

HISTORY

OF

WALWORTH COUNTY,

WISCONSIN,

CONTAINING

AN ACCOUNT OF ITS SETTLEMENT, GROWTH, DEVELOPMENT AND RESOURCES; AN EXTENSIVE AND MINUTE SKETCH OF ITS CITIES, TOWNS AND VILLAGES—THEIR IMPROVEMENTS, INDUSTRIES, MANUFACTORIES, CHURCHES, SCHOOLS AND SOCIETIES; ITS WAR RECORD, BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES, PORTRAITS OF PROMINENT MEN AND EARLY SETTLERS; THE WHOLE PRECEDED BY A HISTORY OF WISCONSIN, STATISTICS OF THE STATE, AND AN ABSTRACT OF ITS LAWS AND CONSTITUTION AND OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES.

I L L U S T R A T E D .

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kesha, Wis., when 6 years of age; subsequently lived in Hebron, Jefferson Co., and moved from there to La Grange, and in 1859 to Richmond; settled in the central part of the town; he enlisted in December, 1862, in Company I, 13th W. V. I., and served two years and one month, or until the close of the war; he was married in Whitewater, Jan. 5, 1867, to Miss Charlotte Claxton, daughter of Charles Claxton. Mrs. Hare was born in Richmond, Wis. They have two children—Mary and Henry.

MORRIS F. HAWES was born at Warwick, Orange Co., N. Y., Nov. 12, 1797, and in early childhood removed with his parents, William and Martha (Wood) Hawes, to Steuben Co., where he remained until about 21 years of age, and during which time he served as a volunteer (though but a boy) in the war of 1812. His father, also a native of New York, participated in the war of the Revolution, and the subject of this sketch was the youngest of a numerous family of boys. Mr. Hawes married, May 17, 1818, Miss Sarah, the eldest daughter of Capt. Nathan Lounsbury, of Rutland, Vt., one of Col. Ethan Allen's "Green Mountain Boys," of Revolutionary renown, who reached the remarkable age of 101 years and 8 months; dying at Rutland August, 1857. Soon after his marriage, Mr. Hawes moved to Chautauqua Co., N. Y., where he led for some twelve years the quiet, happy life of a prosperous young farmer, cheered and assisted by his loving and ambitious wife, a most loyal young helpmate. Though fitted by birth and education to grace a higher social station, she was ever light-hearted, brave and content, surrounded by her thrifty flock of girls and boys, of whom six were born to them during their residence in that State. About the year 1830, Mr. Hawes, hoping to better the prospects of his growing young family, made another push to the Westward, this time halting in Hillsdale Co., Mich., where he resumed his occupation of farming, and also kept for a time a small hotel, about half way between the villages of Jonesville and Coldwater, on the great stage route between Detroit and Toledo and Chicago. Here he remained until the spring of 1837, when becoming dissatisfied with his success and prospects, and hearing much from returning explorers of the wondrous beauty and fertility of the "Rock River Valley," he resolved to make one more advance, and this time to the famed prairies beyond all the great lakes. With Mr. Hawes, to resolve was to act, and with his heroic wife and arms full of babies, he set out for the Territory of Wisconsin, reaching what is now the town of Richmond in August, 1837. Here he selected a claim and erected a cabin—the first home of civilization in the township—and here, on Jan. 5, 1838, a son was added to his family; the first born in the township, if not in Walworth Co. After a few months spent in improving his land, he sold the claim for \$500, and located another, three miles to the eastward, on the town line between Richmond and Whitewater. On a corner of this farm was subsequently built, by Mr. Hawes and some three or four neighbors, the first schoolhouse in the town. The first teacher was paid \$1.25 per week. Mr. Hawes' family constituting a majority of all the pupils. Nevertheless, the handful of settlers were in possession of a free school. For twenty years, Mr. Hawes continued to till the acres he had reclaimed, much respected by the growing community, by whom he was retained in the minor offices of the county for nearly the whole time, and by whom he was elected to the first Constitutional Convention, called at Madison Oct. 5, 1846. In 1857, his wife having long been an invalid, and his sons not following the chosen occupation of their father, Mr. Hawes decided to relinquish the cares of a large farm, and removed to Whitewater, where, on July 28, 1859, the gentle partner of his busy life folded her weary, loving hands in final rest. Of his family, the eldest, Lucretia, the wife of B. P. Plato, of Rock Co., died in 1866. Lucy, the second, died in childhood, in New York. Lucinda M. is the widow of Joel Clapp, late of Milwaukee; Lucena E. is the wife of William De Wolf, of Whitewater; Lucius J. married Miss Eliza Hunter, of Maquoketa, Iowa, and lives at that place; Lucerne E. married Miss Clara Beemer, of Albion, N. Y., and lives at Whitewater; Frances E. is the wife of Dr. C. M. Palmer, of Colorado; Francis M. married Miss Jennie Housel, of Owen Co., Ky., and resides at Milwaukee; and Dean M. is the wife of Hiram S. Teall, of the same city. A single incident of Mr. Hawes' career will sufficiently illustrate a strong feature of his character. When chosen to serve as a member of the Constitutional Convention, on arriving at Madison, and before qualifying, he was called home by the serious and subsequently fatal illness of his wife. He was detained so long that upon his return to the convention the duties of that body were virtually completed. He was then urged by his fellow-members to qualify, that he might be properly enrolled and receive his compensation as a member. This he stubbornly refused to do, claiming that he had performed no public duty for which he was entitled to compensation. He died at Whitewater Jan. 13, 1868, in the 71st year of his age. Few words are needed to give to the memory of Morris F. Hawes its fit place in the annals of this State. In all the relations of life he was a just man. With scarce an exception, he was honored and trusted and loved by all who knew him. He was punctilious and persistent in the discharge of every moral and business obligation. He lived an open-handed life of usefulness. He died no man's debtor. His name will be honored as long as they live who understand and value the virtue, the heroism, the wisdom and the dignity of the man who shaped the destinies of the proud State of Wisconsin.

TOWN OF RICHMOND.

ORGANIZATION.

When, by act of the Territorial Legislature, approved February 2, 1838, the county of Walworth was first divided into towns, the territory now constituting the town of Richmond was a part of the town of Elkhorn. It so remained until February 13, 1840, when, by an act of the Legislature approved on that day, what is now the towns of Whitewater and Richmond—being Towns 3 and 4 in Range 15 east—were erected into a single town and called Whitewater. By an act of the Territorial Legislature, approved January 12, 1841, the south half of the town of Whitewater, being Town 3 in Range 15 east, was erected into a new one and called Richmond, from a town of the same name in Rhode Island, from which came a few of its earliest settlers.

SITUATION AND NATURAL FEATURES.

The town is situated in the western part of the county, on the western boundary line, from which it is separated from the town of Johnstown, in Rock County. The surface in the southwestern part of the town is a level prairie; in the northwest, it is more rolling, interspersed with beautiful oak openings; in the northeast, the surface is quite hilly, there being a range of hills extending in a northeasterly and southwesterly direction across Sections 2 and 3; in the southeastern part of the town, there is considerable marsh land, which is of no value as farming land, and too wet to be of superior value as meadow land. Rock Prairie, which covers about seven sections in the southwest part of the town, is considered the choicest locality in the town.

There are several small lakes in the town, the principal ones being Lake No. 9, on Section 9; Lake No. 10, on Section 10; and Turtle Lake, covering portions of Sections 11, 12, 13 and 14. The outlet of the last-named lake is Turtle Creek, which flows in a general southerly direction across Sections 14, 23, 26, 35 and 36, leaving the town in the southeastern corner of the last-numbered section. Most of the marsh land of the town spoken of above lies for a considerable distance on either side of this creek. Whitewater Creek rises on Section 3 and flows in a northerly direction, leaving the town on the same section. On either side of this creek is also some marsh land. The soil is a heavy clay loam in the openings and higher portions, while on the prairie and in the lowlands it is mixed with a rich alluvial deposit. The land is generally of excellent quality, being easy of cultivation and highly productive. The town is fairly timbered with the various varieties indigenous to this part of the State.

THE FIRST SETTLER.

The following facts are from the pen of Prosper Cravath, of Whitewater: "To Morris F. Hawes is due the credit of having been the first settler in the town of Richmond. He arrived on the 1st day of August, 1837, and immediately laid claim to the south half of Section 1. The night previous to their arrival, they camped upon Rock Prairie, a few miles distant, and now, as soon as they had halted, preparations were made for breakfast. These were quite primitive in their character, and soon finished. Their table was formed of a board laid across some poles; chairs were taken from the wagon, and all sat down to their first meal in their new home. 'Squire Hawes' had removed from Michigan, and was among the more wealthy of the early settlers. His equipage, when he started from Chicago, consisted of four yoke of oxen and three wagons. One of these wagons was boarded up at the sides and back, about four and a half feet from the box, and covered at the top with a deck roof. This served them not only as a family carriage, but also as parlor, bedroom and pantry. His family consisted of a wife and six children—young ladies, lasses and lads. Their daily progress was from twelve to twenty miles. They found a track as far as Geneva, but, after leaving that place, their only guide was an Indian trail, which led northward to Fort Atkinson. When they stopped for the night, they 'put up' at no hotel, and had no landlord, landlady or cook of whom to complain, for all were their own hotel-keepers. When the shade of evening warned them that it was time to secure a

resting-place for the coming night, they selected some place near which flowed a stream or spring of clear water, and where wood could be procured. Their first business was to collect fuel for the building of a fire. This duty devolved upon the men of the party. The women then succeeded to the peculiarly feminine task of preparing the meal. This ready, they all sat round their rude table in truly gipsy style. Though their fare was simple, yet the feast of an epicure could not have been partaken of with a keener relish. In the morning, they proceeded upon their way with the rising of the sun, and, after traveling four or five miles, would halt for breakfast. This disposed of, and the dishes being washed and packed away, they would start anew, not stopping again until night, their dinner consisting of a lunch taken in the wagon. If they chanced to be in the vicinity of a dwelling near dark, they would stop for the night, using the fire of the house for cooking purposes, and the strangers were always sure of a hearty welcome, for a lack of hospitality could not be charged against the early settlers. Such, in brief, was the mode of traveling then, at once wild and fascinating, and yet wearisome and full of care. But even when their journey was accomplished and they had reached their destination, the prospect before them must have seemed somewhat dark and dubious. Their surroundings were certainly little calculated to inspire hope. With no roof to shelter their heads, no neighbors within miles of them, a trackless prairie upon the one side and a wood as trackless upon the other; huge oaks of a century's growth stood thick around, but these were to be felled and hewn and joined together before they could serve for protection and shelter alike from sunshine and storm. An easily tilled and productive soil lay ready for their hands, but much labor was required, and the sun must again complete his annual round before they could hope to reap of the fruits of the earth. Yet, nothing daunted, and with hopeful hearts and cheerful faces, they went right heartily to work, and soon their cabin was so far completed as to allow of its occupation by the family. The logs were rough-hewn on the inside; the roof was made of shakes, which resembled staves, and were about four feet long, being riven either from the white or yellow oak. They were placed upon poles laid lengthwise of the building, and over them were placed larger poles to keep them firm. The Squire had brought glass and sash for his windows from Chicago. For frames, he took the boards which, on the road, had formed their wagon home. The floor was made of the wagon boxes, and it might seem strange to the uninitiated to know the different uses to which these same boxes were put, now being used as a floor, and now as wagon boxes in going to mill, the ground meanwhile serving as floor and carpet, for in those days there was no superfluous lumber, and a board was a treasure."

Mr. Hawes, after a number of years, moved from Richmond into the town of Whitewater, and subsequently into the village of Whitewater, where he died January 14, 1868, his wife having preceded him by nine years.

OTHER EARLY SETTLERS.

The subsequent settlers of 1837 are as follows: Thomas James, on Section 34; Arthur and Andrew Stewart, on Section 33; Perkins S. Childs, on Section 17. Of these, Mr. James came from Rhode Island; Arthur and Andrew Stewart, from Pennsylvania; and Mr. Childs, from Vermont.

Among the settlers of 1838 are the following-named persons: Charles Hamilton, who located on Section 4; Thomas P. James, on Section 34; George E. James, on Section 33; Ira Sanborn, Cyrenus Wilcox and Joseph Compton, on Section 5; John Teetshorn, on Section 6.

In 1839 came William Campbell, S. W. Newbury and Joseph Prentice, who located on Section 18; Joseph and James G. Humphrey and Anderson Whiting, on Section 7; Stephen and Isaac Kelch, on Section 6.

In 1840 came Asa Congdon and William Hatton, who settled on Section 35; Robert Moore, on Section 29; Daniel Wilkins and Morris Ensign, on Section 6; Alden Wilkins, on Section 3; Edwin M. Rice, on Section 5; H. E. Hemminway, on Section 8; James Cotter, Jasper Humphrey and William Patterson, on Section 19; Harrison and Silas Bishop, on Section —; Gordon Florentine, on Section 17.

In 1841, Elijah Belding settled on Section 29; A. P. Newbury, on Section 18; Freeman Emerson, on Section 19; John Balfour, on Section 20; Andrew Mills, on Section 19.

In 1842 came H. G. Smith and C. J. Dockstader, who located on Section 28; John A. Bowen and John Langley, on Section 20; Solomon Wakeley, Ambrose Moore, James and David