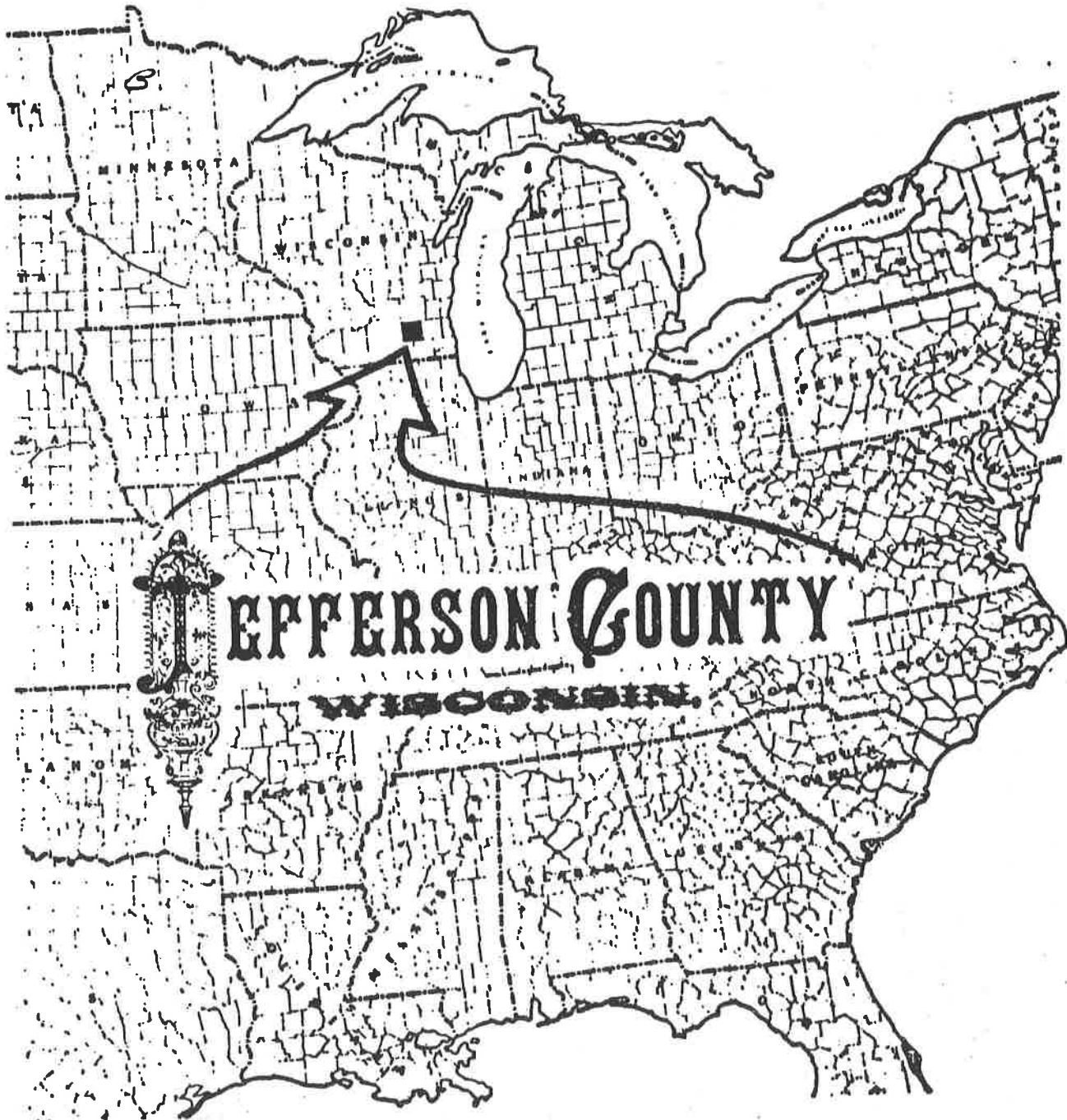


# **A Brief History of Jefferson County**

Its Towns, Villages,  
and Cities





# JEFFERSON COUNTY

WISCONSIN



MINNESOTA

WISCONSIN

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ILLINOIS

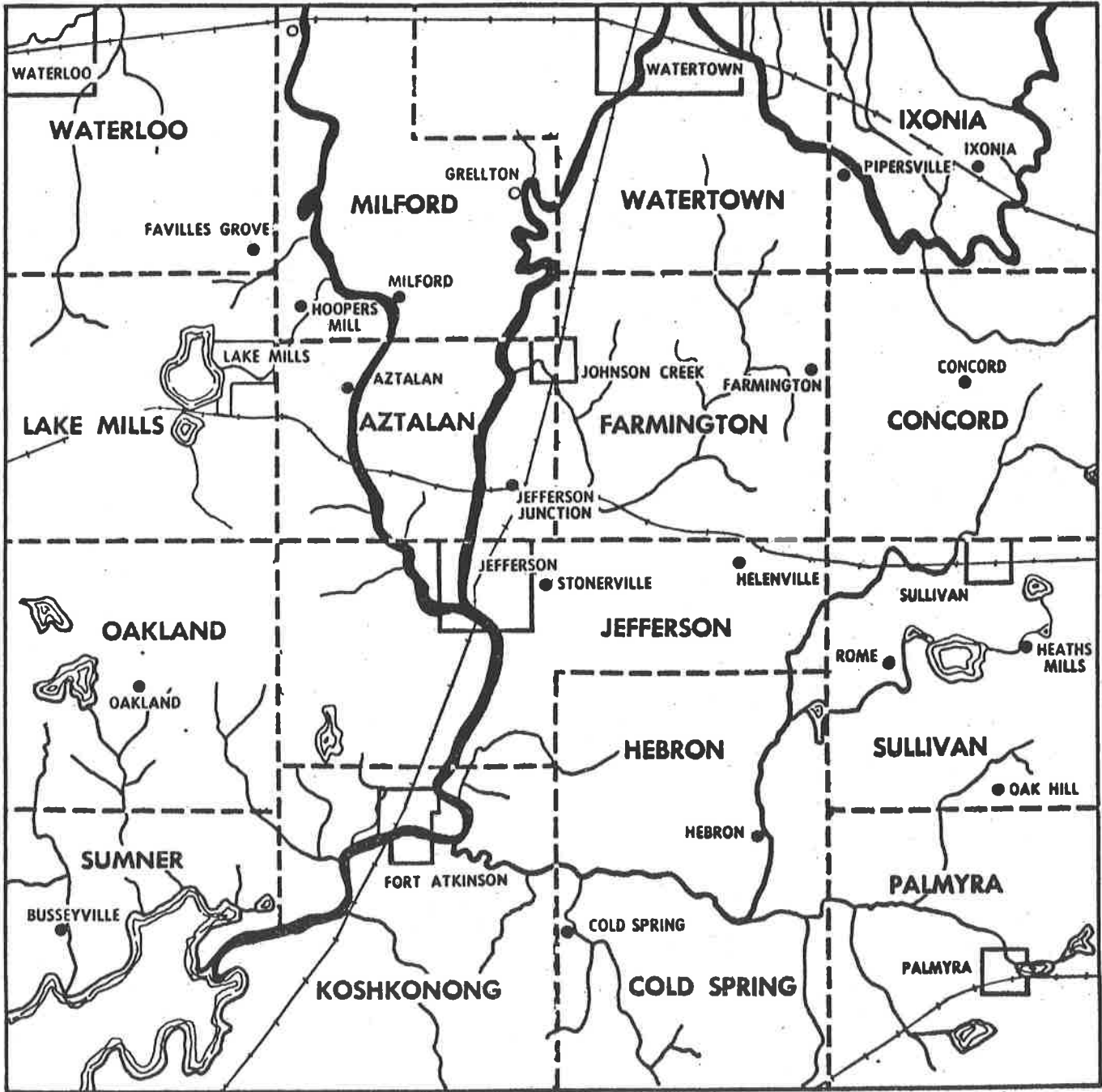
ILLINOIS

**A BRIEF HISTORY  
OF  
JEFFERSON COUNTY  
WISCONSIN**

**ITS TOWNS,  
VILLAGES AND CITIES**

COMPILED AND EDITED  
BY

W.F. JANNKE III  
1998



**JEFFERSON COUNTY, WI  
IN 1860**

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## Elected Officials of Jefferson County

Barbara A. Frank, County Clerk  
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Kenneth M. Schopen, Clerk of Circuit Court  
Orval Quamme, Sheriff  
David Wambach, District Attorney  
Pat Theder, Coroner

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## Jefferson County Historical Societies

The Jefferson County Historic Alliance  
The Bark River Woods Historical Society  
The Concord Historical Society  
The Fort Atkinson Historical Society  
The Jefferson Historical Society  
The Palmyra Historical Society  
The Watertown Historical Society  
The Johnson Creek Historical Society  
The Lake Mills-Aztalan Historical Society  
The Waterloo Historical Society  
The Rome-Sullivan Historical Society

## Officials of the Towns, Villages & Cities in Jefferson County

Gary W. Boden, Manager, City of Whitewater  
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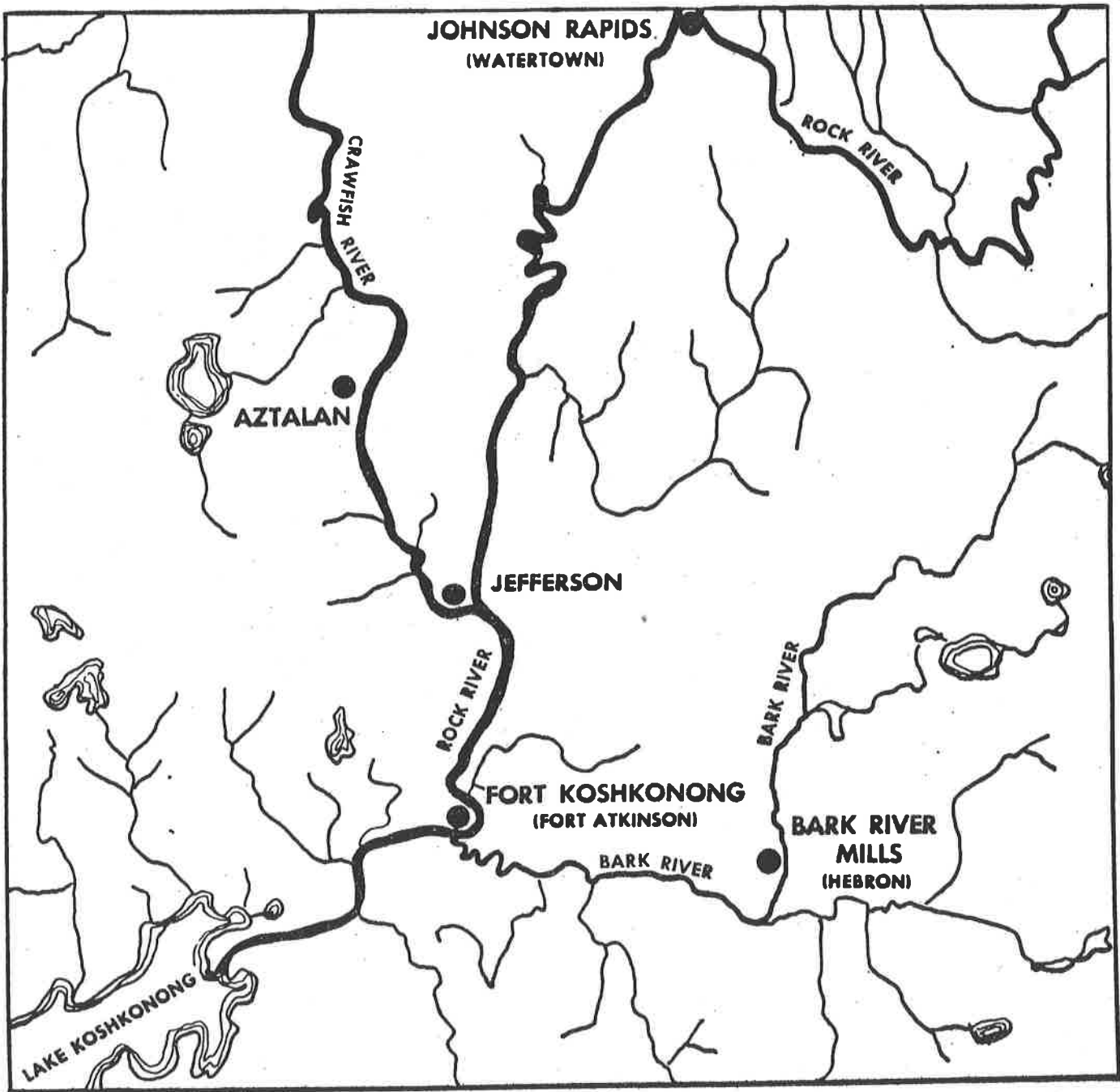
**The lion's share of thanks should be bestowed upon the members of the Jefferson County Sesquicentennial Committee who originally conceived the idea for this booklet. Those serving on the committee are:**

**Carl Jaeger, Committee Chairperson, Second Vice Chairperson County Board**  
**Cindy Arbiture, Secretary**  
**Wendell A. Wilson, Chairperson, County Board**  
**Janet Sayre Hoeft, County Board**  
**William Ward, Fort Atkinson**  
**Willard D. Hausen, County Administrator**

**And a special thanks to the residents of Jefferson County, past, present and future for whom this booklet is kindly dedicated.**



**PART ONE:**  
**HISTORICAL OVERVIEW**



**JEFFERSON COUNTY, WI  
AN 1840 MAP SHOWING THE MAJOR  
AREAS OF SETTLEMENT**

## **A BRIEF HISTORY OF JEFFERSON COUNTY**

In the early 1840s a newcomer to Jefferson County, Zenas Cole, wrote home to his parents back east extolling the virtues of his new home. After telling them of the prices of produce and of the quality of his life here he concluded his letter by saying that he was sure that when he died St. Peter wouldn't let him into Heaven once he stated where he had come from. He felt that the good saint would tell him to go back to Jefferson County since he already was in Heaven.

The residents of Jefferson County have long suspected that they lived in a very favored part of Wisconsin. Located in the southeastern part of the state, Jefferson County has long played an important role in Wisconsin's history.

The county is comprised of an area of 526 square miles. It is located midway between the urban areas of Madison and Milwaukee and over one half of the state's population, according to one estimate, live within a sixty-mile radius of the approximate center of Jefferson County.

Geographically speaking, the landscape of the county varies from level to rolling and hilly with many smooth-shaped hills separated by winding, slow-moving streams. The landscape was formed as a result of a large continental ice sheet which once covered the county. Jefferson County abounds with campsites, scenic lakes, such as Blue Spring Lake and Lake Koshkonong, archeological sites, such as the stockaded ruins at Aztalan, historical sites and markers, and numerous county parks.

The park system in Jefferson County is one that everyone can and does enjoy. There are 16 county parks covering well over 200 acres in total. The park sites in the county offer some attractive landscapes and are well disbursed throughout the county rather than clustered in one specific location. County parks include Altpeter Park in Koshkonong Township, Burnt Village Park near Hebron, Carlin-Weld Park in Palmyra, McCoy Park in Fort Atkinson, Pohlmann Park near Helenville, Rock Lake Park in Lake Mills, Rock River Park in Aztalan, Rome Pond Park in Rome, Welcome Travelers Park between Palmyra and Whitewater, Bicentennial Park in Johnson Creek, Busseyville Park southwest of Fort Atkinson, Cold Spring Creamery Park in Cold Spring, Johnson Creek Park, Joy Park, Kanow Park near Oconomowoc, and the most recent addition to the park system, Indian Mound Park in Fort Atkinson. In addition to the county parks, Jefferson County is also home to one state park, Aztalan State Park, the site of one of Wisconsin's most important archaeological sites.

Besides the many parks there are specialty shops, sprawling farms and a wide range of industries which serve as a good balance to the rural landscape. The location of the county and its many attractions guarantee a steady stream of tourists each year.

In addition to its many lakes, Jefferson County can boast of a network of rivers which crisscross the area. The major body of water, the Rock River, flows in a serpentine

path through the heart of the county. Its tributaries include the Crawfish, Maunesh, Bark and Scuppernong Rivers as well as Johnson's Creek. In addition, the Oconomowoc River, which begins in Washington County, also runs through the county, cutting between the towns of Concord and Ixonia before joining up with the Rock River. The excellent quality of the water in the earliest days of the county also attracted animals to this region in addition to making the land fertile and prime for crops. Together these factors attracted the first Native American settlers to this region.

One of the earliest of these tribes to call the future site of Jefferson County home were the so-called Mound Builders. They acquired their name because of their distinctive habit of building earthen mounds which were used as burial sites and also by erecting effigy mounds which probably had important religious or cultural significance. More than 1500 mounds are scattered throughout Jefferson County. The Mound Builder culture came to this region about 1100 A.D. and founded the ancient city at Aztalan near Lake Mills. This village contained 21 acres and was enclosed by a 12 foot high stockade. The Mound Builders seem to have left the area sometime in the mid 1300s.

Some time afterwards other Indian tribes began to locate in this area, most notably the Potawatomi, Winnebago (now known as the Ho-Chunk tribe), Menominee, Sauk and Fox. But by the mid 1700s and the arrival of the first European traders and explorers there were only two tribes continuing to make Jefferson County their home, the Potawatomi and Ho-Chunk. The Ho-Chunk tribe were by far the most numerous and powerful group and at one time had 14 villages between Lake Koshkonong and what is today Dixon, Illinois.

Relations between early white settlers and Native Americans were, for the most part, amicable. This was especially true in Jefferson County where no white settlement occurred until after the infamous Black Hawk War of 1832.

The Black Hawk War, one of the darker moments in Wisconsin's history, began as a result of broken promises and misunderstandings. For hundreds of years the Sauk Indians had been calling the Rock River, particularly the area now known as Rock Island, Illinois, their home. In 1804 a treaty was drawn up between the tribe and the U.S. Government in which the Sauks gave up their land with the promise that they could still live, hunt and plant corn on it until the land was surveyed by the government and opened for settlers.

White settlers soon arrived and began encroaching on the Indian lands. The settlers started to harass the Indians in hopes of driving them out. Tensions began to heat up.

In 1828 the Winnebagos at Prairie du Chien were forced to sign over their rights to the rich lead mining regions of southwestern Wisconsin and they were removed across the Mississippi River. One spectator at this event was an elderly war chieftain, Black Sparrow Hawk. He had seen five decades of violence since fighting on the side of the British in the Revolutionary War as a young boy.

Tensions continued to mount as the Sauk tribe, when returning to their village in the spring of 1830, discovered that their land had been taken over by white settlers and their burial ground had been plowed under for crop land. Black Hawk wanted to drive the whites out but he was overruled by a rival chief, Keokuk, who sadly led his people across the river into Iowa. There they experienced many hardships and Black Hawk became determined to bring his people back and reclaim their ancestral lands in the Rock River Valley. In April, 1832, 400 warriors and 1200 old men, women and children, under the leadership of Black Hawk, recrossed the Mississippi River and headed for the Rock River.

News of the crossing spread across the frontier like wild fire and created panic among the white settlers. Military troops were called out to protect the new settlements and local militia were formed by volunteers in Illinois and Michigan. Black Hawk retreated up the Rock River and on May 14 sent three of his men to surrender to American troops under the leadership of one Major Stillman. Half drunk, Stillman's men killed the three Sauks and cavalry groups rode out to exterminate the rest. Black Hawk had not wished to fight and only had forty men with him. His warriors, however, took cover and fired upon the cavalry and routed them. The report spread that the bloodthirsty Black Hawk, along with 2000 warriors, had ambushed the soldiers. When this news reached the white settlers it created wide-spread terror. Black Hawk knew there was no other option than to fight. Other tribes sent word that they would join him in helping to rid the valley of white settlers.

Black Hawk moved up to Lake Koshkonong in Jefferson County, then a total wilderness inhabited only by Indians, and settled his people there. Hard pressed by American forces, he retreated again, this time towards the Mississippi River. It was there that the war ended with the Battle of Bad Axe. Of 1600 Indians that began with Black Hawk only about 150 survived this battle. After his capture Black Hawk was imprisoned and later taken to Washington where he had an audience with President Andrew Jackson. He was finally released to a reservation after signing a treaty of perpetual peace.

The Black Hawk War was the last stand of the Indians in the northwest territories. After the war ended the door was opened for white settlers and Yankees and Europeans began to throng into the area. By the 1840s the last remaining tribes in the county were forcibly removed and by the 1870s the sight of an Indian was considered a rarity.

Commencing in late 1835 Yankees, chiefly from New York state, began to arrive in the territory. One of the earliest groups to settle in Jefferson County were members of the Rock River Land and Claim Company. This organization, made up of men from the Milwaukee area, were on the look-out for suitable land for mill sites and investment. They claimed land in what is now Hebron township and erected a mill there along the Bark River which began operations in 1836.

The full force of settlement in Jefferson County would not be felt until 1836. This was

an especially magical year for the state and the county. In 1836 Wisconsin was made a separate territory and cast off from Michigan. At the same time Jefferson County was created and separated from Milwaukee County by an act of the territorial council. It would not be until 1839, however, that the territorial legislature would officially recognize Jefferson County and provide it with a county government.

Contrary to popular belief, Jefferson County was not named for Thomas Jefferson. Instead, several early settlers, including James, Peter and Patrick Rogan along with Judge Hyer, petitioned the legislature to have the new county named after Jefferson County, New York, where they originally came from.

The location for the center of the county government was chosen in 1837. A petition was presented to the legislature to locate the county seat at a point between the Rock and Crawfish Rivers within the present city of Jefferson.

Though it would seem logical to place the center of county government at the center of the county (and indeed the present location of the courthouse is within one mile of the geographical center of Jefferson County) the placement sparked a series of bitter controversies between Jefferson and Watertown. Each city wanted the county seat in their community. This continuing animosity finally resulted in the so-called "county seat war" of 1856.

In 1856 a bill was introduced and adopted by the Wisconsin Legislature that would leave the decision of the location of the county seat up to the voters of the county. The bill, however, mentioned nothing about voting more than once! Needless to say, the voters in both communities took full advantage of this loophole.

Ballots were cast by Dodge County residents and names were also picked from the Chicago City Directory to swell the tally. The election was won easily by those favoring the move of the county seat to Watertown. In desperation, the citizens of Jefferson suggested a proposal to allow a new county to be created which would have been composed of five Dodge County towns and the towns of Watertown, Ixonia and part of Milford with the city of Watertown as its hub. This new county would have been called Franklin but the plan did not meet with favor and nothing came of it.

The whole county seat matter was finally settled by the Supreme Court in 1857 which stated that the ballots cast by residents outside of the county were illegal. Watertown residents disagreed but the matter was dropped and Jefferson was retained as the county seat.

The early residents of the county were, for the most part, small farmers. Everyone who came here shared similar hardships. Each was looking for the ideal farm site which, according to one source, would contain some oak or maple woodland for building material and fuel and some prairie for easy planting. A handy water supply was also a desirable feature.

The first thing a newcomer did was clear a site for a house, usually a log cabin in the earliest days of the county. The next step was to cut, trim and notch the logs. Once done, the settler would invite his neighbors to a "raising bee" which was always well attended. Once the house was up the next important matter was to get a crop in the ground which would insure a winter's supply of food. Fish and game were plentiful but staples such as vegetables and flour were often hard to come by and expensive.

The first years of settlement were reasonably peaceful. That is not to say that there wasn't the occasional outbreak of lawlessness. Counterfeiting rings and horse thieves abounded, the most notorious band of marauders being a family named Finch that lived near Lake Koshkonong. They were known to swoop down upon the outlying settlements and steal horses. But for the most part things were peaceful.

As the years went by and times improved log homes gave way to substantial frame or brick homes with fine furniture. Churches and schools began to begin throughout the county starting in the late 1830s. The first dominant religious body in the county were the Methodists who had circuit riding ministers preaching throughout the area. They were followed by Catholics, Congregationalists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians and, with the arrival of the Germans in the mid 1840s, Lutherans. By 1850 there were only 19 churches in all of Jefferson County, the Methodists leading the path with eight of those churches. By 1870 there were 51 churches in the county. Presently, residents of Jefferson County have over 100 churches to choose from.

Educational needs began to be met in the late 1830s, with the first school in the county purported to be in Aztalan. These early schools were, for the most part, one-room affairs and many rural school buildings still exist throughout the county, most today being private dwellings. Many of these schoolhouses were used until the mid 1950s when school districts began to consolidate and modern schools were built. Presently there are nearly 105 schools scattered throughout Jefferson County.

As the years went by and times continued to improve and settlers prospered, log cabins gave way to substantial frame or brick homes with fine furniture. Those not wishing to become farmers began to open businesses that would cater to the needs of new settlers which continued to pour into the county.

The first major commercial industry was milling. Flour mills and saw mills would continue for many years to be important hubs around which whole towns were created. The very shape of the rivers in the county were forever altered by the many mill races carved into the shore lines. Saw mills would gradually fade from the scene by the 1870s as brick and lumber yards began to dominate the building field. Flour mills, however, would continue to be an important business until well into the twentieth century.

The dominant focus in the county would always be agriculture. Each new arrival from the east brought with them new and improved farming methods and equipment. The



factory system of cheese making was introduced at Lake Mills in the 1840s and the first blooded livestock were introduced by Jefferson County farmers. With the arrival of German immigrants came practical applications of improved farming methods. Today farmers in Jefferson County are still keeping abreast of current trends by hosting Farm Progress Days (held in the county in 1956 and 1984) and also by presenting awards to outstanding young farmers as a way of paying tribute to leaders in their fields. In addition, the Jefferson County Farm Bureau has been in existence for well over 50 years which has acted as the voice of the farmer in the county, addressing their needs and concerns, offering farm insurance and in 1945 the Bureau established Farmco, a farm cooperative in the county. The schools in Jefferson County have also taken an active role in promoting and educating young people about the ways of farming with the Future Farmers of America program and also 4-H programs. One of the most prominent ways of promoting farming and agricultural products is the Jefferson County Fair, held annually since 1853. Each year hundreds of local farmers use the fair to showcase their produce and livestock and through the years the Jefferson County Fair has become one of the best county fairs in the state.

The major cash crop grown through most of the earliest years in Jefferson County was wheat. Indeed, Wisconsin farmers in general all grew wheat and at one time Wisconsin was considered to have been the second largest wheat producing state in the nation. But a series of agricultural disasters, including the devastating effects of the Cinch Bug and wheat disease, coupled with the fields being played out after so many years with no crop rotation, killed the wheat industry in Wisconsin and in Jefferson County. Desperate to find a new agricultural outlet, county farmers turned to a young visionary, William Dempster Hoard, who had been preaching about the virtues of dairy farming. In 1872 Hoard and six others met at the Lindon House hotel in Watertown to form the Wisconsin Dairymen's Association. This group acted as a voice for all of the small dairy farmers in the state. Through the pages of "Hoard's Dairyman" magazine and the Association farmers were kept informed of current trends and innovations in the industry and Wisconsin's contribution to the dairying industry were brought to the attention of the world. As a result of the Wisconsin Dairymen's Association's pioneering efforts Wisconsin has always been in the vanguard of the dairying industry.

The 1840s saw a sudden increase in population and progress. Irish and German immigrants began to arrive in the county, followed by other ethnic groups. New towns began to spring up. A stage line began running through the county which helped bring even more settlers. About this time a movement was taking place to construct a canal that would have linked Milwaukee Harbor with the Mississippi River. The canal would have been dug from Milwaukee and linked up to the Rock River near Jefferson. Ground breaking for the project began in 1839 but after 5 years, one completed mile and \$57,000.00, the idea was considered a failure and further plans were abandoned.

Roads were laid out throughout the county but they were crude affairs and often



impassable during bad weather. In the early 1850s, however, a movement began to construct plank roads, the first being the Milwaukee-Watertown plank road which proved to be very successful. Other communities began to follow suit but by the mid 1850s these roads would be doomed to oblivion by the arrival of the railroad. Talk of a railroad in Wisconsin, and indeed Jefferson County, had been going on since the early 1840s, but the first concentrated effort to bring a railroad here did not take place until the mid 1850s. By 1860 most areas in Jefferson County were linked by rail. Those towns that were passed by gradually withered, most notably Aztalan, and some towns, such as Aliceton and Waitsville, disappeared entirely. But those towns that were included along the line prospered and thrived. Towns became villages and villages became cities. Farmers were able to transport their goods to market quicker and command a higher price for them. Life was good.

Then came the nation-wide depression of 1857. Many businesses were forced to close and most railroad companies in the state went bankrupt, taking the fortunes of small investors and bond holders with them. No place in the state and in the county was immune from the sting of the depression. Those towns that were fortunate enough to come out from the depression unscathed continued to grow and prosper. Other places, such as Watertown, which wouldn't emerge from the shadow of its railroad bond scandal for nearly thirty years, saw their hopes for big city status doomed and their progress impeded for years to come.

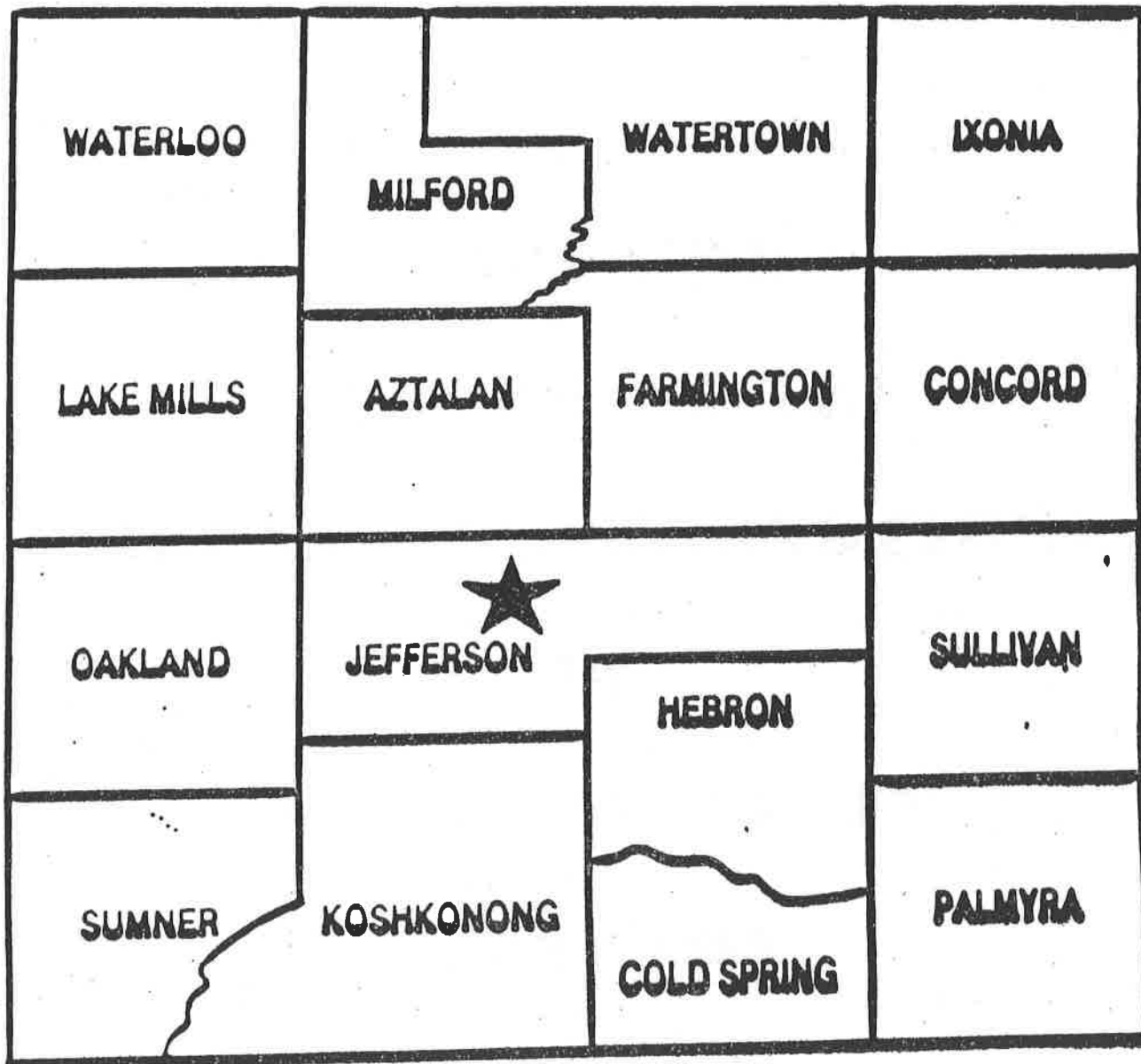
The 1860s brought with it the Civil War, which claimed thousands of lives and tore the country in two. The residents of Jefferson County were not hesitant to answer their country's call to arms. Volunteer companies sprang up throughout the county and hundreds of men left for southern battlefields, many never to return. Those companies that went to fight gave a good account of themselves and ably served the government.

This was not the first time a call to arms was heard in the county, nor would it be the last time. There have been Jefferson County residents in every war from the Mexican War in 1847 to the Gulf War in the early 1990s.

The twentieth century brought even more changes and innovations which made life easier. Poor and unmarked roads gave way to paved and well marked highways. Horses and wagons gave way to automobiles. Opera Houses, scenes of amateur and professional theatrics and concerts, gave way to movie theaters. Pianos in the parlor and music boxes gave way to the phonograph and later radio and television. Candles gave way to electric lights and wells, pumps and outhouses gave way to indoor plumbing. Each decade has brought with it new and exciting innovations which have had an impact on Jefferson County, some good and some bad. What will the future bring? The possibilities are endless.

In this year, the 150th anniversary of Wisconsin's statehood, the residents of Jefferson County can look back with pride on the accomplishments of those that have gone on before. The story here related barely scratches the surface of the rich tapestry of

Jefferson County's history. One can only speculate on what future historians will say about this time period. It is to be hoped that coming generations will look back and realize that people in the waning days of the twentieth century thought enough of their heritage to try to preserve it and honor it.



### **JEFFERSON COUNTY, WI AS IT APPEARS TODAY**



## **THE TOWNSHIP OF AZTALAN**

An expedition for the purpose of establishing a settlement in what would become the town of Aztalan set out from Milwaukee in late 1836. The party consisted of Thomas Brayton, Timothy Johnson, William Brayton, Stephen Fletcher, the Rev. Jared F. Ostrander and a few others. William Brayton had come to the area a year earlier as part of a federal surveying team and had found the place to his liking. These men made claims in what would become the town of Aztalan.

Prior to the arrival of white settlers Indians of a culture far more advanced than that of the simple woodland tribes had built a stockaded village on the west side of the Crawfish River and had flourished there for perhaps two hundred years before the arrival of the white man. This ancient village site is considered by experts to be one of the nation's premier archaeological sites outside of the Cahokia Village site near St. Louis, also a site colonized by the mound-builder Indians. When the early settlers arrived they found the ruins of this ancient village and the town that grew up around it took on the name Aztalan, in honor of these early tribes which, it is widely believed, were the founders of the Aztec culture in South America.

The little colony flourished and soon many more families settled. Thomas Brayton built a large log house which served the community as a public house in which to board weary travelers. Since the town was situated at the junction of two well traveled roads Aztalan was soon teeming with freight wagons, stage coaches and wagons of settlers and explorers.

It was felt that Aztalan was destined for greatness and in 1839 the residents petitioned the territorial legislature to have the state capital located there. Aztalan lost to Madison by one vote. At this time Aztalan was one of the largest townships in the county, its area covering what is today Waterloo, Lake Mills and part of Milford.

Business flourished in the community. The first hotel opened in 1840, followed by the first general store in 1841. By 1842 Aztalan was considered to have been the leading business and industrial center in Jefferson County.

The first post office in the county was established at Aztalan on April 1, 1837 with Nathaniel F. Hyer as the postmaster. This post office closed in 1904.

The first school in the county opened in Aztalan in 1838, taught by Rev. Jared F. Ostrander who also conducted the first religious services in the county.

In 1839 a Baptist church was founded in Aztalan which continued until about 1915 or so and then closed. The building still stands and is today the home of the Lake Mills-Aztalan Historical Society.

The railroad, which was the lifeblood of many communities, brought only decay and

death to Aztalan. In 1859 the Northwestern Railroad passed within five miles of Aztalan. After that, travel on the roads which had brought the community to prominence began to fade. In 1881, when the line from Milwaukee to Madison was built, the tracks missed Aztalan by two miles. In 1882 the final blow came when the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad extended its line from Milwaukee to Madison, passing within a mile of the fading village. By 1900 Aztalan, once considered a site for the state capital, was a ghost town at a quiet country crossroad.

A rejuvenating force came to Aztalan in 1941 when the Lake Mills-Aztalan Historical Society was founded. The society took over the old abandoned Baptist church and turned it into their museum. They filled the building with a fascinating collection of Indian artifacts and pioneer relics. The museum has been visited by thousands of people coming from nearly every state in the union as well as foreign countries. The old church, the last building of a once-thriving community, stands as a memorial to the hardy pioneers who once lived and toiled within the shadow of its spire. In addition to the old Baptist Church, there are six other buildings on the museum grounds. They include three pioneer log cabins, a red brick one room schoolhouse across the road from the museum complex, and the Hansen Granary. The latest building added to the grounds, and currently undergoing a restoration, is a log building that was the original meeting place of the Mamre Moravian Church congregation.

In addition to the museum complex, Aztalan is also home to the only state park in the county, Aztalan State Park. This park contains one of Wisconsin's most important archaeological sites, the ancient stockaded village and mounds, and was designated a National Landmark in 1964. The park is mostly open prairie with 38 of its 172 acres in oak woods. Northern Pike, Catfish and Walleye are caught in the Crawfish River which is also used for boating and canoeing. Since 1980 the park has been managed by the Township of Aztalan under an agreement with the Department of Natural Resources.

Today approximately 1,472 people live in the township. The present town chairperson is Gordon Roglitz.

## **THE VILLAGE OF CAMBRIDGE**

The Village of Cambridge has a rich and colorful history. It has long been a popular vacation spot for Chicagoans and other big city folks who flock to the shores of scenic Lake Ripley.

It was this scenic beauty that first brought Joseph Keyes, his son Abel and businessman Alvin Carpenter to the area. They bought land around Lake Ripley and in 1847 they were granted the rights to the water power.

The village got its name from Alvin Carpenter who named it Cambridge after the hometown of his former sweetheart.

In 1847 Keyes and Carpenter built a saw mill. In the next year two hotels, a school, the Willerup United Methodist Church and many other small businesses began to open. The population soared to 500 in a very short time. It was believed that this sudden burst of growth was due to the rumor of a railroad due to come through the village. Sadly, this did not occur until 1896.

Cambridge has had many well-known residents over the years, including Arthur Davidson, one of the pioneers of motorcycling, the renowned children's author Leo Edwards and Ole Evinrude, the inventor of the first outboard motor.

Today Cambridge is also the home of the Rowe Pottery Works, which opened its doors in 1975. This company, known throughout the nation, specializes in replicas of nineteenth century salt-glazed stoneware pottery. Prior to their opening, Cambridge's commercial district had been experiencing a bit of a decline. Since then, other specialty shops, such as Music and Memories, which specializes in music boxes, greeting cards and figurines, The Cambridge Country Inn and Pub, which features fine dining in pleasant surroundings and the Cambridge Antique Mall, have opened in downtown Cambridge making the main street a mecca for shoppers and tourists alike.

Cambridge is a small village which is, in reality, a cluster of small rural towns, villages, lakes and streams that form the "Greater Cambridge Area", a mix of farmers, business people, artists and entrepreneurs. The current village president is Eileen M. Scott.

## **THE TOWNSHIP OF COLD SPRING**

The Cold Spring Township was once part of the Bark River Township. The Bark River ran through the township and crossing the river for the spring elections proved a hardship for residents of Hebron because of the annual spring floods so in 1846 the Territorial Legislature passed an act which divided the town of Bark River. South of Bark River became Cold Spring and north of the river became Hebron Township.

Cold Spring was first settled by Alexander Henderson in 1837, followed by Abram Brink in 1838. Brink settled on Whitewater River, opposite a bounteous spring of cold, pure water, so cold in fact, as to entitle it to the name of Cold Spring, after which the settlement was named. Brink was the builder of many of the early industries; building a dam across the Whitewater River; a sawmill, turning mill and grist mill. Other early settlers included Nelson Fryer, Asabel Kinney, Henry Johnson and George Easton in 1839; Thomas Findlay, James Wallace, Prude Parsons and Thomas Brice in 1840. Descendants of some of these early families still live in the area.

The first school district formed in Cold Spring was the Vail or Sheriff School District No. 2, now called the Stone School. The first slab structure, built in 1842, had plank seats, and an earthen floor. The Little Red School replaced the first one in 1850. The present stone building was built in 1869 of stones cleared from Deloss Vail's farm. The school closed in 1962. The Stone School is today the site of the town hall. After the school closed, an incorporated non-profit organization, known as the Cold Spring Community Club, was organized and became owners of the building. The building was bought from the Whitewater School District for \$1200.00. The building was turned over to the township in 1984 and became the town hall. It is now known as the Cold Spring Community Center Town Hall. The Stone School 4-H meets there, as well as the Cold Spring Homemakers and the Cold Spring Community Club.

Other school districts in Cold Spring included School District No. 1 named King, Lentz or Meadowbrook, was a frame building located on Hwy U; District No. 3, the Parish School, was located on Hwy 59, and has been remodeled into a home. District No. 4, the White School, was also a frame building located on Hwy D and Piper Road. The school houses in Districts 1 and 4 have been razed. The Cold Spring School, located in the village, was Joint District No. 3. This was organized about 1840. The first school was a log cabin. The present 2-story brick school was built in 1871. It has been remodeled into a home.

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church is located in the township. The first building was erected in 1867 and is still in use by the present congregation which purchased it in 1884.

The Cold Spring Union Cemetery Association was organized in 1869 to care for the grounds of the cemetery. The cemetery is located at the highest point in the township and many of the early settlers are buried there.

Some interesting facts about Cold Spring:

Abraham Lincoln, who would later become the sixteenth president of the United States, received an honorable discharge from the United States Army in Cold Spring on July 10, 1832, after serving as a militia volunteer under General Henry Atkinson in the Black Hawk War. The next day Lincoln discovered that his horse had been stolen and he was forced to walk home to New Salem, IL, a distance of 250 miles. A historical marker with the date and a description of the event was erected in 1964 in the township.

George W. Peck, author of Peck's Bad Boy series of books, spent his boyhood in the village of Cold Spring. He was Wisconsin's Governor between 1891-1895.

Cold Spring Cheese Co., owning five cheese factories, was the largest company in Jefferson County.

Edward Sheriff Curtiss, well known North Western Indian photographer, was born in the town of Cold Spring in 1868.

Burnt Village, an old Winnebago Indian village and a landmark of the Black Hawk War, is located on Hwy N, about one mile north of the junction of Hwy M.

Cold Spring Coffin Factory was considered the best. You were not considered "properly buried" unless put to rest in a Cold Spring Coffin.

The building that houses the Cold Spring Inn is over 100 years old and was once a post office, general store and a local bar. The establishment is now a restaurant and bar.

Spring Creek Golf Center, a public 9-hole golf course, was built on the property that originally belonged to the mill site farm. The course opened in 1988.

Present members of the Cold Spring Town Board include Lisle Piper Jr., chairman, Wesley Freeman and Lyle Pester, supervisors; Mary Ellen Findlay, clerk; and June Freeman, treasurer. The present population of the town is 738.

## **THE TOWNSHIP OF CONCORD**

The history of the Town of Concord dates back to February 12, 1841, when townships seven and eight, north of range 16, separated from the town of Watertown to form the Town of Union. On January 21, 1846, Union township divided into two separate towns, Concord and Ixonia. The two towns took different paths to future development. The railroad would be routed through Ixonia providing opportunities for commerce and industry. The town of Concord remained a rural township with a focus on agriculture and dairy farming.

The Town of Concord was a central stopping point between Milwaukee and Madison on the Wisconsin Stage Lines route along the old territorial road. Concord grew with a population of 725 in 1850, which increased to 1,627 by 1870. By the turn of the century Concord was a growing farming community, with a town hall, post office, general store, schools, churches, a sorghum mill, barber shop, creamery, cheese and butter factories.

The first general meeting of the Town of Concord was held on the first Tuesday of April, 1846, at the home of Austin Kellogg. The meeting was organized by the election of Luther Thayer for Moderator and Jost D. Petrie for Clerk. Town officials were then elected for the ensuing year: Chairman of Board of Supervisors, Horatio N. Carlton; Assistant Supervisors, Luther Thayer and William Sacia; Town Clerk, Jost. D. Petrie; Treasurer, William Dunning, Jr.

Concord Township was also home to the families of well known children's author Laura Ingalls Wilder. Laura's grandmother, Charlotte Quiner, purchased 40 acres of land in Concord moving from Brookfield, Wisconsin, as a widow in 1848. Lansford Ingalls, Laura's paternal grandfather, also purchased land in Concord on December 31, 1853. Laura's mother, Caroline, grew up in Concord where she became a teacher and met her future husband, Charles Ingalls. They were married in Concord on February 1, 1860 and shortly thereafter moved to Pepin, Wisconsin, where Laura was born in 1867.

A new series of children's books have been authored by Maria Wilkes (published by Harper-Collins Publishing) about the Quiner-Ingalls family roots in Brookfield, Waukesha County, and in Concord. The name of the series is, like Laura Ingalls Wilder's series, "The Little House Series". The most recent entry is entitled "Little Clearing In The Woods".



## **THE TOWNSHIP OF FARMINGTON**

The earliest settler in what would become the Township of Farmington was very likely Timothy Johnson, who came to the area in 1838. He made a joint claim in this area with Charles Goodhue and built a cabin where the present village of Johnson Creek now stands. The first cabin built in Farmington Township was built by Charles Dunning, another early settler.

The first post office was established in the township in the early 1840s, with branch offices in Johnson Creek, Farmington village and Helenville. The first school district was laid out in 1849 and classes were taught by Harriet Esselstein in a log house a mile west of the creek.

The first marriage was probably that of Richard Rose to Elizabeth Pike. The first child born in the township was Albert Rose and the first recorded death was that of an unnamed stranger who happened to be visiting at the Rose home.

The Township of Farmington was formally established in 1848 and currently has a population of approximately 1,415 persons. The present town chairperson is Donald Reese.

## **THE CITY OF FORT ATKINSON**

Fort Atkinson has its origins shortly after the end of the Black Hawk War of 1832, which marked the last Indian war east of the Mississippi in American history. Settlers journeyed to this area in search of rich soil, a welcome change from the poor rocky soils of their native New England. Modern streets and buildings still honor some early settlers, such as Dwight Foster, Aaron Rankin, Milo P. Jones and Lucien B. Caswell.

Dwight Foster and his family came here in 1836, built a log cabin, and began feeding and housing other travelers as they passed through the pioneer village. In 1841, the year that the Act of Congress named the town of Fort Atkinson in honor of General Henry Atkinson, a military leader during the Black Hawk War, Foster built the first frame house. He later opened the first hotel, served as postmaster and operated a ferry service across the Rock River.

By 1853 "Fort" had a population of roughly 750 residents. The community remained under a township form of government until 1860, when it was declared a village. On April 5, 1878, Fort Atkinson became a city. Milo Jones was elected Mayor of the thriving new city of nearly 2,000 people. On April 4, 1930, as a result of a referendum, the city manager form of government was approved and since 1931 Fort Atkinson's top administrator has been a full time city manager. Fort's city government provides its citizens with police and fire protection, street maintenance, and community programs and special events through the parks and recreation and museum departments.

The city has been served by many newspapers over the years, the present paper being The Daily Jefferson County Union. In addition to the local press, the city is also served by radio stations WFAW--AM and WSJY--FM.

Fort Atkinson was established by those seeking to homestead on rich farm land, but soon a strong industrial base grew from the farmers needs. The first major industry within the city was the Northwestern Manufacturing Company in 1866, which produced furniture, farm wagons, carriages and sleighs. Soon other factories began to bolster Fort's economy. Cornish, Curtis and Green began to supply to not only the community but soon to the Midwest and eventually the majority of the nation with butter churns and a multitude of items for the dairy farmer.

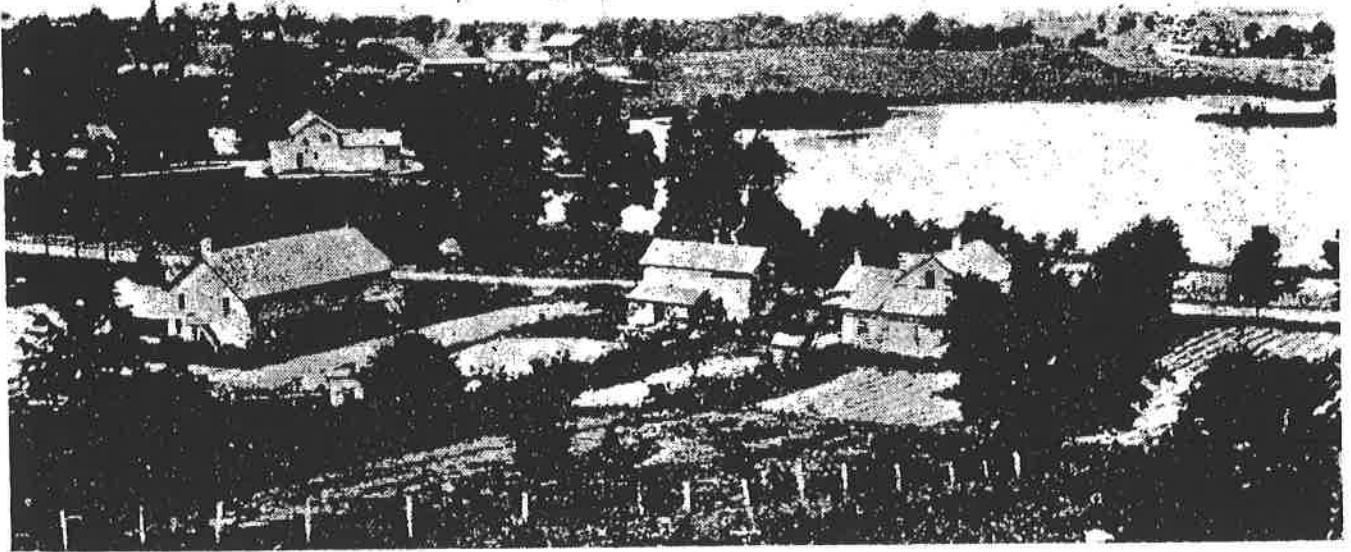
In the 1870s, Fort Atkinson became the home of W.D. Hoard, the man who is generally considered "the father of dairy farming" in Wisconsin. A newspaper man, agriculturist and politician, he founded "Hoard's Dairyman", a national publication, in 1885, and also served as Governor of Wisconsin.

The Jones Dairy Farm, founded by Milo Jones, the first county surveyor, was established in 1898. The production of pork sausage began in the family kitchen but with a national advertising campaign in 1904 their product gained world-wide recognition.

Fort Atkinson is now home to many industries and businesses such as W.D. Hoard and Sons, Inc., Nasco International and the Uncle Josh Bait Company, Spacesaver, Johnson-Hill Press, Badger Press, Riverwood International and Wisconsin Packaging.

Fort Atkinson also prides itself on preserving its community heritage. Two historic districts preserve the architectural history of its built environment with the Main Street Historic District and the Merchant's Avenue District which includes homes once owned by some of Fort Atkinson's most prominent community leaders. The Hoard Historical Museum maintains a large archive of documents, photos and items relating to the rich history of the community, as well as permanent and rotating exhibits.

Fort Atkinson is proud of its history and looks forward to an equally rich future.



**HEBRON, WI  
A PANORAMIC VIEW TAKEN  
AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY**

## **THE TOWNSHIP OF HEBRON**

In 1835 a party of six men left Milwaukee and went out into Potawatomi and Winnebago territory to find water power sites along the Bark and Rock Rivers. After 17 days they arrived at the present site of what is known today as the village of Hebron. In November, 1835, they put up a shanty for the Rock River Land and Claim Company and left one of their party, David Sargent, to spend the winter here and legalize the claim. Sargent subsequently became the first known white settler to spend a winter in Jefferson County.

On September 9, 1836, construction was started on a saw mill and the first logs were sawed in February, 1837. This was the first sawmill on the Rock River or its tributaries north of Dixon, Illinois. The first mill operator was Enoch Darling. In 1845 Joseph Powers bought the mill, added a bedstead factory, for the manufacture of bed frames, and hired about 100 men. A steam operated sawmill was built in 1852 by Jesse Wright northwest of the Hebron village. In 1852 Powers built a flour mill, but it burned in 1855. It was rebuilt the next year by C.R. Barnes. Powers lost his bedstead factory due to a fire in 1866. He did not rebuild in Hebron but instead moved his operation to Fort Atkinson.

In 1837 Cyrus Cushman, a farmer, claimed land two and one-half miles north of Hebron in Section 24. He had a large tract of land along the Bark River, built the first framed house in 1843 and put up a dam and sawmill on the mighty little Bark River. From there Cushman floated lumber down the Rock River to settlements in Illinois and also had a "run of stone" for grinding feed. He was breeder of full-blooded Ayrshire cattle and was the first to have Berkshire hogs in the state.

In 1838 the territorial legislature divided Jefferson County into towns. The southeast corner was Bark River which included Cold Spring, Hebron, Sullivan, Palmyra and part of Jefferson township. The first town meeting was April 5, 1842, in Cold Spring, at the home of Abram Brink, the town clerk, who certified \$135.00 for a general tax. Subsequent to this meeting town meetings were held at Bark River Mills in Hebron. In 1846 the territorial legislature passed an act to divide Bark River into the towns of Sullivan, Tunbridge, Palmyra and Bark River. Tunbridge was named by Cyrus Cushman after his native town in Vermont. This town division lasted one year and again Hebron was reorganized by the legislature, taking from Bark River (Cold Spring) the part north of the river as well as part of Tunbridge and placing the upper portion of Tunbridge in Jefferson Township.

The village of Hebron was platted in 1844 by Joseph Powers and John Fisk. It was platted again and recorded in 1856 by F.X. Starin. In the late 1840s and early 1854 Hebron was a booming village, the second largest in Jefferson County. However, plans for a proposed railroad going through Hebron did not materialize, thus curtailing the growth of the village. Six schools were built from 1843 to 1854 and used until 1956 when they were consolidated. Tax records dating from the 1840s are still

housed in the Hebron Town office.

The Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in 1839 and for 15 years members met in homes or outdoors. In 1856 a brick church was built, but in 1898 it was struck by lightning and damaged so badly it had to be completely demolished. The new church was dedicated June 25, 1899, and is still very active.

The first highway through the village of Hebron was built in 1842 when the territorial legislature authorized a road to be built from Prairieville (Waukesha) to Fort Atkinson. This highway was later rerouted and is now known as State Highway 106.

The first bridge over the Bark River was built at Princes Point on Highway D in 1859 along with a corduroy road up to the bridge on both sides over the marshland. An iron bridge replaced the wooden one in 1897 and in 1950 a cement bridge replaced the iron one. The first bridge to be built in Hebron was three-quarters of a mile south of the village on Koch Road.

From 1846 to 1868 Bark River Mills had a post office. In 1868 it was known as the Hebron Post Office which was integrated into Fort Atkinson in 1905. William Noyes was the first mail carrier. He bought the beautiful home built by Joseph Powers in 1849 which is still in use in Hebron today.

Between 1865 and the early 1870s Hebron boasted two mills, one large bedstead factory, a post office, creamery, two general stores, two shoe shops, a repair shop, two blacksmiths, a potash factory, brick yard, milliner's shop, sugar bush, two hotels and two saloons.

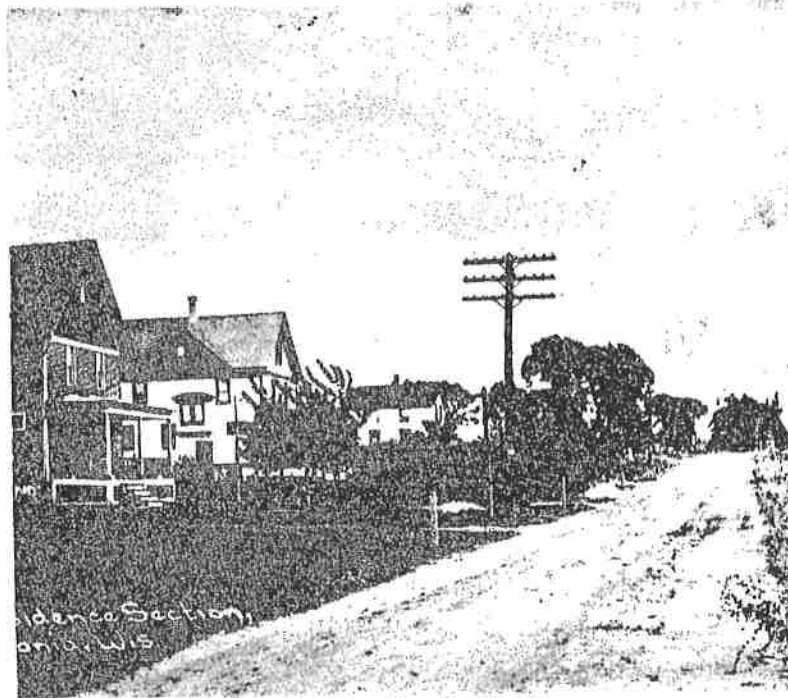
A circus--the Wintermute and Hall Circus, owned jointly by the Hall and Wintermute families--was housed in Hebron when not on the road. The Wintermutes were from Hebron and their descendants still live in the area.

Hebron has had volunteers who fought and died in the Civil War, in the Spanish-American War, World War One, World War Two and every conflict since then to the present time.

Today Hebron is a quiet little village with homes, one tavern, a church, a body shop and the Hebron Community Center which is utilized by the Jefferson County Head Start Program, the Town Board, 4-H Club and rented out for various activities and functions.



**Business section facing West.**



**Residence Section facing East.**

## **IXONIA, WI IN THE 1910S**

## **THE TOWNSHIP OF IXONIA**

The flourishing township of Ixonia was once a trackless trail of wilderness occupied by the Winnebago and Potawatomi Indians. Later the British, Welsh, Germans and Norwegians immigrated and settled in great numbers.

A ford across the river east of the present village attracted the first settlers along the west bank of the Rock River. In this little settlement there were log houses, a store, hotel, saw mill, tavern and a half-way house which provided a place to live for prospectors who were looking to claim land. When the railroad appeared this little settlement, called Vicksburg, took its flight to the present village of Ixonia. The remains of the sawmill were cleared away in 1932.

Pipersville, named after the first settler, Benjamin Piper, located in the southwestern part of the township, also began to develop at the same time as Vicksburg. Piper built an inn on his land and provided the local farmers with a means of combining their loads of grain and hauling them to market in Milwaukee over the newly completed plank road which eased their burdens by building a loading platform. Today this hamlet is still located in the township.

The Ixonia Township was once a part of Watertown. In 1841, towns 7 and 8, north of range 16, were divided off and became the town of Union. Five years later Union divided and town 7 became Concord. The townspeople could not agree on a name for town 8 and so letters of the alphabet were placed in a hat and drawn out resulting in the name IXONIA. It remains the only town in the nation bearing this name.

The first town meeting was held April 21, 1846 at the home of Benjamin Piper. Town meetings were held in homes and other available vacant places until 1925 when the present town hall was built. An addition to the hall was added in 1981 to allow for extra space.

Statistics reveal that there were once many sawmills, five ice houses, eight cheese factories, a stock yard and a railroad depot in operation at one time in Ixonia. The railroad first reached Ixonia in 1855 and a depot was built to accommodate passengers in 1888. It closed in 1966 and was razed three years later. Today all have vanished except for the cheese factories which have been converted into private homes.

The ten public one room school houses are not used as classrooms anymore. The majority have been converted into private dwellings also. A large public school is now located in the village and is affiliated with the Oconomowoc School System. There were at one time three Christian day schools of which one remains, and three of seven churches continue with weekly worship services.



The early settlers had to rely on farming to make a living and were instrumental in developing family farms. Twenty-one of these family farms remain in the township that have been in many generations of the same family for over 150 years in some cases.

Ixonia has also been the home of many prominent and colorful people, including Dr. Franklin Martin, a founder of the American College of Surgeons, Richard Jones, grandfather of Frank Lloyd Wright (three of Richard Jones' daughters were instrumental in founding the Hillside School for Girls in Spring Green, Wisconsin) and John "Commodore" Lewis, the shortest man in the state who measured a mere 27 inches in height.

Electricity reached the village in 1917. In 1903 a telephone cable was installed between Milwaukee and Watertown which made it convenient for a phone, but only one phone was installed in the village at that time.

An electric railway (interurban street car) running between Milwaukee and Watertown was located south and parallel to the railroad tracks. It was constructed in 1908 and disbanded in 1940. The rails were taken up and shipped away to use for metal scrap in the manufacturing of munitions in World War Two.

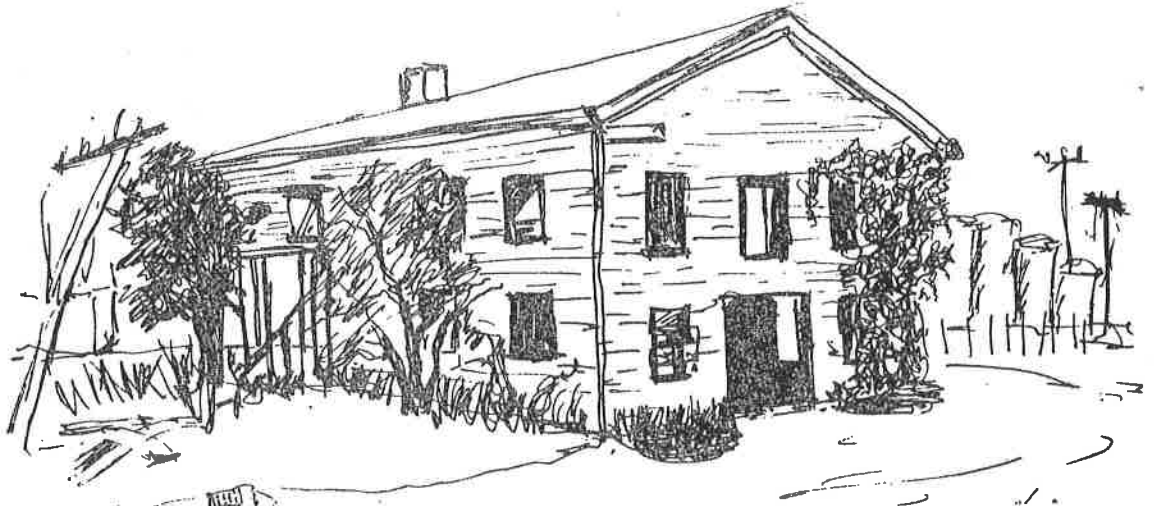
Ixonia has its own highway department, volunteer fire department, ambulance service, two sanitary districts, a park and recreational department, a planning committee, industrial committee and a recycling committee. Ixonia was the first community in Jefferson County to start a recycling program and transfer site. An industrial park began in 1973 with the purchase of 30 acres of land located south of the village. It has expanded over the years to encompass 220 acres.

At one time Ixonia had its own post office with Benjamin Piper and a Mr. Rutledge serving as the first postmasters but this office has long since closed. Today the village is served by two rural routes.

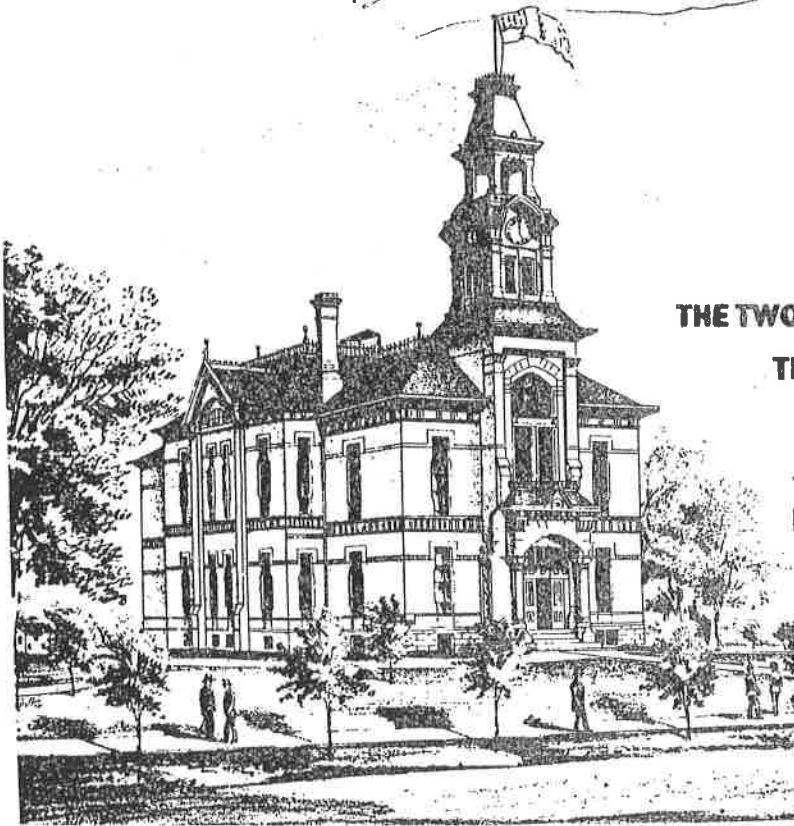
In addition to a town hall and several small shops Ixonia is also home to the Ixonia State Bank which began in 1918. Over the years this banking concern has expanded with an addition of three branch offices.

The people of Ixonia count themselves as citizens of a progressing township with roots that began over 150 years ago. Approximately 2,895 people call Ixonia Township home and the present town chairperson is Thomas Reiss, Jr.

# THREE VIEWS OF THE JEFFERSON COUNTY COURT HOUSE

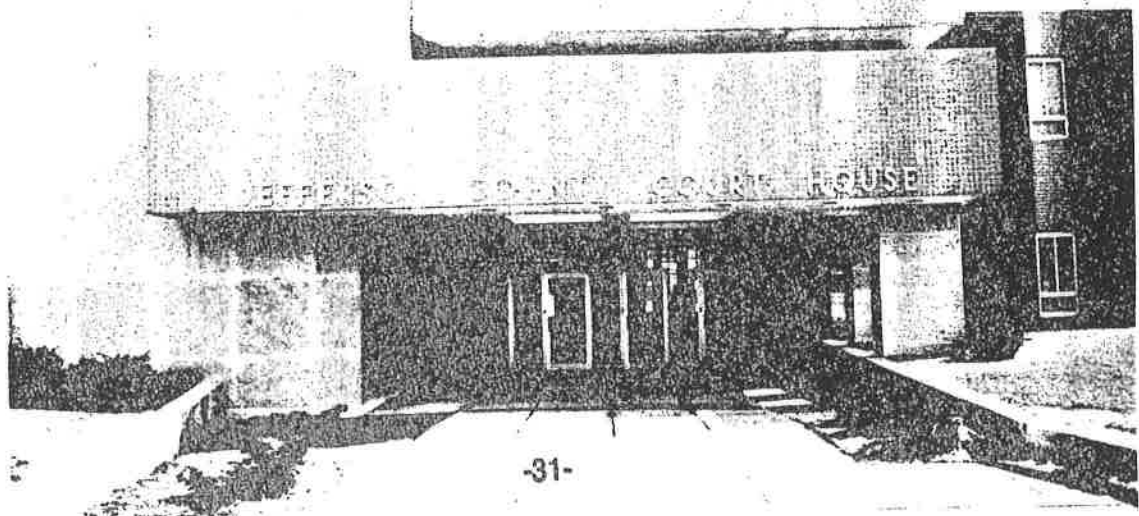


**THE ORIGINAL BUILDING, WHICH ALSO  
HOUSED A TAVERN ERECTED IN 1837**



**THE TWO-STORY VICTORIAN BUILDING  
THAT WAS ERECTED IN THE  
1880S AT A COST OF  
\$36,000.00**

**THE PRESENT DAY COURT HOUSE,  
COMPLETED IN 1966**



## **THE CITY OF JEFFERSON**

The City of Jefferson, situated in the center of the county, serves as the home of the county seat. The Jefferson County Courthouse is situated here, the present building having been erected in the late 1960s. The history of the city goes back to the very beginnings of the county.

It was on December 18, 1836, that nine settlers from Bark River Mills traveled to the area now known as the City of Jefferson. Rodney J. Currier and Daniel Lansing stayed on for the winter and lived in a log hut at the mouth of the Crawfish and Rock Rivers, today the site of the Copeland--Ryder Apartments.

Robert Masters and his family, along with Edward and Alvin Foster, arrived in 1836 as well, followed in 1837 by E.G. Darling who piloted a scow containing more settlers, housekeeping supplies and the framework of a house. Could this have been the first prefab home in the county? In October the frame of the house was elevated on a piece of ground which is the present day site of the Jefferson House, now called "Miss Kitty's". This building was not only a home, but it also served as a hotel, tavern, court house and general store.

The first death in town was E. Foster who died at his son's home on Oct. 10, 1837; the first birth was a daughter born to Hiram Z. Brittan; the first marriage was of Frank Roberts to Martha Fellows in 1839.

The first village president was John E. Holmes who would later become the very first Lieutenant Governor of Wisconsin. Jefferson became a city on March 19, 1878 with a population of 3000.

In the Spring of 1842 the first Germans came to Jefferson and since 1971 the city's Germanic heritage has been celebrated with an annual event called "Gemuetlichkeit Days".

By 1845 the population of the village was 75-80 people. Jefferson's businesses at this time included 2 blacksmith shops, a gun smith shop, 2 carpenter shops, county buildings, 2 lawyers, 2 doctors, and one school house.

The first brick building in the city was erected in 1849 by Andrew Lansing and it stood on the corner of Milwaukee and Third streets. A grist mill was also established by James Wadsworth.

The city continued to grow and as the years passed more services for the betterment of the residents were provided, including police and fire protection, a library and fair grounds.

Today there are many businesses and industries in Jefferson, such as Friskies Petcare Products, Jefferson Meats, the Ladish Malting Company and Schweigler Industries. There are also two industrial parks, seven churches and six schools, as well as senior citizen housing and a senior center. Jefferson is also home to the Council for the Performing Arts, which produces plays for people of all ages and tastes.

You can still walk down the street, go to the post office or enter a business and greet people with a friendly hello; you can still go into any of the fine restaurants and see the old timers and the new comers trying to solve the world's problems over a cup of coffee. One can still have a piece of pie ala mode and listen to the Legion Band play on a summer night (over 50 years now), or cool off in the new aquatic center, watch a ball game, golf at a new 18 hole golf course, or just sit along the Rock River at Rotary Park with its new Veteran's Memorial which pays homage to the men and women who gave their lives in the service of our country.

People who say there's nothing to do can check with the Chamber of Commerce and they will discover that Jefferson has over 56 active service organizations from AARP to the Volunteer Service for Countryside Home. To say that Jefferson is the "biggest little town you'll ever love" is an understatement.

## **THE TOWNSHIP OF JEFFERSON**

The Township of Jefferson was first settled by Rodney J. Currier and Andrew Lansing, who came from Milwaukee in December, 1836. They erected a cabin in the northwest quarter of Section 10. Jefferson Township and the Township of Watertown share the distinction of being the largest townships in the county in terms of square footage.

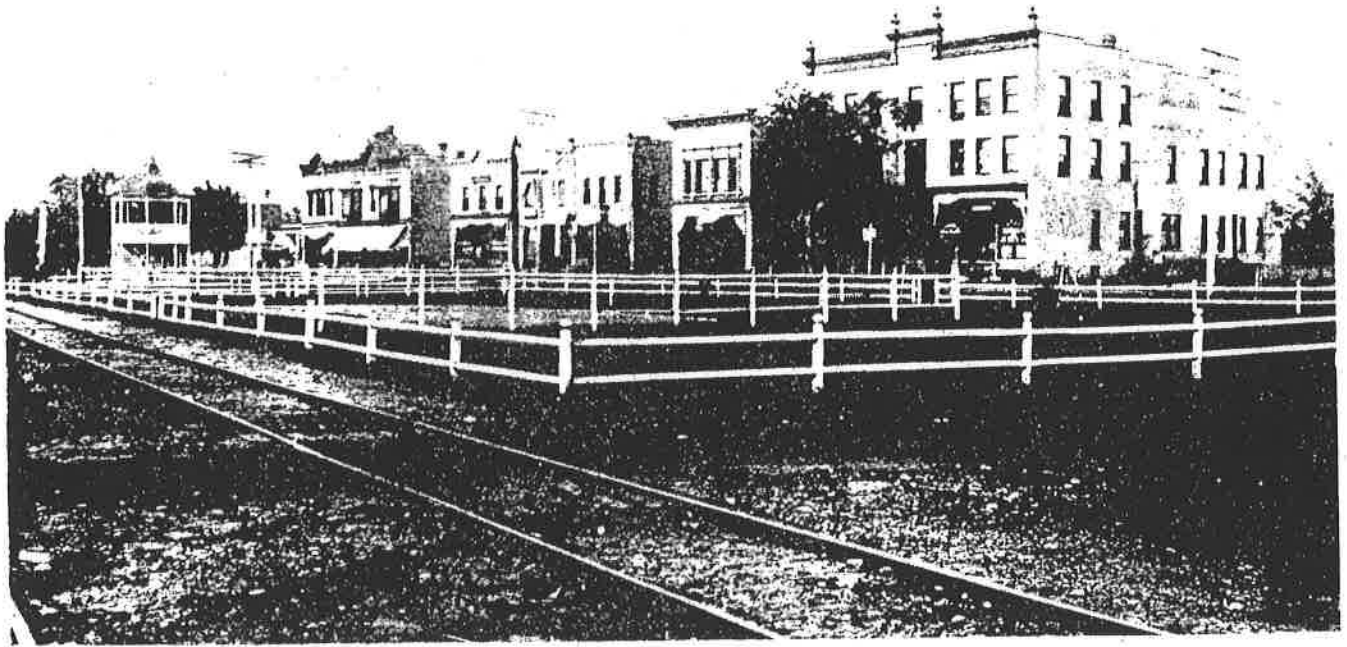
In 1837 Enoch G. Darling and his family moved to Jefferson from Bark River and built a log house which served as a tavern, trading post and courthouse. The log house stood near the site of the present day Jefferson County Courthouse.

The earliest preserved records for the township are of a town meeting held in 1845 at which William Sanborn served as moderator. Business included the raising of funds to support schools for the year; raising \$100.00 to build bridges across the Rock River opposite the county seat and an appropriation of \$50.00 to establish a free ferry across the Rock River.

The present City of Jefferson operated under the township form of government until 1857 when the Village of Jefferson was incorporated. Jefferson reached city status in 1878.

The only other community of appreciable size in the township is Helenville, which is about eight miles east of the city of Jefferson. This community was named in honor of Helen, wife of the place's founder Ortiges Bullwinkel. The first store there was established in 1849 and a post office opened in 1851. Helenville was settled by a large number of German immigrants and is the home of the oldest parochial school under the Wisconsin Synod of the Lutheran Church, St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran School, which was founded in 1851. Just west of Helenville is the old church yard and cemetery of the former Zion Evangelical United Brethren Church. This church was founded in 1854 and has long since ceased to exist. There is a historical marker on this site, however, denoting it as the scene of the first Wisconsin conference of the Evangelical United Brethren, which was held here in 1857.

The current population of the Township of Jefferson is 2,753 and the present town chairperson is Harold Bockman.



**JOHNSON CREEK, WI  
VIEW OF THE TOWN SQUARE  
IN THE 1890S**

## **THE VILLAGE OF JOHNSON CREEK**

The present Village of Johnson Creek had its inception in 1838 when Timothy Johnson and Charles Goodhue made a claim upon land where the main part of the village is now located. They built a cabin on ground over which the Northwestern Railroad now runs. A dam and a sawmill were also constructed by the same men.

Four years later, in 1842, there were two houses in the village. The nearest post office was located in Aztalan. Provisions could be obtained at no nearer point than Janesville or Milwaukee. The first religious service was held in 1841 by Reverend Allen, a Methodist circuit rider. The year 1859 brought the first railroad and a marked increase in the population.

The next two decades brought further growth. By 1879 there were 2 stores, 2 churches, 3 saloons, 2 blacksmith shops, 2 wagon shops, 2 shoe shops, 1 implement dealer, 1 cheese factory, 1 commission warehouse, 1 feed mill, 2 hotels 1 lumber yard, a district school house and a drug store.

The village was known as Belleville in honor of Charles Bell, who owned a good portion of the land upon which the village stood, though it always bore its present name as a post office. On April 9, 1868, the name of Belleville was changed to Johnson's Creek in honor of Timothy Johnson, though it was still referred to as Belleville in some sources as late as 1873. Sixty-five years later the village became incorporated and in the same year (1903) the name was changed from Johnson's Creek to Johnson Creek, the apostrophe and letter "S" being omitted.

In March of 1903 eight men signed a petition requesting certain territory in the towns of Aztalan and Farmington be declared the incorporated village of Johnson Creek. These men were F.C. Mansfield, W.A. Christians, J.H. Scofield, Jules Warnes, Ed Kottke, E.F. Flath, H.O. Meyers and T.J. Jax. The actual date of incorporation was May 11, 1903. New gas lamps were installed that year as well.

Johnson Creek's school district was laid out in 1849. A lot was purchased for \$100.00 in 1854 and a school was built on it for \$1278.00. The total school enrollment in 1886 for all grades was 25 students. The teachers were paid \$20.00 a month for three summer months and 3 winter months. Quite often the amount of money spent on wood was the highest part of the budget. The present high school was built in 1958 and the elementary school in 1964 with additions in 1969 and 1974. Today's enrollment for all grades is in the area of 600 students.

One of the leading residents of Johnson Creek was George C. Mansfield, who was the pioneer in the butter, milk and egg trade. He located in Johnson Creek in 1860 and engaged in merchandising. He started a cheese factory in 1877 and later was the state's leading butter producer. Johnson Creek was one of the larger markets in the



state for butter, milk and eggs; a position achieved through the energy of the Mansfield, Grell and Christians families. In 1888 Mansfield started the Mansfield Bank, a commercial system necessary to the success of any village.

The railroad arrived in Johnson Creek in 1859 and with it came one of the saddest events in the area's history. On November 1, 1859 an excursion train on its way to Chicago was traveling about 15 miles an hour when it struck a large ox, derailing the train and sending the engine and cars into a marshy area. The location of the accident was just south of where I-94 intersects with the tracks today. The road had just been built and therefore the farmer hadn't time to build a fence to keep the animals off of the tracks. There were fourteen people killed and at least thirty injured.

Another tragedy occurred on Saturday, December 26, 1891 when the business portion of Johnson Creek was wiped out by a disastrous fire. \$23,000.00 worth of property was consumed by flames. The fire was discovered in the basement of Steuber's Saloon. The origin of the fire remains a mystery. The Jefferson and Watertown fire departments had to be called to aid in putting out the fire. All of the businesses were under insured but nonetheless they all said they would rebuild.

Many local residents participated in both world wars, as well as the Korean and Vietnam wars. A local woman by the name of Hattie Raithel served in WWI as a Red Cross nurse. She died overseas as a result of an influenza epidemic. Dr. Floyd Wendt started his practice in Johnson Creek in 1933.

A local celebrity is Meinhardt Raabe, who graduated from Johnson Creek High School in 1932. He went on to portray the role of the Munchkin coroner in the 1939 classic film "The Wizard of Oz". He was also employed by the Oscar Meyer Co. and portrayed "Little Oscar".

Johnson Creek was well known for the dances held at the "Music Box" owned by W.A. Christians Jr., where popular dance bands of the day were booked. Another well known establishment was the "Gobbler Supper Club and Motel " built by Clarence Hartwig, today known as "The New Gobbler".

Johnson Creek is now known as "The Crossroads With A Future". Many new homes and apartments are being built . The Village has its own medical clinic, library, veterinary service and smaller businesses. The present large industries include Hi-Life Rubber, Bobcat, Master Mold, Polydyne, Saelens Corporation, and Equity Livestock Auction Market. The Village keeps growing with the addition of its first movie theater, fast food restaurant, the Johnson Creek Outlet Mall and the First American Bank and Trust. One thing that remains constant is the presence of the three churches, St. John's Evangelical Lutheran, Johnson Creek United Methodist and St. Mary Magdalene Catholic Church.



## **THE TOWNSHIP OF KOSHKONONG**

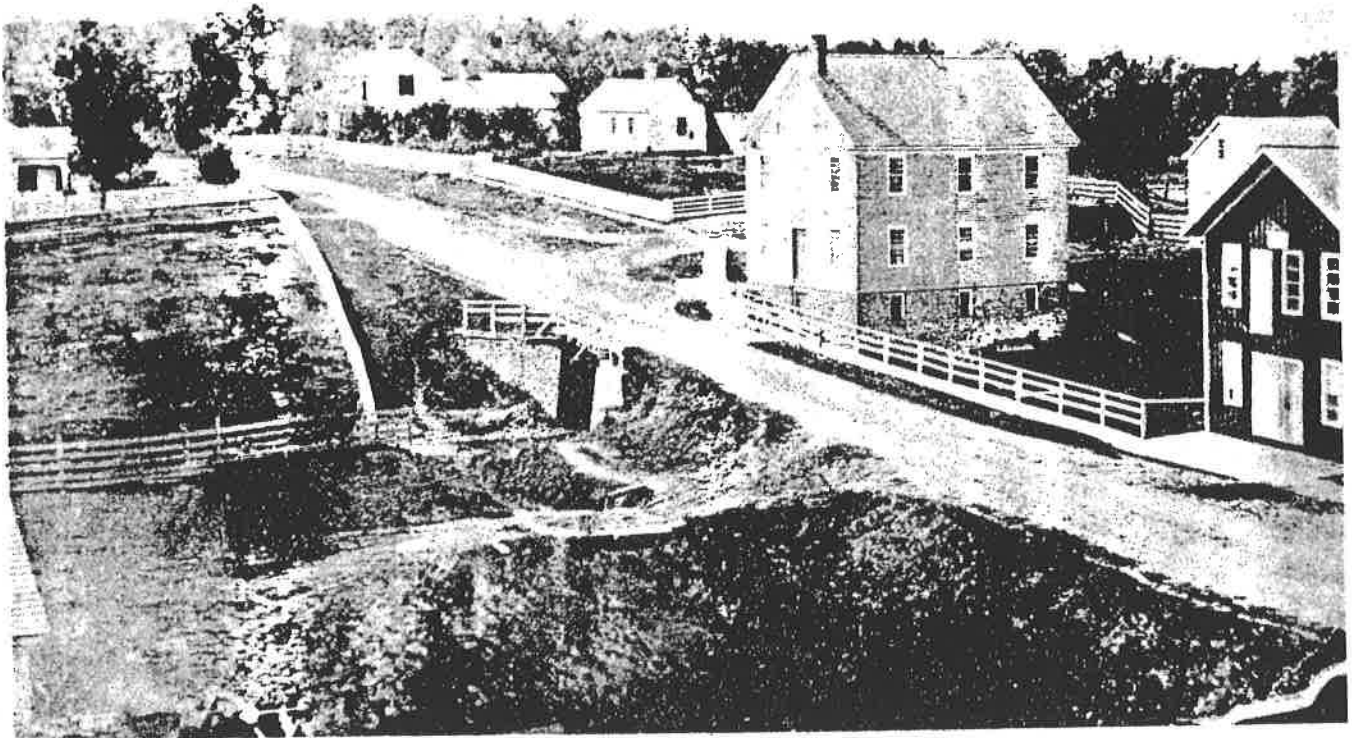
The Township was founded in 1836 when Dwight Foster came to the shores of Lake Koshkonong with the Rock River Land and Claim Co. He laid claim to a piece of land not far from the ruins of the old stockaded fort, which had been abandoned after the Black Hawk War. Foster's home was the first in the township and he would later serve as the first postmaster as well.

The first known town meeting was held on April 5, 1842, at the home of Chester May, Sr. Charles Rockwell was named moderator at this meeting. The early meetings of the township were held in various homes and vacant buildings until a town hall was built. The present location of the town hall is in the former Star School, which was a one-room rural school building.

The present day city of Fort Atkinson and the Township of Koshkonong were served by the same form of government until 1860 when Fort Atkinson was granted village status. Since that time the township and the city have been two separate entities.

At one time there also existed an area in Koshkonong Township which was known variously as Finch or Finchtown. Located just south of present-day Fort Atkinson, this area was settled by the Finch family, who came here in the late 1830s. In this family were a number of boys, many of whom were peaceful and industrious. Some, however, proved to be troublesome. According to some sources a number of the Finches became horse thieves and were the scourge of the county, swooping down on isolated settlements and making off with horses and whatever else they could get their hands on. This same account goes on to state that the "Fighting Finches", as they came to be known, were ultimately driven out of the area by the Jefferson County Anti-Horse Thief Society. These stories, however, have been embellished over the years and the true history of this early and colorful family may never be known. Whatever their history, with the departure of the Finch family in the early 1840s, the town of Finch disappeared.

The current population of the township numbers approximately 3,090 and Paul O. Swart serves as the town chairperson.



**LAKE MILLS, WI  
SHOWING JOSEPH KEYE'S SAWMILL**

## **THE CITY OF LAKE MILLS**

As Wisconsin recognizes its 150th year as a state, Lake Mills can look back and view its own progression through the years. Lake Mills became a settlement ten years before Wisconsin attained statehood. From that simple struggling community located on the primitive territorial road from Milwaukee to Madison and Mineral Point, Lake Mills has developed into the beautiful city it is today; a city of parks embracing the east shore of spring-fed Rock Lake. It is a community which has always attracted progressive thinking people who found ways to produce a positive compliment between industries and recreational facilities. A place with a unique triangular central park in which summer band concerts still resound from the Franklin Elise Bandstand on Friday nights.

In 1836 Capt. Joseph Keyes of Vermont bought the claims to lands on the east side of Rock Lake from Morgan Bartlett. Two years later he built first a dam and subsequently both a sawmill and grist mill, basic necessities to establish a community, at the outlet of the lake. It was Keyes who gave the town its name; a name which has remained except for a brief period in 1870 when it reverted to its Indian identity as Tyrana. Originally associated with Aztalan, Lake Mills became a separate township in 1845, was incorporated as a village in 1856 and became a city in 1905. Like many Wisconsin settlements, the town's early industries were related to agriculture, some of which gained national recognition. In 1841 Ann Pickett, having 20 cows which produced more milk than could be used, brought together the herds of nearby farmers to start a small dairy cooperative. The cheese and butter made from the combined milk was then sold or traded in Milwaukee. This organization has since been recognized as the first dairy cooperative in the United States. The Phillips family which arrived in 1849 is credited with developing the first commercial creamery in Wisconsin while Stephen Faville, another early settler, is identified as opening a cheese factory as early as 1860.

The people of this community have seemingly always been on the cutting edge. Along the way they have produced a series of firsts--particularly for a town its size. In Wisconsin's first year of statehood, a group of businessmen formed an agricultural company to manufacture farm implements. As part of this operation they built a foundry, the first in this part of Wisconsin. Also in 1848 a telegraph line was brought into Lake Mills with an office installed in the rear of a general store, thus becoming the first town of its size to have a downtown telegraph office. The Fargo Dairy Supply Co., a nationally known producer of dairy and creamery supplies used its steam pumps and dynamos to provide Lake Mills with an electric light system for the town and in 1891 also provided the village with a water works. These were the first small town utilities to be established in the state. Other notable achievements of the town include some of the first cement sidewalks and dial telephones in the state.

There have been many diverse industries in Lake Mills. Many of these businesses are no longer part of the scene, such as the Seaver Knife Co. and the Lake Mills Shoe and

Canning factories, but the city still has a strong industrial base that employs upward of 1700 people. Industries in the city today include APV Crepaco, Hamlin Electronics, Bickel-Geiger Furniture, WISCO/Crystal Farms (egg and cheese processors), MPI Wisconsin (auto parts), Fiberdome (fiberglass specialties) and Standish Liquid Crystals to name but a few. The city's newspaper is The Lake Mills Leader, which is published weekly.

Both music and education have since early days been important to the people of Lake Mills. It was in 1839 that the residents here organized the first Fourth of July celebration in Jefferson County. Not long afterwards the citizens raised money for band instruments and in 1844 organized a twelve member brass band led by school teacher J.F. Johnson. Since that time there has always been a city band in Lake Mills and the band has always been liberally supported by the local populace. An early Lake Mills band director was Fred Ray who was also the organizer of the first University of Wisconsin band in 1882. Not surprisingly the education of its children has been given an even greater impetus by the town. In 1839 Joseph Keyes and his neighbors subscribed money for a teacher and shortly after built a one room frame school on Madison Street. In the intervening years that school system has moved from a one teacher school, through a three building complex of the 1890s to the present three site, multiple campus arrangement embracing the latest computer technology. Its graduates have gone on to become leaders in industry, legislators, nationally known authors and artists, prominent scientific researchers, numerous professions and even a participant in the creation of the atom bomb. Proof that small schools provide adequate tools and can inspire excellence in its students.

In reviewing the accomplishments of Lake Mills, credit must also be given to those who had the foresight to develop the town as a vacation mecca. With the arrival of the railroad to Lake Mills in 1882, the town leaders began promoting the advantages of Rock Lake beyond its basic provision for food and power. From early emphasis on boating and fishing, they expanded to summer hotels and tenting and progressed to rental cabins, tourist parks, dance pavilions and beach resorts.

In addition to its natural advantages, Rock Lake is known for its celebrated underwater pyramids. As early as the 1840s, resident Winnebago Indians told the white settlers of the area about the "stone tepees" in Rock Lake but it wasn't until the mid 1930s that any serious explorations of the site began. Why they are there and what their actual purposes were remains a mystery, though it is widely believed that they, along with the mounds in Aztalan and others in the area, were built by ancient Native American tribes in sacred homage to their dead. Countless underwater explorers have probed the murky bottom of the lake trying to explore the pyramids and at least two books have been written which attempt to explain their history but to date one can only speculate as to their true meaning and purpose.

Today, with its lakeside parks, multiple boat ramps and public beaches, Lake Mills has remained a source of enjoyment and Rock Lake continues to be one of the clearest spring fed lakes in southern Wisconsin.

## **THE TOWNSHIP OF MILFORD**

The first settlers in the Township of Milford were W. H. Pampier and Benjamin Nute who built a sawmill there in 1840. They had settled in Milford in the late 1830s. In the earliest days the area now covered by the township was the scene of numerous Indian camps which were located along the river where traders used to come and barter for furs.

The first post office was established in the town in 1849. A post office was also established at nearby Navan in 1887 with Andrew Hughes as the postmaster. This office closed in 1904.

Early Milford businesses included the Milford Hotel and a cheese factory which was built in 1871. At its peak Milford boasted a creamery, broom factory, two general stores, a wagon shop, cooperage, harness shop, small bank and Nathaniel Greene's mill, considered by many to have been the finest mill in this part of the county. Green's mill burned down in 1883 and with its passing went the heart of the community. With the loss of the mill Milford became a virtual ghost town.

The Greenes, however, prospered. They moved to Fort Atkinson and later, in partnership with Messers. Cornish and Curtis, founded a creamery that lives on today as part of APV Americas-Lake Mills, formerly known as APV Crepaco. This business is currently located in the city of Lake Mills.

The town of Milford was originally divided into six school districts and for years the town had one of the four state graded schools in the county. Other schools included Hickory Grove, North Milford, Heitz and Rock River Valley Schools.

The town was also well represented spiritually. The Salem Evangelical United Brethren Church was founded in 1857. The Congregationalists and Methodists of the town held union services at a school house until 1897 when the Methodists built their own building. In 1898 the Congregationalists built the Christian Union Hall for their worship services. These churches later merged with other congregations in nearby Lake Mills and by the 1960s there were no churches operating in the township of Milford.

Though platted as a village in the early 1860s, Milford never has been incorporated as such. Today approximately 1,048 people make their home in Milford township and Vic Imrie, Jr, serves as the township chairperson.

Also in the Township of Milford there are two other smaller communities, Hubbleton and Grelton. Hubbleton was named for Levi Hubbel and it was surveyed in 1852. At one time it had a steam sawmill, general store, post office, small bank and barrel stave mill. It was also a shipping center on the Madison branch of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad, Today it is a sleepy crossroads hamlet.

Likewise Grellton, once a settlement of French immigrants, was a thriving hamlet. The French were lured to the area because of the abundance of sugar maple trees which they employed in the making of maple syrup. At one time Adolphus Blair operated a busy half-way house which served as a stop over for weary travelers. But the French did not stay in Grellton long. Instead they moved to the Appleton and Oshkosh areas along Lake Winnebago. Today, like Hubbleton, there is little or no trace of the hamlet's once thriving past.

## **THE TOWNSHIP OF OAKLAND**

The Township of Oakland is a rural area settled chiefly by men and women from New England, Michigan, Ohio, Canada, the British Isles, Scandinavia and Germany.

The earliest settlers began arriving in the late 1830s. Mr. and Mrs. Erastus G. Snell were amongst the first to arrive. Their daughter, Eliza, was the first child born in the new settlement in 1840. The Snells operated a stage coach store located along what is today Highway 12, a former Indian trail.

The Township of Oakland was known for its many churches which included the Seventh Day Adventist Church, which was the first Adventist Church in the state and the first Norwegian Adventist Church in the United States. The land for the church was donated by Norwegian immigrant Andrew Olsen and a school and cemetery were also established. The church is still in existence.

St. John's Community Church and Union Cemetery was founded in 1852 and is also still active. In addition, there was a Presbyterian Church and Cemetery founded in 1846 and a "Free Will" Baptist Church founded in the 1850s which closed its doors in 1904.

Oakland's businesses have included the Century Creamery Association, a sorghum mill, a skimming station, the Engelside Resort and Cedar Lodge. Currently the Lake Ripley Country Club (established in 1915), Lake Ripley Lanes (a bowling alley) and the Jefferson Speedway are operated in the township.

A post office was established in Oakland in 1846 and a town hall was built in 1882 which is still in use. Currently 2,828 people live in the township and the current town chairperson is Raymond C. Kisow, Jr.

## **THE TOWNSHIP OF PALMYRA**

When the Territorial Legislature divided Bark River Township in 1846, the southeast corner of Jefferson County was designated as Palmyra Township. It is comprised of approximately 35 square miles surrounding the Village of Palmyra and has a population of 1,257.

According to the first book of the Township, an act to organize the Town of Palmyra was approved February 2, 1846. The first Town meeting was held April 1, 1846 at the school house in what is now the Village of Palmyra with William M. Mott, moderator, David J. Powers, clerk and Peter H. Turner, assistant.

One of the more interesting township ordinances was passed on April 3, 1866 and stated, "Resolved, that the incoming Board of Supervisors be and are hereby instructed to grant no licenses for selling liquor in the Town of Palmyra and that they are hereby requested to use the power they have by virtue of their office to suppress the sale of intoxicating liquors as a beverage in said Town." This ordinance still stands, as there has never been a liquor license given in the Township.

The first death occurred in 1845--Lavinia Duncan Wilbur.

The first marriage in the Township took place in the fall of 1843 between Albertus Knapp and Miss Polly Duncan, a sister-in-law of Miles Wilbur. Their great-grandson, Stewart Calkins and his family, presently live on the farm the Knapps bought in the township in 1844.

In addition to the Knapps, some of the pioneer farmers were: William Bray, Isaac Congdon, James French, James and Thomas Gilbert, George, John and Thomas Hooper, Richard Jolliffe, Richard H. Mill, Levi and William Munger, Christopher and Ole Oleson, William Piper, Ole Saukerson, Joshua Thayer and Miles Wilbur.

Palmyra Township includes Blue Spring Lake. Originally it was a beautiful large, deep, clear spring that reflected the blue sky and hence its name, "The Blue Spring". It attracted many visitors and a board walk was built around it. Eventually the walk deteriorated and interest in the spring decreased. Kurt Froedert, a Milwaukee malt and grain industrialist, purchased land around the spring and in 1927 he constructed a dam, flooded the spring area and the surrounding low land and formed Blue Spring Lake. A road was built around the lake and a few exclusive homes were constructed. In June of 1949 the Advance Realty Company purchased the property and opened it as Blue Spring Lake Subdivision. Many homes and cottages were built and an active Blue Spring Lake Organization was formed. There are now many year-round homes surrounding the lake and in 1990 a sewer system was installed in the subdivision.

Palmyra Township is also known for the Kettle Moraine land within its boundaries.



This area is a series of large hills and hollows--a landscape left by a receding glacier eons ago. In earlier days this land was used only for woodlands and pasture but later came into demand for home sites and parks. The public land, now under the auspices of the Department of Natural Resources is now regularly used by hikers, snowmobilers, horse and bicycle riders. Horseriders Park is a well known camping area south of the Village of Palmyra as is Carlin-Weld Park which was given to Jefferson County in 1970 by John Carlin to honor his grandparents, Ebenezer Fisk Weld and William Carlin, early pioneers of the area.

Other notable landmarks in the Township of Palmyra include the Palmyra Marsh which is a low, flat piece of land covering an area of nearly 4,000 acres. At one time the marsh grasses were harvested as marsh hay by the early farmers in the area. In later years much of the land has been drained and ditched and large scale "muck farming" is presently engaged in this area.

The Cold Spring Egg Farm was an important industry in the Township. Started in 1967 with 500 acres to grow corn for thousands of laying hens at the farm, the owners were the Godfrey Company of Waukesha who supplied eggs to the Sentry Food Stores that they owned. As time went by the farm passed through several other owners and is now owned by S & R Egg Farm, which also owns an egg farm in neighboring LaGrange Township. In all, they produce eggs for many stores in Wisconsin and neighboring states from a total of 800,000 hens. They are also a chief buyer of corn from neighboring farmers to feed these chickens.

One of the newer industries in the township is Rushing Waters, which is a trout farm. The firm owns several ponds and does a brisk business in the marketing of trout.

One of the best known features of the Township is the Palmyra Airport. It is on 50 acres of land on the northwest edge of the village purchased in 1950. It was originally developed by the Federal Government as an emergency airport and is now one of the finest grass strip runways in the state, home to about 30 private airplanes.

The Palmyra Town Board met for many years in the old Town Hall in the Village, but in 1980 a new Town Hall was built on the airport north of the Village. The present town officials are: Stewart Calkins, Chairman, George Ventura and John Mason, Supervisors, Kathryn Oleson, Clerk-Treasurer.

## **THE VILLAGE OF PALMYRA**

The first white settler in the village of Palmyra was Cyrus Horton from Vermont. He built the first frame house in town in 1839. Abram Brink began construction of a dam and mill on the Scuppernong River. David and Samuel Powers, who had been living in Whitewater, saw an opportunity to start something larger. They bought the mill and acquired a fair amount of land in the immediate area. At that time land speculation was considered a sure-fire method of making money. Some parcels changed hands as much as three times in a single year. The Powers, however, not only subdivided and sold their property, David commissioned John Fish to survey and plat the village. Powers also joined a planning commission for the first railroad in Wisconsin and saw that its route came through his town. The Milwaukee and Mississippi Railroad came through Palmyra by 1852. The Powers brothers were also credited with choosing the name "Palmyra" since the sandy area between the springs reminded them of the Syrian Palmyra of Biblical times.

In addition to platting the village in 1843, John Fish also served as its first postmaster. Zebina Willson used his oxen and horses to help build the railroad and was awarded the position of station master which he held for thirty years. The first general store was opened by Levi Powers, the first inn by William Mulks. M.W. Coon operated a cooper shop to build barrels for shipping flour from Palmyra to the cities. Monroe McKenzie used an experimental grout system to build his house on Main Street and, perhaps, his shoe factory next door. That house is now the Carlin House, home of the Palmyra Historical Society.

It wasn't until 1874 that the village was incorporated. The trustees first incorporated the village in 1866 but, due to a legal error, had to go through the procedure again in 1874. The village's newspaper, The Palmyra Enterprise, was also founded in 1874 and continues to serve the community.

One of the landmarks which put Palmyra's name on everyone's lips in the latter half of the nineteenth century was the discovery of the Palmyra Springs. In 1871 Victor Loewe was clearing land on his farm when one of his workers unearthed a spring. As time went on his farm hands claimed that drinking that spring water cured them of all kinds of pains and ailments. More springs were discovered in the immediate vicinity, each one having a different mineral content. Ira Bidwell, a wealthy man from St. Paul, was "taking the waters" at a spa in Waukesha when he heard about the Palmyra springs. He had the water tested and after getting the results began to buy up land that contained some of the springs from Miles Wilbur, C. Grey and a Mr. Vandercook. He formed a corporation and built a large health spa on his property which he called the Bidwell House. It proved to be tremendously successful often having 50 to 60 guests at a time. Palmyra became a boom town.

In 1884 the Bidwell House became known as the Spring Lake Hotel and still maintained its high level of activity. By 1898 the hotel business began to falter and the

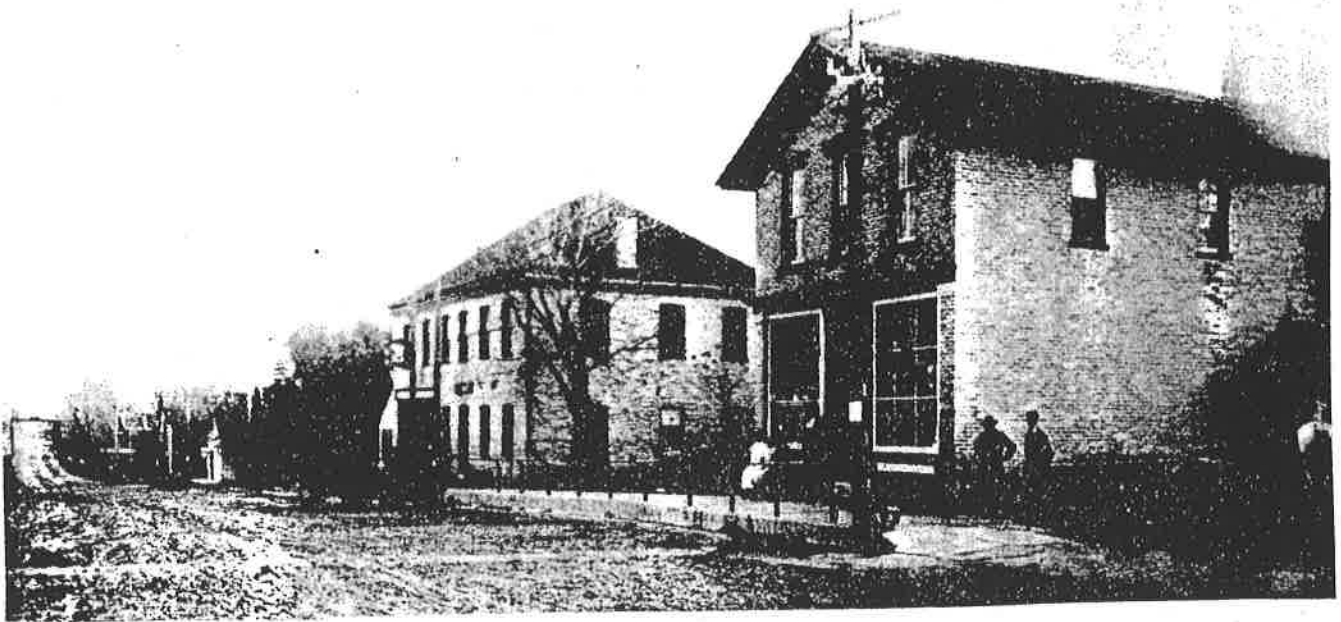
operation was changed into a sanitarium and nursing school. But by the time of the first world war the interest in mineral springs died out and the building was left to decay. It was ultimately torn down some years later.

The first school house was built in 1846 and replaced with a two-story frame building in 1858. This building was eventually replaced by a two-story brick building on Maple Street.

The first churches in town were the Baptist Church built in 1844, the Methodist Church built in 1849 and the Congregational Church built in 1852. Later churches included the Norwegian Lutheran Church which is now known as St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, St. Mary's Catholic Church, an Episcopal Church which flourished and died out in the early days of the twentieth century and a Baptist Church.

Through the years the face of Palmyra's Main Street has changed greatly. Where once the Otto Scherer building, with its innovative mall-like atmosphere, complete with business offices, auto dealership and repair, movie theater, gymnasium and dance hall all under roof, held sway businesses such as True Value Hardware and pizza parlors now dot the street. Today Palmyra has five restaurants, one gas station, a hardware store, three gift shops, insurance offices, a lumber yard, American Legion Post, Masonic Temple, post office, dentist office, medical clinic, farm co-op, feed mill, three auto repair shops, fire hall, grocery store, chiropractor's office, funeral home, video store, public library, two beauty parlors, an antique store, martial arts school, realtor's office, liquor store, builder's shop, florist and wedding shop, printing shop, laundromat, newspaper office, bank, police department, village hall, attorney's office and a mower and marine sales. Palmyra boasts many active organizations as well as a Chamber of Commerce. There is a healthy mix of apartments, homes and trailers.

In the summer visitors come to Palmyra to ride their horses, swim, use the airport and see the historical Carlin House and museum. In the winter they come in from snowmobiling and cross-country skiing. The Old Settler's Picnic, Maxwell Street Days, the Father's Day Fly-In, and the Memorial Day and Fireman's Parades also draw visitors. All in all, Palmyra is a pleasant place to visit or live.



**ROME, WI  
A VIEW OF ITS MAIN STREET  
TAKEN ABOUT 1900**

## **THE TOWNSHIP OF SULLIVAN**

The Township of Sullivan was originally part of the Bark River Woods, and by an act of the Territorial Legislature became Bark River Township. Cold Spring, Hebron, Sullivan and Palmyra comprised this township until 1846 when the Territorial Legislature divided the township into individual groups. Cyrus Curtis was recorded as the first permanent settler, building a cabin in 1837. The first town meeting was held in the eastern section of the township.

Settlements of Sullivan Township included Rome. This tiny village was carved out of the Bark River Woods and through it runs the Bark River which provided a life-line for early settlers, supporting early industries for growth and sustenance. The earliest settler was Peter Knockler and his family who arrived in 1840 and built a log house.

In 1842 Myron Smith and S.D. Tenney arrived, dammed up the river which created the Rome Mill Pond, the largest in the state, and built a sawmill. The mill burned, but Charles Dewitt soon built another. At this time wagons began arriving with settlers, among which were Ambrose, Davis and Dempster Seely of New York State, along with their sister Betsey and her husband Silas Sears and family. The Seely Brothers purchased the mill and along with others at different intervals, dug the mill race and built a sawmill and turning shop in 1852. Part of that sawmill still stands.

On September 9, 1848 Ambrose Seely platted and recorded the Village of Rome, which, along with the State, celebrates its sesquicentennial this year. Rome was so named for the place where many of the early settlers came from, Rome, New York.

Silas Sears built a hotel which was named the "Live and Let Live" and later called the "Rome Exchange Hotel". Early Rome had sawmills, a grist mill, a blacksmith, brick and block maker, wagon maker, shoemaker, milliners, hotels, stores and numerous other industries and businesses. Today it has two taverns, a bowling alley, grocery/liquor/bait/video depot, small private businesses and a volunteer fire department. The once proud and thriving buildings that remain have been turned into residences or stand idle. The population travels to larger cities where job opportunities are available.

The first school house was built in Rome in 1846. It was a log building which was replaced with a frame school building in 1854. In 1869 the village purchased land for a brick school which later became one of the state's graded schools with classes through tenth grade. This school closed several years ago and today children attend classes at the Sullivan Elementary School.

The first church services in Rome were held in private homes until a proper church building was erected. The German Methodists, later known as the Evangelical United Brethren, first erected a brick building in Rome in 1869. This congregation disbanded in the 1960s and the building today is part of the Sullivan Historical Society. Today

the only church still active in the village is St. Luke's Lutheran Church which began worship services in 1887.

Another small community that once existed in the Township was Hardscrabble. This area was settled mainly by New Englanders. It was the site of the first Town meeting, at the home of John Nutter, where the Town of Sullivan was first established. The first post office was moved from Oak Hill to Hardscrabble. There were the usual businesses in the settlement that included a blacksmith shop, tavern, general store and others. A school was built in Hardscrabble in 1859. The building is now a private residence.

Heath's Mill, also known as Heathsburg or Erfurt, was another settlement. It was the site of the invention of the first reaper. This was the Duering Reaper built by John Heath. Heath's Mill was at one time a very busy place. A sawmill was in operation and there was a store, blacksmith shop, wagon shop, cider mill and other businesses. Eventually the dam near the mill washed out and slowly the booming little settlement disappeared. At one time there were two schools at Heath's Mill, Heath's Mill school which was in operation by 1850 and Golden Lake School which began in 1876, now a private residence.

The other major settlement that once flourished in the Rome-Sullivan area was Pleasant Valley. This settlement also went by the names Punk, Pumpkin Hollow and Oak Hill, later changed to Oakhill. The first post office in the Town of Sullivan was established at Oakhill in 1846. Later it was moved to Hardscrabble. The first tavern in the township was here and the first voting for general election in the new State of Wisconsin took place here as well. The settlement boasted many businesses as well as a school and church, known as the Pleasant Valley Church. This church is still very active.

## **THE VILLAGE OF SULLIVAN**

Winfield was the name chosen for the little village laid out in Town 6 North's Section Three, and it was duly recorded on June 21, 1881 by Earl Newton and Enoch B. Fargo. With the coming of the railroad a bright future was anticipated. The first building in the village was the "Badger House", a tavern built on a site purchased from the government by Ludwig Vinz. The coming of the railroad caused a boom in building, and before long most of the business lots were sold and the village began to prosper. In 1883 Barney Grogan built a tavern near the depot and named it the "Park Hotel". In 1892 the "Morgan House" was built by John Morgan. Mathias Nordt built a large hotel south of the railroad and offered food and lodging to the men working on the new line. He also dealt in liquor and cigars.

Grocery stores were a necessity in every community and Sullivan, which was the name the village took on when it became incorporated in 1915, soon had three. R.H. Mills built a one story building across the street from the Badger House. His business grew and soon demanded a second story which was added in 1912. The building also housed the office of Dr. Campbell and a bakery operated by K. Herman.

Caspar Braun built a store in 1889. The property was sold to Henry Zahn in 1896. On the evening of May 8, 1902 a fire started in the attic, burning the main part of the village, namely, Zahn's store, Morgan's hotel, a meat market, harness shop and Caspar Braun's store. All lived on their properties and were left homeless. Mr. Zahn having hurt his foot, developed blood poisoning and died a short time afterward. Insurance settlements were made and in several months the street was rebuilt and looked almost as it is today.

Sullivan is the only settlement in Town 6 North that has been incorporated into a village. This occurred on July 21, 1915, and the first election was held on October 12, 1915. The Sullivan Volunteer Fire Department was also organized in 1915.

The wooden sidewalks, hitching posts, and old time country stores are gone now. But surely the dreams of Earl Newton and Enoch B. Fargo had come true. Those who remember the bustling activity of yesteryear are indeed fortunate. Truly, those were the "good old days".

## **THE TOWNSHIP OF SUMNER**

The Township of Sumner is by far the smallest township in the county. It contains only 17 square miles. Its southern border is entirely bounded by Lake Koshkonong.

Sumner was created by a division of the Town of Koshkonong in 1858. The first town meetings were held at the school house in Koshkonong.

Sometime after this division, the Town of Koshkonong wanted to take back the land in the newly formed Town of Sumner which was south and east of the lake and as far north as Rock River. This was done and the Town of Koshkonong assumed the railroad bond indebtedness of Sumner because no part of the railroad would cross the township after this land was returned to Koshkonong.

The area had been inhabited by Indians for centuries and the most notable settlement was White Crow's village which extended along the shores of Lake Koshkonong for three quarters of a mile. After the Indians left the area with the close of the Black Hawk War white settlers began to settle in the area. The most notable early settlers in Sumner Township were a band of Swedish immigrants that included famed pioneer naturalist Thure Kumlien. Other notable residents of the township included Sterling North, author of the beloved children's books Rascal and So Dear To My Heart who spent most of his childhood in Sumner.

The settlement was first platted by Thomas Bussey in the mid 1850s. He had built a large grist mill which proved to be very successful and the settlement that grew up around it took on the name Busseyville for a time.

The first school in the Township opened in 1848 and closed in the mid 1850s. Another school was operated for some time afterwards.

The current population of Sumner Township numbers approximately 820 and the present Town chairperson is Lavern Maasz.



## THE CITY OF WATERLOO

The City of Waterloo can trace its history back to 1842. In that year Bradford L. Hill arrived in this area and purchased "two forties" in Section 5. Mr. Hill, a native of Vermont, settled here with his wife and four children. Other settlers followed the Hills. At that time the area was still visited by remnants of the Winnebago Indian Tribe, and evidence of earlier Indian habitation was seen in mounds scattered throughout the area.

The Hill home was located on the eastern side of the Maunasha River. Maunasha was an Indian word meaning wandering or crooked, which describes the river's course.

The land now comprising the town and village of Waterloo was, prior to 1845, a part of the town of Aztalan. The political organization of Waterloo as a town was effected in 1845 or 1846, with Abram Vanderpool as its first chairman, and P.M. Brooks as its first clerk. J.H. Ostrander was the first superintendent of schools and laid out the school districts of the town.

In 1848 Waterloo had 35 to 40 residents and six homes. By 1853 the population had grown to approximately 200, having sixty homes, four stores, two hotels, one church and one town pump. Growth slackened during the Civil War, and again increased in the 1870s and 1880s, with a residential building boom in the 1890s.

A post office was established in the town on January 12, 1847 and weekly mail delivery became available. Prior to this mail for the villagers was obtained at Aztalan. At a meeting to select a name for the post office names discussed were Hillsdale, in honor of the Hill family, and Maunasha, because of the river. It was finally concluded to recommend the name of Waterloo, and in 1859 Waterloo was formally incorporated as such. Waterloo became a city in 1962. The city has been served by several newspapers over the years, the present one being The Waterloo Courier, which is published weekly.

In 1843 Abram Hill and Ira Brooks purchased a water site from Bradford Hill to construct a dam on the Maunasha. A sawmill was built at the dam for sawing the many oaks and other timber in the area. A second dam was built one-half mile west of the Village in 1847, which housed a grist mill by 1848. Another dam was built near the Village center for a factory and carding mill, which burned in 1862. This dam later washed away and was never replaced.

The 1840s brought many businesses to the new settlement, including a blacksmith, shoe store, carpenter and mason, a plow and rake factory, a fanning mill factory among others. During the 1870s Waterloo was a leading grain market in the area. Madison and Monroe Streets became lined with brick business places.

Industry continued to flourish into the new century which saw the development of local agricultural resources of the Waterloo Malting Company, the Waterloo Canning Company, Drew Carrier Company, the Baby Rice Popcorn Company, McKay Nursery and the Wisconsin Drainage Company. The middle 1900s saw the existence of the Interstate Malt Company, the Waterloo Cheese Factory, Kress Packaging Company, Perry Printing as well as 94 business offices. Today Waterloo is also home to Trek Bicycles.

In 1856 Waterloo attempted to aid in the construction of the Central Wisconsin Railroad to Waterloo but this never took place. Instead, the Milwaukee, Watertown and Baraboo Valley Railroads opened on January 20, 1859 and these lines connected Waterloo with Milwaukee.

In 1908 Waterloo erected a municipal lighting plant on Monroe Street, south of Madison Street, providing light and electrical service to the Village. A water works system was installed in 1910.

The first school in the Village was established in 1843 and a building was erected in 1844. This building was replaced by a large brick school in 1848 and in the 1860s two private schools opened. Today the city is served by several parochial schools and modern public schools as well.

The Methodists were believed to have been the first religious group to hold services in Waterloo and they built the first church building in the Village in 1854. Congregationalists and Baptists were also represented, while in 1867 the Catholic and Lutheran faiths began to be established. In 1906 St. Paul's English Lutheran church was organized. A cemetery was laid out in the mid 1800 which became the Waterloo Cemetery. In 1904 Oak Hill Cemetery was laid out on the southeastern side of the city and in 1891 a Catholic cemetery which originally adjoined the city cemetery was moved to the western part of the city.

## **THE TOWNSHIP OF WATERLOO**

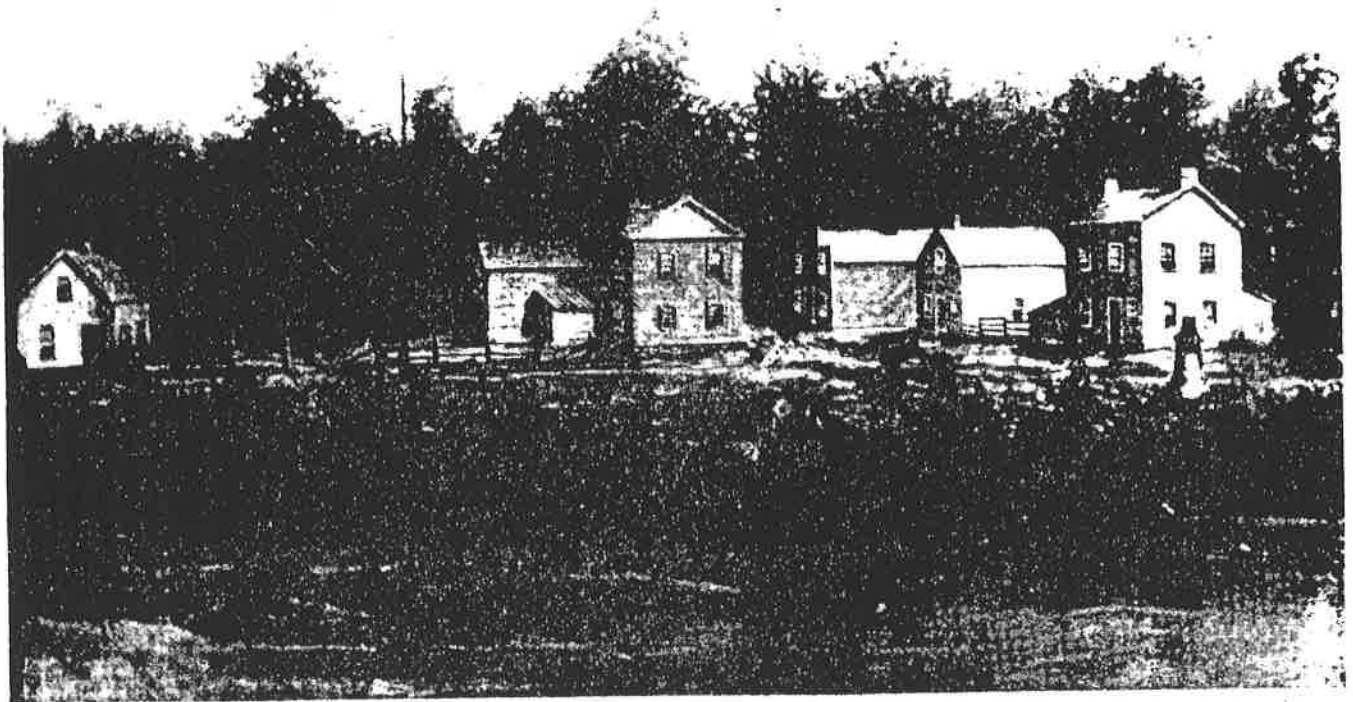
Waterloo Township, located in the northwestern corner of Jefferson County, was at one time part of Aztalan Township until February 22, 1845 when Lake Mills Township, containing Waterloo, was created. In 1847 Waterloo became an independent township.

The first settler in the township was Joseph Edwards who came to the area in 1838. Many settlers soon followed, most coming from New England and New York State. The first European immigrants arrived in 1844.

A post office was established in Waterloo in 1847. Mail was received from Aztalan every week, road conditions permitting. The City of Waterloo was separated from the township in 1859 when it was incorporated as a village.

One other community existed within the township, Faville's Grove. This place was named for Alpheus D. Faville and his brother Stephen who came to the township in 1843. A school was founded there in 1850 which finally closed in the early 1950s. The Favilles are credited with having the first registered Holstein-Friesian dairy cattle in the area and were among those who helped found the Wisconsin Dairymen's Association in 1872.

Currently the population of the Township of Waterloo numbers 720 and Dale Neupert serves as the Township Chairperson.



**WATERTOWN, WI  
MAIN AND FIRST STREET AREAS  
CIRCA 1842**

## **THE CITY OF WATERTOWN**

The City of Watertown was founded in 1836 by Timothy Johnson, a carpenter from Connecticut, who came here looking for likely places to settle. He named this place "Johnson's Rapids" owing to the tremendous rapids which were apparent in the undammed Rock River that flowed through the area.

Johnson laid claim to all of the land which now encompasses the city and in 1837 the first mill and dam were erected within the site of the future city. The first hotel opened in 1849 and this was followed by the first general store which opened in 1841.

Settlers, mainly from New England at first, began to pour into the settlement, attracted by the abundant stands of forest for building purposes and the fine water power. The first foreign settlers, Irish and Germans, began to arrive in the mid 1840s.

The name of the settlement was changed to Watertown in 1839 in homage to Watertown, New York, where many of the city's earliest settlers hailed from. The first town meeting was held in 1842. In 1849 Watertown was granted Village status and in 1853 it became a city.

In the 1850s a plank road was built which linked Watertown to Milwaukee and in 1855 the railroad came through the city, quickly making Watertown the second largest city in the state with a population of 8,512. Sadly, the depression of 1857 wiped out the railroads and threw the city into a financial panic from which it did not fully recover for nearly thirty years. The population dropped and it wasn't until the 1930s that Watertown could claim 10,000 residents. Today the city has a population in excess of 20,000 making it the largest city in Jefferson County.

Prominent residents of the city have included Carl Schurz, who came here in the mid 1850s. He later became a well-known and respected politician, serving first as ambassador to Spain and later as Secretary of the Interior, and was one of many responsible for helping to elect Abraham Lincoln in 1860; Margarethe Schurz, Carl's wife who founded the First Kindergarten in America in Watertown. The original building still stands and is today a historic shrine owned by the Watertown Historical Society; Joseph E. Davies, who served as ambassador to Russia during the term of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Davies's mother, Rachel, was the first female ordained minister in Wisconsin and she preached at the Welsh Church in Watertown and also in Ixonia; Ralph David Blumenfeld, editor of the London Daily Express; and Dan Brandenstein, astronaut.

Always proud of its history, the landmark of the city would have to be the famous Octagon House. Built in 1854 by pioneer lawyer and businessman John Richards, this 8-sided landmark contains a cantilevered spiral staircase, a unique system of running water and boasts 57 rooms. It has been operated as a public museum by the Watertown Historical Society for over 60 years.

Watertown has also been progressive in education and the first schools were established here in the early 1840s. In the 1850s the city adopted the Union School system which presented a more regulated approach to education. In the 1870s the first free text books in the state were issued in Watertown. The city has always had two colleges. In earlier times they were Northwestern College and Sacred Heart College, a Lutheran and Catholic college respectively. Today Madison Area Technical College and Maranatha Baptist Bible College serve the higher educational needs of the young people of the city, while seven public and seven parochial schools serve younger students. In addition to education, the city's spiritual needs are served by over twenty churches.

The businesses that have flourished in Watertown are numerous. In the past they included brewing, cigar making, milling, the manufacture of cutlery and also the noodling of geese. Currently businesses in Watertown run the gamut from metal fabrication to digital instruments.

The city is served by "The Watertown Daily Times" a daily newspaper since 1895 and WTTN Radio which was founded in 1950. In addition the city is also very proud of its 16 parks, tennis courts, aquatic center, baseball and softball diamonds which are maintained by a full-time park department.

The city enjoys an annual event called Riverfest which attracts thousands of people from the surrounding areas. With all of this to offer, it is no wonder that the city's motto is "We like it here!"

## **THE TOWNSHIP OF WATERTOWN**

The first annual meeting of the inhabitants of the Town of Watertown, Jefferson County, Wisconsin Territory, took place on the 5th day of April, 1842. The first town chair was John Richards.

They voted at this meeting a tax of one-half of one percent.

The compensation of the supervisors and clerk were set at \$1.00 per day while in session. The Town Clerk shall be entitled to receive, for services rendered, 9 cents per folio or 100 words for recording all papers which by law are required. The assessors were also to receive \$1.00 per day for their services and the treasurer received 4% for receiving and disbursing all moneys.

Much of the meetings held in the following years concerned the laying out of roads. Elections for the first years were held in homes as were all other meetings. Later a town hall was built which was located on the corner of High Road and CTH Y. Later they held meetings at the Plattdeutscher Hall in Watertown for many years and still later at the VFW Hall on High Road, until they purchased their present hall in 1984.

In 1854 at the annual meeting it was voted that they have two assessors, one who conversed in German and the other in English.

Watertown had been a village up to this time and under the rule of the township. In 1853 the village became the City of Watertown.

In the time of the existence of the Township there were 29 chairmen, one of whom was Hilmer H. Groth, who served the township from 1945 to 1984. There were also 26 clerks that served the township. One was William Dietzel, who served for 38 years. Upon his death the position was taken over by his son, Hugo, in 1932. He served the town until 1945. In 1963 Hugo's daughter-in-law, Gladys, became clerk and served until 1976. So, in all, for 64 years the Dietzel family served as clerks of the township.

The present officers of the township are Richard Gimler, who was elected as supervisor in 1983 and then, with the resignation of Mr. Groth in 1984, who moved into the city, Mr. Gimler was appointed chairman. To replace the position held by Mr. Gimler, the board appointed Michael Klecker. George Stuehler was elected in 1989 as was Nancy Zastrow, treasurer. Upon the resignation of Gladys Dietzel in 1976, Bernice Lange was appointed Clerk and has served in that position until the present time.

## **THE CITY OF WHITEWATER**

Whitewater boasts a proud and colorful history that dates back to 1836 when Daniel Butts, the first white settler, carved his initials on a tree next to Whitewater Creek. The name of the city comes from the Algonquin name for the creek, which was Wau-be-gan-naw-po-cat. This translated into "whitish or muddy water."

Commerce came to Whitewater in 1840 when a New York native by the name of Dr. James Tripp erected the first gristmill. A blacksmith shop, tavern, general store and a hotel soon followed.

The railroad came to Whitewater in 1855 which made the city boom. In 1868 several members of the community put their savings together and petitioned the state to build a "normal school" for the instruction of teachers, especially rural school teachers. This school was the second "normal" school established in the state. Today it is known as the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. The college enrolls more than 9,700 students and employs more than 1,000 people.

The first town meeting was held in Whitewater in 1842. Whitewater was incorporated as a village in 1858 and became a city in 1885. Whitewater has the distinction of being one of the first cities in the state to adopt the council-manager form of government. It has a growing business area and is served by one of the state's best volunteer fire departments and rescue units. Currently there are approximately 2,571 residents of the city and Gary W. Boden serves as the city manager. The city's newspaper is the Whitewater Register.



## **FOR FURTHER READING**

Many resources were consulted during the preparation of this work by the editor. Those listed below are the standard reference works on the history of the county and budding historians are urged to read them in order to better understand the heritage of Jefferson County. For more in-depth sources visit the library or historical society nearest you.

Butterfield, C.W.                      The History of Jefferson County, Wisconsin  
Chicago: The Western Historical Co. 1879

Ott, John Henry , ed. The History of Jefferson County, Wisconsin and Its People  
Chicago: S.J. Clarke Co., 1917

Swart, Hannah                      Koshkonong Country, A History of Jefferson County  
Fort Atkinson: W.D. Hoard & Co., 1975

Swart, Hannah                      Koshkonong Country Revisited : Vol. One  
Muskego: Marek Lithographics, Inc., 1981