WHITewater

LOCATION.—The town of Whitewater, organized in 1841, is symmetrical and occupies surveyor's township number 4 north of range 15 east in the northwestern corner of Walworth County. It is bounded north by Cold Spring in Jefferson County, east by La Grange, south by Richmond, and west by Lima (Rock County). The town is fifty miles due west from Racine, and nearly sixty miles southwest from Milwaukee. Janesville, the nearest large town, lies twenty miles southwest on Rock River. Whitewater was surveyed in 1836 by H. Burnham, United States deputy surveyor general.

SURFACE AND DRAINAGE.—The topography of the town, as delineated on the original survey, shows as the principal drainage system Whitewater Creek, made up of two main branches which flow from the southeast and southwest respectively, uniting in section 5. The mill ponds later caused such enlargements of both branches, near their junction, as to form a lake which occupies portions of sections 10 and 9, as well as section 5. The easternmost branch had its head in Lakes Whitewater and Bass, located in sections 34-35 and 35-25-25. The westernmost branch rises apparently in section 28. Each has a small tributary flowing from near the border of the township east and west respectively. Whitewater Creek empties into Bark River, an eastern affluent of Rock River.

The surface is diversified. Its features become clear by reference to the United States Geological Survey, Whitewater Sheet. This shows approximately one-fourth of the area of the township, in the south and southeast, to be hilly and broken; about an equal area in the south and in the north, wet prairie; and the remainder dry prairie, openings, and bottom land interspersed with frequent small tracts of swampy meadow. The hills attain an elevation of 1000 feet above sea level. They belong to a kind of range or chain which trends northeast and southwest, paralleling in part the "limestone ridge," which forms the westernmost outcrop of the Niagara limestone.

TYPES OF SOIL.—Whitewater is in the area of glacial drift. The soil, resting on limestone, is in general fertile, and was described as first-class by the surveyor, except the hilly portions and a small area of rolling land in the northeast, which were called second-rate. No soil survey of this town has yet been executed. The surveyor who made the original plat described the soil in most portions as first-rate. In the southeast—the hilly portion—and in some of the more swampy sections he called it second-rate. Whatever may be the scientific designation of the soil series, there is no doubt about the excellent quality of the soil on the high prairies, the openings, and such of the lowlands as are not too wet for successful cultivation. A portion of the lowlands is not merely wet, but the character of the subsoil offers obstructions to drainage. These lands are unclaimed even now. The hill lands have good soil, but being rough and stony they are esteemed of less value than would otherwise be the case.

TIMBER.—There were no densely forested areas. The primitive timber growth was almost wholly oak—that resistant tree which often survived the Indian prairie fires when all else was cleared away. The oaks—burr, burr, white, and yellow—sometimes stood in the form of small wooded islands in the prairie, but more often constituted oak openings, in which good-sized trees or clumps of trees were scattered thinly over the surface, with scarcely any underbrush or hamper cultivation. The marshes were usually free from timber. Thus conditions were precisely such as most new settlers desired—timber enough for immediate uses, but mostly open land ready for the plow, with wet meadows and marshes to furnish hay and pasturage for stock; and stock water in abundance everywhere.

BEGINNINGS OF SETTLEMENT.—A study of the land entries with reference to the character of the land as described by the surveyor, and as shown on the topographical map, reveals instructively how the early settlers avoided the very rough lands and the very wet lands. In all cases, the dry prairie and openings were entered first, mostly in 1839. The entries were made by English speaking persons, with but fourteen exceptions. These tracts went to Scandinavians. Moreover, the earliest entries were practically all settlers, a settlers' association having been formed to enable claim makers to buy their claims at the land sale in Milwaukee, which was held in February, 1839. Speculators were effectively suppressed by the association. In fact, it does not appear, from our data, that speculators ever secured an appreciable part of the lands in this town. That foreign names are found mostly in the southeastern part of the town plat is due, of course, to the fact that the more desirable lands had all been entered prior to the time of the Scandinavian immigration to that region, and those left-over lands in the heart of a settled and prosperous community appeared to them more desirable than wild lands lying at the actual frontier.

Whitewater, in its origin, is one of the New England-New York communities. The earliest settlers were nearly all of that tradition. They began to arrive early in the spring of 1837, the first authenticated party, that of Benoni Finch, reaching in April of that year Whitewater Creek at the site of the present city. This party opened the first trail through the township by following the Indian path which in those days wound its serpentine course through woods, marsh, and prairie, from Milwaukee to Galena. This first road was known for some years as Finch's Trail. That season claims were made by William Barron, Samuel Prince, William and Leander Birge, Dr. Edward Brewer, and Norman Pratt. The first house, a log cabin twelve feet square, was built in July, on section 6, by Samuel Prince. Also, some ground was broken during the same season, and before winter set in some half a dozen cabins dotted the prairie, in several of which families were actually living. These first improvements were on sections 5, 6, 7, and 8, the northwest corner of the township. For their water supply the settlers bought potatoes from a man who had begun farming near Janesville in 1836; and during the winter, flour and pork running low, they sent an ox team to Elgin, Illinois, for a load of these necessities. It was customary for drovers to bring from Illinois both cattle and hogs for the purpose of selling to the new settlers in Wisconsin. The Walworth County pioneers were as early as 1838 supplied from such sources. Most of the land claimants, indeed, did not actually settle in the town until 1838, but in that year improvements were made in many sections, so that it could be said that they harvested sufficient "not only for home consumption but enough to divide with the stranger who should come, unprovided, among them."

The new crop rendered the question of a gristmill crucial. There was, supposedly, only one mill site on the creek, in the south half of section 4. Since the holder of that claim did not build a mill, the people raised a mass meeting and resolved that he must either give bonds to build or permit the land to go, at the forthcoming land sale, to some one who would give bonds to build a mill and have it in operation within a year. If the claimant refused to do either, he should be run off the claim. They appointed a committee to carry the resolution into effect. This committee secured, at a given price, a relinquishment of the claim. Then they sought and found a man (Dr. James Tripp) who gave bonds to build the mill pro-

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1 In describing the town of Whitewater we have had the unique advantage of excellent town histories, of which the volume edited by the late Albert Salisbury stands at the head. On this account we are able to depart somewhat from the concise, formal mode of treatment and to present a picture of the town which is much nearer our ideal of what town history should be.
vided he secured the land. They went to the land sale in Milwaukee in February, and saw that this man obtained title. Work was begun forthwith, and on the twenty-seventh of June, 1839, the frame of the mill was raised amid a great concourse of settlers from four towns—all interested in its erection. An outdoor feast, followed by ball games on the Prairie, concluded a day memorable in the pioneer annals of Whitewater.

The land sale at Milwaukee, in February, was an event of the highest importance to settlers through all the Milwaukee land districts. It was the first sale held there, and had been advertised to occur in the previous November. However, so many of the settlers of the southeastern counties were unprepared to pay for their lands thus early, and petitioned so numerous for a delay, that three months' grace was given. The methods followed by the settlers in their claims association were in all respects similar to those described elsewhere.

Cravath says that two money lenders' from Chicago were present and made loans to many of the Whitewater people, as well as to others who had not the money to pay the government. He does not mention the rate of interest charged, but says they dealt fairly by the settlers in all respects.

There was as early as 1838 a sawmill on Bark River within reach of the settlers of Whitewater, and in the fall of that year a frame barn was erected, the first building in which sawed lumber was used. Another near-by sawmill was in operation by the end of the year 1840, and a year later Dr. Tripp had one running at Whitewater. But the products of these neighborhood sawmills, indispensable during the first years of the settlement, were soon discriminated against in favor of pine lumber from the northern forests. By 1845 the Whitemans were drawing their building material—good pine lumber—from Milwaukee, "as the time for using basswood and oak for siding was past." If the house of logs or clapboards is the symbol of frontier conditions, it may be said that the primitive period in Whitewater endured the briefest possible time. The gristmill by 1841 was selling flour of good quality as low as $1.50 per hundred. Two years before, it had cost settlers $1.25 per hundred to haul supplies by team from Milwaukee. Now they had an abundance of everything for their own use and a generous surplus to sell, albeit at low prices, to immigrants and for shipment east.

The territorial road, from Rochester in Racine County to Madison, passed through the northern tier of sections in Whitewater town, the thirteenth milepost being in the middle of Whitewater Creek. This road was laid out in the spring of 1839 and promptly improved. By means of it the settlers were soon able to reach a market at Racine, about fifty miles to the east, and at Milwaukee. Also, regular mail stages early connected Whitewater village with those two lake ports. It is said that by 1840 nearly every family in Whitewater received a copy of the weekly Milwaukee Sentinel.

The village, by 1844, had become the local market for the farmers within a radius of twelve miles. Every effort was made to win new trade by devoting resources of the village to aid the building of roads through the lowlands south, southeast, and southwest within the town. "Every one seemed interested in the work; merchants, millers, hotel-keepers, mechanics all subscribed liberally, while the farmers in the vicinity assisted by their labor. During the year not a dollar was expended upon the streets of the village, but all the funds were appropriated to the building of these highways across the lowlands."

Cravath gives us some statistics of the year 1844 which are interesting. There was assessed that spring 9,980 acres of land to residents and 8,500 to non-residents, leaving 10,300 acres of government land. The farming lands were valued at $33,137, the non-resident holdings (probably wild land in most cases) at $11,774. The entire tax for the year was $342.58.

The local historians furnish data for a somewhat detailed account of the progress of Whitewater village, but this information we can take account of only so far as it reflects the changes in the condition of the rural population. The building of churches and schools in the village, which began contemporaneously with the settlement, affected the farmers in the vicinity, as did the organization of the town in 1841. The first town meeting was held the first Tuesday in April of that year. Of fundamental importance to them also was the first of the railway.

**Conditions Affecting the Purchase of Lands.**—As already stated, speculators appear to have gained no foothold in this town. Even the mill site, usually a bone of contention in the beginnings of new communities, made but a mild speculation in Whitewater; for it seems that the original entryman of the tract containing it sold his claim right for a small sum, and the actual builder of the mill bought the right for $500. The accompanying plat of the land sales (fig. 40), based on the topographic map of the town, reveals better than pages of description how the most favorably located and the best farm lands were taken promptly, while the inferior lands went more slowly.

**Progress of Farm Making.**—The country by 1850 was thickly settled, the census taker finding in the town 148 farms valued at $182,450, and including 6867 acres of cultivated land, with 14,091 acres uncultivated. Among the nine towns for which we have agricultural census statistics for the year,

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1. See Introduction.
3. See diary of Frederick J. Starn in Wis. Mag. of Hist., vi, 219. The publication of this diary was begun in September, 1895, and completed in March, 1923.
5. Ibid., 71.
Classification of Farms according to Area.—As early as 1830 Whitewater had 76 farms of 100 or more acres. Classifying by census periods we get the following results: In 1850 and 1860 there were no farms under 20 acres in size. In 1850 there were 18 farms between 20 and 49 acres, 34 between 50 and 99, 45 between 100 and 174, and 29 between 175 and 499 acres. Two farms overran the 500-acre limit—that of John M. Clark, with 1100 acres, and that of Henry J. Starin, with 1800 acres. It is obvious from the quantities of land entered by individuals, that a good proportion of the settlers had come with appreciable sums of money, or the credit which enabled them to obtain money. The founders of the town were persons of some financial standing in the communities from which they had emigrated.

In 1860 there were 24 farms between 20 and 49 acres, 40 between 50 and 99, 42 between 100 and 174, and 30 between 175 and 499. The farm of John M. Clark had 600 acres and was valued at $25,000. In 1870 the largest number of farms, 69, fell again in the group of 100 to 174 acres. There were 20 small farms of less than 20 acres, 34 in the class 20 to 49 acres, 31 in the class 50 to 99, and 29 in that of 175 to 499. The farm of H. and C. Clark had 614 acres. Ten years later 6 farms were under 20 acres in area; there were 19 in class two, 33 in class three, 32 in class four, and 82 in class five. Three farms exceeded 500 acres—those of Charles Norton, 540 acres; Eric Ericson, 940 acres; and George Doubleday, 560 acres.

General Productions.—The average farm in Whitewater, with 44 acres under cultivation in 1849, was producing 179 bushels of wheat. All of this had to be hauled by team to Milwaukee—a long, expensive, and tedious process. One gauge of the miles which could be covered in a day by a loaded team was the distribution of taverns, whose principal customers were teamsters drawing grain, lead, etc. It is said these stood along the great road between Whitewater and Milwaukee to the number of fifteen—that is, four or five miles apart. When, therefore, the Milwaukee and Mississippi Railroad was projected, the farmers of Whitewater town were equally interested with the villagers in having it run through Whitewater, which it did, reaching there in the fall of 1852.

Whitewater was fourth in wheat production at this period, being exceeded by Mount Pleasant with 375 bushels, Sugar Creek with 870, and Plymouth with 340. The average farm in Whitewater produced, besides wheat, 51 bushels of corn, 97 of oats, 18 of potatoes. It had 10 tons of hay, 71 pounds of butter, 7 of wool, and maintained 22 sheep, 6 cattle (one a working ox), and one horse. The value of the livestock was given at $291, which is the third highest of the nine towns, Mount Pleasant with a valuation of $912 being first and Sugar Creek with a valuation of $247 being second. Whitewater was first in number of sheep per farm, having more than twice as many as Sugar Creek, her nearest rival. It appears that sheep and wool growing was an important industry in Whitewater. We find that one farmer, George R. Goodhue, had 900 sheep valued at $1475; another, John M. Clark, of Vermont, had 700; and Leander Birge, of New York, had 600. Several others had from 175 to 200 head, and 46 farms out of the 148 kept sheep to some extent. The statistics of wool production are incomplete, but by comparison with Sugar Creek the amount may be estimated at about 4000 pounds.

Wheat in 1859, while more abundant absolutely, represented a smaller yield than in 1849 in proportion to the tillable acreage. Other crops—corn, oats, and hay—were larger, yet not notably so, than ten years before. Milch cows had augmented in number until there were 4 to the average farm in 1860, whereas in 1850 there had been but 2, and “other cattle” had increased from 3 to 4. Sheep were less numerous, only 2784 in the town as against 3282, while the average per farm had fallen from 12 to 9. There was also a decrease in number of swine, of which in 1850 there were 851, while the 1860 schedules show 780, or an average of 5 to the farm. The production of buttermilk had multiplied fourfold. In that item and in the item of pork we seem to have the key to the recent agricultural development of the town.

By 1860 wheat production had dropped to 167 bushels per farm, but more corn, oats, hay, wool, and other crops had come in to replace wheat. It appears probable that wheat as a staple crop had passed its period of maximum profitability in Whitewater some years before 1860. The antiquarians speak of the years 1849, 1850, and 1851 as the “pink-eye” years, when crops grew progressively worse. After that there was a revival, and in 1855, the year in which wheat prices soared to $1.55 and more in Whitewater, the crop seems to have been good, and great prosperity prevailed. Nevertheless, there is evidence of much restlessness among the farmers during that decade, in the frequency of land transfers, which totaled 252 forfeitures. In other words, approximately 43 per cent of the land in the town changed hands between the years 1851 and 1860. No doubt the good prices due to the Crimean War and the project for building the Central Wisconsin Railway through Walworth County in 1854 and 1855—both of which tended to advance the prices of land very markedly—were a fruitful cause of land transfers. In the early spring of 1854 spring wheat was worth $1.25 “at home,” and the farmers were preparing to increase the acreage enormously. Land prices were going up, and prominent farmers of the county at that time sold their farms and moved away.

The census of 1880, as summarized by towns in our chart, discloses a condition of at least relatively high prosperity in the agriculture of Whitewater. First place was occupied by dairying, which from 8 cows brought the average farm 2548 gallons of milk and 420 pounds of butter. At 10 cents per gallon the milk would be worth $254.80; at 20 cents per pound the butter would yield an additional $84, or a total gross income of $338.80. This nets a large proportion of the $799 of total productions. Since the milk produced was apparently marketed at creameries or cheese factories, the above estimate may be too high. Still, it looks as if dairying were becoming well established.

There were 16 swine to the average farm, and this fact, supported by the comparatively large production of corn, 620 bushels, indicates that pork was a leading product of Whitewater farms in 1880. In 1885 Whitewater had on hand 2388 hogs, 3739 cattle, and only 1539 sheep (showing that the wool industry was a vanishing industry). It produced 487,800 pounds of cheese valued at $34,110, and 89,000 pounds of butter worth $7215. There was also a crop of tobacco, 87,000 pounds valued at $8700. The value of hogs slaughtered during the year was reckoned at $29,138; of cattle and calves, $25,099; sheep and lambs, $216. Here is still another test to prove the decadence of sheep farming.

Ten years later, 1895, the farm lands were valued at $960,940 as against $465,935 in 1885. Pork was less important in production, amounting to $19,981; cattle and calves on hand were valued much higher than in the preceding census, while those sold brought in only half as much. Sheep remained about as before. The amount of cheese produced was $229,500 pounds valued at $21,113; butter, 280,353 pounds valued at $43,498. Thus cheese and butter had exchanged places, and their combined value in 1894, $64,011, exceeded their combined value of 1884, $41,925, by $22,086. Hence, dairying had become the agricultural specialty, as is also shown in the high valuation placed upon the cattle, 2987 head at $84,490. The majority of these animals must have been milk cows. In 1905 the number of milch cows was 2210, valued at $58,215. Milk produced amounted to 93,110 gallons valued at $90,840 (which seems impossibly high and suggests an error in printing); butter, 10,150 pounds valued at $2235. The above is the farm production. In addition, 5,408,667 pounds of milk yielding 244,768 pounds of butter went to four creameries, and brought to 94 farmers milking 1271 cows the net sum of $53,487. Besides, the creamery in the city of Whitewater paid to 80 farmers $14,858 for the milk from 350 cows. Apparently there were no cheese factories in Walworth County; at least none are listed. However, the combined totals of milk and butter foot up to $101,415, or approximately $700 per farm (there were 147 farms). The total cattle, 3492 head, were valued at $78,360, and those slaughtered at $24,638. Hogs slaughtered were worth $39,960, sheep and lambs a paltry $288.
SPECIAL PRODUCTIONS.—So far as appears from the census, specialization except in one particular was hardly as much in evidence as it had been ten years earlier. This is true of sheep. In 1870 the average per farm was 33, with 190 pounds of wool; in 1880 the average was 22, with 128 pounds of wool. Moreover, the total number of sheep in the town had dropped from 6030 to 3330, and the total wool clip from 33,847 pounds to 18,660. These statistics show a marked decline in the one branch of farming which seemed to be tending toward a specialty.

VALUE OF PRODUCTIONS.—The total estimated values of farm productions in 1870 ranged from $60 (in a single case) to $14,500 (in a single case), with a liberal sprinkling of incomes exceeding $2000 and a large number over $1000. The one big income mentioned is the only case where total productions are valued at more than $3000, and in that case $9000 of the $14,500 was derived from animals “slaughtered or sold on the farm.” Probably a large number of sheep, cattle, and hogs went into the aggregate. The farm in question, owned by two partners (the Clarks), contained 514 acres improved land and 100 acres unimproved, and was valued at $50,000. The machinery was valued at $2000. The owners paid out $3000 in wages. It was the closest approximation to the “bonanza farm” that one meets with in Whitewater, and it was a stock farm having on it chiefly purebred animals.

There were 74 incomes of $1000 and more, 38 from $600 to $990, 26 from $400 to $390, 26 from $200 to $399, and 16 under $200. It was obviously a community having in it a considerable number of very well-to-do families intermingled with those in poorer circumstances. The proportion of low valuations and also of low incomes increased in the rough lands and decreased in the more desirable sections—those which were entered first,—proving that the owners of the poorer lands were under a fairly permanent handicap.

The average value of the productions per farm for the year 1879 was $790, which places the town fourth in our list, those surpassing it being Pleasant Springs, Bangor, and Empire, the highest average being that attained by Pleasant Springs—$1301. The land was by that time practically all improved, only 19 acres on the average farm of 133 acres remaining unimproved. This shows that swamps must have been drained for the most part and the highlands brought under tillage. At this time there were 40 incomes of $1000 and over, 36 of $800 to $999, 34 of $400 to $599, 21 of $200 to $399, and 13 under $200. One farm reported no income.

Seven incomes were $2000 and over, and 3 of these were $5000 and over. The largest was $8000, made by Truman Taft on a farm of 135 acres, of which 120 acres was cleared. The farm was valued at $5000, the livestock at $1100. The amount of milk sold or sent to creameries or cheese factories was 7000 gallons. There were 150 sheep on the farm. Mr. Taft raised 1000 bushels of corn, 200 bushels oats, and 100 bushels wheat. Five thousand dollars was made by Charles Clark on a

farm of 400 acres, 410 of which was cleared. It was valued at $23,000, the livestock at $6000. The productions were: 1000 pounds of butter, 3000 bushels corn, 1500 bushels oats, 400 bushels wheat. One hundred and sixty sheep produced 1200 pounds of wool. The sale of purebred cattle, sheep, and horses from this stock farm may explain the size of the income.

In 1904 the average farm income was $1289 and in 1919 it was $2936. There were 1260 milk cows in 1880, and this number had increased by 1905 to 2210 and by 1920 to 2630. The value of dairy products in 1919 had advanced to $1777 from $790 in 1904; the value of other livestock productions to $978 from $440; and crop incomes to $181 from $59.

SOCIAL CONDITIONS.—The recital just concluded testifies to the existence in Whitewater of a group of farm homes so well furnished with the pecuniary means of good living as to suggest that we may have here a model rural community. That question will turn upon the social use that was being made of the material resources, the housing, the education furnished the farm children, the religious, social, and intellectual opportunities of the people and the way these were used. On some of these points a little light can be thrown from general sources of information.

In the first place, our census report on the population in 1850 shows that the total number of persons of American nativity was 985, of foreign nativity 245. The foreign element included, however, 49 Irish, 31 English, 38 Canadians, 7 New Brunswickers, and 4 Scots, or a total of 149 English speaking persons. This left 96 persons or only 7 per cent non-English speaking foreigners. In this summary for 1850 no distinction is drawn between the village and the town, and the foreign element was no doubt concentrated mainly in the former, leaving the rural community English speaking and almost purely American, with the exception—already noted—of a few Scandinavian families. The 1860 population census discloses a marked increase in foreign born persons; but, as in the former case, these were largely in the village, not on the farms. A glance at the plat will show that the farming community was still, as ten years earlier, predominantly English speaking in character; and a count of heads of farm families as given in the census seems to show that only 25 of these were non-English speaking (mainly Norwegian), while 145 were English speaking. The English speaking group was divided as follows: from New York, 55; Vermont, 11; Massachusetts, 3; Connecticut, 3; Rhode Island, 1; New Hampshire, 1; Ohio, 3; Virginia, 1; Pennsylvania, 2; New Jersey, 1; Wisconsin 1—of whom American nativity; Ireland, 42; England, 16; Canada 3; Scotland, 2—total foreign English speaking, 88. In the non-English speaking group were 22 from Norway and 2 from Germany.

When we reach the census year 1870, we find the farm population of Whitewater divided between American born and foreign born, in the proportion of 813 American and 222 foreign—exactly 500 of the former being natives of Wisconsin. Of the remainder (313), 200 were natives of New York, 81 of Vermont, and 19 of Massachusetts, while Ohio furnished 17, Connecticut 10, Pennsylvania 8, and Rhode Island 7. There were also 5 from Maine, 4 from Indiana, 3 each from New Jersey and Michigan, 2 from California, and 1 each from Alabama, Illinois, Maryland, and Tennessee. The foreign born were: 81 from Ireland, 58 from Norway, 45 from England, 18 from Germany, and 15 from Canada, while Holland furnished 4 and Scotland 1. It will be seen that if the English speaking foreigners are added to the American, the total English speaking element will be raised to 955, leaving only 80 non-English speaking persons in the rural town, or less than 8 per cent.

We now move forward fifteen years, to the date of the state enumeration in 1885, when we find in the town of Whitewater—outside of the city—a total population of 838 distributed among 163 families. Of this number, 673 were born in the United States and 165 in foreign countries, as follows: Germany, 29; Great Britain, 38; Ireland, 45; British America, 11; and Scandinavia, 41. This gave an English speaking population total of 767 and a non-English speaking element of 71, or just over 9 per cent. The foreign element equaled 19 per cent of the entire population. Ten years later the families numbered 196, apparently, while the total population was only 832, 6 less than in 1885. The American born were 655, Germans 71, English 48, Irish 38, and Scandinavians 25. The Germans and Scandinavians together num-

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**Fig. 41. Town of Whitewater, 1915**

After a drawing lent by the W. W. Hixon Company
bered 96, while the total of the English speaking element was 796. The most noticeable change was in the number of Germans, who increased from 29 in 1885 to 71, while the combined British and Irish element changed hardly at all, and the Scandinavian declined from 41 to 25.

The last state census, that for the year 1905, gives the total population as 759, the native American as 650, and the foreign as 109. Of the native population Wisconsin was the birthplace of 594, other states furnishing only 56 in the total of 650. The foreign born came, 1 from Canada, 19 from England, 56 from Germany, 18 from Ireland, 12 from Norway, and 3 from Scotland. Thus, of the 109 foreigners, 41 were English speaking and only 68 non-English speaking, or 8.9 per cent of the whole.

These statistics show that, from its beginnings down to recent years, the town of Whitewater regarded in its rural aspect has been a distinctively English speaking community, prevailingly American, and that in its social origins the New England tradition predominated strongly. One would expect to find there, in much perfection, the characteristic institutions of New England, especially her churches and schools. The New England leadership in local affairs—political, moral, intellectual, and communal—would doubtless be evidenced by local records. But the presence of a numerous Irish element may have influenced both religion and politics to a considerable extent, and it would be strange if the Norwegians in the southeastern part of the town did not have their separate church organization also.

The village (afterwards city) of Whitewater absorbed in a part of its activities—for example, the religious—some of the minor elements of the rural community. A Catholic church served the needs of the Catholic farmers as well as of Catholics in the city. The county plat of 1873 shows four schoolhouses scattered through the town—one in the extreme south (section 38), one in section 20, one in 9, and one in 2. There was but a single country church building, in section 20. The county map of 1859 fails to show a church, and there were at that time three of the four schoolhouses found in 1873 located as above. The 1891 county plat shows five rural schools, a Methodist church in section 20, and (apparently) a Norwegian church and cemetery in section 34.

These features, save the Methodist church, all reappear in the plat of the year 1907.

Tradition, very well authenticated in this case, speaks of the custom early established among many Whitewater farmers, of attending lyceums, lectures, singing classes, concerts, balls, etc., in the village. The Norwegians in the southeastern part of the town, however, appear to have led their own distinctive social life, centered largely at the local church. The village served most of the American families.18

**Political Conditions.**—Walworth County, as was to be expected from the origin of its population, was inclined to go for slavery restriction as soon as that question arose. It is therefore not a matter of surprise, that this county in 1856 gave Fremont a majority over Buchanan of 2221. The vote stood: Fremont, 3518; Buchanan, 1297. At the same election, Whitewater voted 377 for Fremont, and 206 for Buchanan. This was the vote of the entire "town," including the village. No separate totals for country and village are given.17 But at the same election the town of Sugar Creek, a wholly rural town, gave Fremont 131, Buchanan 75. All local officers received in both towns about the same plurality as was given Fremont, and the same was true of Congressman (John F. Potter was elected) and members of the legislature.

It was claimed, by Republican papers, that nine-tenths of the newly made voters in Milwaukee voted the regular Democratic ticket, and it is true—as we saw in Newton and Manitowoc County—that the German vote was overwhelmingly Democratic in this period. The native Americanism of the southeastern counties is revealed in the large Fremont majorities in Walworth, Rock, Racine, and Kenosha counties, also in Winnebago and Columbia; while Milwaukee County, with over 4000 majority for Buchanan, and Washington, with nearly 2000, disclose the German immigrants' trend toward Democracy.

The results of the earliest elections cannot be given by towns, since only county summaries were furnished to the secretary of state. Yet, inasmuch as Whitewater was a fairly

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18 It would be an interesting inquiry to what extent the farm boys sought work in the Esterly reaper factory, located in Whitewater for many years, in the other manufacturing works, or in the important gristmill there.

17 *Whitewater Gazette*, Nov. 13, 1866.