

BERRY.

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THE town of Berry is situated in the western part of Dane county, and lies south of the town of Roxbury, west of the town of Springfield, north of the town of Cross Plains, and east of the town of Black Earth. The general character of the town is hilly, although there are several rich valleys, the largest being Halfway Prairie, which is sometimes called the English settlement, and that portion of Black Earth valley, which crosses the southwest corner of the town. The bluffs are timbered with several kinds of oak, cherry and poplar, the last being a recent growth, and admirably adapted for fencing. The poplars grow in groves, long and straight, and are cut when about six inches in thickness, sawed into fencing, and considered by many as superior to pine fencing. They seem to be especially provided by Providence for such purposes, as the large oaks, formerly used in fencing, are all gone. The town is abundantly supplied with water, there being a number of springs and creeks, with several mill sites, one of which, on the Black Earth creek, is being improved for a flouring mill. The climate is very healthy, there being no stagnant water or marshes.

The town was first settled in 1843, by James Mills, Captain Amos Heald, Albert Skinner, Joseph Rogerson and ——— Hood, on Black Earth valley, and a year or two later by Mr. Barnes and Mr. Hyer, on Halfway Prairie.

In 1845, a large number of English came out under a colonization society, which was organized in the city of Manchester, England, in 1842, called the "British Temperance Emigration Society." They located several of their claims in this town, and the following persons came out in 1845: John Whiteman, John Mead, James and William Bowman, Geo. Draper, Francis Wilson, John Ford, John Saville and James Crowther. This last gentleman relinquished his claim, giving it away, saying, "it was dear at a gift," and bought Albert Skinner's farm, on section 31, which had the first frame house in the town. His claim was situated on what was called "long breaking," in the town of Mazomanie, a miserable sandy prairie that would not grow white beans. This so enraged the officers of the society that they sent word to England that Mr. Crowther had left a nice farm and gone and settled in a swamp (which, by-the-way, was every foot dry and good land). In after years, when they would come up to see him, he would say, "let us go out and see my swamp."

In 1847, several more English settled there, among which were Thomas, Samuel and Edward Barber, Thomas Haynes and George Bates.

Many amusing incidents are remembered of these early settlers; most of the English coming from manufacturing towns in the old country, were, to use a phrase, somewhat "green" respecting farms and farming, which the following incident will illustrate: Two parties (who afterwards became prominent and thrifty farmers) came to Joseph Rogerson, another English settler, who came out in 1843 and settled on section 32, to buy his claim. After partaking of a frugal meal, which consisted of pork and corn bread, the latter made into the remembered "johnny cake," they went out to see the farm, examine the soil, etc.; after they got out to the field, one of them commenced to jump and spring on the ground, saying to Mr. Rogerson "is this land sound?" The latter, in a (feigned) terrified air said, "My G—d, friend, do not do that or you will go down about twenty feet." It is also related of another who, before he was "naturalized," commenced planting his corn, and had about an acre planted before he found out his mistake; he had planted an ear in each hill.

In 1847, the Germans first commenced to settle, the first comers being Otto Kerl and Mr. Anhalt. They rapidly settled in, till the whole town was taken up. But very few of the old English settlers are now alive to tell the tale of the trials and hardships of the early settlement of the town; most of them have gone to "that bourne from whence no traveler returns." The town now is almost entirely Germans, who, by-the-way, make our very best citizens.

In 1849-50 a number of Germans settled here, and the town has continued to fill up from time to time until it is now almost all cleared and broken up for cultivation.

The town was organized in 1850, and the first town meeting held on the 2d day of April, 1850. Twenty-four votes were cast, and sixty dollars raised for town purposes. The names of the voters were Wm. Seston, Otto Kerl, John W. Ford, Thomas Barber, George Stevens, Henry Carden, John Wightman, John Savelle, George Draper, Edward Barber, Francis Wilson, Thomas Hawley, John H. Roberts, Wm. Hawley, John Gray, Thomas Haynes, Joseph Harrison, Edmund Ellis, Joseph Bowman, Samuel Hawley, William Bowman, John Mead, Henry Paddelford, Abijah Davis. And the following officers were elected: *Supervisors* — Joseph Bowman, chairman; Thomas Haynes and John Wightman. *Town Clerk* — Samuel Hawley. *Treasurer* — Thomas Barber. *Justices of the Peace* — Thomas Haynes and Joseph Harrison. *Superintendent of School* — Edward Barber. *Constables* — Henry Carden and Aug. Barnes. *Assessor* — George Draper.

In those early times there were plenty of deer, and often as many as twenty-four head at a time were seen feeding upon the fields of winter wheat sown by the early settlers. The town was a favorite resort with the Indians, because of the quantity of game frequenting this section of country, and their camp was about one-half mile from my house. In the fall

of 1848, about sixty-five of them and their families remained near my land, on section 27, for about six weeks, killing deer. When they prepared to depart, they loaded each of their ponies with a fresh killed deer, which they purposed carrying to Milwaukee to sell. They made frequent visits to my house for flour and salt, and the most friendly relationship existed between them and my family, we passing in and out of their camp as often as opportunity permitted us. On one occasion, while I was making hay near their camp, three squaws came with long sticks or canes and helped turn the hay. When done, they signified by signs that they had done so because I had given them flour and salt.

The deer continued plentiful for a number of years, but the constant settling up of the town, and the killing of them, made their appearance very scarce, so that the last deer known to have been killed in the town was by myself in 1856.

A frequent and very troublesome annoyance to the settlers was the great number of wolves that made the night hideous with howling, and would even attack the stock if suitable care was not taken to keep the cattle in places of safety. In the winter it was sometimes unsafe, even in the day time, to be unarmed, as they followed teams of horses or oxen, watching every opportunity to attack them. One winter in 1847, between Christmas and New Year, Conrad Scheele, a young man living with me, started out with the ox team and sleigh to go to Clark's Corners, in Spring-



INDIAN CAMP.

From Mitchell's New School Geography.

field, to get a few bushels of potatoes from Joseph Knippschild, and after being gone about an hour, came back to arm himself, because the wolves were so numerous and savage he could not make any progress on the road.

On Table Bluff, the highest bluff in the town, section 29, there are a number of Indian mounds that are in the form of small hills, others long or oblong, while some of them take the shape of animals, such as bears, snakes, etc. On section 27, where my land is, there are several long ones, also having the form of animals.

There is evidence on sections 21 and 29 that the aborigines were engaged in mining or digging for some valuable minerals or flints, before the white settlers came to this town. Large excavations are seen showing where the soil has been thrown out for some purpose that we are not made aware of in our time. Perhaps to obtain the copper masses, or boulders from which they made their tools.

In those days the postal arrangements in the town were not within the requirements of our modern conveniences, and perhaps could not be better told than to relate an incident that came under my own observation. The nearest post-office was Madison, and letters for the town of Berry had to come over the Sauk road, by way of Mr. Dunlap's, then sometime afterwards it would be carried from there to Cross Plains, and then to Mr. Thomas, who was postmaster, on section 10. A friend and myself calling for letters at his house were informed by Mrs.

Thomas that her husband was in the meadow haying, where we went and found him mowing with a sickle one foot long. After the compliments of the day were passed, we asked if there were any letters for us. He replied that he would see, and sitting down on his haunches he very carefully with both hands took off his hat (which was a genuine stovepipe of no very recent style), tumbled out a number of letters on the ground, looked them over for us, and then replaced the hat and its contents on his head. We were Germans, but we had never seen a portable post-office before, nor had any conceptions of the weighty correspondence of many heads being carried in one, and then covered with a stovepipe hat; but that was the post-office of Cross Plains.

The nearest mills that we had were Hickocks', in Iowa county, Sugar River Mill, and the Lodi Mill; and the inconvenience of the early settlers in getting their wheat gristed was sometimes scarcely possible in our times to imagine. On one occasion, I carried a grist to Hickocks' Mill and found the mill stopped and undergoing repair; I then started for the mill at Sugar River, but found that also broken down and repairing, which ultimately compelled me to go to Janesville, before I could get my wheat gristed; occupying about six days going and returning. Mr. John Cropper started a mill at Halfway Prairie creek in 1863, but afterwards moved it to Mazomanie.

In 1852, I started a brewery, and continued in the business until 1861. In 1862, George Esser also started a brewery, and has built up a large business.

In the southeast part of the town there is a large Catholic church, built of stone, and with a fine spire that can be seen for miles around. The present pastor is the Rev. John Friede, a well educated and sociable gentleman. There is also a Catholic school connected with the church. In the center of the town there is a German Lutheran church, under the pastoral charge of the Rev. Mr. Schenk, of Middleton. The town has six school districts.

The first store in town was kept by Hartwig Meyer, at Halfway Prairie, and for several years Mr. Christian Henrichs also kept a store at the above place. There is no store at present.

The town is well supplied with stone for building purposes; and Mr. Peter Rouls has a lime kiln, and supplies the neighborhood with burned lime.

The Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad runs through the southwestern part of the town. In Halfway Prairie there is a little village called Meyer's Corners, where are two saloons, one kept by Aug. Rie-ward, and the other by Herman Schneyer; two blacksmith's shops, one by August Hagemann, and the other by John Hagemann; one wagon shop, kept by Jacob Back; one shoe shop, kept by Carl Schuman; and one tailor, Chris. Luetzow.

On sections two and eleven there is a lake known as Indian Lake, that has no apparent outlet. It was much frequented by the Indians for fishing and hunting, but of late years, they seldom visit it, although many of the citizens still continue to hunt here. From having dried up, it is not as large as formerly.