

New Haven Alias Big Spring  
Adams County Press July 10, 1886  
by Solon Wesley Pierce

In a retrospective glance to 1853, when the writer hereof first came to press the soil of this town, the picture presenting itself to "memory's view" is that of a land where the houses are few and far between, and these were nearly all built of logs and slabs, etc. There were only four framed houses in what is now the town of New Haven, mostly finished, and those were all oak except the nails and shingles. Brick chimney tops were a later improvement. On the creek was a saw-mill owned by Jerry Landt.

Township 14 of range 7 at that time constituted a part of the territory of the town of Jackson, along with what is now the towns of Dell Prairie, Springville and Jackson.

The only laid out public highway was what is known as the Old Pinery Road, the original line of which, owing to subsequent changes and vacations of portions, has nearly disappeared.

The first post office in town was known as Warsaw, with Jasper Stowell as post-master. The name of the office was afterward changed to New Haven, and D.M. Hatch, having bought out Mr. Stowell's claim and improvements, also succeeded him as post-master.

In 1854, the vacant land was largely taken up and some highways were laid out.

Talk at the present time about preaching and meeting houses! We had the preachers in those days. One, I remember, who used to come and go on foot from Cascade, [now White Creek] a distance of twenty miles, preached in an old building that was used for a school house. It had one of those old fashioned fire places and such ample ventilation as to furnish one with the not always most agreeable sensation of burning one side while the other almost froze, and kept one continually turning around like the spit of ye olden time. This log house stood on or very near where B.S. Wilbur's store was afterwards erected. I said it was used for school purposes. This was

the only school in town at that time, and it was run only in warm weather.

About this time a class of the M.E. Church was formed and had preaching in the log house of Mr. S. Ward on the west side of section fifteen.

Reuben Thompson had a slab house at the head of the springs where he kept a few things for sale. Thompson was a Baptist and through his influence Elder Fisher was induced to come over from Dell Prairie for occasional services, and so, through the action of the three societies, the people were furnished with preaching and religious meetings about three times a month.

At the meeting of the County Board of Supervisors in November, 1854, the town of Jackson was divided and this part made a new town under the name of Big Spring. Town officers were elected the following Spring, and the town fully organized. At that election Seth Mills was chosen Superintendent of Schools. During his incumbency of the office, he divided the town into four school districts. Mr. Ward furnished a log house, situated on section sixteen, for use as a school house in district No. 4. Mr. Winchell put up a log hut for the use of district No. 2; A.D. Smith let district No. 3 use his granary, and No. 1, or the Badger district, held its schools in private dwelling houses for some two years. The first sabbath school was organized in 1855 by Elder Fisher of Dell Prairie. He donated a few books toward the establishment of a library. Harvey Phillips was the first Superintendent of this school and John Russell the Librarian. The extent of the library, and something of the facilities enjoyed by the early settlers may be inferred from the statement that the Librarian carried the entire library in a pipe box.

Those were some of the good old times we read so much about. Wheat, in the fall of 1853, sold for 50 cents a bushel; dressed pork for \$2.50 per hundred pounds.

Newspapers were not as plenty then as now, and information of what was being done in the great world outside was slow in reaching us. One day Uri Morse discovered that owing to the Crimean war, Russia on one side and Turkey, France and England as allies on the other, the price of wheat had suddenly and very heavily advanced. He profited by this information, went around before "ye grangers" had become apprised of the state of affairs, and bought up all the surplus wheat in the vicinity. This wheat Mr. Morse

afterwards hauled by wagon to Milwaukee and sold. At this time the nearest grist mill was located at Delton.

Com.

[Continued next week.]

Adamd County Press  
July 17, 1886

New Haven alias Big Spring

[Continued from last week]

Judge A.D. Smith, one of the oldest settlers in this town, was making calls on the rest of the old-timers the other day. I presume there are a good many who don't know that the old man came by the title of *judge* by holding that office. It is so nevertheless, and he was called an upright one, and his decisions were sustained in the higher courts of law. He came by the title in this way: Before the lands that now comprise Adams and adjoining counties were surveyed or organized into judicial districts by the State Legislature, the squatters formed a club and adopted rules and regulations for the government of the club. They elected three judges and a clerk of court, as I call him, and other officers, and woe be to the man or woman who violated the rules. If anyone squatted on the claim of another, or committed any other villainous act, he was cited to appear before the tribunal composed of these three judges, of whom A.D. Smith, our townsman was one, and the decision of that tribunal was final, and its orders carried out to the very letter, even to the burning of shanties, if need be.

After Columbia county was *civilized* by the location of lawyers at Portage City, some parties from this town were taken to that place and tried on complaint for acts done pursuant to the orders of this court of Judge A.D. Smith and his two associates. Upon trial the records of the proceedings "in court" before these three Judges was produced, sustained by the Judge, and the defendants exonerated; all of which is recorded, and ye Chronicles

of ye Olden Time say.

In the years of 1854-55, S.S. Wells, W.S. Pierce, E.S. Pierce, D.K. Wells, D. Stone and others came from Canada to this town with their families.

W.S. Pierce bought the old saw-mill from Jerry Landt, and the project was then agitated of a grist mill. Mr. Pierce made preparations for that purpose. The old saw mill was put in order and the sawing commenced. The fixtures were bought, shipped by rail to Madison, the then nearest railroad point 55 miles distant, and all freight had to be hauled from there by teams. Giles Smith put the machinery in the new mill, and Big Spring had a grist mill. The mills were finished in 1858 and named "Big Spring Mills".

About this time also, the matter of building school houses in the several districts caused much bickering. The first settlers thought they had the best right to say where the new houses should be located as well as to dictate in other matters. The Badger district was the only one in which the people came to agreement without trouble to build a school house. In the Ward district the party in the north end voted for a site for a house located some two miles northeast of where the house now stands, afterwards divided the district, and the northeast part was organized into the district commonly known as the Buckley district and built a log school house.

Somewhere about this time, too, Dell Prairie became the "center of gravity" for mail routes to this section, and one was established from there to Princeton via Oxford, and as a matter of course, post offices were wanted along the line. The route passed through the north end of section 20 in this town, and a post office was established with the same name of the town, Big Spring, and Lycurgus Best was appointed postmaster.

Another point must not be forgotten here. At this time we had four taverns with bars in them over which whiskey was sold freely. These taverns were known as the "Fair Play House", "New Haven House", "Badger House" and Jared Walsworth's. The latter did not need any high-sounding title, for Jared Walsworth was known to everybody along the line of the Wisconsin River. The town records show that no moneys for license to sell intoxicating drinks was ever paid into the town treasury.

Sometime prior to 1856, the Big Spring post office was moved to a point about eighty rods north of where the Big Spring Mills were being built, and

John Russell acted as deputy postmaster. I find that he was commissioned postmaster in April, 1857. In the same year the village of Big Spring was platted on the northeast quarter of the northeast quarter of section 27, by the owner, W.S. Pierce.

Mr. Henry Wilbur came from East Troy, in this State, looking around for a location to put up a store, and his was the first building put up on the village plat. The same building, but now situated in another part of the village, is now occupied by John Russell, for the post office and a grocery store.

The Wilburs, father and son, ran a General Store in the village until May, 1859, when Ben Wilbur's store and goods and dwelling house were consumed by fire. Shortly after this event, he moved to Packwaukee. A blacksmith shop and one or two houses were erected shortly after the first store was established, and the place began to assume very much the appearance of a village.

About this time, D. Stone put a dam across the stream three-fourths of a mile above the Big Spring Mills, built a small factory and began the manufacture of chairs, etc.

The western part of District No. 2 was taken off and joined to the south end of what is now known as the Ward School District. This change harmonized matters, and both districts erected good school houses, that in the Ward district being designed to accomodate all kinds of meetings.

The first general election was held in the town in November, 1855, and the whole number of votes cast for Governor was 40 - Coles Bashford receiving 38 and Wm. A. Barstow 2. The writer hereof printed the ballots *with a pencil*.

At the meeting of the County Board in November, 1855, I think, on the application of the members from this town, and through the influence of a few of the first settlers, the name of the town was changed to *New Haven*. The reason for this course on the part of those instrumental in procuring the change, seemed to be a feeling that they had been ignored in the naming of the town, grist-mill, and post office, and they wanted to beat the new-comers. The name of the town has in common talk been one and the other ever since.

W.S. Pierce sold his mill and erected a store.

E.S. Pierce also put up a store which afterwards was known as that of E.S. Pierce and Son.

The next important improvement was made by F.M. Richardson on section 21, by damming a number of springs he made them run *up hill* to his wagon shop and sorghum mill. Afterwards a cheese factory was added, and the pond stocked with brook trout.

James Winchell took it into his head to dam the springs at the head of the creek and did so. He also bought two run of stone for a mill, but the work was never completed.

[Continued next week.]

New Haven alias Big Spring  
July 24, 1886

[Continued from last week]

Somewhere about the year 1870, the question of building a church began to be agitated by the Congregational Society, but they found it uphill business and were defeated in their aspirations. The project was to build a Union house, but the other societies working in the same field did not favor the enterprise in that form, and as none of them were able, unaided, to build a suitable house for worship, none was built at that time. In 1873, the Free Baptist Society of Newport proposed to the Congregational Society to unite with them in building a Union Meeting House. The house was erected the next year. G.M. Marshall, now of Kilbourn City, but at that time proprietor of the Variety Works in this town, a large-hearted, public-spirited man, dressed the lumber and performed much other work, all of which he did without charge.

About four years ago the M.E. Society here felt the need of a meeting house of their own, and purchased one in the town of Moundville in Marquette county, which was taken down, removed to this place and re-erected here with the addition of a belfry to the original building.

New Haven at this time has school and meeting houses that will compare favorably with those of her sister townships.

The question of a Town Hall has been considerably discussed, and has twice been submitted to a vote of the electors at town meetings - once by ballot, and once by a division of the house. In each case the decision was in the negative, not because a majority were opposed to building a Hall, but because of divisions upon the question of location. A large majority are in favor of building a Hall, but they differ as to location.

Politics, as far as parties are concerned, are never thought of in connection with town offices, the present Town Board belonging to the Democratic party. In the past the town meetings have been run on the "to beat somebody" principle, and sometimes the town gets the worst of the "beat".

The last census gave the population of the town at 788, of whom 409 are males and 379 females. The census also showed 31 ex-soldiers residing in the town.

The industries now carried on in the town, other than farming, dairying, and cognate branches, are three general stores, two blacksmith shops, and two grist mills. The farmers, since wheat and clover seed have suffered such drawbacks, have turned attention largely to raising stock, and to butter making. Messrs. Robert Ramsay, Uri Morse and Josiah Marshall being the largest producers of butter. Mr. Ramsey makes about 2000 lbs. per year; Mr. Morse nearly as much. The latter manufactures on the creamery system, doing the churning by water-power.

P.G. Stroud of Kilbourn City, owns two good farms in this town, one of them being improved by ditching, and everything is in city farmer style.

Mr. William Cussick has a model farm of 200 acres, and he has also model buildings consisting of barns, pig styes, hennery, etc.

The town is beginning to exchange some of its older settlers for the thrifty German and "mine frau" who are already complaining for want of a place where they can get their beer. The fusil oil, soap and tobacco doctored stuff called *whiskey* don't suit them.

I don't wish it understood that those named are the only enterprising farmers in the town, for there are many more of the same sort, such as Landt, Crothers, the Sweets, Walker, Hatch, McConick, and many others. In fact, as a class, the farmers are enterprising and pushing forward improvements. Even the cemetery is being cleared up by the officers of the association.

"Adams County to the front" is the watchword.

There are three excellent water-powers improved, besides the one owned by P.G. Stroud. The latter is an excellent power for a sorghum mill and there is much need of one in the community.

Several first class mineral springs are waiting for someone to make their merits known to the public, and establish a popular summer resort at this point. A small steamer or other craft might be placed on Mason Lake in which bass, pickerel, perch and other fish abound.

Who will put up the required buildings, use a little printer's ink, and collect the dollars from the investment?

Since writing the above I have looked up some things of what the Old Chronicles say.

The first white who settled in New Haven was Jared S. Walsworth. His widow is still living somewhere in Dakota. He received some kind of a permit from the Indians to reside among them before the Government made the treaty for the purchase of their lands. But I find that Daniel Eighme, the father of the widow of the late H.H. Phillips, was really the first settler, as he came here in 1849 and built the "first shanty on a claim". Eighme was followed in May by E. Shutts, who built the log house first spoken of as used for a school house and to hold religious meetings in. Shutts also was in company with H. Landt in the erection of the saw-mill.

Com.

Adams County Press  
July 31, 1886

From New Haven.

I find, in looking over the history of this town as published in the Press, that one paragraph is omitted:

In the Spring of 1861 when the war clouds were gathering in the South, and the President called for volunteers for the military services of the Union, in many parts of the North the people organized companies of Home Guards, whose services were tendered to the Government to be called for on emergency.

At that time the young men of this town called a meeting and organized a company for such purposes. The names of the members of the organization were sent in a list to the Governor, together with the names of those selected for officers, and the Governor issued commissions to the latter. I find that almost to a man that company of Home Guards afterwards enlisted for active service, and the men were scattered in quite a number of regiments from this State. The first of these men to enlist were Monroe Leach, S. Pickard, N.B. Smith and ---Liscomb, in the 4th regiment. Afterwards the Captain and First Lieutenant, with ten more of the company enlisted in the "Fremont Rifles" being company D of the 10th regiment.

From this point the record is correct as published.

The Home Guards were never called out but once for any duty but drill. Then there were a good many Indians camped in town and the neighboring region, and report said they were going to make a break for their old lands.

The Captain called out the Guards and put them on picket in different parts of the town until the intentions of the Indians could be ascertained. It turned out they were assembling for their customary Big Medicine Dance. There were about one hundred Indians when they got together in all the glory of Indian paint, feathers and ribbons, but the excited imaginations of the news retailers had multiplied them into many hundreds.

Not a "fish story" but one of our Isaac Waltons, caught a black bass in Mason Lake that tipped the scales at nine pounds.

Sunday night we had the best rain of the season. It rained on every man's farm.

Com.