

"We enjoyed ourselves in various ways just as you do now. There was the regular dancing school twice a week held in the old cabin that first winter. Euchre parties became the fashion. Christmas and New Year's suppers were made lively by the verbal and practical jokes passed around.

"We had turtle soup suppers, also. The turtles were caught by cutting holes through the ice on what was called 'Mud Lake', and brought to us by Abel Rasdall. Mr. Peck sent some of them to a Mineral Point hotel keeper, who informed us that he netted \$50 on the sale of the soup. The turtles were frozen solid, and rattled together like stones, and were put in the cellar to thaw out before we could dress them, and, going down in a few days after I found they had thawed out and were crawling around on the bottom of the cellar."

Mrs. Peck's husband who started for California in 1844 was supposed to have been killed by the Indians while crossing the plains.

About 1838 the family removed to Baraboo and there Mrs. Peck spent most of her life, returning to Madison for frequent visits at her son, Victor Peck's home. Her death occurred October 30, 1899 and her remains lie in the Baraboo cemetery.

MRS. WILLIAM VROMAN
(Nee Harriet Field)
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It was in the spring of 1836 that my embryotic father William Vroman anticipated the voice of Horace Greeley and "went West". It was to him a boyish adventure, encouraged probably by his two brothers who had already gone. His destination was the new Territory of Wisconsin which had just been established, surveyed, platted and opened to the public for sale at \$1.25 per acre. He experienced all the vicissitudes by field and flood that

were usual to the times and reached his destination, which was the Madison that was to be. Governor Dodge had been appointed Governor and he had made the village of Belmont the place for the first session of the legislature. The great question to be decided was the location of the Capital of the new Territory. James D. Doty had early in the day explored the country about the four lake district and had early decided the center of that as the ideal location. He accordingly influenced speculators to buy in that locality and although there were sixteen other locations as competitors, Doty's tact, energy and knowledge won out and Madison was declared for by vote after a four week's session. "Thus ended" says a local historian, "one of the most exciting struggles ever experienced in the Territory of Wisconsin". And to think that my father stood around with his hands in his pockets and saw it all. While James Doty is said to be the founder of Madison, he also gave it a name honoring the fourth president. My father returned to his home in eastern New York in the fall and remained there until he was again attacked by the western fever and considering himself old enough to get married, hastened to the banks of that rapidly flowing and tempestuous stream, the Erie Canal, picked up his nineteen year old bride and brought her with him via stage, lake steamer, then stage again, from Milwaukee, landing in Madison on the 4th day of September, 1844. Then with little anxiety and the greatest assurance they assumed the title of "pioneers" and the responsibility of taking care of themselves. The first step towards it being the purchase of land pursuant to their business of farming. They eventually became among the best known residents of the city of Madison and surrounding country. The subject of this sketch will now take her proper place at the head of the column.

Harriet Field was born in Durhamville, N. Y., May 27, 1824. Her mother, ^{ANNE}~~Nancy~~ Newcomb, descended from a line of Baptist ministers. She married John Field, who dying quite young left her with three sons and two daughters. My mother was the eldest. She married Wm. Vroman and came to Wisconsin in 1844. She was of a

happy vivacious disposition and entered into her new life with great enthusiasm and wholeheartedness. The novelty interested her. She found much to do and in doing, forgot herself. Madison shortly became an incorporated village with a population of 600. They were a good class of people, many of them from her own state. "Hospitality" was their watchword and newcomers were treated like old friends. One of their neighbors was a graduate of Hamilton College, in New York, but his family was afraid of thunder storms just the same, and when one threatened they made haste to take shelter, so when they appeared over the brow of the hill, my mother knew without consulting the weather report that a violent storm was imminent. The dreaded Indian by now safely in his reservation, except for a few stragglers. One would appear semi-occasionally walking in unconcerned and asking for pork. "Indian John" was the last of these to disappear. At this time my mother's life was saddened by the death of her mother at the old home. So she induced her young sister, Ellen Field, to come on to Wisconsin and join them at the farm, which she did and was joyfully received. Then things began to move. The farm horses were turned into equestrian steeds. A dancing class was formed, a singing class was organized and led by a man who stammered, but not when he sang. Under his tuition a serenading group was formed to be used when occasion required. It came when my father and his brother took opposite sides in the election for governor. My uncle was a fierce and rabid democrat. My father had gone over to the newly organized republican party. It was a contested election between Mr. Barstow who was on the democratic ticket for re-election and Mr. Bashford on the republican side, which almost resulted in civil war. Finally the courts decided in favor of Bashford, the republican. When the serenaders received the news the next evening they appeared in full force before my uncle's door with many other musical in-

struments besides their voices and their made-up songs. One of these was sung to the tune of Auld Lang Syne, it begun:

“Old Barstow’s dead, that poor old soul, we ne’er shall see him more, etc.”

When Wisconsin became a state being better advertised the population increased rapidly and with it new buildings for schools. One in which the beginning of the University was housed. The upper floor being occupied by Miss Matilda Howell (as a school girl). My father joined a newly organized cavalry company called “The Dane County Cavalry Co.” These gaily caparisoned gentlemen made annual trips to the farm where they went through with their maneuvers and afterward were treated by the ladies of the company to a sumptuous repast spread on tables under the shade of the wide spreading oaks. There were no women in those days. My mother’s sister took a course of study with Miss Howell, after which there was a break into the family circle caused by her marriage to Charles Holt and their removal to Janesville where he founded and was editor for many years of the Janesville Gazette, gaining the title later of “the Veteran Journalist of Wisconsin.”

My father being absorbed in business in the nearby city of Madison, and for the advantages the schools offered to the two children, my brother and his little sister, moved his family there. My mother gladly welcomed the change and was happy with her church work, and later when clubs began to be the order of the day, was a member of the Woman’s Club from its organization. Various charitable organizations—the D. A. R., and a Grandmother’s Club, for she was then a grandmother, was her special protégée. She lived to be over ninety and died at the home of her daughter, full of years and honors and loved by everyone.