DELAFIELD AND CHENEQUA

The Memoirs continue:

We returned as soon as possible with our oxen to Milwaukee where, meantime, Christine had been taken sick, which delayed our moving. A lumber wagon was bought for $60, and Carl and Wilhelm started back alone to Delafield with the first load, while I remained in the city to assist the ladies. Fortunately, Christine soon improved, so that when Wilhelm returned with the oxen and the wagon, we could start out again at once with the rest of our belongings. Carl had remained at Pearmain's to cut some grass, which though late in the autumn yet could serve fairly well as fodder.

On Sunday the seventeenth of October 5:00 A.M., we left Milwaukee. Christine, who was weak after her sickness, took her place on the wagon among the trunks and other things, while Lotten prepared to walk, and Wilhelm and I took turns about driving the oxen, in the art of which none of us was expert. Everything, however, went well except driving down hill, where we did not understand how to make the oxen hold back the heavy load. They rushed down with such speed between stumps and stones and roots and ditches that I many times thought both oxen and wagon would tumble over and crash. At last we met an experienced American, who finished the lessons Lange had given us. He drove our oxen down the next hill, walking quite close to their heads, and with the stick of the whip quietly touched them while he called out 'back, back,' whereby the animals firmly held back the wagon, which thus rolled downhill as slowly as in a few minutes it rolled uphill. During the rest of the way we were, with this lesson, more experienced in the art of driving oxen.

But the party did not make swift progress. The road was poor, and the oxen were slow. By noon they were only about ten miles out of Milwaukee. A house appeared by the roadside. They had provisions for their lunch but went to the house to see if they could buy some milk. They did not
get any milk. There was, undoubtedly, plenty of milk in the house, but it was Sunday, and the pious people would not do business on that day. Unonius says:

I felt that even if their conscience did not allow them to sell milk on Sunday, this should not have kept them from giving wayfaring strangers a little of the strengthening drink. Christian kindness would have dictated this. But they answered very seriously that manna did not fall on the Sabbath, and that those who started out on such a trip on Sunday, well deserved, even here, to get acquainted with the thirst that is never quenched.

About this much I understood of the puritan reprimand with which they turned us down. As long as I cannot properly defend my own misconduct in traveling on Sunday, I cannot fairly blame their excessive zeal in righteousness. However, I have always nursed my suspicion of such outward show of Christian devotion. Our Lord proved a greater Samaritan than those who claimed to be His servants, for fortunately we found nearby a spring, which with its clear, fresh water served us well with our meal.

This affair, however, aroused new worries. Even if our oxen had been the most fleet of foot, it would have been impossible in one day to get as far as Pearmain’s home. I knew there was a tavern some miles farther on which we could reach about dusk and where we planned to remain over night. Now, if the same puritan piety should there deny us lodging, as it had denied us a drink of milk, we would be obliged to stay in the woods over night, as it was impossible to travel over these roads in the dark. This might be a quite serious affair for my wife and Christine, who was not yet completely well after her illness. The thought of this annoyed me and made me bitterly regret our Sunday journey, although I could not honestly admit that my regret originated in a realization of any wrong I had done. At last we arrived at the place in question, where we planned to end the day’s journey and, fortunately for us, we were received for the night. Whether our host was really a good Samaritan, who would not close his door to the wayfaring strangers, or whether he was one who did not consult the elders in Israel and their ordinances, I do not know. No matter, we and our oxen were taken care of for the night for cash, in hand paid, of course.

This so-called ‘inn’ was much like the others of its kind among the new settlers—unfinished and primitive in many ways, consisting mainly of one large room and a dark attic. Other guests were there, and they all made concessions so that the ladies especially were cared for as comfortably as
possible under the circumstances. The pioneer spirit of courtesy and sacrifice was there. The wagon with its contents was left outside by the open road, and although some people were heard passing by in the night, not a thing was missing in the morning.

Early the next morning they were off for Pearmain’s at Delafield. They were now out of the woods, the road was better, and about noon they reached the end of their journey. Here Unonius gives a sketch of the personal characteristics of his hosts at Delafield. As an example of his keen powers of observation and deduction, based merely on a very limited association, together with a vivid imagination, his estimate of Mrs. Pearmain in particular is related here in his inimitable style:

The so-called ‘Mrs. Pearmain’ was one of the most original beings in woman’s clothes that I had ever met. She was about forty years old, yet a veritable coquette and full of affectation, much like a forsaken old maiden, who has lost all hope. The thin and from wearisome daily duties emaciated face still retained a trace of vanished beauty. Her body also gave evidence of having been attractive in the younger years. She carried her head proudly high and used not without ease good language and elegant gestures in her conversation. Her bearings and demeanor were striking as she swung her skirts around the fireplace and between the simple wooden stools in the dilapidated shanty, which she seemed perchance to have had to exchange for a home of elegance and refinement. Her whole personality suggested a superannuated actress. One could imagine her the applauded prima donna in her boudoir, surrounded by riches and luxury, wantonly and nonchalantly passing her days away and at night in gay abandonment sipping a cup of wine with boon companions—and then the same woman in an American frontier log cabin, like a discarded piece of furniture relegated to the scrap pile, her adornment the threadbare cover, suggestive of former glory. The mace of beauty changed into a broom handle! The dainty hand that at one time fingered and played with the golden tassels of a velvet-covered divan now emptying the slop-bucket. The cheek, which once was flushed from the insidious sipping of champagne, was now blotchy and red from the frequent calls on the whiskey bottle, and many times during our stay under her roof, my wife was called upon to help her in her ‘nervous attacks,’ superinduced by too great an indulgence at her beloved fountain of consolation.
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peopled, were heard passing by so the
night, warning, 
They were here, 
and played a vital role in the development of the area.

The map shows the layout of the area with various roads and landmarks.

Note: The diagram is a detailed representation of the area with specific landmarks and roads marked.
Pearmain's house was unfinished and in about the same condition as the inn they had just left, but the ingenuity born of necessity was in evidence, and somehow the place was made livable even if the wind had free course through the unchinked places. This situation served to impress upon their minds the need of getting their own cabin built as soon as possible. Their real pioneer life was about to begin. The season was getting late, and the nights were cold. The first day was spent in grinding axes, loading hay, and preparing the most necessary provisions for a temporary camp at Pine lake. As it was too far to go back and forth between the two places each day, and the workers must have some shelter during the time, they would have to start cutting logs for the house and preparing the ground for its erection. On the following morning they started out for Pine lake, and Pearmain volunteered to escort them for the purpose of blazing the trail for a permanent road to the settlement. They accepted the offer, grateful in the thought that Mrs. Unonius could come along under such circumstances and return with Pearmain in the evening. He saddled for her benefit his own horse, which seemed to be reasonably safe, as it was a worn out old nag and blind in both eyes.

Thus with axes they proceeded felling and marking the trees, followed by the oxcart, and Mrs. Unonius on her charger. Forgetting that the horse was blind and, consequently, must be guided carefully, she was thrown once or twice from the saddle, without, however, receiving any serious injuries.

After considerable efforts they at last reached the section road bordering on their claim, and through the oak openings beyond they readily found their way to their destination.¹

¹ The road here referred to is today highway 19 between Nashotah and Hartland, and the land was bounded to the east by highway 88, leading to the east shore of Pine lake.
Mrs. Unonius was pleased with the location they had selected but suggested for the homestead a more suitable spot, and in deference to her wishes this was chosen for the site, and they never had reason to regret having followed her vision and wisdom in the matter.

Mrs. Unonius and Pearnain soon started on their return trip in order to reach Delafield before dark. To be sure the distance was only four miles, but the road was rough and tedious. The three men had also to find some shelter for the night and to that end felled a number of trees, cleaned them into seven foot logs, and built them up in a square about four feet high. A big walnut bedstead, bought in Milwaukee and brought along, was placed within, and a slanting roof of rough boards and stakes covered by the hay and fastened to the logs, finished their first attempt in house building. A hole was made in the logs and this served as a window as well as a door, and after they retired, they closed it with a bundle of hay. On the clay floor was barely room enough to undress. Carl prepared a modest evening meal in the open, and after the camp fire had died down, they crawled into their little dwelling, the first one occupied by white men on the shores of Pine lake. The Memoirs continue:

A few miles east of us we knew of some settlement, and to the south was Pearnain’s, our nearest neighbor, but to the west of the lake there were none, and to the north stretched a deep and unknown forest where only the Indians were known to roam and knew the way.

For many hours, sleep was out of the question. We were lying there in the dark surrounded by a wilderness whose fantastic mysteries aroused our imagination, and we recalled the tales of our youth, picturing the subtle espionage of suspicious and treacherous Indians, who possibly even at that very moment loitered about in the vicinity, resenting the presumption of the white invaders. With a depressed feeling in my heart, I repeated a tender lullaby of long ago, which recalled the peace of my far away home and the loving embrace of my mother of her only son—and sleep at last overtook me.
Awakening early the next morning they realized the necessity of a more substantial cabin. The stars had sent their rays in between the logs, and the chill autumn air had been quite sharp and had left a white mantle of frost on the ground. The cracks between the logs must be chinked, earth thrown up around their base, and the roof improved to protect the interior against rain and snow. They discovered not far away the remains of a recently abandoned Indian camp fire, which they had not observed the night before, and they now felt still more the necessity of a more substantial protection against the elements and possible enemies.

Unonius determined to return immediately to Delasfield for more building material while Carl and Wilhelm occupied their time in preparing more logs for a more permanent cabin. Thus, during the day quite a bit of progress was made, and when upon the return of Unonius, they again sought shelter in the evening, they felt more safe and comfortable. As fate would have it, a severe storm broke, with rain and snow, yet they were fairly well protected. They grieved, however, over the unavoidable exposure of the poor animals, tied to a log, who were forced to endure unprotected the severe inclemency of the weather. However, the night passed, and in the morning neither man nor beast seemed any the worse from the experience.

PLANs AND PREPARATIONS

The following morning in camp is described as follows:

No light of day awoke us, for we were in complete darkness, and, besides, we had to be careful with fire in our low cabin, made and covered by highly inflammable material. Carl was the only one who had a watch with him, but he had forgotten to wind it in the evening, so there was no other way of finding out the time but to crawl over to the opening and remove the bundle of hay. It was daylight, but no sun to tell the time through the heavy mist and clouds. The morning was cold and dis-