



Mr. and Mrs. Carl Schurz as they looked when they came to live at Watertown, Wisconsin.

CHAPTER VI

INFLUENCE OF THE LARGEST OF THE EARLY NATIONAL ELEMENTS IN WISCONSIN

Nobody knows just what proportion of the people of Wisconsin are English, what of German, and what of other stock. Few of us know enough about our ancestry to give the census taker exact information as to what we are.

We can tell, however, by looking at the census reports every ten years, what groups have been coming in in greatest numbers. We know, for example, that in 1850 there were in Wisconsin 198,000 people who were born in the United States, and 106,000 born outside the United States. We know that of the 198,000 born in the United States, half came from New York. About 13% came from Vermont, 13% from Pennsylvania and 13% from Ohio. 63,000 were born in Wisconsin. The few others came from other states. We know that the census showed that about 35,000 were from Germany; 21,000 from Ireland; 19,000 from England; 8,500 from Norway; 8,300 from Canada; 4,300 from Wales; 3,500 from Scotland; 1,200 from Holland. The census of 1860 showed the largest number of Irish we were ever to have (about 50,000), and of Scotch (about 7,000). 1870 was the banner year for England (28,000) and for Wales (6,550);

1880 for Belgium (5,267); 1890 for Germany (260,000); and for Norway (66,000); 1900, for Sweden (26,000), and for Canada (34,000); 1910, for Russia (30,000); for Switzerland (8,036) and for Hungary (10,500); 1920, for Poland (50,500); for Denmark (16,500); and for Italy (11,000).

British in Wisconsin

The English, Irish, and Scotch distributed themselves all over the state, except that the English had especially large groups in the lead mining counties, Iowa, Grant, and LaFayette; in western Dane county, at Mazomanie; in western Racine county, at Rochester and Waterford; in Waukesha and Milwaukee counties.

The first British settlers in Wisconsin were miners from Cornwall, England. About seven thousand of them came into the lead mining region. They were Methodists in religion. They had received little or no education in England. Probably 75% of them were illiterate, and brought with them no traditions of learning.

In the 40's and 50's the Welsh came. They were very religious and musical, having many musical festivals. Many of them were dissenters who had left England because they disliked to pay tithes to the Church of England. In politics they were radicals, remembering the landlord's oppression and the church tithes in the old country. They joined the Republican Party with enthusiasm. In occupation they were chiefly farmers and miners. They had settlements in Racine, Waukesha, Columbia, Iowa, Jefferson and Dodge counties. In Waukesha county they settled at Genessee and Delafield; in Iowa county at Ridgeway and Dodgeville.

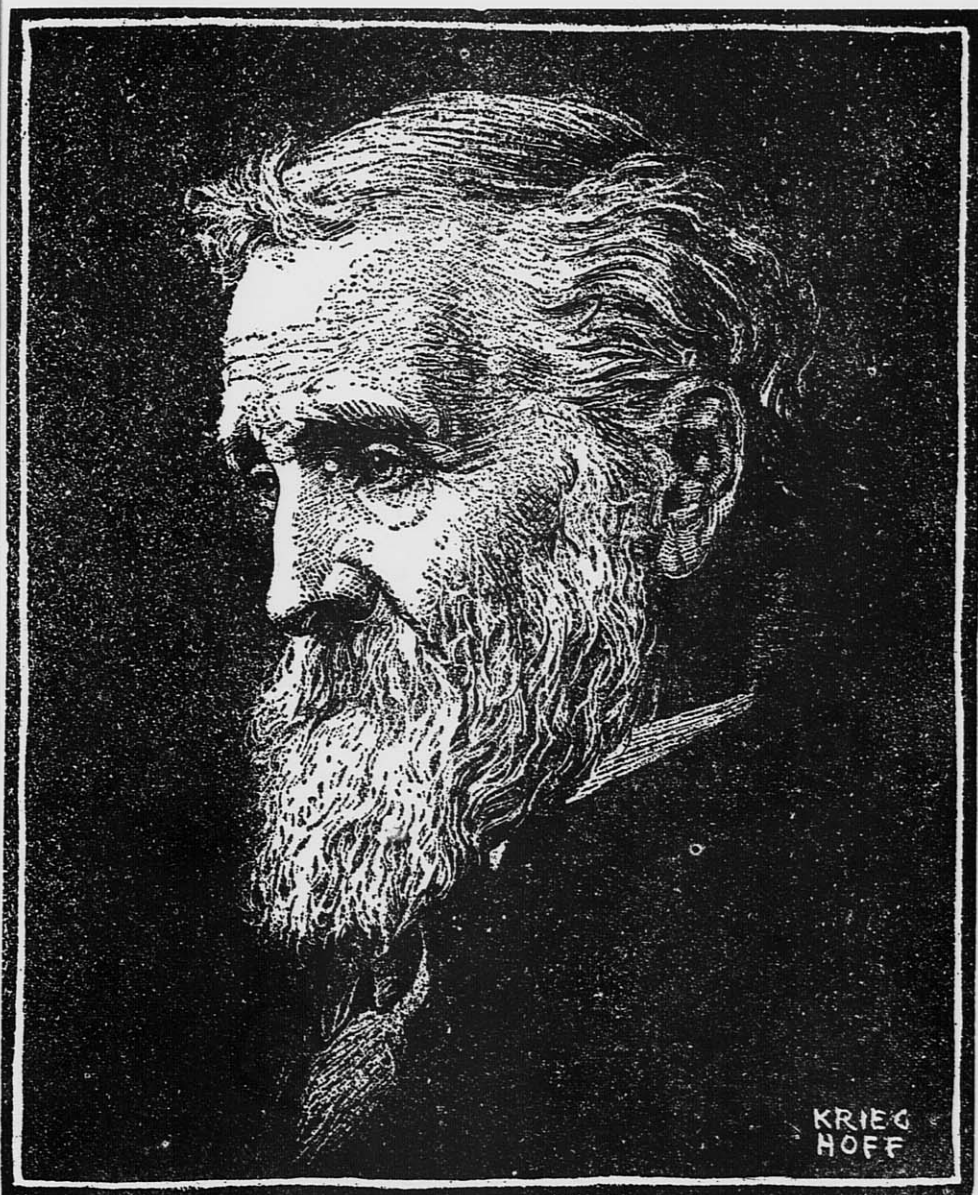
Among the English born citizens of Wisconsin who have shown a strong public spirit here are Frederick Layton, who built and endowed an art gallery in Milwaukee; and Doctor Joseph Hobbins, who was a physician when he came, and who organized the first Madison Health Department, and was active in establishing the State Board of Health. He was also president of the State Horticultural Society, and a constant experimenter with fruit, flowers, and vegetables.

Another distinguished citizen of English origin was Samuel Fallows, who came over from England when he was thirteen. He lived at Deansville, near Marshall, about 15 miles from Madison. He walked home every Saturday while attending the University, and carried back to Madison the food his mother had cooked for him. His father hauled into Madison enough wood to keep the stove going in his room. Samuel Fallows later served in the Civil War as Chaplain, Lieutenant Colonel, and Brigadier General; was three terms State Superintendent of Public Instruction; was a University Regent; preached for sixty years and became a Bishop in the Reformed Episcopal Church.

The British were a strong element in Racine and Kenosha counties. They were leaders in the movement for better cattle. They brought in Shorthorns, Herefords, Ayreshires, Jerseys and Guernseys. They also introduced good breeds of hogs: Berkshires, Suffolks, Essexes, Chester Whites, and Jersey Reds. By bringing in cattle, they saved from bankruptcy thousands of farmers who had nearly ruined themselves by persisting in wheat raising.

Among the Scotch immigrants were such trained men as Duncan McGregor, who served the State for more than fifty years as teacher and Normal school regent. He had left Scotland within a year of graduation from Aberdeen University, had worked in logging camps, and had finally become a school teacher and graduated from Lawrence College.

Alexander Mitchell, who founded the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway was a farmer boy in Scotland. He became a law student and a bank clerk and was so able that his firm sent him to America to take a position in Milwaukee.



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John Muir.

The position was a difficult one. He was sent by the Smith Insurance Company in 1839 to start a bank in Milwaukee. This was at the time when the whole country was afraid of banks. The people of Wisconsin would not allow a bank in the state. But the Smith Insurance Company got a bill through the Wisconsin Legislature chartering an Insurance Company. The bill said in words that it was not giving "banking privileges." But it did give them just the same. It permitted the company to accept deposits, lend money and issue notes.

The young man of 22 had a delicate task. He had to conduct a bank; to keep his enemies from destroying his bank by their often tried runs on it; and to keep the legislature from repealing his charter. At last the people gained confidence in his operations and other banks were permitted in the state.

Wisconsin's best known Scotchman was John Muir, who came from Scotland at the age of eleven, was brought up on a Wisconsin farm, and studied at the University of Wisconsin. Years after he became a world famous traveler, explorer and naturalist. In his old age he visited Alaska and explored the Amazon.

The Germans in Wisconsin

The Germans scattered all over the state, but they also formed large groups in Milwaukee, Washington, Ozaukee, Waukesha, Dodge, Jefferson, Sauk, Sheboygan, and Racine counties. In 1850 in Milwaukee county approximately one-third of the residents were natives of Germany; in Washington county, one-half; in Manitowoc county, one-third; in Sheboygan county, one-fourth; in Dodge and Fond du Lac counties, one-sixth. In Washington county in each of eight towns, from one-half to three-fourths of the population were natives of Germany. The town of Belgium was practically all German.

Some of the Germans came directly from Europe, some came from other states, either as first or second generation Germans. Both have strongly marked characteristics which have impressed themselves upon Wisconsin.

Some Germans came over as religious congregations. In 1839 a Lutheran colony, resisting the attempts of Prussia to change the church, settled in Washington county. Many more followed. With almost every church, a school for the education of the children was established. The German Evangelical and the German Reformed Church were also brought in.

A large Catholic immigration began about 1843. Catholic clergymen and their followers came from Austria, Bavaria and Switzerland. In 1844 Rev. John Henni came from Cincinnati to be the first Bishop of the new diocese of Milwaukee. Churches, parochial schools, convents, monasteries, hospitals and orphan asylums were established in great numbers. A unique event was the transplanting of a whole parish from the Black Forest, Baden, to St. Nazianz, in Manitowoc county. For a time the people held property in common, like the early Christians.

As early as 1824, people began to arrive to escape persecution from the governments of the German states. As a result of the teachings of the American and French Revolutions, and in order that their people might stand with them against Napoleon, the rulers of the little German states had given their people more liberal governments. But now that the danger from Napoleon was over, the rulers began to try to take back what they had given. They feared the people. They feared the newspapers and teachings of the universities. They feared all talk of reform. They resorted to arrest and imprisonment of those who talked or wrote in favor of reform. Some liberals gave up in despair, and left the country to come to America. Others stayed to keep up the

fight. In 1848 revolution broke out all over Europe against the tyranny of the rulers. Republics were established in France and some of the German states. But the Revolutions were crushed, and those who were responsible for them were lucky if they managed to escape the country. In 1849 the German refugees, or "Forty-Eighters" as they were called, began to pour into Wisconsin.

The "Forty-Eighters," fleeing from their troubles in Europe, got here just in time to take part in our own terrible civil struggle. It was a painful shock to these seekers for freedom, to find slave markets in the national capital of this land of the free. It was bewildering and painfully disappointing to find this great union of republican states which they had revered from afar threatened with rebellion and possible breaking up into little, quarrelling, fighting groups like the states of Europe.

It was lucky for the United States that they came. Wherever they were, in Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Iowa, Missouri, and Pennsylvania, they joined the Republican party and threw themselves into the struggle to save the Union and abolish slavery. Dr. James of the University of Illinois says, "The influence of the "Forty-Eighters" at this critical time of our national life was to my mind, decisive. They turned the balance of power in favor of universal liberty."

The recognized leader of the Germans in the United States at this period was Carl Schurz. He had become famous as the daring German youth who, having fled from Germany to Switzerland to save himself from prison, returned to help his old friend and teacher Gottfried Kinkel, escape from the prison where he was held. He plunged into American politics as soon as he arrived, and from his home in Watertown, Wisconsin, toured the United States urging Germans to stand by the Union and the cause of anti-slavery. He became a friend of Abraham Lincoln, soldier in the Civil War, Minister to Spain under President Lincoln, and Secretary of the Interior under President Hayes, 1877 to 1881. He was one of the best known and one of the most influential citizens Wisconsin has ever had. His intense interest in good government led him to write hundreds of letters of advice and criticism to those in power. He became the leader in Civil Service Reform for the United States in the worst period of corruption. His story of his own life, called "Reminiscences of Carl Schurz," and his biographies of Henry Clay and of Abraham Lincoln are well worth reading.

At Watertown, where the Schurzes lived for a time, Mrs. Schurz, who had been the pupil of Froebel, the great founder of the kindergarten, conducted the first kindergarten in Wisconsin, probably in the United States.

The "Forty-Eighters" were eager to have free public schools. One of them, Colonel Krumrey, who had been a member of the revolutionary parliament of Rhennish Bavaria, and who came to Sheboygan county in 1849, kept a journal which shows that a free public school system had been one of the demands of his group for Bavaria. Not all Germans in this country, however, were advocates of free public schools. Many preferred to have their own church schools.

Some of the German States did have free public schools. In 1839 the Reverend Calvin Stowe addressed a teachers' convention at Columbus, Ohio, on "The Prussian system of Public Instruction and its application to the United States." His speech attracted much attention, and the state of Ohio sent him to Europe to investigate. He studied the educational systems of England, Scotland, France, the Netherlands, the various German states, Denmark and Russia, and recommended the Prussian system as that best adapted to the United States. Horace Mann, after a similar visit made a similar recommendation. The school laws of Ohio of 1839 were patterned after them.

Colonel Michael Frank, of Kenosha, who labored long to secure free public schools in this state, was a German but a second generation one from New York. His father

had fought for the American cause in the American Revolution. In Wisconsin the struggle to establish public schools was probably not so bitter as in the East, where the idea was called "Un-American" and where German Americans were severely criticized for advocating the education of poor children by the state, the free school, and the forcing of parents to send their children to school.

It was a German of a German community, Professor Theodore Barnard of Watertown, through whose influence the first free text book bill was enacted. His city was the first in the state to supply free text books.

The Germans have contributed much to the artistic taste and ability of the state. They have founded musical activities, orchestras, and bands. German architects designed the cathedral and city hall of Milwaukee and the libraries of Milwaukee and Madison. Carl Marr, an art student of Milwaukee and the son of a German engraver, continued his painting in Munich and became one of the most famous painters of his time.

Some of their art is of a practical nature. They have a fondness for landscape gardening and for flowers, and have been influential in obtaining public parks and playgrounds.

The Germans are artisans as well as artists, excelling in trades which require a long apprenticeship, like that of the blacksmith, jeweler, baker, shoemaker, harness maker, carpenter, cabinet maker, mason, and others.

The teaching of singing, drawing and gymnastics came into the public schools through the German influence. We are also greatly indebted to the Germans for their example and experience in the teaching of home economics, trade and industry, and in the application of the principle of part-time continuation schools for young workers.

The majority of the Swiss who came to Wisconsin were from the German cantons and spoke German. Among the German Swiss are two men who stand high in the scientific world, Dr. Nicholas Senn, teacher, writer, and one of the world's greatest surgeons, and Dr. Albert J. Ochsner, a native of Sauk county, a great physician and surgeon. Dr. Senn was born in Switzerland in 1844 and came to Wisconsin when eight years old.

The German made a good farmer. He rotated his crops, fertilized his fields, and housed well his stock and implements. He built warm barns for his stock where others used open sheds. He was willing to live in a poor house for a time in order to have a good barn.

Agriculture had been taught in the old country in special schools and the idea of teaching agriculture in the schools of Wisconsin was suggested very early by the German farm papers.

The German farmer might sacrifice his house for the sake of his barn, but he would and did have a variety of food and drink. Germans introduced the growing of barley and hops and the making of lager beer. They introduced the culture of grapes, planting vineyards and making wine in Sauk, Sheboygan, Washington and Waukesha counties. It is said however that a German, Colonel Michael Frank, was one of the earliest advocates of temperance in the state.

The German women were good cooks and bakers, and they introduced new methods of cooking and new articles of food, such as sauer kraut, cold slaw, potato salad, dill pickles, sour meats, Hasenpfeffer, Hamburger Steak, Vienna, Frankfurt, and other sausages; goulash, noodles, pickled green beans, endive, chives, leeks, dill, spinach, asparagus, kohlrabi, red cabbage, sugar beets and others. The Germans of Dodge county introduced brick and limburg cheese. This county also became famous for the "Watertown goose," fattened properly for the market.

Although people of English stock took the lead in organized effort to develop the dairy industry, a German, Julius Rust of Bremen, was the pioneer breeder of pure Holstein cattle; and another German, Henry Krumrey of Plymouth, organized the Wisconsin Cheese Producers' Federation. The Swiss of Green county introduced the Swiss brown cattle. The Swiss introduced the making of Swiss cheese into Wisconsin.

The Scandinavians in Wisconsin

There are three groups of Scandinavians in Wisconsin: the Norwegians, the Swedes and the Danes.

The Norwegians, who form the largest group, were the first to come. They spread over the state, but their strongest settlements were in Dane, Rock, Racine, Waukesha, and Jefferson counties. Later settlements are in Columbia, Waupaca, Waushara, Portage, Winnebago, Manitowoc, LaCrosse, Vernon, Trempealeau, and St. Croix counties.

The largest and most prosperous Norwegian colony is on Koshkonong Creek, in the Eastern part of Dane county and western part of Jefferson county. In 1850, two-thirds of the towns of Deerfield, Pleasant Springs, and Christiana were Norwegians. Stoughton is almost entirely a Norwegian city. Another Dane county settlement includes the townships of Vienna, Windsor, Bristol, and parts of Burke and Westport, with the villages of Norway Grove, De Forest, and Morrisonville. A third Dane county settlement was in the west, in Blue Mounds, Vermont, Springdale, Primrose, and Perry Townships, with Mount Horeb as the later commercial center.

The Norwegians are mainly farmers. While not the beginners of the dairy industry, they have helped to build it up, especially in their settlements about Viroqua and Barron. In Dane, Rock, Vernon, Monroe, LaCrosse, Trempealeau, and St. Croix counties, they have become the chief tobacco growers of the state.

The Swedes have come in much smaller numbers. Their first settlement was at Pine Lake, near Hartland, in Waukesha county. Other settlements were on Lake Koshkonong; in Burnett and Polk counties; St. Croix Falls; Stockholm, Pepin county; near Superior, Ashland, Ogema, Prentice, Glen Flora, and in Waupaca and Portage counties.

Among the Swedish settlers have been many men and women of science and letters, and several of the Swedish nobility. Among those on Lake Koshkonong was Thure L. Kumlien, who won fame as a naturalist.

The most important Danish settlements were in Racine, Kenosha, Winnebago, Polk and Brown counties. At New Denmark, in Brown county the settlers clung for many years to the farming methods and the social customs of Old Denmark.

The Danish farmers in the old country have become world famous for their good butter and their culture. They organized cooperative associations to market their butter and other products, and to see to it that every pound sold was sweet and good. They established two kinds of winter schools for young farm people: agricultural schools where they go to learn how to be better farmers, and the "People's High Schools" where they go for general instruction in English, history, music, and other subjects which will make their lives richer.

Inspired by the example of the home land, the Danish people of Wisconsin have encouraged the movements to make Wisconsin likewise famous as the producer of clean, good butter and cheese; and to train the farm youth of Wisconsin for their work and for good living.

The Scandinavians have been farmers. They broke and built up thousands of acres of prairie lands. They were the chief labor element in the early lumbering industry in the cutting, rafting and sawing of lumber, and in the clearing of cut over lands.

Other Groups in Wisconsin

There are other groups in Wisconsin whose stories would be well worth telling, but whose influence on the state has not been so great as that of the British, Germans and Scandinavians. They came in smaller numbers, or they came after the state was well established. Among these are the Belgians, who began to come over in 1853. They settled in little groups in Door, Kewaunee and Brown counties. They talked French. It is interesting now to find out whether the people with French names in and around Green Bay are descendants of the early French traders or of the later Belgian settlers.

There are numerous Polish settlements in the larger cities. Bohemians or Czechs are also found in considerable numbers. The last census shows large numbers also from Russia, Italy, Jugo-Slavia and Hungary.

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