NINTH CHAPTER.

DEATH OF HARVEY JONES, NOV. 8TH, 1849—PERSONAL APPEARANCE—INCIDENTS, ETC.—WHEN AND WHERE BORN—THE MANAGEMENT OF HIS ESTATE—L. H. JONES AND E. W. DRURY, ADMINISTRATORS.

HARVEY JONES was unfortunate in his western speculations. He was unfortunate in his dealings with Reed, and was unfortunate in arraying against himself a combination of rival interests, which but multiplied the many natural obstacles met with in founding a new settlement. As before noted, disagreements and misunderstandings between Jones and Reed followed directly on the heels of their first trades, and while Jones lived the two men at no time worked in sympathy or for a common purpose. The various phases and features of their movements and difficulties belong more to a personal narrative than to this sketch. Suffice it for us to say that the complications beginning between Reed and Jones lasted until the latter’s death, and was continued in long years of litigation with the administrators of his estate, and was in fact never settled until all the heirs became of age and the property passed into their hands.

Harvey Jones is described as a typical New England business man and manufacturer. Close, careful and methodical in all his business arrangements, he plainly
showed his training in the eastern school, where business is conducted more in conformity with certain rules and usages than at the west. Mr. Jones had been a promising and successful business man. Beginning life as a poor boy, he commenced clerking in a country store early in his teens, and step by step worked himself up until he owned and controlled quite an extensive manufacturing establishment in Gloversville, being one of the very first to begin, on a large scale, the manufacture of gloves and mittens. He was also interested in a mercantile house in New York city, and on the whole was in a very prosperous condition when he became infatuated with the plan of building up a town in the west. We have from the lips of a gentleman, now a resident of this State, who knew Jones and his family in New York, the following incident as illustrative of his trading propensities while yet a boy. It was a habit of Jones' father, who was owner of a New England farm, to give each of his boys a piece of land which they cultivated for their own profit, putting in just such crops as they wished, and disposing of the same as best suited them. It is told of Harvey Jones, that no sooner would the other boys get their crops in than he would begin buying and trading with them, and as a rule, by harvest time he would own or control the product of each boys' bit of land. What the final outcome of this western scheme would have been, can but be conjectured, as his untimely death cut short all his plans, while the years of mismanagement which followed at the hands of the administrators of his estate, secured to his children little more than fragments of that which he had hoped to bequeath them. Harvey Jones is described as a man of medium height,
slim and straight, weighing about 145 pounds. His complexion was rather light, with hazel eyes and grayish hair. His face was always cleanly shaven. His manners were very gentlemanly and he was always courteous in his business. He was a man of untiring industry, rather nervous, and exceedingly anxious concerning all matters wherein he was interested; indeed, it is the general belief among the early settlers that his exceeding anxiety concerning his matters here, more particularly the vexatious litigation with Reed, and the disappointment in failing to secure the Improvement on this side of the Island, so wore upon him as to hasten his death, which occurred Nov. 8th, 1849. He was born at Johnstown, N. Y., June 23, 1805, and was consequently but forty-four years of age at the time of his death.

Harvey Jones died, leaving no will, or at least none that was ever admitted to probate, and his brother, Loyal H. Jones, was by Judge Blodgett, of the County Court, appointed as administrator of the estate until the heirs should become of age. The year after, E. W. Drury, of Fond du Lac, was appointed to act with L. H. Jones, and all persons who, between the years 1850 and 1864, wished to buy real estate in Neenah, have a distinct remembrance of the vexatious condition in which the business was always to be found. It is a dark page in the history of Neenah, for had the property here been spared the years of needless litigation, during which no one could, with safety, purchase, there is no question but what the growth and wealth of Neenah would have been increased thousands of inhabitants, and millions of dollars.

We neglected to state in the preceding chapter that
the final trade been Reed and Jones differed greatly from the first proposition made by Reed, as the latter deed to Jones the bulk of the Winnebago Rapids property, and the administrators of the Jones estate had the handling of most of the village property during their control of it.

Jones left three children as the heirs to his property, all of whom are still alive, and two, Gilbert C. Jones, and Willard Jones, are still residents of Neenah. The daughter, Abigail, married Rev. James Bassett, a Presbyterian minister, and both are now in Persia, in the missionary interest.

Note – The following matter should be read in connection with the Second Chapter, the facts herein given having been secured after the first pages were printed. We are pleased to be able to give the names and circumstances attending the coming of the first white men to this section, viz: those who were sent here by the Government in 1832-6:

The first inhabitants of Winnebago county, other than Indians, were Augustine Grignon, one of the French settlers of Green Bay, an Englishman by the name of Powell, who located here for the purpose of traffic with the Indians, James Knaggs, a half-breed, who kept a ferry just above the present site of Algoma, where the trail leading from Fort Winnebago to Green Bay crossed the river. Grignon located at Buttes des Morts, and Powell a little lower down the river. About the same time, a white man by the name of Archibald Caldwell, settled among the Indians near the rapids, the present site of Neenah. In 1835, the United States Government established an agency for the benefit of the Menomonee
Indians, at Neenah, in the benevolent enterprise of education in agriculture, mechanics, morals, and science, and the general principles of civilization. William Dickinson was the contractor to prepare the way for the perfection of this grand enterprise, by the improvement of the waterpower, the erection of a saw and grist-mill, blacksmith shop, farm houses, and school house. This contract was entered into as early as 1831 or 1832. The work was commenced by Mr. Dickinson, but before its completion, the business was transferred by a subsequent contract to David Whitney.

The scheme embraced the instruction of the Indians by theory and practice. Competent and practical instructors were employed. Two brothers, of the name of Gregory, the one an Episcopal clergyman, the other an experienced teacher were at the head of the department of science, morals and religion. Religious meetings were regularly held on the Sabbath. Clark Dickinson, Nathaniel Perry, Robert Irwin, Gen. Ruggles, and a Mr. Baird, father of Hon. H. Baird, of Green Bay, were employed as farmers. Col. David Johnson was miller; Jourdan and Hunter were the blacksmiths, (the former settled here, and Tom Jourdan, now a resident of this city, is a son of this same man.) The contractors gave employment in 1835 to about twenty-five or thirty laborers in the various departments of the enterprise. This arrangement continued about two years, during which the Indians who did not come into the arrangement for civilization, were numerous about Neenah, living in their wild manner. The small-pox made its appearance among them and swept off about one-third of their number. Col. Boyce, of Green Bay, being Indian agent, sent to their relief a surgeon of the United States troops
to give them the benefit of vaccination. But Mr. A. Caldwell, a resident and trader at Neenah, benevolently took charge of the sufferers, spending much of his time in nursing and nourishing the sick, and contributed greatly to alleviate their sufferings at the hazard of his own life; he took the disease, suffered severely and barely escaped the fate of the unfortunate victims.

Webster Stanley, the first white settler at Oshkosh had been employed on the mills at Neenah, and when the work stopped, went from here and located at Oshkosh.