MADISON

AND THE

FOUR LAKE COUNTRY OF WISCONSIN.

CHAPTER I.


It would be interesting, if not profitable, to know when and through whom the section of country now occupied by the city of Madison and adjoining the Four Lakes, was first made known to Europeans; but it is one of those questions much easier asked than answered.

Wisconsin, it is well known, was visited at an early date by the Jesuit Fathers, and a mission established at the Rapids de Pere, on the Fox river, near Green Bay, in 1669. In June, 1673, the Upper Mississippi river was discovered by Father Marquette and his companion Joliet, who passed up the Fox and down the Wisconsin rivers to the Mississippi. This was the great thoroughfare through Wisconsin for a long period but we do not find any record of explorations to the north or
south of those streams, until Capt. Jona. Carver passed down the Wisconsin to the “Great Town of the Saukies,” Prairie du Sac, in October, 1766, and while at that place made an excursion to what he calls “some mountains that lie about fifteen miles to the southward, and abound in lead ore.” These mountains are now known as the “Blue Mounds.”

There is every reason to believe that the “Four Lake Country” was not unknown to the French traders soon after a trading post was established at Green Bay; and it is a well established fact that, early as 1655, there were Frenchmen engaged in trade at that point; and, wherever there is a reasonable prospect of gain, there will be found the hardy adventurer, however difficult the path or dangerous the road.

These traders and their employés, while collecting peltries, visited every available location, and it is not a reasonable supposition that this rich section of country, abounding with lakes the favorite abode of fur-bearing animals, should have been overlooked or unknown. Again, it was the interest of these persons to keep the knowledge they had acquired to themselves for their own particular benefit; and, in connection with this subject, Capt. Carver in his narrative* says: “I cannot help remarking that all the maps of these parts I have ever seen are very erroneous—the rivers, in general, running in different directions from what they really do, etc. Whether this is done by the French geographers (for all English maps are copied from theirs) through design, or for a want of a just knowledge of the country, I cannot say.” Some of these maps would indicate that the country south of the Wisconsin was generally swampy, and apparently of little value.

“...These singular men, the trappers,” says Hon. J. Y. Smith, “were shrewdly silent in regard to their wanderings and explorations, especially when they extended to beautiful and fertile regions. It was part of their policy to discourage immigration of those who were devoted to industrial pursuits, as they anticipated therefrom competition and the general decline

of their trade which must inevitably follow upon the settlement of the country."

The Four Lake Country, we also know, was the favored locality of that mysterious race who long since inhabited this state, and who have left behind those remarkable mounds and earth-works, fortifications and embankments which are found in the most beautiful locations in this vicinity.

I. A. Lapham, LL.D., in his valuable work on the Antiquities of Wisconsin, refers to some of these mounds, and as they are fast disappearing, and some of them no longer in existence, his account will prove interesting:

"In the vicinity of the Four Lakes, where Madison, the capital of the state is situated, the mound-builders have left unusually numerous traces of their former occupancy and industry. These lakes are united by a stream called the Catfish, now known as Yahara, through which the waters are conveyed to the Rock river. The mounds, situated six and twelve miles west of the Four Lakes, were among the first of the animal-shaped mounds of which an account was published in Silliman's Amer. Jour., Vol. XXXIV, etc. A figure on the Third Lake (Monona), near the residence of Ex-Gov. Fairchild, was fortunately rescued from oblivion by Mr. F. Hudson, in 1842. Its length was 318 feet, and shape of a lizard. In grading Wisconsin avenue and Wilson street it had to be removed. On the north side of Lake Wingra, on the road to Monroe, there is an irregular row of mounds, comprising two quadrupeds, one bird, and one mound with lateral projections, five oblong and twenty-seven circular tumuli."

Accurate drawings and surveys of these and other mounds in this vicinity are given in Dr. Lapham's valuable work.

The Sac and Fox nations of Indians were for a long period the occupants of the Fox river valley country and of the Wisconsin, before the permanent settlement was made. They were a warlike race of old, as we know that nearly two hundred years since, the French who had rarely become involved with the aborigines, were obliged by force of arms to wrest from them the privilege of transit between Green Bay and the Mis-
sissippi. The lakes were their favorite resort owing undoubtedly to the abundance of fish and water fowl; the shallow bays were literally covered spring and autumn with myriads of ducks. The larger game of deer were numerous, and the marshes afforded abundance of peltry.

The ground upon which Madison is built, was in common with most of the region included between the Mississippi and the Wisconsin and Rock rivers, purchased from the nations in 1825, at which time they relinquished all claim to lands east of the Mississippi. These Indians were reputed among the early settlers to be peculiarly faithless and savage. They seemed to have repented the surrender of their old hunting grounds, and in 1831 we find them again on the east side of the river, greatly annoying the settlers and destroying much property. They were speedily driven back, and entered into a new treaty with the United States, the terms of which were much the same as those of the treaty of 1825. The next year they again returned to the east side of the river, and shortly after took place what is usually known as the "Winnebago Outbreak," succeeded by the Black Hawk War; after which the Indians were again and permanently removed to the west, and tranquility ensued.

The first pioneer settler within the present county of Dane, was Colonel Ebenezer Brigham. This gentleman was so identified with our history, that it is necessary to give a memoir of his life and the events connected therewith. No one ever lived in this section that was better known or more highly appreciated than Col. Brigham. He died at Madison, September 14, 1861, in the 72d year of his age.

Ebenezer Brigham was born at Shrewsbury, Worcester county, Mass., April 28, 1789. In 1818 he came to Olean Point in the State of New York. The Alleghany river was then the only channel known through western New York, and that was only navigated by canoes, rafts or skiffs. He came through in a canoe, and at Pittsburgh took a flat boat down the Ohio river. The villages on the river were all small. During the journey down he saw but one steamboat. On arriving at
Shawneetown, he landed and walked through to St. Louis. There was nothing at that place but a small French settlement—not more than three or four brick houses in the town. In 1822 he first set foot upon Wisconsin soil, but not to remain. At Galena he found Col. James Johnson, a brother of Col. Richard M. Johnson, who was just opening the mines, and subsequently he spent a short time at Springfield. In 1827 he embarked for Wisconsin with an ox team. At that time there was a large emigration to the lead mines, in the southwestern part of the state, as the ore was abundant and the price remunerative. He remained a while near Platteville and was engaged in mining, and with a small party pitched his tent (so to speak) on what is now the Block House branch of the Platte river. From this point the party retreated in haste to Galena, owing to the commencement of hostilities by the Indians. In the spring of 1828 he removed to Blue Mounds, the most advanced outpost in the mines. The only source of food supply was from Galena. Soon after he had raised his cabin he took a trip with two companions to Fort Winnebago to ascertain whether food could not be more easily obtained at that point. The route taken, was north of Fourth Lake, probably on or near the line of the old military road afterwards laid out. They obtained a supply of salt pork, hard bread, powder and some other things, of a sutler, not loading heavily, and on the return struck south, striking the old trail that formerly ran between the Third and Fourth Lakes, following it up to the hill where the capitol now stands, where they encamped over night. Intercourse with the Indians had made known to them the existence of the lake region before they started. From the enchanting view of the spot, he predicted that a village would be built there, and probably the future capital of the Territory. The isolated condition where he settled will be apparent from the statement of a few facts. The nearest settler was at what is now Dodgeville. Mineral Point and other mining places where villages have since grown up, had not then been discovered. On the southeast the nearest house was on the O'Plaine river, twelve miles west of Chicago. On the east, Solomon Juneau was his nearest neigh-
bor at the mouth of Milwaukee river, and on the northeast, Green Bay was the nearest settlement.

Shortly after locating at the Mounds, Mr. Brigham, in company with Col. Wm. S. Hamilton and M. Gratiot and some others, visited Green Bay in order to settle on certain boundaries between the whites and the Indians. The line was fixed upon, and the Indians blazed the trees along this line, notifying the whites *not to pass it*, a prohibition about as effectual as the whistling of the wind.

For several years after his coming, the savages were the sole lords of the soil; a large Indian village stood near the mouth of Token Creek; another stood on the ridge between Second and Third Lakes, and their wigwams were scattered all along the streams. When the capital was located here, he was the nearest settler to it, though twenty-five miles distant.

Soon after his settlement, he was honored with the appointment of magistrate from Governor Lewis Cass. He held this commission four years, and all the duty he performed during that time was to marry one couple. He often related an anecdote of being called upon to go some thirty miles to marry a couple, but on arriving within a short distance of the place, word had been left there that the fair lady had changed her mind, and he must not come any farther. Mr. Brigham, however, went on and introduced another friend, who succeeded in making a contract, and the next spring he was called upon to ratify it, and this was the only official act of a four years term of justice of the peace.

The principal object of his location at this point, as before stated, was mining for lead, and at the same time cultivating the soil. One of the leads on his land was “proved” before his death to the depth of seventy-five to one hundred feet when the workmen were prevented by water from going deeper. Upwards of four million pounds were taken from this lead with no other machinery than the common windlass, rope and tub. This lead was hauled to Green Bay, Chicago and Galena. On his first trip to Chicago, there was not a house or wagon track between that place and Blue Mounds. He was fifteen days in
reaching his destination, fording with his oxen and load of lead the Rock and Fox rivers and the smaller streams on the route. In this expedition he was accompanied by a favorite dog, for which he was offered in Chicago a village lot, which was situated where now is the most valuable property in that city. In those days the whole site of the town could have been purchased for a few hundred dollars.

Col. Brigham, at the organization of the territorial government, was elected a member of the council, and was re-elected, serving nine terms, from 1836 to 1841. When the state government was organized, 1848, he was elected a member of assembly. He died at the residence of his niece, Mrs. H. G. Bliss, at Madison, September 14, 1861, aged seventy-two years.

A short description of the Four Lakes, in the vicinity of Madison, and the Blue Mounds, may prove of service, taken from I. A. Lapham’s “History of Wisconsin.”

There are in all, twelve lakes in Dane county — but the principal, and those most attractive, are the Four Lakes, lying in the valley of the Cat Fish or Yahara, and nearly in a direct line from northwest to southeast.

Kegonsa, or First Lake.—This lake is the lowest of the four. Its longest diameter is three and one-eighth miles by two miles in its shortest; its circumference is nine and a half miles, and it covers five square miles. It is situated nine miles above Dunkirk Falls, near the southern line of the county, and lies in the towns of Dunn and Pleasant Springs.

Waubeza, or Second Lake.—This body of water lies three and a half miles above Kegonsa. Its length is three and a half miles, and its width about two; and with it, has an average depth of about twelve feet. The larger part is in the town of Dunn, and the remainder in Blooming-Grove.

Monona, or Third Lake, is next above, at a distance of seven-eighths of a mile. It is about six and a half miles long, by two broad, occupying an area of six square miles. Madison, the County Seat and Capital of the State, is located on the strip of land about one mile across, between this and Lake Mendota.
The larger part is in the town of Blooming-Grove and the remainder in Madison.

Mendota, or Fourth Lake.—This is the uppermost and by far the largest of the Four Lakes. It has a periphery of nineteen and one-fourth miles, and covers an area of fifteen and sixty-five one hundredths square miles. Its diameter is six miles by nine. The larger part is in the town Madison and the remainder in Westport.

Each lake is surrounded by a broad valley, which, with the bottom lands bordering upon the numerous small streams, flowing into them, on all sides, forms a portion of agricultural country of unsurpassed fertility.

The water of all these lakes, coming from springs, is cold and clear to a remarkable degree. For the most part, their shores are made of a fine gravel shingle; and their bottoms, which are visible at a great depth, are composed of white sand, interspersed with granite boulders. Their banks, with few exceptions, are bold. A jaunt upon them affords almost every variety of scenery — bold escarpments and overhanging cliffs, elevated peaks, and gently-sloping shores, with occasional strips of meadow land between, affording magnificent views of the distant prairies and openings.

The Blue Mounds are two conical hills, about one mile apart, one in Iowa, and one, the largest, in Dane county, twenty-five miles west of Madison, and twelve miles south of the Wisconsin river.

On the western line of Dane county, the highest peak rises to an altitude of 1,931 feet above the sea, and 1,072.5 above the lakes at Madison. Going west from the city, the visitant passes successively across the out-crop of every principal geological deposite in the state. He ascends from the upper layers of the lower or Potsdam sandstone, across the lower magnesian, the upper or ferruginous sandstone, the blue fossiliferous limestone, the upper magnesian or lead-bearing rock, and ends upon the crest on a layer of some four hundred feet thickness of hornstone — a sharp, siliceous deposit filled with chest nodules, flint and fossilizations. The mounds of all this
region owe their origin to erosion, and not elevation. They are the outliers of an ancient world — land-marks of ages too remote to be computed by years — boundaries which remain to prove the existence of a former surface over all southern Wisconsin, of which in the lapse of epochs more than six hundred feet have been dissolved and carried away by the action of the elements. The Blue Mounds being the highest, dominate all others. Sharp cut valleys and ravines radiate from their hoary sides in nearly every direction. Springs break out along the margins of the successive layers, and streams run to the four points of the compass. It is the source and parent of river and rivulet, seamed by many a scar, but beautiful and grand from every point of observation.

The elevation of the mounds is such, that they can be seen fifteen to twenty miles distant. The Indian name is Mu-chaw-ku-nin, or the Smoky Mountains, applied to them, it is said, on account of their summits being usually enveloped in a blue haze. The following is a geological section of the eastern mound, as reported by Dr. Locke:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Layer</th>
<th>Feet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corniferosus rock forming the peak of the mound</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geodiferous Lime rock or lead bearing rock</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saccharoid Sandstone</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternations of Sandstone and Limestone</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandstone</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Limestone at the level of the Wisconsin</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

—Lapham’s History of Wisconsin.

In the month of May, 1829, Hon. James Duane Doty, * Judge of the U. S. Court, Henry S. Baird and Morgan L. Martin Esqrs, attorneys of Green Bay, performed a journey to Prairie du Chien on horseback. These gentlemen had in 1825, ’26, ’27 and ’28 taken the same trip by water, by the way of the Fox and Wisconsin rivers, which was then the usual and only

mode of communication between the two places. At the time above alluded, to they were anxious to obtain a knowledge of the country outside of this route, and of which no one had previously written. They were accompanied by a Menomonee Indian as guide who led or rode a pack horse. Their route was not a direct one, as the Indian was not well acquainted with the country west of Lake Winnebago, following the Indian trails as far as practicable, they traveled on the east side of that Lake to Fond du Lac, thence by way of Green Lake to the Four Lakes, crossing the outlet between the Second and Third Lakes, the site of Madison, the Blue Mounds, Dodgeville, and crossed the Wisconsin about six miles above its confluence with the Mississippi. They were about seven days in making the journey, and saw no white people until they reached Blue Mounds. This was the first party of whites that had attempted and accomplished the land journey from Green Bay to the Mississippi.

Attracted doubtless by the beauty of the location, as well as other considerations, Judge Doty made another excursion to this place in 1832, after the termination of the Black Hawk war. It was very evident that with his usual foresight he was impressed as was Col. Brigham with its desirability for a future town.

The year 1832 was memorable for the war of the Sacs and Foxes under Black Hawk against the whites, and as Blue Mounds and the Four Lake Country were intimately connected with the movements of the army and the flight of the Indians, it will be necessary to give a statement of the events occurring at that time as far as these localities were concerned.

In the spring of that year (1832) the Winnebagoes were professedly friendly, but they could not be depended on in case of reverses from the Sacs and Foxes. To guard against surprise, Col. Brigham and the settlers in the vicinity of the Blue Mounds, built a block house in a commanding position on the prairie near the mounds, and about a mile and a half from the Colonel’s residence. The buildings were commenced May 10, and completed about the 24th, and consisted of two block houses each about twenty feet square and a log building in the centre
about thirty feet by twenty feet large for a store house and barrack. The whole was enclosed by a picket fence of about one hundred and fifty feet on each of the four sides—the pickets were of stout oak about sixteen feet high, planted about three feet in the ground. James Aubrey had the first command of the men assembled at the fort; E. Beouchard, 1st Lieutenant, and, after Aubrey's death, succeeded to the command until June 14 when he resigned and was succeeded by Capt. John Sherman. On the 6th of June, Aubrey was killed as will presently be noticed; at this time there were in the fort, the families of all the settlers in the neighborhood, as no one knew how long they would be free from attack.

In the latter part of May, Col. H. Dodge assembled a company of fifty mounted volunteers commanded by Jas. H. Gentry and John H. Rountree and proceeded with them to the head of the Four Lakes where, on the 25th of the month, he held a talk with the Winnebagoes, desiring to know their intentions as to the Sacs, whether or not they would aid, counsel or harbor them in their country (that nation then had nominal possession of the Four Lake region); if they would, it would be considered as a declaration of war on their part; informing them that the Sacs had lied to them and given them bad counsel, and that if they were unfaithful to the treaties, they must expect to share the fate of the Sacs. To all which the Winnebagoes made fair promises and agreed to remain at peace.

About the first of June, Capt. Sherman who commanded at Mound Fort, fearing an attack from the Indians, sent word of his apprehensions to Col. Dodge, who immediately collected from the several posts, of which there were twelve or more in the mining districts, some two hundred mounted men. They proceeded to Mound Fort on the 3d of June, on which day the two Misses Hall, who had been captured by the Sacs at the massacre on Fox river, were delivered up by the Winnebagoes for the purpose of obtaining the reward which had been offered by Gen. Atkinson for their recovery.

On the 6th of June, James Aubrey, an inmate of Col. Brigham's family, was killed by the Sacs while getting water at
the spring near the dwelling-house; this was about a mile and a half north of the fort, but in sight of it. It has since been ascertained that the Sacs had been piloted to this place by certain Winnebagoes. Suspicion ever attached to this treacherous people.

On the 20th of June, some Indians were discovered in the vicinity of Mound Fort, and Lieut. Wm. Force and a person of the name of Green, whose family was in the fort, mounted their horses and rode out to reconnoitre. In a short time they fell into an ambush of the Sacs, about two miles in front, and immediately in view of the fort. The unfortunate men were plainly seen endeavoring to escape to the fort, but they were soon surrounded and killed by the savages, who mutilated the bodies in a most horrible manner. Lieut. Force had a heavy gold watch by which the hours of standing guard were regulated; at the time he was killed it was in his pocket, and was taken — his body being chopped in pieces and scattered about the prairie. Shortly after, an Indian trader named Wallis Rowan, who will be noticed hereafter, was out on the trail, picked up five or six Indian saddles, the horses having given out in the retreat. On coming up to the body of this savage, he found the prairie fire had passed over it, consuming his pack and clothing. The watch of Force was found in the ashes and identified by Mr. Brigham a few days after. Rowan kept the watch over ten years before finally parting with it.

In the march of the command under Henry and Dodge in pursuit of the Indians, the detachment crossed the Crawfish river near Aztalan, and followed the trail until the high grounds between the Third and Fourth Lakes, the capitol grounds and the site of Madison, were reached, and struck the north end of Third Lake. In the timber between Gen. Simeon Mills' country residence and the Catfish bridge, then the ford, they overtook the rear guard of the flying foe, where an Indian was wounded, who crept away and hid himself in the thick willows, where he died.

A scouting party of fourteen men, one of whom was Abel Rasdall, who will hereafter be noticed, was sent forward by
Col. Dodge, and preceded the main body about two miles, who crossed the Catfish just below where the bridge leading out of Williamson street, Madison, now stands. When they arrived at the point where Parker’s planing mill stood, since occupied by Billings & Carman as a plow factory, an Indian was seen coming up from the water’s edge, near the present watering place below the Lake, now Meredith, House, who seated himself upon the bank, apparently indifferent to his fate. In a moment after, his body was pierced with bullets, one of which passed in at the temple and out of the back part of his head. On examination, it was found that he was sitting upon a newly made grave, probably that of his wife who had perhaps died of fatigue, hunger and exhaustion, and her disconsolate companion had resolved to await the advancing foe and die there also.

The trail was followed around the southern end of Fourth Lake, passing a little north of the Capitol Park and along the lake near the State University, where it appeared that an admirable position for a battle-field, with natural defenses and places of ambush, had been chosen by the enemy; and here they had apparently lain the previous night. This place was near Col. W. B. Slaughter’s farm, afterwards laid out as the City of the Four Lakes, about three quarters of a mile north of the present village of Pheasant Branch.

Of the further movements of the army, it is only necessary to say, that the pursuit continued July 21, with occasional glimpses of straggling Indians, some of whom were killed, until about five o’clock in the afternoon, when the Wisconsin river bluff was reached, and a battle took place, when about sixty were killed, and a great number of bodies were afterwards found on the northern side of the Wisconsin, on the route to Bad-Axe. The loss on the part of the whites, was one killed, and eight wounded. On the 2d of August the battle at the mouth of the Bad-Axe river took place, which resulted in the total destruction of a very large portion of Black Hawk’s followers — men, women and children — and the capture and dispersion of the remainder. Black Hawk soon after surrendered himself to the Chiefs Cha-e-tar and One-eyed Decorra, who
brought him and the Prophet afterwards to Prairie du Chien, and delivered them to Gen. Street, agent of the Winnebagoes, on the 27th of August, thus terminating the war much to the satisfaction of everyone.

In the month of September of this year, Col. Chas. Whittlesey, now of Cleveland, Ohio, made a journey from Green Bay to Fort Winnebago, and thence to Galena, an account of which can be found in Vol. I, Collections of State Historical Society of Wisconsin. He passed around the northern shores of Fourth Lake to Blue Mounds, and thence to his destination.

A correspondent of the "Madison Democrat" writes from Cadiz, Wis., July 1, 1871, and gives some reminiscences of his experiences in the United States army in 1832–3 in Illinois and Wisconsin, after the conclusion of the Black Hawk war, from which the following extracts are made: "His company, after the treaty with the Sacs and Foxes at Rock Island, September 25, 1832, received orders to go into winter quarters at Danville, Ill., where it remained until April 13, 1833. From that place it proceeded to Dodgeville, where the writer found a cluster of eight or ten log cabins, and where he met Col. Henry Dodge. After remaining there a week the company started for Fort Winnebago via Blue Mounds. Here he found a block-house, but the people had all left on account of the Indians, who had killed some of the settlers. From here he went to the northwest side of Fourth Lake, and encamped for a few days. Near the encampment lived a solitary Frenchman in a log cabin. He, with Col. Brigham, was the population of Dane county at that time. Between the lake and Bellfountain, a name we gave the place, they spent sometime resting themselves and horses; they considered the country utterly worthless, and thought it would never be settled, except that there might be a settlement sometime at Blue Mounds, and one at Platte Mounds, and perhaps a small settlement at the Four Lakes. The company resumed its march, and, on the ground now occupied by Portage City, they found the whole Winnebago tribe of Indians encamped. The company, after serving out the
term of enlistment, returned to Dodgeville, and were discharged July 23, 1833."

In the year 1834, J. A. Wakefield prepared and published a "History of the Black Hawk War," a little volume which is now extremely rare. The author served during the campaign. His description of the Four Lakes is interesting, and is here given:

"Here it may not be uninteresting to the reader to give a small outline of these lakes. From a description of the country, a person would very naturally suppose that those lakes were as little pleasing to the eye of the traveler as the country is. But not so. I think they are the most beautiful bodies of water I ever saw. The first one that we came to, was about ten miles in circumference, and the water as clear as crystal. The earth sloped back in a gradual rise; the bottom of the lake appeared to be entirely covered with white pebbles, and no appearance of its being the least swampy. The second one that we came to appeared to be much larger. It must have been twenty miles in circumference. The ground rose very high all around; and the heaviest kind of timber grew close to the water's edge. If these lakes were anywhere else except in the country they are, they would be considered among the wonders of the world. But the country they are situated in, is not fit for any civilized nation of people to inhabit. It appears that the Almighty intended it for the children of the forest. The other two lakes we did not get close enough to, for me to give a description of them; but those who saw them stated that they were very much like the others."

It is probable that Mr. Wakefield would form a different idea of the country in this section, if he could see it at the present time. Forty years have made great changes, and lands which he thought were worthless have brought one hundred dollars an acre and upwards, not making mention of lots between the Third and Fourth Lakes, now occupied by the city of Madison.

On the 15th and 16th of October of this year, 1882, Capt. Low, of Fort Winnebago, with James Halfin and Archibald
CRISMAN encamped on Fourth (Mendota) Lake ridge. At this time about five hundred Indians were located between the site of the present state capitol on the shores of the lake. These Indians came here for the purpose of traffic with a French trader named LOUIS ARMEL. Capt. Low came from the Fort in pursuit of some deserters whom they readily found, as they had imbibed too freely of the French traders' bad whiskey to be well qualified to secrete themselves. Mr. ARMEL had his goods in a temporary Indian-built hut near the present stone residence of J. B. NORTON on Johnson street.

Another trader who was doing business in this section in 1832, was WALLACE ROWAN, a rough and hardy pioneer who located at the head of Mendota Lake, and was there at the outbreak of the Black Hawk war; reference has been made to his finding the gold watch of LIEUT. WILLIAM FORCE. Not long after he removed to Squaw or Strawberry Point, on the eastern bank of Lake Monona, and with WILLIAM B. LONG entered, in 1835, the fractional tract embracing the point. He was afterwards joined by ABRAHAM WOOD; but selling out his fifty-two acres to Col. WM. B. SLAUGHTER, March 28, 1838, he removed to the present locality of Poynette, where, for several years he kept a house of entertainment, and still later to Baraboo, where he and Wood built a mill, and where he died. Unlike most early Indian traders, his wife was a white woman.

Another of the early traders at the Four Lakes, was Abel RASDALL, who from his long residence here is entitled to particular notice. He was a native of Kentucky, born August 15, 1805, in Barron county, son of ROBERT and ELIZABETH RASDALL. He was raised a farmer. When a young man he went to Missouri and engaged in lead mining, and in 1828 went to Galena and assisted awhile the late Col. JAMES MORRISON in his mining operations at Porter's Grove, about nine miles west of Blue Mounds, and soon engaged in the business of an Indian trader, locating his cabin on the eastern shore of First Lake, about a half mile south of its outlet. He married a Winnebago woman by whom he had three children, and was a real help-meet to him in the Indian trade, and accompanying
him to Fort Winnebago at some Indian payment there, she sickened and died of small pox, Rasdall alone attending her and burying her remains. He had been vaccinated when young, and did not take the disease. He subsequently married another Winnebago woman; they had no issue, and when her people migrated west, she concluded to go with them — so Rasdall and his Indian wife cut a blanket in two, each taking a part, the Indian mode of divorce.

Mr. Rasdall’s services in the Black Hawk war have previously been referred to. In his trading with the Indians, he did not by any means, confine himself to his trading establishment, but would pack several ponies with goods, and would take a tour among the Indian camps and settlements, and dicker off his goods for skins and furs. He obtained his goods at Galena, where he disposed of his furs and peltry. Not only ponies were used for packing and transporting goods, but Indians also.

In 1846, he was married to Mary Ann Pitcher, in Madison, by whom he had three sons. Mr. Rasdall died at his home at Token Creek, Dane county, Wis., June 6, 1857, at the age of nearly 52 years. He will long be remembered as an early settler of Dane county, his trading adventures around the Four Lakes having commenced as early as 1831.

Another early trader, and perhaps the only one not heretofore referred to as doing business on the lakes, was Michel St. Cyr. An interesting biography of him has been prepared by L. C. Draper, LL. D., and published in Vol. VI of the Collections of the State Historical Society, and from which the following extract is taken:

“St. Cyr was a Canadian half-breed (his mother’s name was Kee-No-Kau, a Winnebago woman), born about 1806; had always lived on the frontier and among the Indians, and could speak English quite well, though he was entirely illiterate. He was a man of ordinary size, about one hundred and fifty pounds weight; with a thin visage, dark complexion, black hair and eyes, a quick step, and a ready, active man generally, in both body and mind. He was amiable, and kind to all, and scorned a dishonest man or a liar. He exercised a commanding
influence over that portion of the Winnebagoes with whom he was associated. He succeeded Rowan as a trader at the head of Fourth Lake — whisky and tobacco constituted his stock in trade. The whisky was at first dealt out to his Indian customers in full strength, and pretty liberal quantities, until they became considerably oblivious, when the liquor was diluted, and finally, as they became still more intoxicated, water was freely substituted, and, as St. Cyr said, answered every purpose. But this trade was not sufficient for a livelihood, and St. Cyr cultivated about eight acres of ground, surrounded with a rude fence, raising corn, oats, potatoes, and a few vegetables. His cabin was a small affair, about twelve feet square, with a dirt floor; and almost adjoining it was a stable of about the same dimensions. With a Winnebago woman for his wife, and two sons and two daughters, all young, he entertained the very few travelers that passed through the country. When A. F. Pratt and companion stopped there in February, 1837, as related in the first volume of the Wisconsin Historical Collections, they had served up to them a kind of pot-pie which relished very well; and after finishing their meal, and inquiring what kind of meat they had eaten, they were informed that it was muskrat. Indeed muskrats, and occasionally pheasants, seemed to form the principal viands for his table; and St. Cyr would pleasantly observe, that the Englishmen, meaning white people generally, 'would just as soon eat pheasant as rat, when all were cooked up together.'"

St. Cyr resided at a point a little north of the mouth of Pheasant Branch, where the City of the Four Lakes was located and platted, and now owned by Mr. James Livesey, about six miles from the State University. His place was the nearest to the location of Madison. He received from Col. Slaughter some two hundred dollars for his trifling improvements, and about the first of July, 1838, he removed first to Minnesota, and soon after to the Winnebago Reservation in Iowa, and there he died about 1864. His two sons grew up worthless fellows among the Indians, and, as some of the Winnebagoes reported, "they drink heap of whisky."
Michel St. Cyr was one of the half-breed Canadian race of the coureurs des bois, voyageurs and Indian traders, whose wants were few and simple, and who, in manners, customs and acquirements, were but slightly in advance of the Indians with whom they associated, lived and died. It was only the mere accident of his having been temporarily an early settler of this section of country, and the humble part he took in the primitive survey of Madison, as will hereafter appear, that led to the perpetuation of his name and career in these early reminiscences of the country.

In the year 1834 the preliminary steps were taken by the General Government to have the lands in this locality surveyed and brought into market, and we find by the volume of Field Notes in the office of the School and University Land Commissioners, that February 4, Mr. Orson Lyon contracted with M. T. Williams, Esq., United States Surveyor General for the States of Ohio, Indiana and Michigan, to survey fractional township seven, north of range nine, east of the fourth principal meridian, in the Northwest Territory, comprising the present town of Madison.

These lands, including others adjacent, were surveyed in the month of December of that year, and certified to by Orson Lyon, Deputy Surveyor, Harrison Flesher and John Straight, chain-bearers, and Madison Young, ax-man, on the 6th of that month. Accompanying the notes is a drawing of the grounds and the lakes.

In the summer or autumn, 1835, Col. William B. Slaughter* entered the tract of land occupied by St. Cyr, and on the

*Col. William B. Slaughter was a native of Culpepper county, Va.; born April 19, 1797, and was educated at William and Mary’s College, Va. He removed to Bardstown, Kentucky, where he practiced law from 1827 to 1829, and, in 1830, removed to Bedford, Lawrence county, Indiana. In 1832, was elected a member of the legislature, when he introduced the Indiana resolutions, sustaining President Jackson’s proclamation on the subject of nullification and threatened secession in South Carolina. He was appointed Register of the Land Office at Indianapolis in 1833, which position he resigned the year following, and was appointed to the same office at Green Bay in 1835. While serving in that capacity he was elected
20th of December conveyed an undivided interest to Judge J. D. Doty, with a view of having a town laid out there, and eventually securing the location of the Territorial Capital at that point. Accordingly, Judge Doty employed John Bannister, a surveyor of Green Bay (who subsequently removed to Fond du Lac, and died there), to lay out the City of the Four Lakes, where Rowan and St. Cyr had successively traded, and where Gen. Dodge had held a conference with the Winnebagoes, May 25, 1832. It was surveyed and platted probably in June, 1836, as the certificate of the plat bears date July 7 of that year. This city (on paper) at one time had high aspirations for the seat of government, but owing to circumstances not necessary here to state, it failed to win the coveted prize.

J. V. Saydam, Esq., of Green Bay, in a letter to Dr. L. C. Draper, thus refers to his visit to Madison with Gov. Doty for the purpose of laying out and surveying the plat for the village:

"On the second day of October, Gov. Doty and myself started from Green Bay on horseback, he with his green blanket and shot gun, that had been his companions on many and

a member of the Legislative Council of Michigan, which assembled at Green Bay in the winter of 1835, and was the author of the memorial to Congress praying to disconnect the territory lying west of Lake Michigan from the State of Michigan, and to be organized into a new Territory to be called Wisconsin.

He resigned the office of Register in 1841. In May, 1837, he came to the "City of the Four Lakes," a plat of which was laid out and put on record July 7, 1836, by M. L. Martin, W. B. Slaughter and J. D. Doty, proprietors. Mr. Slaughter opened up a farm and made it his residence until 1845, when he removed to his old home in Virginia; but at the beginning of the late war (1861) he returned to Wisconsin, and located in the town of Middleton, Dane county.

In 1862 he was appointed Commissary of Subsistence and Quartermaster by President Lincoln, and served one year, when he retired, and returned to Wisconsin, where he still resides at his home in sight of the City of Madison. Although in his 77th year, he is strong and active as most persons one half his age. He has delivered a number of lectures on moral, philosophical and political subjects, which have been greatly admired for their genius, learning and eloquence.
many a trip through the almost trackless wilds of Wisconsin, and I with my compass and chain. We were both provided for camping out wherever night should overtake us; and for the more solid part of our forage, we were to depend upon the Governor’s gun. On our way we stopped at various places, among which were Clifton, at the north end of Winnebago Lake, where we laid out the village bearing that name, out of respect to an extensive ledge of rock that crops out at that point; and at Duck creek, on the east bank of the Wisconsin river, about eight or ten miles below Portage City, where we laid out the town of Wisconsinapolis.

“Finally, after about eight days from the time of leaving home, we reached what was then called ‘Four Lakes.’ We came by the trail that led around by the north side and west end of Fourth Lake, and found near what might be called the northwest corner, and perhaps two miles from where the University buildings now stand, a small log house, occupied by a man whose name I have forgotten,* who entertained our horses and ourselves nights, and assisted us day times in making such meanders and surveys of the shores of the Third and Fourth Lakes, and other points, as were necessary for making the plat of the future city. This took us, I think, three days. The precise time in which the survey and original plat of the city were made, was during the second and third weeks of October, while the Legislature was in session at Belmont.

“While standing at the section corner, on that beautiful spot between the Lakes, then the central point of a wilderness, with no civilization nearer than Fort Winnebago on the north, and Blue Mounds on the west, and but very little there; and over which now stands the principal entrance to one of the finest capital structures in the west—I have no doubt Gov. Doty saw in his far-reaching mind, just what we now see actually accomplished, a splendid city surrounding the capitol of Wisconsin at Four Lakes, as he remarked to me then, that I need not be surprised to learn that the seat of government of Wisconsin was located on that spot before the Legislature had adjourned. And sure enough, it so happened.

*Michel St. Cyr.
“We went directly to Belmont, where the Legislature was in session. On arriving there, I immediately set about drawing the plat of Madison, the Governor, in the mean time, giving me minute directions as to its whole plan, every item of which having originated with him while on the ground as being the most suitable, and best calculated, to develop the peculiar topography of the place.

“As soon as the plats were completed, I returned home alone, leaving the Governor behind to carry out his object. On the adjournment of the Legislature, quite a number of gentlemen, I never learned how many, belonging to that body, went to their homes the owners of sundry corner lots in a new town, and the seat of government of Wisconsin was permanently located at Madison, while the temporary locality was to be at Burlington, on the west side of the Mississippi, until the capitol buildings were erected and got ready for occupancy.

“Gov. Doty had the honor of naming the county of Dane after some notable person and circumstance connected with the passage of the Ordinance of 1787, for the government of the territory northwest of the Ohio, which he wished might be preserved in this imperishable way; and the name was given to the city by him in honor of President Madison, whose memory he held in very high esteem.”

Mr. Suydam certifies, October 27, 1836, that he had carefully meandered and measured the exterior lines of the plat of the town of Madison; and Judge Doty certifies to its correctness November 4, 1836, at Belmont.

It may be desirable at this point to give a brief account of the place selected for the seat of Government, as a matter of historic interest. The village (now city) of Madison, is situated in latitude 43 degrees 4 minutes and 20 seconds north, and longitude 89 degrees 20 minutes west from Greenwich, or 12 degrees 20 minutes west from Washington; another authority makes it nine minutes further west, or ten and one-third miles. The grounds occupy under the city charter, the greater portion of sections 13, 14, 23 and 24 of town 7 north from the base line or southern boundary of the state, and range 9 east from the fourth principal meridian: these sections have their corner
under the western doorway of the rotunda of the capitol. This point is about seventy-five miles in an air line from Lake Michigan, about ninety miles from the Mississippi river, thirty-nine miles from the southern, and two hundred and forty miles from the northern boundary of the state, at its nearest point on Lake Superior, and two hundred and sixty-four from the extreme northern limit of the state. It is therefore very near the centre of the state of which it is the capitol on an east and west line but far from the center of a north and south line. It is twenty-three miles from the western and nineteen miles from the eastern boundary of Dane county, of which it is the capital seat, and midway between the northern and southern boundaries being fifteen miles from each.

The site of Madison is a undulating isthmus between Lake Mendota (Fourth Lake) on the northwest, and Lake Monona (Third Lake) on the southeast. These lakes are 788 feet above the Atlantic Ocean and 210 feet above Lake Michigan.

The most elevated ground within the present city limits, is "University Hill," the summit of which is about 125 feet above the surrounding lakes. The ground upon which the capitol stands is about 75 feet, and the ridge that skirts Lake Mendota, about 80 feet above the level of the water. Northeast of the capitol, each of the lakes is skirted by a ridge perhaps thirty or forty feet high. Between these ridges the ground is flat, and was formerly a wet marsh. The efforts to reclaim this tract by draining and by lowering Lake Monona have been successful, and a number of dwellings and shops have been erected upon it; also the works of the Madison Gas Light and Coke Company. The site of the city, with this exception, is abundantly high and so rolling as to afford perfect drainage and beautiful building sites. Much has been said of its beauty. Horace Greeley, Bayard Taylor and other distinguished visitors have described the charming lake scenery by which we are surrounded in such glowing terms as to give Madison a national reputation. The visitor has only to survey the city from the dome of the State Capitol, the State University, the Park Hotel or Vilas House, to satisfy himself that the world affords few more delightful prospects.
Hon. John Catlin,* now of Elizabeth, N. J., one of the earliest of our pioneers, and who was the first Clerk of the Supreme Court of the Territory, the first attorney and District Attorney of Dane county, and the first postmaster of Madison, has given the following account of the early years of his residence:

"The territorial government of Wisconsin was organized and took effect on the 4th of July, 1836. The legislature was convened by proclamation of Gov. Henry Dodge to meet at Belmont in November of that year. I was at Belmont during the session when the Capital was established by law at Madi-

*Hon. John Catlin was born in Orwell, Vt., on the 13th day of October, 1803. He was the son of John B. Catlin, and a descendant of the 6th generation of Thomas Catlin who was a resident of Hartford, Conn., 1645, 6, and from whom a large part of the persons of that name in this country are supposed to have descended. His mother's name was Rosa Ormsbee, daughter of John Ormsbee of Shoreham, Vt. Both of his grandparents served through the Revolutionary War, and died in Vermont at an advanced age. His grandfather on his father's side, was one of seven brothers all engaged in the Revolution, and were all stalwart men, remarkable for size, being all six feet in height and well proportioned. His grandfather Ormsbee was a Lieutenant and was honorably discharged at the close of the war, receiving $1,400 in continental money for his services, and when he returned to his family in Massachusetts paid $60—of it for a bushel of corn, so great was its depreciation.

Mr. Catlin's father was a merchant, but when the war of 1812, broke out, retired to a farm on Lake Champlain in the town of Bridport, Addison Co., Vt., where Mr. Catlin was raised, receiving only a common school education with the exception of a year at Newton Academy in Shoreham, and a few months study of French in Canada. When eighteen years of age he took a school and continued to teach for nine winters, during which time he educated himself, studied law with Hon. Augustus C. Hand of Elizabethtown New York, and was admitted to the Bar in 1833. In the spring of 1836 he removed to the west, and settled at Mineral Point, in May of that year, entering into partnership with Hon. Moses M. Strong.

When the seat of government was located at Madison, Mr. Catlin was appointed Postmaster and established the office in May, 1837, and removed to Madison permanently in the spring of 1838. On the election of Gen. Harrison to the Presidency, Mr. Catlin was removed on political
son, then in the wilderness, with only three white men residing in what is now Dane county. These were Ebenezer Brigham, Eben Peck residing with him at the East Blue Mound, and Abel Rasdall residing at the First Lake. Michel St. Cyr, a half-breed, residing at the head of Fourth Lake. The legislature formed the plan of organizing a territorial government west of the Mississippi river, and to divide the territory by that river, which was subsequently accomplished, and the territorial government of Iowa organized, and this was the main reason for locating the seat of government at Madison, grounds, and restored by Mr. Wickliff who was appointed Postmaster General under President Tyler. Mr. Catlin continued to hold the office until his election to the council in 1844 when he resigned, as he could not by law hold both offices. On the organization of the Supreme Court in the fall of 1836, Mr. Catlin received the appointment of clerk, and was chief clerk of the House of Representatives of the Territory from 1838 until 1845 when L. F. Kellogg succeeded him to that office. On the organization of Dane County for county and Judicial purposes, Mr. Catlin was appointed District Attorney.

In 1846 Mr. George R. C. Floyd being in default to the United States Government as Secretary of the Territory, was removed and Mr. Catlin was appointed to that office by President Polk which he held until the admission of the Territory as a State in 1848.

The State of Wisconsin was admitted into the Union, with its western boundary by the Mississippi and St. Croix rivers, leaving out a full organized county with a sheriff, clerk of court, judge of probate and justices of the peace which had formerly been included within the limits of the Territory and under its government and laws. A bill had been introduced at a previous session Congress by Hon. Morgan L. Martin the delegate from Wisconsin, to organize a territorial government for Minnesota, including the district left out on the admission of Wisconsin, but which failed to become a law on account of the slavery question. The citizens of what is now Minnesota, were very anxious to obtain a territorial government and two public meetings were held, one at St. Paul, and the other at Stillwater, advising and soliciting Mr. Catlin, who was Secretary of Wisconsin, to issue a proclamation, as the acting Governor for the election of a delegate.

On consultation with Governor Dodge who had been elected to the Senate for the new State (and consequently had vacated the office of Governor), and on the resignation of Hon. John H. Tweedy of the office
which would be in about the center of the territory, between
the east and the west, if the territory (now the state of Iowa)
should be set off. They had, however, another reason, which
was the settlement of the interior, and the opening up of the
country at a time when population was greatly to be desired.
Provision was made for building a capitol to be commenced in
the spring of 1837, and by the advice of members of the legis-
lature I agreed to locate at Madison, was recommended for and
appointed postmaster, having been previously appointed Clerk
of Delegate, Mr. Catlin repaired to Stillwater and issued a proclamation
for the election of Delegate. Hon. H. H. Sibley was elected, and nearly
four hundred votes were polled at the election. Gen. Sibley presented his
certificate of election to Congress which was referred to a committee
which reported in favor of the admission of the Delegate; the committee
taking the same view Mr. Catlin had taken, and Gen. Sibley was admitt-
ed to his seat on the floor of congress by a vote of two to one, most of
the southern members opposing, contending that the Territorial Gov-
ernment fell on the admission of Wisconsin. The admission of Gen. Sibley
facilitated and hastened the passage of a bill for the organization
of a Territorial Government for Minnesota which Gen. Sibley was
able to get passed notwithstanding the opposition of the southern
members. Mr. Catlin subsequently was elected to the office of County
Judge of Dane county, which he resigned on being appointed President
of the Milwaukee & Mississippi Railroad Company, when he removed to
Milwaukee when the principal office of the company was kept. Mr. Catlin
rendered efficient service in the building of the Milwaukee & Mississippi
road. He was mainly instrumental in procuring in the banking law a
 provision making first mortgage bonds of railroads to the amount of
fifty per cent, the basis of banking, under certain restrictions, a provision
which enabled him to sell and issue of $600,000 of bonds on the said
road, which breathed into the corporation the breath of life, and gave it
a grand start towards the Mississippi.

Mr. Catlin declined a re-election as president in 1856, and on the 11th
of February the Board of Directors tendered him their thanks for the able
and efficient manner in which for the past five years he had dischargd
the arduous and responsible duties of that office.

After the failure of the company in the revulsion of 1857, Mr. Catlin
was again elected President, and re-organized the company under the
name of the Milwaukee & Prairie du Chien Railway, and was Vice
President until the consolidation of the company with the Milwaukee &
St. Paul.
of the Supreme Court at its first session held at Belmont in 1836.

"My first visit to Madison was in company with Moses M. Strong, Esq., Josiah A. Noonan and Geo. Messersmith, early in the year 1837 (or in December, 1836) to survey out and find the lines of Mr. Noonan's* lands lying just west and adjoining Madison. We found the snow very deep, and after a hard day's work, wading in the snow, we camped at night between the Third Lake (Monona) and Dead Lake (Wingra), where we found some thick timber and a sheltered spot. With a good deal of difficulty we made a log heap fire and eat our snack, and after the fire had thawed the snow, and warmed the ground, we removed the fire to a little distance and made our bed on the ashes where the fire had warmed the ground. The weather was extremely cold, but we slept warm, and the next morning Mr. Noonan left us on horseback for Milwaukee. The snow being too deep to survey out and find the corners of lots and blocks in Madison, and the weather extremely cold, we returned to Mineral Point to wait for milder weather.

"In February, 1837, I again visited Madison with Mr. Strong, who had been employed by Judge James D. Doty (who platted the town from the township plats without a survey) to survey out some lots and blocks around the public square according to the plat he furnished, so that those persons who intended to build, could find their lots. We found that the snow still covered the ground, and we stuck the stakes in the snow, the ground being too deeply frozen in most places to receive the stakes. We camped in the timber in the low grounds under the hill of the Fourth Lake, and were compelled to abandon our work by a severe snow storm, that so blinded us, that it was with great difficulty we found our way across the Fourth Lake to the cabin of St. Cyr, where we stayed two days, until the storm was over. While here I made a contract with him to erect the body of a log house on lot 3, in block 90, where

*These lands were what is generally known as the "Darwin Meadow Lawn Farm," now the property of Daniel Campbell.
the postoffice now stands, which he put up in that month, but
the house was not finished and completed until spring.

"In the spring I drew the pine lumber to finish the house
from Helena, on the Wisconsin river, at a cost of over $90 per
thousand feet, and was so unfortunate, after its completion in
very good style, as to have the inside burnt out before any one
lived in it. I again visited Madison in March, where I found
Mr. Eben Peck drawing logs to erect a house which was
partially completed in April, and in May he removed into it,
which was the first house built in Madison that any one lived
in. Mr. Peck kept on adding to it until it was capacious
enough to entertain comfortably, the travelers and first settlers
who visited Madison and it was then a great accommodation.
On the 27th day of May, 1837, I established the postoffice by
appointing Luther Peck as deputy, and the first mails were
opened and the office kept in Mr. E. Peck's house, his being
the only family in Madison.

"In June, 1837, Mr. Augustus A. Bird, one of the commis-
ioners of public buildings, arrived from Milwaukee with quite
a large number of mechanics, and commenced building a board-
ing house, office, steam mill, store and hotel, preparatory to the
erction of the capitol, and very soon the excavation for the
foundation of the capitol building was commenced. James
Morrison was the contractor and Mr. Bird was the acting
commissioner and superintendent, and had the general man-
agement. A mail route was established between Milwaukee
and Mineral Point, carried on horseback, which first supplied
Madison, but afterwards the mail route from Galena, Illinois,
to Fort Winnebago, carried in a two horse stage, was changed
to go via Madison.

"On the 4th of July, 1837, Mr. Simeon Mills was sworn in
as deputy postmaster, and kept the office in a one story log
building on lot 8 in block 108 during that year, and the sum-
mer of 1838, until he became a mail contractor on the route
between Milwaukee and Madison.

"The second session of the legislature was held at Burlington
(now Iowa) in the fall of 1837 and winter of 1838, where I
spent the winter, and was not therefore at Madison, but I have been told of the high prices and short supplies that prevailed among the few residents of the town. Flour was $20 per barrel, salt $30, but other articles were more reasonable. Salt and flour had to be hauled from Galena through the timbers and across the prairies, with scarcely any roads for the first forty miles west of Madison. In the spring of 1838 there was some relief to the high prices, but the times were what men called "hard" as there was no money except "wild cat" and "shin plasters," which soon ceased to be of value. Judge Doty issued his own notes, handsomely engraved, which passed current at Madison and in other places and were all redeemed. The wild cat banks of Michigan flooded the new territory, and after being put in circulation soon became of no value, and made the times harder than ever to the new settlers. What gave rise to the "wild cat" and "shin plasters" was the speculation of 1836-7, caused by the removal of the deposits of the government from the United States Bank to the state banks, which induced the latter to discount freely and greatly to expand the paper circulation of the country, and in the spring of 1837, President Jackson issued the "specie circular" which arrested the speculation, and a general suspension and failure of the banks was the consequence.

"The third session of the legislature was held in Madison in the winter of 1838. Two hotels called the "American" and "Madison" having been erected, together with several private houses for the accommodation of the members. Mr. J. A. Noonan published the first paper printed at Madison, called the "Wisconsin Enquirer," and was the public printer of the legislature.

"The 'American Hotel' was kept by Messrs. FaKe & Cotton, and the "Madison" by Mr. Chas. H. Bird, and the fare was quite passable. There was a number of private houses that boarded members and officers of the legislature. I heard but few complaints of short-commons at that session.

"On the Fourth of July, 1837, we had an impromptu celebration at Peck's Mansion house. There were present James D.
DOTY, THOS. W. SUTHERLAND, E. P. DEACON, two of the Messrs. SCHERMERHORNS of New York, JOHN MESSERSMITH, Senior, JOHN D. ANSLEY, SIMEON MILLS, myself and many others nearly all accidentally met on the occasion. We had refreshments with champagne, lemonade, punch, toasts and some conversational speeches. It was quite enjoyable, the more so from the absence of clap-trap and parade, and the noise of gunpowder usual upon such occasions. The day was fine and the country about the four lakes to me, at least never looked more beautiful. A more enthusiastic company with “great expectations” could rarely be found.

“In the spring of 1839, the county of Dane was organized for judicial purposes, and the “District Court” opened and established by the appointment of SIMEON MILLS clerk, Judge DAVID IRWIN presiding. There was no business to be done, the legislature having previously passed a “stay law” which for the time being prevented the collection of debts. There was no criminal business for the courts of the Territory for a long time after its organization, and this fact is greatly to the credit of the early “pioneers” or first settlers, nor was there much litigation. Almost the first business for the courts and lawyers, grew out of the passage of the bankrupt act of 1841, which was passed to relieve the unfortunate debtors of the consequences of the speculation of 1836, and the revulsion of 1837. “Hard times” prevailed for many years afterwards and until BENTON’S “mint drops” came into general circulation. During several years of general prostration of the country, gold flowed into the country from Europe to fill the vacuum, caused by the failure of the banks. Opposition to banks and corporations generally, was one of the cardinal principles of the Democratic party in those days, and the great mass of the western people were in favor of the doctrine. The hard times continued until 1848, when gold was discovered in California, and soon after the times began to change, and property began to rise in value. The settlement of Madison and the interior of the state was very slow, until the building of the Milwaukee and Mississippi Railroad, and that caused a great accession of population.
and rise in the value of real estate. The state census of 1855 showed the population of the state to be a little over 300,000, and that of 1860 gave 777,000, thus more than doubling the population in five years.

"Notwithstanding the "hard times" and the impossibility of making money and "getting along in the world" there was much real happiness and enjoyment among the early settlers, all were friendly and good will prevailed. The "almighty dollar" had not then taken possession of their souls to the exclusion of the milk of human kindness for each other, and the expectation of what Madison and the future state of Wisconsin were to be, and the future wealth they were sure to acquire, kept them in good spirits and made life endurable. The absence of fashion and pride, and the chilling influence of wealth made their wants few, and they were content with Mr. Micawber's philosophy of "waiting for things to turn up."

"There was plenty of leisure for hunting and fishing, and both game and fish were plenty. Let me tell a "fish story" right here, which luckily for the truth of history is capable of verification by a living witness, and many living who may have heard it at the time. On the first day of May in 1839, returning from Cottage Grove with Lafayette Kellogg, Esq., we discovered a large catfish near the shore of the head of Third Lake, and I suggested the idea of stopping to catch him. Mr. K. laughed heartily at the suggestion and said I could not get within two rods of him. I replied that he did not understand the nature of the animal, and that he was sunning and stupefied by the pleasure. The sun was shining warmly and the fish was near the top of the water, I waded out quietly and putting my hands gently, one under his head, and the other at the tail, lifted him out of the water and landed him safely upon the shore before he was awake from his stupor. He weighed thirty-five pounds!

"Judge Frazier, one of the Judges of the Supreme Court, appointed from Pennsylvania, was a very able judge, (when not under the influence of liquor), and remarkable for his ability, memory and knowledge of law. A term of the court was
to be held at Madison, in July, 1838, at the old Madison Hotel, which was only partially finished. The judge came on from Pennsylvania to hold the term, but the other judges, Dunn and Irvin, did not attend. The judge insisted on opening the court and holding the term as the law required. I informed him that there was no business and no lawyers in attendance. He said that made no difference. It was necessary to adopt rules, and accordingly the court was opened, the judge dictated from memory, and I wrote the rules, but they were not adopted by the other judges. The climate of Madison, however, at that dry time at the capital, did not suit the judge, as the "critter" or "O be joyful" was not there, except some Chinese cordial in the store of Jas. Morrison, which Mr. Bird had charge of, in the absence of Mr. Morrison. This cordial was put up in a very handsome and expensive set of china-ware representing Mandarins, and by the liberality of Mr. Bird, the whole set was emptied by the judge while holding the term (about a dozen bottles). When the cordial had all leaked out, the judge took his departure, and never held another term. He died at Milwaukee, November 8, 1838. Judge A. G. Miller was soon after appointed in his place, who proved to be a very temperate and upright jurist, and gave general satisfaction. On the organization of the state government, Judge Miller received the appointment of District Judge of the United States Court for the District of Wisconsin, which he held until his resignation January 1, 1873, at the age of 72, having held the office of United States Judge in Wisconsin — Territory and State — over 35 years.

"The rules of practice for the district courts of the Territory, were prepared by Judge Miller, and were adopted by the judges of the supreme court at the term of 1840. These rules were published in primer form, and were the uniform rules of practice in the several district courts until after the admission of the State into the Union.

"The only men I remember living in Dane county in 1887, other than the men who came with A. A. Bird to work on the capitol, were Ebenezer Brigham at the Blue Mounds, John
Kellogg at the same place, the two Pecks, Abel Rasdall at First Lake, Covalle at Second Lake, Abram Wood at Wood's Point on Third Lake, and St. Cyr at the City of the Four Lakes. Horace Lawrence, I think, came during the same year, and also John Stoner. Berry Haney lived at Cross Plains. I staid one night at his place, on my way to Green Bay, in September, 1836.

"Col. Ab. Nichols, who built 'The Worser,' where the United States Hotel afterwards stood, was a noted person in early times, but, on the whole, a very good sort of man. It was he that named Mineral Point 'Shake Rag,' from a white cloth that used to be hung out to call the miners to dinner. The colonel reformed at the close of his life, united with the church, and became a sincere and devoted christian."

A. F. Pratt, Esq., of Waukesha, in the first volume of the Collections of the State Historical Society, gives a notice of Judge Frazier, which is re-published in connection with Mr. Catlin's account of the early judiciary:

"The Territory of Wisconsin was organized in July, 1836. It was divided into three Judicial Districts. Judge Dunn was appointed for the Western District, Judge Irwin for the Middle, and Judge Frazier, of Pennsylvania, for the Eastern. Judge Frazier arrived in Milwaukee on a Sunday evening, in June, 1837. He put up at the small hotel which stood where "Dickerman's Block" now stands, which was called the * * * Tavern, kept by Mr. Vail. On his arrival he fell in with some old Kentucky friends, who invited him to a private room, for the purpose of participating in an innocent game of "poker." The party consisted of the Judge, Col. Morton, Register of the Land Office, and two or three others — friends of the Judge. They commenced playing for small sums at first, but increased them as the hours passed, until the dawn of day, the next morning — when small sums seemed beneath their notice. The first approach of day was heralded to them by the ringing of the bell for breakfast. The Judge made a great many apologies, saying, among other things, that as that was his first appearance in the Territory, and as his court opened at
10 o'clock that morning, he must have a little time to prepare a charge to the Grand Jury. He therefore hoped that they would excuse him, which they accordingly did, and he withdrew from the party. The court met at the appointed hour—Owen Aldrich acting as sheriff, and Cyrus Hawley as clerk. The Grand Jury was called and sworn. The Judge with much dignity commenced his charge; and never before did we hear such a charge poured forth from the bench! After charging them upon the laws generally, he alluded to the statute against gambling. The English language is too barren to describe his abhorrence of that crime. Among other extravagancies, he said, that "a gambler was unfit for earth, heaven or hell;" and that "God Almighty would even shudder at the sight of one."

"At that time, we had but one session of the Legislature, which had adopted mostly the statutes of Michigan, which allowed the court to exercise its discretion in granting stays of executions, etc. A suit came up against a man in the Second ward, who had no counsel. The Judge ordered the crier to call the defendant. He did so, and the defendant appeared. The Judge asked him if he had anything to say against judgment being rendered against him. He replied, that he did not know that he had, as it was an honest debt, but that he was unable to pay it. The Judge inquired what his occupation was. He replied that he was a fisherman. Says the Judge, "Can you pay it in fish?" The defendant answered, that "he did not know but he could, if he had time to catch them." The Judge turned to the clerk, and ordered him to "enter up a judgment, payable in fish, and grant a stay of execution for twelve months;" at the same time remarking to the defendant, that he must surely pay it at the time, and in good fish; for he would not be willing to wait so long for "stinking fish." The next suit worthy of note, was against Wm. M. Dennis, our present Bank Comptroller (1854–57.) He, like his predecessor, had no counsel. His name was called, and he soon made his appearance. He entered the court room, wearing his usual smile, whittling, with his knife in the left hand. The court addressed him in a loud voice, "What are you grinning about, Mr. Dennis?" Mr.
D. replied, that he was not aware that he was laughing. The court inquired if he proposed to offer any defense? He replied that he did, but was not ready for trial. "No matter," said the Judge, "there's enough that are ready; the clerk will enter it 'continued.'" The next case, about which we recollect, was the trial of two Indians, who were indicted for murdering a man on Rock River. They were also indicted for an assault with intent to kill, upon another man, at the same time. The trial for murder came off first. They were found guilty, and sentenced to be hanged. On the day following they were tried for the assault, etc., found guilty, and sentenced to five years' imprisonment, and to pay a fine of five hundred dollars each. Governor Dodge, however, deeming it too severe to fine and imprison a man after he was hanged, commuted it to imprisonment for life. The Indians were confined in a jail a year or two, but were finally pardoned by the Governor.

"Judge Frazier soon afterwards went to Green Bay, and held a court, from whence, for want of a jail in which to confine prisoners, he sentenced a man, for some trifling offence, "to be banished to Turkey River." After the court adjourned, he returned to Milwaukee on the steamboat Pennsylvania. She anchored in the bay, and the Judge, who was dead drunk at the time, was lowered by means of a tackle, into a boat, and rowed to the landing, at Walker's Point. From the effect of this bacchanalian revel he never recovered. His friend, Col. Morton, took him to his own house, called to his aid our best physicians, and all was done that human skill could devise, for the restoration of his health; but it was too late; the seeds of death had been sown; he lingered in great distress for four or five days, and breathed his last.* The members of the bar, generally, neglected to attend the funeral; and having no relatives in the state, he hardly received a decent burial. His remains were followed to their last resting place by only two members of the bar, (Messrs. Arnold and Crocker,) besides a few friends.

*Hon. William C. Frazier, Associate Judge for the Territory of Wisconsin, died at Milwaukee, October 18th, 1838, aged sixty-two years.—American Almanac, 1840.
they now remain in the old church yard in the First Ward, without even a slab to mark the spot.

—"The above sketch was written by us from memory, for the Wisconsin, last summer. We now republish it for the purpose of doing simple justice to the living, by adding that we have since learned that a son of Judge Frazier came to Milwaukee some years since, and had the remains of his father removed to the new church yard in the Fifth Ward, and proper tomb-stones erected over them.

"December 6, 1854."