

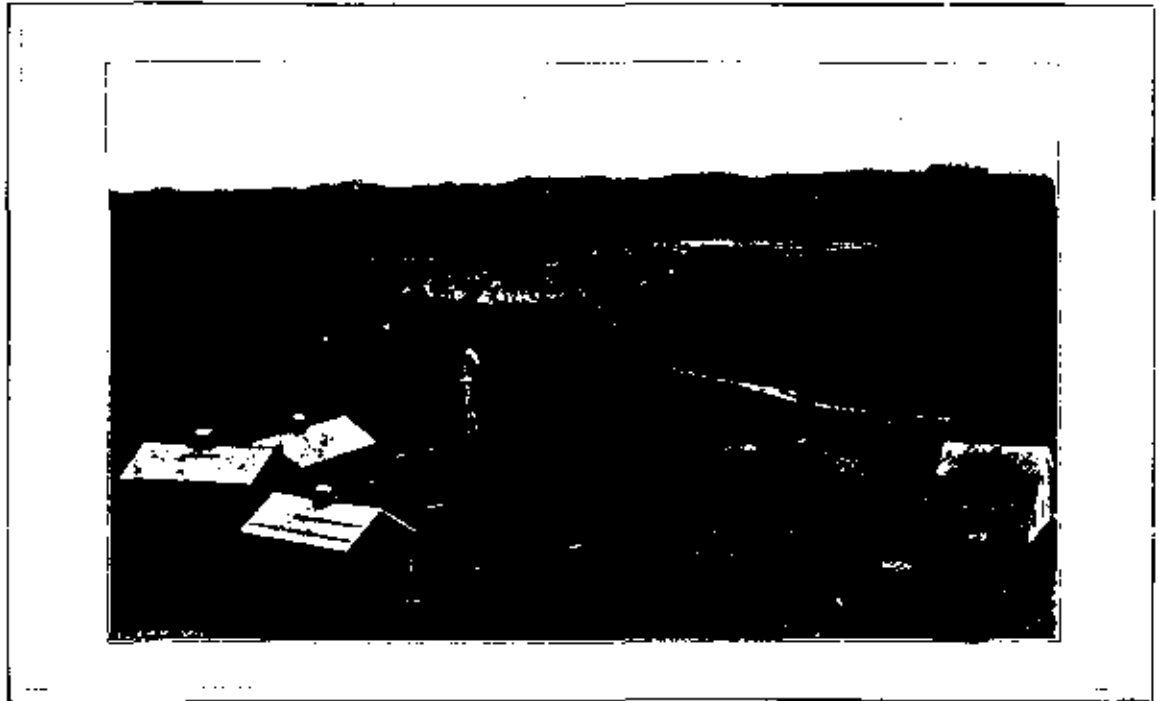
Events in Adams County History

Pioneer Settlers in New Haven and Well Prairie.

By Jas. E. Jones

IT IS time a history of Adams county should be written. There is very little of that county's early history in existence, at least in print, and the old settlers whose memory must furnish the details are getting scarce. As it is the writer finds considerable conflict of opinion as to early data. It is expected that the wide circulation given this history through ILLUSTRATED EVENTS will start memories to jogging and that an authentic account will be evolved. To this end

first mayor of Portage, built the "Marsh house" in 1845, the "first house built in Adams county." This account rather mixes dates, in saying that Mr. Sylvester "moved to Green Bay in 1834, where he worked thirteen years and was then appointed blacksmith for the Indians at Point Bassett and was granted a permit to build on Indian lands, and in 1845 erected the first house in Adams county, known as the Marsh house, the family moving into it that fall." This house is in the town of Lincoln, on Grand Marsh, now



An Adams County Stock Range.

This view takes in a perspective of land in the town of Quincy, Adams county, and now embraces a stock ranch of 1,000 acres. It was sold by the Central Wisconsin Farm Land Co., to C. F. Francis of Davenport, Iowa. Six months before this picture was taken there was not a house or sign of civilization within the range of this view. This picture was taken about three years ago.

we invite all old settlers to send in their recollection of dates and incidents so that the whole may finally be summarized into reliable facts.

The first disagreement encountered is over the first house erected in the county. The biography of Mrs. Harriet Thompson, recently printed in a large volume entitled "Illustrated Album Biography," claims that her father, William Sylvester, afterward

owned by George Fletcher, Mr. Thompson's son by a former marriage.

From best authorities the writer feels warranted in saying that the first white settler's house in Adams county was Jared Walsworth's near Big Spring, built as early as 1839. His father, Sias Walsworth, came to Portage in 1827, where Jared lived until he married a Menominee squaw, by which he obtained excep-

tional privileges from the Indians, who were yet owners.

The first claim taken in Adams county was by Henry Landt, who came from Jefferson county in 1846 and made claim to land about where Bowen and Hansen's farms are now. He also located a claim for his brother Jerry about where the M. E. church is, and one for his brother Fredrick Landt where the S. S. Landt farm is now, Amos Landt being next further up the creek. There appearing some difficulty about holding all of these claims Henry Landt summoned his brothers to come at once, and thus the Landt family made claim to the whole valley. Mr. Landt placed Indian families on some of the claims until his brothers took possession. Roswell Bullock, who had married an Indian sister of Mrs. Jared Walsworth, was at that time living about where H. H. Mason's present farm is and kept a kind of stopping place. Before the survey was made Bullock and Winchell tried to crowd on the Landt claims. Winchell built a mill north of Fredrick Landt's place, on the creek, which was in operation until about fifteen years ago. It is now torn down and scarcely even a trace is left. Mr. Landt had a fine lot of fruit trees, and one especially thrifty row on his land toward Winchell. One day Winchell came over and said to Mr. Landt,

"That's a nice lot of trees you have there."

"Yes, quite fair trees," was the reply.

"I suppose you would like to keep them," said Winchell.

"Well, yes, I hope I shall," was Mr. Landt's response.

"You could take them up and move them this way, I suppose. I thought I would tell you before I begin cleaning up there," Winchell said, confidently.

"What do you mean?" asked Mr. Landt.

"Why," said Winchell, "they are on my land."

"Oh I guess not. The survey will have to settle that question," said Mr. Landt.

When the survey was finally made and the lines definitely established Winchell found himself back beyond the creek and actually had to obtain his mill site from Mr. Landt, his mill being erected about 1852.

About 1847 and '48 Henry Landt and Shute built a saw mill where the lower grist mill now stands, the frame of the old mill yet being a part of the present structure.

At that time the road from Portage to the pines came up by Eighth's tavern, to Jared Walsworth's, across by Robt. Crothers' present farm, along the hill by the Walter Hosford place on to Davis Corners, where Davis built a house in 1849. At that time John Stowell hauled a load of scrap lumber from Big Spring to Davis, and said there was not a house on the way. Later a new road was opened straight west from Walsworth's across Dell Prairie, when in 1850 a few settlers came in.

At this time Aaron Towne and Johnathan Butterfield had made claim to what is now Briggsville, including the present water power. These men all stopped at Walsworth's until they brought their families in 1850. That same year Chamberlin and A. E. Briggs bought the interest of Towne and Butterfield in the water power, built a dam and saw mill and started a store at Briggsville. In 1853 the Chapmans took an interest in the power and built a flouring mill, and William Murphy established a store. The first hotel at Briggsville was kept by Chas. Mason, and a little later the land overflowed by the dam was plated as Lake Mason, named after him. The lumber to build the first jail in Portage was sawed at this mill and taken on flat boats down Neenah creek and up the Fox to Portage.

In 1849 the treaty with the Menominee Indians permitted the taking up of claims, the county having been organized by the legislature the session of 1848 and '49, and laid out in towns and sections during that summer. When first set off Adams county embraced what is now Juneau, and the county was attached for all purposes to Sauk, the settlers having to go to Baraboo for judicial and county business. It was organized for its own government in 1853, the county seat being at Quincy. In 1857 Juneau county was detached from Adams with the county seat at New Lisbon, and in 1858 the county seat of Adams was moved to Friendship.

In the fall of 1849 settlements were made west and north of Big Spring. Martin and Patrick Baggott settled to the west on land now one of the finest farms in the county owned by T. S. and J. H. Baggott. Then in the next few years came the Kancs, Donahoes and Buckleys, the latter father of Lewis and Leonard Buckley. Also the O'Connells, Brusnahans, Calahans, Cusacks, and the "East," and "West" Tangneys. On the present D. M. Hatch farm John Best located, his sons, Lycurgus, Socrates, Solon and Alexander, later marrying and settling on farms further north. R. P. Rose in 1849 located on what is now the McConick farm, north of Big Spring. He had built a log cabin and got his farm started, when in 1852 he got the gold fever and went to California. His experience there was similar to that of many who went from this state, some from this region. Mr. Rose and his brother John started from Jefferson, Wis., in company with sixteen men and three women, following along the line of the Platte river, by Salt Lake, and down the Humboldt in Nevada. When they struck the Platte valley there seemed to be an almost unbroken line of teams and vehicles of every conceivable variety. In the morning when the wind was still a streak of dust hung above the road in each direction as far as the eye could reach. Mr. Rose paid the conductor of his party \$160 for the trip, hauling

baggage, food and society only, as the understanding was he was not to ride. Consequently Uncle Dick walked every step of the way from Jefferson to California. He, with 200 other men worked for big wages for a company, all leaving their wages in the company until ready to come home. When the company "busted" Uncle Dick had saved up \$3000, which he lost. He then went prospecting, found a claim from which he got gold, sold the claim and got back his \$3000 and more. Then he came back by vessel, crossing the isthmus of Panama on a railroad train. He had gone clear across Wisconsin and from the Mississippi river to the Pacific ocean, yet this little road in Panama was the first railroad or train he had ever seen in his life.

Benjamin Shaddock, who died at the home of his daughter, Mrs. J. Armeah, in Portage, about a year ago, was a type of the hardy nature of the Adams county pioneer. He came to the county in 1853, building a shanty near the present Field farm, a few miles north of Kilbourn, where he lived one winter. After that he located on a farm about half a mile this side of Plainville, being there until a few years ago. Everybody in this section knew "Uncle

Ben." He was always good natured, joking and ready for fun. The remarkable thing about Mr.



Shaddock was his hardy nature, living until he was 93 years of age. When he was over 80 he used to come to town and dance a jig to show the boys he was "just as young as he used to be." Before he left the farm he drove a yoke of oxen to Kilbourn frequently, and was a familiar figure on the streets. He would turn up Broadway walking at the head of his oxen, swinging a long stick over their heads to keep them moving. Often he would go along swinging his gad with his eyes on the ground, finally, after going nearly a block, look up and find that he had got ahead of his team, and was absently waving his whip in the air while the oxen were plodding along half a block behind him.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Effective Organizations in Communities

It is a well-known fact that one hundred soldiers, disciplined, organized and directed by capable leaders are more effective than a thousand men having none of these advantages, and every man fighting on his own hook. The same is true in every other relation of civil affairs. No town ever progresses where there is no united, harmonious effort in upbuilding and advancing. Therefore we find advancement associations, business men's societies, etc. They may not always be in action, perhaps, but usually the organization is maintained and is there when anything can be helped by decisive, united action. It is safe to say that three-fourths of all the enterprises established in villages and cities is effected through solicitation of some kind, and most frequently by local organizations of business men. In cities and towns around Kilbourn we hear of these organizations promoting certain public enterprises or directing local reforms and standing back of the municipal board or council who carry them out, and as each special purpose is accomplished they seem to go out of existence. While this may be true in some instances it is not so in all. Generally the organization is kept intact and is always there when needed. That is where many towns make a mistake. They organize a society with a great spread of enthusiasm, hold a few meetings, and unless each individual is at once materially benefitted, interest lags and the society dies. In private business men do not relax effort or shut up shop because business is dull. The merchant stays at his

counter ready to take advantage of anything that comes along. It is just as necessary to maintain organization and cultivate opportunity in a community's affairs. Kilbourn has had several associations of this character. They began with considerable interest, lived for a few meetings and disappeared in a mist of jealousy, rivalry or indifference. Because men did not see a direct, immediate benefit to themselves they could not see any "sense in the thing." And, like too many mistaken and therefore weak communities, some not only declined to unite, but discouraged the plan because competitors in business or personal enmities were conspicuous in proposing or conducting the organization. Of course in this Kilbourn is only an instance, and not an exception. The same condition has prevailed in all towns and cities during the period of cutting eye-teeth. It is apparent that Kilbourn has out grown that. In the past two years a village board has, in spite of opposition of the most determined character, put the village on a level with the smallest towns in the state, or rather the village has advanced from an old-fashioned country town to modern conditions. In this the board can say in the words of the late Governor Rusk, they "seen their duty and they done it." The village also has the most effective advancement association it ever had. The membership includes all classes, and has energetic, capable men for officers. It should be kept up, its officers and committees, at least, should always be "keeping house" ready to act for business interests.