Rudy Schaller, Gottfried Schaller, Jack Matti, Leo Hiltbrand, Gottfried Friedli, John Burkharte (who died of heat stroke in factory), Thoni Klarer.
The factory closed in December 1953. As it contains living quarters, it is now rented as a residence.

In early days, before modern methods of cooling milk were used, it was necessary for all patrons to haul their milk twice each day, and the cheesemaker made cheese every forenoon and every night. He put in long days, sometimes not finishing until midnight.

Most farmers say that even though it is convenient to now have a truck come to the farm to pick up milk, they miss the cheese factory because there they met their neighbors and exchanged news each day. They had many friendly chats and saw their neighbors more often than they now do.

FARMS OF GERMAN VALLEY

THE AUGUST HEUSER FARM

(Information by August Heuser
Written by Olin Ruste)

In the late 1880's or early 50's my grandparents Peter and Sophia Heuser together with other relatives and friends from Ritasau, Germany settled in the town of Blue Mounds, Wisconsin. They had heard glowing and exaggerated accounts of unbelievable opportunities of free land ready to be planted, where every one was given equal rights. Why they chose this particular
spot or state is now only guess work on our part or shall we call it "fate". My grandparents, together with others from Germany, settled in the same community on account of the language question as well as for protection and fellowship with those of the same cultural background.

There were no railroads in this area at the time of this settlement. Mineral Point had been set up by the Territorial and State Government as a Land Office wherein settlers could file their claims and records, deeds and mortgages. It is believed that Peter and Sophia Heuser claimed and settled on this farm when they first arrived, for the first deed I have in my possession Peter and Sophia Heuser deeded this farm to my father and mother Jacob and Dorothea Heuser on April 11, 1862. I purchased the farm from them in 1915 and have now rented it to Mr. and Mrs. Walter Hiltbrand who have been occupants for the last 15 years. Thus the farm has been in the Heuser family for over 100 years. A tax receipt in my possession dated January 9, 1862 shows that my grandfather paid a tax of $13.62 on 280 acres of land at that time. The first school district established in the town of Blue Mounds consisted of the S. W. 1/4 of the town, which includes this farm, was recorded on April 9, 1855 in the town clerk's records. Thus this farm has been taxed and a supporter of this public school by the same family for now just 100 years.
The Heuser family, Peter and Sophia Heuser and their seven children, came to this area by the way of New Orleans, up the Mississippi River. The crossing of the Atlantic Ocean required seven weeks, due to weather conditions. Much walking was done to complete the trip to German Valley. A wagon road had been established by the Territorial Government between Milwaukee and Waukesha was built in 1851, and was extended to Madison in 1854, then to Prairie du Chien in 1857. These early settlers came to this country for economic reasons. They settled in the valleys where there was wood and water to be had. Their first consideration was to build a log house for themselves. While the log house was under construction they lived in "dug-outs" in the hillsides for shelter until the log house was ready. Except for their food supply for the long voyage across the ocean, they brought very little of worldly goods with them.

Deer, jack rabbit, cottontails, prairie chickens, and quail were their main meat ration. Patches of ground were plowed with wood plows or spaded with shovels for the first years, and planted to wheat and barley. Crops were harvested with the scythe or cradle and tied into sheaves or bundles by hand and then stacked. Threshing was done on the clean frozen ground by spreading the sheaves and then walking the oxen over them, tramping out the kernels. The chaff
was fanned out by the hand-pan. The use of the flail by some was another method of threshing. For that period Elvers Mill in the town of Vermont was the closest grist mill for grinding wheat into flour. To bring a load of wheat to the grist mill was an occasion to remember, as enough was ground a time to last throughout the winter. There were no roads or bridges, so sometimes streams had to be crossed to reach a destination. Trails and weather conditions had to be picked with care when any one went on a long journey. Food for man and beast had to be provided from home, even in going to the mill as one had to wait his turn for grinding.

Letters from home or to the folks back home were few and far between in the 40's and 50's. As mining was an important industry in 1840's at Mineral Point it gradually extended to Pekerville at the foot of Blue Mounds, which became a thriving trading center and Trading Post. This was the closest contact with the outside world for some time. The horse drawn stage coach going through was an exciting event. Mount Horeb got its first post master in 1861.

No great surplus of food was produced at this time, to provide for any cash income for those early settlers. Barter of labor, as grubbing of land, splitting of rails for fences, helping build houses in exchange for a setting hen and a dozen eggs, or a pig, a calf or a sheep was the order of the day.
All clothes were made from the wool which was sheared, carded, spun into thread, and then woven into clothes for the family by the industrious and thrifty settlers. Whenever possible, men folks sought work in mines or wherever work was to be had in order to get some cash to provide the family with necessities they could not get in exchange for labor. My father, as a young man, worked in Mineral Point in the brewery for some time to get some ready cash for farm necessities. As the flocks and herds grew so did the surplus food supply. With the coming of the railroad more surpluses of all farm products were realized because of the greater outlets established by the railroads. The opening of this larger market together with the coming of the Swiss from New Glarus, caused this state to develop into the dairy state that it now is.

(August Heuser, and his two sisters, Elizabeth and Caroline, now reside together in Mount Horeb.)

THE AUGUST BECKER FARM

(Written by Olin Ruste)

One of the farms of German Valley which has remained in the same family for now a little more than one hundred years is the Becker farm. In 1853 Daniel Becker and his wife Catherine arrived in this valley from Germany. The crossing of the ocean and much of two continents was a voyage consuming from 12 to 16 weeks, depending upon the wind and weather. All boats were sail boats. The road from Milwaukee here
was a wagon road. No railroads had as yet been built.

Daniel and Catherine Becker, like all the other settlers were hard working, thrifty folks who wrested from nature their livelihood. They built their own log houses and barns and grew all their food, raised sheep for their wool, and spun and wove their own clothes. At first their sole cash crop was wheat, but shortly after the Civil War they, together with the Swiss and the Scandinavians, began to produce dairy products to supplement the cash for the wheat.

To Daniel and Catherine Becker three children were born. The children were Henry D., Daniel Jr., and August. When it came time for the old folks to retire they sold the farm to Henry D. Becker. Henry D. and his wife Augusta did their share to improve the farm and buildings. To this union five children were born. As their time for retirement came the farm was sold to their son August. August and Emma farmed their allotted time. They turned the farming operations over to their son, Robert. Thus this farm has been on the tax roll of the school for over 100 years.

THE BILSE FARM

Over one hundred years ago Henry Bilse came to German Valley from Germany. His wife was Maratha Bilse. They farmed for many years. The next owners of the farm was their son Jacob Bilse and his wife, Ann.
The first house was log and had two rooms. It was rebuilt over 55 years ago (present home.)

Jacob Bilse's son, William, and his wife Elizabeth were the third owners of his farm and lived here all their married life.

Clarence Bilse and Elizabeth Bilse Swenson are co-owners of the farm at the present time. Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Swenson occupy and operate the place.

DONALD BRATTLE FARM

Henry Kahl, who came from Germany, was the first owner of this farm. About 52 years ago he sold the farm to his son Jacob Kahl who married Marie Heuser.

Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Kahl were the parents of eight daughters, Lydia (deceased), Edna, Erna, Elizabeth, Amanda, Caroline, Marie, and Dorothy.

One of the landmarks of German Valley is the old stone house on the former Kahl farm. This house was built for Henry Kahl by Peter Heuser (Jacob Heuser's father) who was an excellent stone mason.

The Kahl farm is now owned and operated by Donald Brattlie who married Dorothy Kahl. They have one daughter, Diane Kay.

THE FRED KAHL FARM

John Kahl bought this farm in 1899 from Henry Becker. Their home was a two story log house with basement and it is still standing. The present nine room home was built in 1905.

In 1918 Mr. and Mrs. John Kahl moved to Mount Horeb, and the children farmed. Fred married Marie Brattlie in 1920 and they rented the farm. They have two sons, Ralph and Philip, who are now married and operate the farm. Mr. and Mrs. Fred Kahl live in Mount Horeb. They bought the home place in 1952.

Ralph has two children, John and Cynthia. Philip has one son, Jeffery.

William Kahl, who was born on this farm, now has a position with the State Department of Public Instruction at Madison, as a school supervisor.

Otto Kahl operates a grocery store in Mount Horeb. Ralph and Philip have received recognition for their successful and modern methods of farming.

OTHER FARMS OF GERMAN VALLEY

Many of the farms of the valley are still owned by direct descendants of the original owners.

Peter Heuser, who now resides in Mount Horeb, is owner of the farm occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Herman Brattlie. The Brattlies have operated this farm for many years.

Otto Heuser, Milwaukee, owns the farm of which the Clifford Mueller family resides. Mrs. Mueller is the former Grace Mae Brattlie, daughter of Herman Brattlies.
The present occupants of the Adolph Heuser farm (estate) are Mr. and Mrs. Dale Fawett. Mrs. Fawett is a daughter of the Heusers.

POKERVILLE—GHOST TOWN

The first settlers in German Valley did their trading in Pokerville. This was located just west of the present village of Blue Mounds. Nothing remains today of this once thriving mining town except three dwellings.

Pokerville was first called West Blue Mounds, but due to the gambling in the saloons the name was changed to Pokerville.

The nearby lead mines made the village prosperous and it grew rapidly.

Fortunes were won and lost every night over the tavern tables. Liquor flowed freely and bloodshed and killings were no unknown.

In the town were two saloons, several general stores and barrooms, the ten pin alleys, a blacksmith shop, a harness maker, a carpenter, and a physician. A large business was done in lead and part of it was hauled to Galena, Green Bay or Chicago.

Long lines of prairie schooners passed over the military road carrying settlers to Minnesota and to other points west of the Mississippi river.

The village of Pokerville figured prominently in the Black Hawk War which broke out in that locality in 1832. The Blue Mounds fort was built by the