

An Interpretation of S.W. Pierce's historical account of Big Spring

(The original account was printed in the Adams County Press in July 1886)

By Kenneth Crothers, May 8, 1988

The following (see article) was written in 1886 by Solon Pierce. He was writing an historical account of Big Spring and it is fairly accurate, but time has nearly erased the landmarks prominent at that point in time. Thus, I will attempt to "interpret" his meaning as accurately as possible.

Following Mr. Pierce's articles, I have attached three maps. The first is a plat map of property ownership in 1976 which is current enough for my purposes. The second is a plat map of property ownership in 1900 which was extremely accurate and is helpful in this instance. The third is a map of the village of Big Spring in 1900. I will refer to these as appendix 1,2 or 3.

Pierce refers to Wibur's store which was located on lot #8 as shown on appendix 3. Mr. Samuel Ward was my great great great grandfather and his house was where ours now is on section 15. The Ward School was across the road as shown on appendix 2. The Winchell School was the original Big Spring School and was located in the southwest quarter of the southwest quarter of section 23 on what was known as Winchell Street (approx lot #2 and #3) and is now known as Golden Avenue. The Badger Valley School is now Charles Julson's house and is located in the southeast quarter of the northeast quarter of section 33. The Smith School also referred to, was later known as the Stafford School and was located in the northwest quarter of the southeast quarter of section 12, as shown in appendix 2.

Pierce referred to the "Big Spring Mills" which were located on the east end of the current mill dam. The Buckley School was located on the corner of 3rd Avenue and Hwy. P. The New Haven House was in section 35 near the intersection of County XX and State 23. The Badger House is now Harry Kingsley's house at the intersection of G and 23 in section 34. Walsworth's Tavern was southeast of the intersection of 4th Ave and Golden Lane in section 28. The Big Spring Post Office was also John Russell's store and

was on lot 50 of appendix 3. The basement of this building is still visible. Wilbur's store was later owned by M.J. Hanson and P.J. Hindes and was on lot 8. The Pierce Hotel was on lot 26 and still exists as a home.

Pierce refers to the D. Stone dam which was at the intersection of G and Golden Avenue. The foundation of that mill (later owned by Jason Tibbetts and later by Frank Spike) is still plainly visible. The Ward School building was moved across G to its present location (as our machine shed) in 1959. The Winchell dam was on the Big Spring where G makes a bend in section 22 north of (and on the property of) Roland Jensen. The Richardson place is now owned by Bill Ebert in section 21. The Variety Works was just south of the D. Stone dam where Lapp's Shop now stands. The Union Meeting House is the Congregational Church.

Pierce refers to the M.E. Church which was located just east of where Russ Sundsmo's house now stands, east of the cemetery. Robert M. Ramsey was my great great grandfather and his farm was in section 22 and 23. Uri Morse owned a farm in section 24 and 25; Josiah Marshall in section 35; P.G. Stroud in section 15 and another in section 19; Will Cusack in section 15; Sofronus Landt in section 22 and 23; Jim Crothers (my great grandfather) in section 15; Mr. Sweet in section 27; Mack Walker in section 15; D.M. Hatch in section 21; D.L. McConick in section 10.

Pierce refers to Daniel Eighme (my great great great grandfather) as the first settler in 1849. This is an error as Ira C. Ward and Richard Rose came here in 1846 (early). Mr. Eighme came that fall and settled near the shore of Eighme Pond. On all current maps this is erroneously spelled as "Amey Pond". See appendix 1 and 2.

Mr. Pierce also refers lightly to an important part of New Haven history which needs further elaboration. During the Civil War, while most able men were away in the G.A.R., many Indians in Minnesota were inclined to make trouble. History books often tell of the New Ulm massacre. The local tribe of Winnebago were a quiet and peaceful band which lived in co-existence with their new white neighbors. Their Chief was known by all as Chief Pretty Man. They lived during the winter along the creek south of the village in section 27. Their ceremonial grounds and graveyard were on top of the big hill south of the present Big Spring School and to the east. On appendix 2, section 27 in the southeast corner of a 40 owned by Jos. Wheeler is a small triangular piece with the initials J.P. These initials are

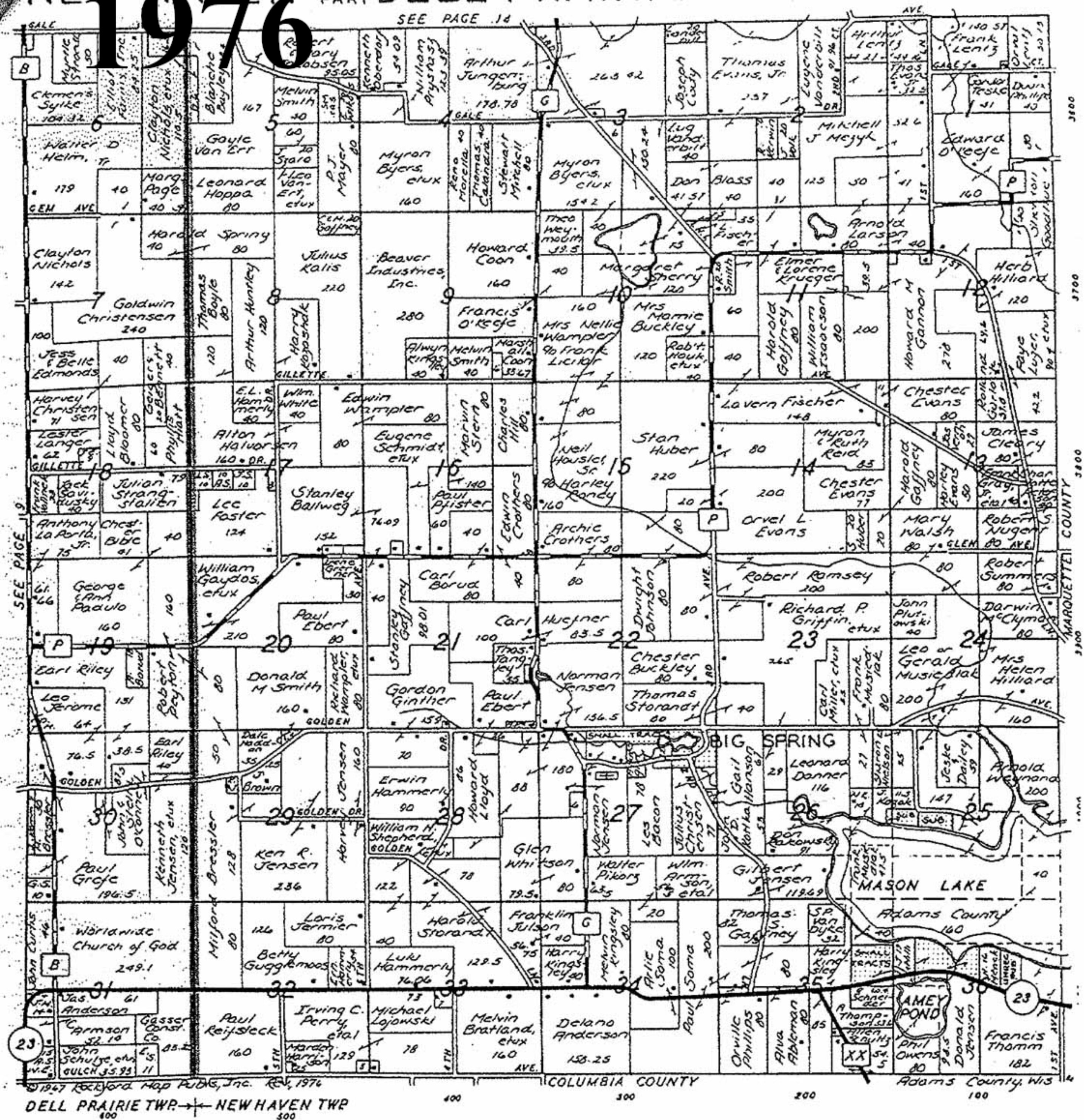
for Jake Pretty Man, son of the old Chief. This is the approximate location of the Indian burial ground. During the Civil War the white folks were pretty nervous and formed the "Home Guard" but Chief Pretty Man and his sons promised they wouldn't make trouble - a great relief for everyone. The local band either died or moved away to other areas by 1910. Their burial ground was repeatedly vandalized and eventually bought through a tax deed and plowed up. This is the most disgraceful historical fact in Big Spring history.

Hopefully my clarifications of Mr. Pierce's writing will help someone to obtain a clearer understanding of our local history and will help preserve that history for awhile longer. Kipling wrote, "God of our Fathers, known of old, Beneath whose awful hand we hold Dominion over palm and pine, Lord of our far flung battle line, be with us yet. Lest we forget - lest we forget." Indeed, these seemingly insignificant things are all too easily forgotten.

Kenneth Crothers

NEW HAVEN EAST DELL PRAIRIE T. 14 N.-R. 7 E.

SEE PAGE 14



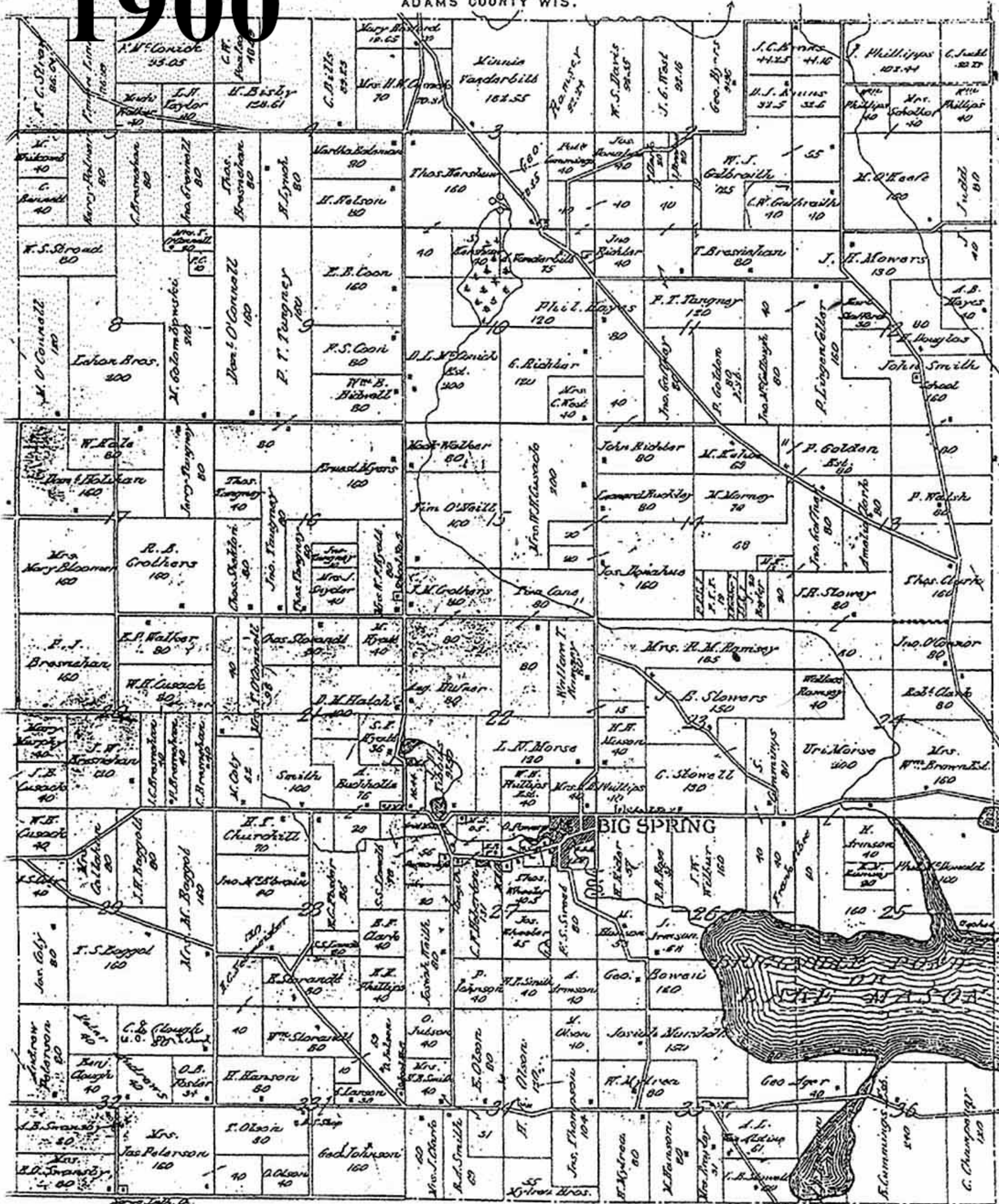
NEW ILAVEN

Township 14 North, Range 7 East
of the Fourth Principal Meridian.

Scale of Miles

1900

ADAMS COUNTY WIS.



BIG SPRING VILLAGE 1900 A.D.

NEW HAVEN TWP. ADAMS COUNTY WIS.

