The 1880 census shows 14 incomes under $200, some of them from plats of ground hardly to be dignified by the name of farms. There were 28 in the second class, $200 to $399, 17 of $400 to $599, 15 of $600 to $999, and 17 over $1000. That is to say, 42 incomes were below $400, 49 were above that figure; or, 59 were below $600, and 32 above $600. One farm reported no income. The largest income in 1879 was $1700. It was derived from a farm of 550 acres, mostly good bottom land in Blue River valley (sections 28 and 29), of which 150 acres was under cultivation. The farmer was a cattle feeder, buying cattle and also raising them, feeding his crops of corn and hay in fattening.

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The time was ripe for a change in the agricultural system, and almost immediately after 1880 began the movement for cooperative dairying which brought to the town all the prosperity to which, considering the quality of its lands, it was entitled. This change was indicated by the increase in number of milk cows from 384 in 1880 to 895 in 1905 and to 1099 in 1920. Income increased in these periods to $698 in 1904 and to $2057 in 1919. Dairy products increased in value from $890 per farm in 1904 to $1106 in 1919, crop incomes per farm from $76 to $198.

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Population Changes.—The schedule of population changes, printed herewith, shows that in point of numbers native Americans at first had a large majority—407 to 180. The count of families, however, gives a different complexion to the population, proving that in 1860 nearly one-half were of foreign extraction. In 1870 the foreigners had a large majority of the families, a condition which changed once more in 1885. From that time native American families had a slight preponderance until 1920, when only 14 families had foreign born heads and 68 American. That means, to be sure, that foreign born persons did not continue to come into the town in considerable numbers, that the original settlers of those stocks were dying out, and their American born descendants are now the heads of families.

**Muscoda—Population Statistics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>American</th>
<th>Foreign</th>
<th>Families</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td>677</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
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<td>347</td>
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<td>232</td>
<td>114</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>1,396</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Village excluded.
the earliest visitors to the township, may perhaps symbolize the hope which existed until some years later, that mineral would be found in that region. But these entries, covering as they do the first good soil in the vicinity of the steamboat landing, may also be accounted for as good speculations in farm land. At the forks of Blue River (or junction with the Fennimore), in sections 32 and 29, were entries dating from 1887, in the form of a parallelogram embracing 440 acres. This was selected as a future town site and was named Lafayette. The site included the east three-fourths of the south half of 29 and the east three-fourths of the north half of 32. The entries were Stephen Taylor, Hugh Russell Hunter, Hunter and Gray, M. V. Burr, and Sheldon and Enev. The land was afterwards made into good farms, but the promoters of Lafayette evidently expected a town might grow up between Wingville on the Military Ridge and English Prairie in the valley, and the forks would be the logical place for it.

Other speculative purchases apparently were all of farm land. Most of them were made shortly before the completion of the railroad, at the time of the rapid settlement of the town. The land taken included both Congress land and state school land. Nearly all of the latter went to one firm of speculators. No doubt the location of the town, with reference first to the steamboat landing on the Wisconsin and second to the railway, was a dominant factor in creating the speculative interest in Muscoda land. Actual settlers were later obliged to pay tribute to the speculators. Fortunately, the town site speculations, except the site of Lafayette, did not affect agricultural purchasers, because the sand prairie was practically worthless for farming purposes.

Progress of Farm Making.—The plat for 1860 shows that, aside from speculate land, which was still in many cases in the hands of the original purchasers, the farms were principally in possession of the entrypes. Some good clearings were already made. Two farms had each 100 acres of improved land, while the remainder seem to have ranged from 90 acres to 25 acres improved. The figures for 1870 are more certain. At that time the number of farms was 70, and the aggregate of improved land 4247 acres. There was a total of 11,579 acres within the farms. That total had risen, by 1880, to 17,586, of which 8556 was improved land.

Classification of Farms According to Area.—In 1870 there were 3 farms having less than 20 acres. Three had between 20 and 40 acres, 13 from 50 to 99 acres, 28 between 100 and 174 acres, 21 between 175 and 500 acres, and 2 over 500. Ten years later, out of 92 farms, 8 were under 20 acres, 7 over 20 and under 50, 16 over 50 and under 100, 26 over 100 and under 175, 38 from 175 to 499, and 7 over 500. This shows that there was a tendency toward the large farm of more than 175 acres, and that the two types, large farms and good-sized farms (100 to 174, and 175 to 500), constituted by 1880 a large majority of the farms. As in the case of Castle Rock, which adjoining Muscoda on the south, some increase took place in the number of very small farms, but considering the total increase the proportion of farms varying in area from 30 to 99 acres remained practically unchanged.

This town, however, contained much waste land which never came into cultivation, and the record of gross acreage is not an adequate test of farming conditions. In 1870 the number of farms having under 40 acres of cultivated land was 22; the number having 40 and under 100 acres was 34; and the number having over 100 acres, 14. The 1880 census shows 26 having under 40, 53 having 40 and under 100, and 13 having 100 and over. The largest acreage under cultivation on any farm was 180 acres, and there were two farms having 150 acres; the rest were smaller. It is clear, therefore, that gross size of farms was not the true test of their value for production. In three cases farms embracing more than 500 acres had 100 acres or less under cultivation.

General Productions.—In 1859, according to the plat, several farms yielded over 400 bushels of wheat. Ten years later the average per farm was 317 bushels, which by 1879 had dropped to 200 bushels. In 1869 the largest wheat crop produced on any farm was 960 bushels. In 1879, though the average had declined seriously and most farms were growing little wheat, two farms nevertheless produced each 1000 bushels. These were both located on the "ridge," in the area of Knox silt loam, and both were growing clover freely. We have in this an illustration of the fact that in the Driftless Area it was the ridges that prolonged the life of the wheat crop, due partly to the better adaptation of their soils to the needs of the wheat plant, and partly to the circumstance that those lands were often cleared and broken up later than the valley lands. Since Muscoda had a large area of ridge land, her standing as a wheat producer among the three towns listed was relatively high, the town occupying sixth place. Highland, an all-ridge town in the Driftless, and Pulaski, mostly ridge land, stood higher, as did Bangor, also in the Driftless, and Empire and Newton in the glaciated area. The large increase of the cultivated area in the preceding decade was in the upland portions of the town. But the aggregate production of wheat, despite the enlargement of area, was approximately 20 per cent below the production of 1869. Wheat farming was on the decline.

Other market crops in 1870 were corn, marketed principally in the form of pork and beef; a small amount of wool; and some butter. In 1880 beef cattle were proportionally as numerous as ten years earlier, while hogs had increased one-third, butter somewhat, and wool had fallen away. The corn crop had increased more than 8000 bushels, which explains the advance in pork raising.

In this town, as in Castle Rock and some others, we have the spectacle of a decline in the proportion of improved land after 1880. The state census of 1885 gives the figure as 7483.5 acres, against 8556 in 1880. The reason, again, was the withdrawal of the less productive or less easily cultivated lands on the ridges and steep slopes from cultivation, and their utilization for pasture. The tendency of the steep hill slopes to form gullies when broken up was halted by leaving them in grass. Also, the flood bottoms along the streams, once broken up for crops, were found to be of maximum value as pasture for dairy cows. The improved acreage in 1895 was 6985. Ten years later it was 6778. By 1885 the wheat crop had dwindled to one-half the production of 1879, and in the next ten years it declined 50 per cent. But, in the meantime, pork and dairy products had taken the place of wheat as money crops. Muscoda in 1885 is credited with 26,350 pounds of cheese and 21,800 pounds of butter. For 1895 the figures are 186,582 pounds of cheese and 14,140 pounds of butter. Thus the transition had been made from general farming based on wheat growing as the major interest, with some livestock and a little dairying, to the more intensive system of dairying under the principle of cooperation and the stimulus of sharp competition. For many years cheese of the American brand was the staple dairy product, and it is so yet.

Special Productions.—There was little to qualify the description "general farming." However, some barley was produced, which was sold to the local brewery, and on the sand prairie some rye was grown, as also elsewhere on the lighter soils, but not to a large extent. Forest products, as one would expect from the lightly timbered character of the town, amounted to very little. Watermelons were grown plentifully on the sand, but the market for them was chiefly local; on the ridges were a number of thriving apple orchards. Beginning about 1880, clover seed was produced to a considerable extent.

Value of Productions.—According to the tenth census (1880) the value of all productions was $51,054, which gives an average per farm of $554. In that respect thirteen of the twenty-three towns surpassed Muscoda. In 1870 there were 19 incomes which exceeded $1000. One of these, the income of a 600-acre farm having 200 acres improved, was $2700. Much of the income came from animals slaughtered on the farm, though there were 500 bushels of wheat, 1000 of corn, 6000 pounds of wool, and 300 pounds of butter. The second highest income was $1900, from a farm of 320 acres having 140 acres improved. In this case, likewise, slaughtered animals made a large proportion of the income. The summary of production records for 1870 includes 4 under $200, 12 between $200 and $399, 10 of $400 to $599, 23 of $600 to $999, and 19 over $1000. It will be seen that the most numerous classification is the fourth, $600 to $999.

1 It was owned by D. C. Strong.
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Of the American heads of families other than natives of Wisconsin in 1860, 15 were from Pennsylvania, 12 from New York, and 10 from Ohio. Indiana claimed 4, Vermont 4, and Connecticut 3. Four other states had 2 each, and six had 1 each. This count included the villagers as well as the farmers, and it may have included a few who were not living in the town of Muscoda. Among the foreign heads of families Germany claimed 35, Bohemia 5, France 4, Switzerland 4, Ireland, England, and Scandinavia 2 each, and Poland 1.

It was, indeed, a mixed—almost a heterogeneous—population, suggesting problems of social organization and adjustment as a condition of progress. The two leading elements were the native Americans and the Germans. For more than a quarter of a century after the organization of the town, the American element remained in virtual control of the town's public business. Thereafter, till about 1900, Germans took the leading part in affairs, giving place more recently to Bohemians.

The community has never been thoroughly unified and harmonious—unless it has achieved that desirable state very recently. Yet, on the whole, the difficulties have been rather less than might be inferred from the complexity and diversity of racial stocks and the wide divergencies in religious beliefs and practices. A good measure of tolerance, and a wide-spread indifference to social affairs, probably help to explain the comparatively peaceful history of the town.