.

Fox River was then a rushing, broad stream, a third larger than it is now. Besides the hard work it was a lonely trip, for we could not talk Menominee—that was the tribe then most prevalent on the lower Fox—nor could the Indians talk English. We saw their large bark-covered houses made of peeled oak bark hung over poles, placed between crotched posts. Many of them had seen but few Americans before.

We had neither map nor guide, and the river was so winding that it was all guess-work as to when we should meet the Green Lake outlet, now called the Puckayan. We supposed it would be the first stream met after passing Lake Winnebago. So up that stream we started. The water began to grow bad-colored, but we kept on. The stream grew smaller and smaller and clogged with reeds. Logs fallen across it had to be sawed off. Progress was painfully slow. The third day from its mouth, we came out into Rush Lake, shallow and muddy, lined with broad marshes. We were forty rods from dry ground, with mud all around. We had to get out into the mud, unload what camp outfit we needed for the night, and wade through the mud and

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<sup>5</sup> Mr. Dart was not personally present on this first exploring trip, but has heard his father describe it.—S. T. K.

<sup>6</sup> Now Kaukauna and Little Chutes.—S. T. K.

## Settlement of Green Lake County

marsh to a place dry enough for a camp. Swarms of mosquitoes and deerflies were eating our life out. We saw flocks of ducks and prairie chickens. The Indians were at that time nearly all away from this their popular resort. We were very tired, but there was nothing to do in the morning but take our stuff back to the boat, turn round as best we could, and pole our way back to the Fox.

We had no further mishaps, and when we actually saw the Green Lake outlet there was no doubt of it. Its stream of pure, bright spring water shot clear across the river. We knew then that we were all right.

It took us two days to wind up through the marshes to Green Lake. The last night we camped opposite the present Dartford boat-landing, where the road-bridge crosses toward Sherwood Forest resort. It was then surrounded with alders and marshes, and we did not know, that beautiful June night (June 11, 1840), that we were so near the lake. When we passed out from the thickets into Green Lake,<sup>7</sup> the next morning, we shouted with joy.

There was at this time no heavy timber around the lake, except at the foot, in the marshes—only what were called “clay openings,” burned over each autumn by the prairie fires. Coming up the crooked outlet, we had in one place gone around over a mile, by measure, to reach a place only a few rods from our former position, whereas we could have pulled our boat across the marsh and saved time. Rattlesnakes were plentiful; marshes were on both sides, most of the way up; deer-flies and mosquitoes made us perfectly wretched.

We soon crossed the lake and reached our land, of which my father recognized the quarter-section corner. We lugged our stuff up by hand from the lake, erected a shanty for shelter, and at once went to work to build a plank house. We split and hewed white oak planks, about two inches thick by six feet long, and set them upright, two lengths end-to-end twelve feet high, held together by grooved girts or stringers. We used poles for rafters and “shakes” for shingles, the latter shaved out of green

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<sup>7</sup> The Indians always used the French appellation for both small and large Green Lake, calling them respectively *Petit Lac Verd* and *Grand Lac Verd*. We could never get them to use any other name.

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oak. We built a large fire-place, and a stick-chimney plastered with yellow clay. The roof was fastened on with tacked cross-pieces.

This house, of two rooms and a little attic, stood half a mile south of Sand Bluff. We kept our boat secure from the wash of the waves, either in the bay west of Sand Bluff or at the Cove where the Spring Grove resort now is, three miles below. The building was not all finished at once, but by slow degrees. We had in stock two barrels of flour, one barrel of pork, four barrels of potatoes, a few groceries, and \$4 in money. We also had salt, pepper, Indian (or maple) sugar, but no butter or delicacies. We soon got out of salt and other things, and to restock meant a journey to Green Bay. We were thirty miles from any other Americans, the nearest settler of our nationality being at Fond du Lac.

Winnebago Indians, who were then being collected at Portage for transportation, were plentiful, but our only civilized neighbor was Pete Le Roy.<sup>8</sup> We got him and his ox-team to come over that month and break up for us a half acre that had been cleared by the boys, and in which we planted yellow corn.

There being no mill, we made a huge mortar by boring out a hard, white-oak log, and, with a heavy hickory pestle, we ground our corn. As the mortar held but two quarts, it was only by rising at four o'clock that we could get enough meal pounded for a breakfast Johnnie-cake. The coarser part we boiled as samp, for dinner, and had cornmeal fried for supper, with neither milk nor butter.

We had to pay \$100 apiece for our first yoke of oxen, and \$100 for our first cow; that is, in work, for we had no money. The cow we bought from Fox Lake, the oxen of our neighbor, Pete

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<sup>8</sup> Pete (probably Pierre) Le Roy was a half-breed trader-farmer, whose plantation lay four or five miles south of us, three miles due south of where the Centre House now stands. Le Roy had a big spring on his place, the source of a creek that bears his name. He was a son of the Le Roy at the Portage, mentioned in *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, vii, pp. 346, 360; see also Mrs. Kinzie, *Waubun*, for whom Pierre Roy acted as guide in 1831. He was in Pauquette's employ, and moved on as the country settled. One of his daughters, a pretty girl, went insane, to Le Roy's great grief.

## Settlement of Green Lake County

Le Roy, who was a kind-hearted man and allowed us to split rails for him, in payment. That was all the stock we had the first year.

### Panthers

In the autumn, father and I started with two yoke of oxen, along the military road east of Lake Winnebago, to go to Green Bay for mother and my sisters.<sup>9</sup> They had come to Buffalo by the Erie canal, thence to Mackinac in the steamer "Consolation," and from there in a schooner to the Bay. The vessel was becalmed among the Manitou Islands, and was a fortnight late in reaching its destination.

While father and I were gone, the other boys stayed alone. Only two sides of the house were finished, and a few roughly-hewn boards constituted the floor. Soon Le Roy came over, considerably excited, and said, "You must come over and stay with me; a big panther has been seen—two of them, in fact, near the lake. They'll come and kill you, if you stay here." These beasts had already been heard snarling at night—great fellows, nearly as big as a yearling calf. The boys told him that, having drawn up their bunk, with ropes, to the foot of the rafters, they thought they would be safe. He urged strongly, but they didn't go with him, for it was the time when yellow corn was ready for roasting.

One evening, when the boys sat about, toasting corn, they heard the bushes crack.

"What's that?"

"Can't think, unless one of Le Roy's cattle has strayed away."

But that could scarcely be, for his place was four miles off. Then they heard a strange whine—almost a scream. The animal was walking around them. Then came a tremendous screech. It was the panther. They were scared enough, for they had no guns. The beast soon started off on the trail toward Le Roy's. Each boy grabbed a blazing brand from the corn-fire and started for the shanty, whirling the brands round his head. Father was gone two weeks, and the boys were well-

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<sup>9</sup> These sisters became Mrs. Mary Keene of Newark, N. J., and Mrs. Elizabeth Johnson of Minnesota.

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scared during that time and didn't sleep very well. The panthers came round, off and on, for a month and a half, but never molested us. Finally the Indians came over and shot them both. They were the only pair that had visited that neighborhood for years.

### Pioneer Hardships

When mother came, only two sides of the house were up. One side was partly open the first winter, except for a carpet hung up. Wolves and other wild animals would come and peer through the cracks at the firelight. Sometimes the stick chimney caught fire, and to prevent this occurring too frequently we had to keep it well plastered over with clay.

Even after the house was finished it was very cold, for the joints were not tight. We tried to plaster up the cracks with white marl, but when dry this came crumbling off. Sometimes we used old newspapers, as far as we had any, to paste over the cracks. While we had no thermometer to measure the cold, I am sure that the winter of 1843-44 was the worst we ever experienced.

Very early that season, two and a half feet of snow fell. Then came a January thaw, followed by fine weather, like Indian summer. Then more snow came, and clear cold weather with sharp, cutting winds. Many wild animals were starved and frozen, and it was known in pioneer annals as the "great bitter winter." To add to the strangeness of it all, there was seen in the west a great comet, whose tail seemed to touch the ground. We nearly froze in our rudely-built house, for we had no stove—only a big fire-place, where in twenty-four hours we would sometimes burn two cords of four-foot wood. It took hard work for the boys just to keep the fires going. Nor did we always have enough food; again and again I have seen my mother sit down at the table and eat nothing, since there was not enough to go around.

Our house was built without a stick of anything but green oak, but we needed some sawed pine lumber for finishing. In the second year, we got enough money together to buy a little lumber. Then we borrowed an old wagon and a yoke of oxen from Pete Le Roy, and George, my oldest brother, started with the outfit for Green Bay. He arrived safely, got a jag of lumber

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and a few groceries, and started home by the military road, east of Lake Winnebago. On the return, the oxen gave out from exhaustion, somewhere between Taycheedah and Fond du Lac. George camped on the spot, among the prairie-wolves, until morning, but rest had not relieved the beasts.<sup>10</sup> So, reluctantly, he left the wagon and the load by the lake-shore, and got the animals home as best he could.

After almost a week at home, they revived, and then George went back after his load. But when he reached the place where it had been abandoned, there was nothing left but the wagon-irons. The prairie fires had run through and burned out the country for twenty miles each way.<sup>11</sup> What could be done? We had lost the lumber, and the wagon was borrowed. As customary in those days, my brother had brought an axe with him; so he cut a timber crotch, bound stakes across, with withes tied on the burned wagon irons, and set out for home. It took a day and a half to drag the crotch and the load to our home. Father being a mechanical genius and a mill-wright,<sup>12</sup> went resolutely to work, and hewed out a rough wagon of green oak, seasoned in hot ashes. It took a month or two to finish this rude cart, but at last it was done, and dear old Le Roy was satisfied.

All the while, we were clearing and breaking land. It was

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<sup>10</sup> The only settler in this region was Dr. Mason C. Darling, whose cabin at Fond du Lac stood on the river near the post-office site; later, he lived where Darling's block stood, on the corner of First and Main streets.

<sup>11</sup> Every fall we had to burn round everything—house, sheds, and stacks—to save them from these fires that annually swept the prairies.

<sup>12</sup> My father, Anson Dart, was born March 6, 1797, in Brattleboro, Vermont. Gaining some knowledge of drugs, he became a druggist in New York city, where he imported from France the first ounce of quinine brought to America. Later he removed to Oneida County, New York, and became a miller, having a large mill at the town of Delta. Afterwards he lived awhile in Utica, being constructive superintendent of the asylum at that place. He came West in 1835-36 and made investments in Milwaukee, and also in pine lands, but lost them all in speculation. Daniel Whitney of Green Bay once offered the company my father represented, \$100,000 for their pine lands, but father laughed at the offer. In the reverses of 1837 he was ruined, and finally took up land in Green Lake County, as herein narrated.

## Wisconsin Historical Society

thin and poor in the clay openings, and as yet we did not know how to farm to advantage. Father used to repair grist-mills and sawmills as far off as Watertown, leaving us boys to run the farm. Finally we got enough money together to go up on the prairie and buy a "forty" of better land, with richer soil.

Father built a grist-mill for Samuel Beall in 1843-44. It stood where there is still to be seen a remnant of an old dam on the south side of Green Lake, three-fourths of a mile south from Sand Bluff. Father ran this mill for two years; then the little lakes<sup>13</sup> began to dry up, the water gave out, the mill-site was abandoned, and the mill pulled down and carried off. My uncle, Mr. Catlin,<sup>14</sup> came from Delta, Oneida County, New York, in 1843 and was father's miller while he ran the Beall mill.

### Game

In the early years of our coming to Green Lake, there was plenty of small game—ducks, pigeons, and prairie-chickens. Deer were plentiful, except when they went south in winter to escape the cold. There were likewise wild turkeys and plenty of geese. Elk and moose were found upon Willow River, and occasionally around Green Lake. Shed elk and moose horns were then often found here; some weighed from sixty to seventy pounds. We saw no buffalo, but their wallows and chips and horns were visible, and seemed recent. Le Roy said that he had seen these prairies black with buffalo. The elk and moose soon went north, or disappeared. In cold, dreary winters, game was scanty.

Green Lake was much resorted to by Indians, but Lakes Rush and Puckaway more so, because of the abundance of wild rice, ducks, and fish. In winter, when these lakes had frozen over, and Green was still open, the latter would be visited by immense flocks of big mallards.

In tracking game, the Indians relied on stealth and skill, rather than marksmanship. They were generally indifferent

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<sup>13</sup> Old residents say that Twin Lakes were practically one in the early day, so were considerably larger than at present.

<sup>14</sup> He came all the way from New York by wagon, and it took him from spring to autumn to come through.



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shots, and had very poor "agency" guns. But they stole noiselessly upon their game, made no noise when they walked, and displayed remarkable sagacity in getting close to their prey unawares. They took no chances with dangerous game; many of them would shoot at the same animal simultaneously, to make sure.

One afternoon, late in the season, we saw a lonely deer stalk past our camp, and down the lake valley, where we lost sight of him. That evening, an Indian came along. We told him of the deer.

He said, "I get him."

"Oh," we said, "you can't. He's far away by this time."

"Yes," he replied, "I get him tomorrow," and he lay down near our camp to sleep.

We laughed at him, but he was as good as his word. Rising early, he did not follow the track of the deer, but started across-lots, down the valley, and got around the animal, which, as he anticipated, had, after a long journey, laid down tired, for a night's rest. The Indian shot him, almost before he waked. We boys followed the trail closely, next day, and proved that it was the same animal we had seen.

### Prairie Flowers

I wish I could adequately describe the prairie flowers. Every month during spring and summer they grew in endless variety—such fields of changing beauty, I never saw before. It was a flower-garden everywhere. You could gather a bouquet any time, that couldn't be equalled in any greenhouse of New York or Chicago. There were double lady-slippers, shooting-stars, field-lilies, etc., etc. Some of them still linger beside the railway tracks. We tried over and over to transplant them, but only the shooting-stars would stand the change. There was also the tea-plant, whose leaves we dried for tea. When in blossom, the oak and elay openings, for miles around, were white with it, like buckwheat. We also had splendid wild honey from the bee-trees.

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## Strawberry Story

Gov. John S. Horner<sup>15</sup> had entered land where Ripon now stands, along Silver Creek and Gothic mill-pond. He wrote to father to take the earliest chance to go down and look over his valuable water-power. So four of us went in June, 1843, to the place where the old stone mill in Ripon afterwards stood, and viewed the land and stream. It was just at the crossing of the Big Buttes des Morts trail—but we looked at the water-power and laughed.

Coming back, we were skirting along the big marsh by the Dakin place, in Green Lake township, when a deer jumped out. We let him have two barrels of buck-shot, but he gave no sign of being wounded—simply stopped and looked back. My brother then shot him through the heart with a rifle, and taking his hams over our shoulders, we went on.

We were coming up near where you go down Scott Hill, by a thicket on the prairie, about the site of the old Bailey farm, when we snuffed a delightful odor—the smell of ripe strawberries. We followed it up and found a place as big as an eighty-acre lot, that had been burned over, all covered with ripe wild strawberries as big as any tame ones you ever saw, and so thick that you could not lay your hand down without crushing berries. The ground was red with them, bushels and bushels for the picking. We carried home our handkerchiefs full, also everything else we had to hold them.

The next day we took the ox-team, laden with pails, pans, wash-tubs, etc.—everything that we had, to carry things—and the whole family went over. Whenever we had picked a lot, we went over to the shade of some plum-trees and hulled the berries, so as to take home the more. We filled all our dishes, but exactly what to do with them we scarcely knew. We had no sugar, save maple made by Indians, and this was very dirty. The natives used to pack this sugar in large baskets of birch-bark, and sell it.

How to dispose of the berries was a practical question; but when we reached home we were glad to find guests—David Jones

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<sup>15</sup> For a biographical sketch of John Scott Horner, see *Wis. Hist. Soc. Proceedings*, 1905, pp. 214-226.—ED.

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and Richard Arndt from Green Bay, who had come down to prospect. We therefore hung the berries up in a large linen bag, half a bushel at a time, and squeezing out the juice, treated our friends to strawberry nectar, which was certainly a drink fit for gentlemen. We improved this strawberry patch for one or two years, but at last the wild grass ran them out.

### Indian Visitors

During our first years on Green Lake our most frequent visitors were Indians, usually of the Winnebago tribe. They would stalk up to the window and peer in, or open the door without knocking. One midsummer day in 1842, while we were eating dinner, there was a rap at the door, which we opened. There stood a stalwart, richly-dressed Indian whom we did not know. He had no gun, his only weapon being a long lance whose shaft was decorated with three white eagle feathers, tied on with deer-sinew. It was the symbol of his rank, but we did not know this. We shook hands, and he asked whether we could give him some dinner. We welcomed him to our modest feast, as we usually did such callers, and found that he talked English quite as well as we did.

After eating, he said: "I'm astonished to find you here. No white man was ever seen here before. I wonder that you are alone. I shouldn't have found you now; only, as I passed up the trail [from Green Bay to Portage] I saw a wagon-track crossing it and coming this way. This excited my curiosity. I followed it, and found your house."

He asked many intelligent questions, and we also questioned him. He said that he would like to have a long talk with us, but must go, for he had to reach Portage that night. We thought it useless for him to try to do so, and vainly urged him to stay. While we saw him to be very intelligent and bright, he had not told us who he was.

"How much shall I pay for my dinner?" he asked.

"Nothing. You are welcome."

"But," he replied, "I always pay for my dinner."

We still declined anything, whereupon he took out a fine buckskin pouch, well-filled with shining half-dollars—thirty or so, I

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should think. Taking one out and playing with it for a few minutes, he then tossed it to my little sister.

"I don't want to be bragging of who I am," he said on leaving; "but you have treated me kindly, and it is fair for you to know that I am Dandy, chief of the Winnebago.<sup>16</sup> I thank you!"

It was the first and last time that we ever saw him. He started back toward the trail, and soon passed out of sight. He was a splendid fellow, and it seems had, at the risk of his life, come back on a secret visit from the reservation at Turkey River, Iowa, to transact business for his tribe at Green Bay.

### Captain Marston's Story

Captain Marston, army officer at Portage, in the 40's, told us the following story of Dandy, whom he greatly admired, and vouched for its accuracy.

Dandy had been back from Turkey River, Iowa, several times without leave. He was forbidden by the federal government to visit Wisconsin, but insisted on coming when he chose.

Marston said to Dandy, one day, "Dandy, you are back here again against orders. I threatened you before with punishment, and here you are again."

Dandy answered, "Captain Marston, it was necessary for me to come for my tribe's sake. I told you what to expect. I could not do anything different. I shall certainly come again if business for my tribe makes it necessary."

Marston replied, "Very well. I will tell you what to expect, and I shall do as I say. Mark my words. If I catch you back again in Wisconsin without my permission, I will hang you up at the flag-staff yard in Fort Winnebago."

Dandy said: "You can't scare me a bit, Captain Marston."

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<sup>16</sup> Mr. Dart says: "Dandy was about twenty-five years old in 1840, was then head chief of the Winnebago, at the time of the deportation, and one of the brightest, finest looking young men I ever saw." This does not comport with Moses Paquette's statement that Dandy was about seventy in 1848, "a small thin man, of rather insignificant appearance" See *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, xii, p. 409; but see also *Id.*, vii, p. 365.—Ed.

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My business here concerns the interests of my tribe. I shall do what I think is needful."

Captain Marston was angry, but they parted without further words. Some two months passed, when one day a runner came up the Wisconsin river from below, in a dugout, and reported to the captain, "Dandy is down the river, about six miles."

"What! Dandy, the Winnebago Chief?"

"Yes."

"I can hardly believe it," said Marston, "he wouldn't dare come. He isn't the man to do that, after what I told him when he was here last."

"Well," said the runner, "come with me and I'll show him to you, or show you where I saw him—beside a big thicket, sitting on a log, smoking his pipe."

Marston hastily mustered a well-armed squad of about twelve soldiers, and went down the river with the spy until they came to the thicket. At first, Dandy was not to be seen; but hardly had they fastened their horses for further search, for the thicket was dense and several acres in width, when Dandy appeared, calmly sat down on a log and began to smoke.

"Dandy, I'm surprised. Why are you here again?" said Marston. "You know what I said I would do, if you returned. I shall keep my word."

At the same time he signalled to his armed men to advance around him, which they did. Dandy sat complacently on the log and quietly knocked the ashes out of his pipe. He only said, "Captain Marston, I told you I should come and why I should come. You hurt my feelings and do me wrong by treating me so. I am here because it is necessary, and I do no one harm."

Marston answered, "Well, you know what to expect. I shall have to do as I said, and make you an example."

"Very well," said Dandy, "you see I am here, and in your power."

Marston then replied, "If you've got a pony here, get him and come with us. Our guns cover you, and you are in our power. It is useless for you to try to get away. If you try, you will be shot. You must go back to the fort with us."

Dandy said, "Follow me where my pony is;" and he pushed calmly back into the thicket, the soldiers following closely, with guns ready to fire. In this manner they penetrated the thicket

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for some thirty or forty rods. Marston, growing a bit suspicious, stopped them and asked, "Dandy, where is your horse?"

"Right here. I didn't bring him outside, for fear he would get hurt."

"Well, be quick, for I'm going to take you back to the fort and hang you. You are my prisoner."

"Do you realize what you will come to, if you insist on this?"

"You see my twelve men surrounding you. They mean business, and will shoot if you don't hurry. You can't get away."

Just then Dandy jumped up on a log, pulled out an Indian whistle, and blew a shrill call. In an instant, fifty Indian warriors jumped into view from a thick brush, each buck with a rifle aimed at Marston's little body of men. There was a moment of silence.

"Now," said Dandy, with a faint smile upon his lips, "if I blow this whistle again, every man you've got is a dead man. Will you take Dandy back to the fort, before he is ready to go, or not?"

Whereupon Marston, seeing his plight, answered, "Well, I see you have caught me in a clever ambush."

The chief replied, "I won't injure a hair of your head, or any of your men, Captain Marston, unless you oblige me to." Upon his signal, every Indian rifle dropped. "Now, Marston, take your choice. I was your friend. I never wronged you. You distrusted me, hurt my feelings, and forbade me to do my duty to my people. I have showed you what I can do."

In silence, Marston and his men turned from the thicket and retreated up the river to their fort.

### Big Soldier

Big Soldier, who in 1840 was fifty years old, was a subordinate chief, or captain, of the Winnebago. He was the first Indian we saw at our house, and one of our best friends. Strictly honest, and always ready to do anything for us, he slept in our house at times and we in his wigwam. He became very important to our success in getting along. He told us ours was the first white man's boat he ever saw cross Green Lake.

He got the name of "Big Soldier" in the summer of 1840, when Col. William J. Worth was rounding up the Winnebago

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and bringing them into Portage. He was there with his band, good-natured, talkative, and a great favorite with the soldiers. Naturally a clean and dressy Indian, he was fond of finery and of white men's ways, and greatly admired Colonel Worth's regimentals. One day he asked Worth if he couldn't put them on and wear them awhile, around the fort. For fun, Worth consented.

"Yes," he said, "wear 'em every day if you want to."

So the Indian fixed himself up, oiled his hair, put on Worth's uniform, and very proudly strutted about in Uncle Sam's regimentals, drawing himself up to full height and grunting out, "Heap big soldier!" He did it so grandly that it brought down the garrison, and they always, afterward, called him "Big Soldier."

Big Soldier hated the Iowa reservation and wouldn't draw his pay out there. He preferred to get his living as he could pick it up, back here in Wisconsin, where he was born. When he went away he had to hide his ponies to save them. We used to keep them for him in our pasture.

### Indian Mounds

We learned to talk the Winnebago dialect, and used to ask Big Soldier what the Indian mounds were, and what they were for. He had but one answer, "Winter wigwams."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, places rounded up high to camp on in winter, where the water will easily run off."

There were trees on some of these mounds, a foot and a half in diameter, yet he always said "winter wigwams." We plowed up in our fields white flint arrowheads and pieces of pottery, which were just as great a curiosity to him as to us. His tribe had no such white flints or pottery. He explained the irregular, effigy-mounds, as having been built so as to run their wigwams off on arms, and not have them on one line, but in various groups. There is no doubt that the modern Indians so used these mounds, and they seemed to know of no other use or origin. Still, some of them did contain burial places.

The Winnebago used to make small mounds to preserve their provisions. When plentiful, they dried fish in the sun till they

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were dry as powder, then put them in big puckawa sacks. The squaws also picked up bushels of acorns. In deep holes, below frost-line, they would bury their fish and acorns together, twenty bushels or so in a place, and cover them over with a mound of earth. When the deer had gone south, and game was scarce—they dared not cross the river into the timber, for fear of trouble with the Menominee—they would come and camp on these mounds<sup>17</sup> and dig up fish and acorns for their winter food, and live on this provender until spring opened or game appeared. It was hard work making such caches, with the tools that they had.

### Indian Deportation

My father's brother, Oliver Dart, came to Green Lake two years after we did (1842). One day he took several of us with him and walked over to Portage to see the Winnebago being gathered in to be sent off to Turkey River, Iowa. This was their second removal. Colonel Worth's regiment, that had cut the military road from Calumet to Fond du Lac, was entrusted with the work of rounding the Indians up at Fort Winnebago. They were greatly distressed to know that they were to be deported. Some would lie down on the bank of the river, break down and cry like children, and would beg the soldiers to bayonet them rather than drive them from their homes. Bad whiskey had been their curse. We traded more or less with them and sometimes one would say he had nothing to sell, but finally would bring out from concealment a fine, big buckskin of three pounds' weight, worth \$3, and offer it for whiskey. We never let them have it, but they could always get it at the Portage.

### Pioneers

Besides Le Roy there had been a half-breed in our vicinity, undoubtedly the first civilized settler of the present town of Green Lake. This was James Powell, who had 160 acres under cultivation as early as 1835 or 1836, near the present Mitchell's Glen. Part of his land was afterwards occupied by A. Long.

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<sup>17</sup> Remnants of such mounds are still visible on low ground back of the residence of S. D. Mitchell, near Green Lake.—S. T. K.



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There was a fine spring on the place, since known as Powell's Spring. This great spring and the green-turfed clearing where his plantation stood, are still visible; he had a rail fence around his place, which was near the Grand Buttes des Morts trail. He was a powerful man, and besides a double log-house had a blacksmith shop, and was one of Pierre Paquette's traders, as was Gleason at Puckaway Lake. He was drunken, ugly, and quarrelsome, and greatly disliked by the Indians, who drove him off about a year or two before we came.<sup>18</sup>

### The Counterfeiters

About twenty rods down a ravine that runs from the north side of Little Green Lake, there was a cave, or excavation. Cut into its side was a crudely-made door, well hidden. This door was down when we came, and within the hole we found a complete counterfeiter's outfit, forge and all. It was for the manufacture of spurious half-dollars, and may have been worked ten years or more. Le Roy told us that there were six or eight of the fellows, and they brought in their supplies and did their work by night. The forgers were not readily caught, because they never spent their bad money where it was made. The smoke of their fire came up as much as four rods from their cavern or shanty, in the middle of a very large old stump, around which sprouts had grown up, so that it was perfectly concealed.

These half-dollars would get out at Green Bay, and the Indians would receive them in their trading change. The authorities did not know where to look for their source. They had first-class Indian hunters and hounds on their track long before

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<sup>18</sup> Henry Burling, now of Ripon, says that in his boyhood he understood that Powell was mysteriously shot or burned in his shanty, and that what was said to be his grave was on his father's farm near Twin Lakes, and that for years his father plowed around the grave and kept it marked, but that later it was plowed under. Richard Dart thinks this was a mistake, and that Powell left the country. He would seem to be the same trader spoken of as William Powell, who was present at the Portage when Pierre Paquette was shot; see *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, vii, pp. 357, 387, 388. Probably he was a half-breed son of Peter Powell, a British trader in Wisconsin in the early part of the 18th century.—Ed.

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they were caught, which was about two years before we came. We never knew who they were, nor what became of them.

## First Settlers

When we came from Green Bay in 1840, the trader James Knaggs was at Oshkosh, and there were a few settlers at Fond du Lac, and scattered about on isolated farmsteads.<sup>19</sup> Waupun and Watertown were but just begun.

I have heard my father tell of his first trip to Milwaukee, through the woods. He borrowed an old horse from Le Roy and followed an Indian trail past Beaver Dam and through the Watertown woods. He had nearly reached the latter settlement on Rock River, when about sundown he came to a little shanty and clearing, and found there a sawmill with a perpendicular saw. The proprietor was Pete Rogan, who offered him the mill-plant at a nominal sum, saying that he was land poor and wanted to get away. Father did not accept this offer, but was afterwards sorry that he did not.

The first election in Marquette County was held in the autumn of 1842 at our plank house, south of Green Lake. There were present Anson Dart, his sons George and Putnam, Pete Le Roy and his son, and William Bazeley, tenant on Beall's place. These constituted the entire polling-list.<sup>20</sup>

After the failure of Beall's mill on Twin Lake Creek, father built in 1846 on his own account another sawmill, where Dartford now stands. Smith Fowler, a half-breed from Stockbridge, and I helped build the dam for this mill, going back and forth daily across the lake in a scow. We built a crib for the dam, and carried boulders in the scow, with which to sink it. Some relics of this mill still remain at Dartford.

The same year, my father sold his farm, increased by that time

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<sup>19</sup> The Pier family came to Fond du Lac in 1836-37, and John Bannister and Mason C. Darling in 1838. The following year, Reuben Simmons built the first house at Taycheedah. Francis D. McCarty came the same season. Meanwhile Waupun had been begun by Seymour Wilcox, and the De Neveys were at the lake in Empire township that is called by their name.—S. T. K.

<sup>20</sup> J. H. Colton, *Western Guide, or Emigrant's Guide*. (N. Y., 1845), gives Marquette County in 1840 a population of eighteen.—Ed.

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to 200 acres, to a man coming in from the South, Lowther Taylor by name. He received \$12 an acre, a price that could not have been obtained again for thirty years.

After the sale of the farm, our family went over to Dartford to live. We were thus among the pioneers of the place that was named for my father. In addition to the sawmill, he built a grist-mill in 1850, and took in John Sherwood as partner.

### Early Politics

Father was a Whig in politics, and was defeated in an election for state senator by Mason C. Darling of Fond du Lac, who was of Democratic proclivities. Sometime about 1846 or 1847, ex-Governor Horner sent word up the trail to father, that Dr. Darling was getting a bill through the legislature setting over a tier of three towns—the best in Marquette—into Fond du Lac County. Horner desired father to go down to Madison and defeat the scheme if possible. Father was interested at once, as he was then locating a county seat for Marquette. He started for Madison and walked nearly all the way. Upon reaching the capital he found Horner's rumor a fact, and in the legislature four Democrats to every Whig. He knew but few of the legislators and everything seemed against him. He went to work, however, interviewing and persuading, and succeeded in defeating Darling's scheme in the house; but it was carried in the senate. The next year the bill came up again and was carried, taking off what are now Ripon, Metomen, and Alto townships from Marquette.<sup>21</sup>

In 1848 father threw himself with ardor into the presidential campaign, and upon the success of the Whigs received in 1851 the appointment of superintendent of Indian affairs in Oregon, with a salary of \$8 per day. Just about this time the village of Dartford was formed and named for him. A lawyer named Hamilton was so angry upon learning of the new enterprise, that he went down to Madison and got the name changed to

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<sup>21</sup> These three townships, 16-18 of range xiv east, were by the first territorial division in 1836 assigned, through an inadvertence, both to Marquette and Fond du Lac counties. By act of March 6, 1848, they were declared part of the latter county.—Ed.

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Arcade; but the townspeople hearing of it in time, sent a delegation to preserve the name Dartford.

Father took my second brother, Putnam,<sup>22</sup> with him to Oregon as his private secretary, and another brother to help him. They each had to pay \$700 for fare from New York to San Francisco, by way of the Isthmus of Panama. Mother, my two sisters, one brother and I lived on at Dartford, but father never came back there to live. He had various political appointments, and after coming back from Oregon was in Europe for two years. He died August 12, 1879, at Washington, D. C.

Mother and I were finally the only ones of the family left at Dartford, and she later went back to Williamsport, Pennsylvania, where she died at the age of sixty-eight. Of the fifteen or twenty early pioneers of Dartford, all of whom were our friends, not one is now living at that place.

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<sup>22</sup> The only schooling my brother Putnam had was four or five years in a district school in New York, before we came to Wisconsin. So he took what books could be had, and educated himself. Night after night, after a hard day's work in the field or mill, he would sit by the fireplace with his book, sometimes until midnight. He thus became able to carry on all of father's correspondence as Indian commissioner.











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