I LIT MY LAMP BESIDE THE GOLDEN DOOR...

Jonathan Carver in 1776 while on a journey through what eventually became Columbia County wrote:

"The country around is very fertile and proper in the highest degree for cultivation...It is no part very woody, and yet can supply sufficient to answer the demands of any number of inhabitants."

And so it remained through its classification as "Indiana", as Illinois Territory and finally as a part of the Michigan Territory in 1818.

During this last categorization, three counties, with their attendant Indian agencies and court systems were carved from this tract of land which was to become the state of Wisconsin in 1848, another thirty years in the future. The three counties were Brown, Crawford and Michilimackinac. In 1833 land districts were created for the surveying and acquisition of the frontier. All people claiming land had to officially register their deeds in Brown County if they were from the area east of the Wisconsin River.

The early settlers of Wisconsin, in general, were of two origins - the restless, westward moving Yankees who came from New York State, Vermont, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts; and the land-seeking Europeans who usually immigrated from Northern Europe.

It was in 1844 that the first of these white families settled along Duck Creek; Langdon's Mill came into existence and the actual history of this village of Cambria began.

Looking south from the saw mill in 1855, one would see the panorama above. The photographer's thumb blotted out what was the saw mill in the lower left hand corner.
This family, the Langdon's came originally from the north of England to Massachusetts in the late 17th century. Over the generations they moved westward to Illinois and finally to this section of Wisconsin.

John Langdon and his grown sons, Samuel, James, Roland and Fred, began construction of a saw mill and also a home along the south side of Duck Creek. An eyewitness account at the time describes how men came from a radius of ten miles to help with the raising of the mill. Wood from the white oak and hackberry trees around the mill site were used for posts and beams in the mill itself. After the first proprietors, Samuel Langdon and Jonas Warncke, got the mill in operation, the lumber was sold for $8.00 a thousand.

During the brief five year interval of the Langdon's prominence, the early settlement was called Florence although generally known in the neighborhood as Langdon's Mill ("Felin Li" if you were Welsh). A store, several more homes and a large Welsh settlement continued the line of civilization begun in 1844.

![Image of saw mill and home]

Ten years later, in 1855, the village of Cambria had expanded north as shown in this picture taken along what is now Madison St.

One of these early Welsh families was the Richard Jones'. They came to Cambria in 1845, settling on land adjoining that of the Langdon's on the east. The high school stands on the land of one son, David R. This David Jones was an architect who designed many buildings in Cambria including several Victorian-style homes, churches, and the Music Hall. Another son, Evan O. was located across the
road just to the east of the mill pond, and he later engaged in many businesses. The third son, John, settled on what is now the Lloyd farm on County Trunk P to Randolph.

In 1846, Columbia County was created and populations in the surrounding countryside began increasing as more farmland was being developed. In 1847-48, the Langdon’s began a new mill - a grist and flour mill. However, they were unable to purchase the necessary machinery to operate it. In the spring of 1849 Mr. James Bell provided the appropriate funds and took a mortgage on the Langdon property. He shortly foreclosed and all the Langdon property belonged to him. The Langdon’s moved to Vernon County, Wisconsin. Mr. Bell proceeded to survey and plat a four block area along the creek and named the new village Belleville.

The time from 1847 to 1851 was busy and progressive. Cambria now had a saw mill, a flour mill, a school, stores, a doctor, a blacksmith, and in 1850 the first white child, Richard Williams, was born in Cambria to Owen Williams (Y Gof). This was at a time when Randolph, to the east was not platted; when Pardeeville to the west was in the process of being surveyed, and Columbus, to the south, had 800 inhabitants.

The years following 1850 found Mr. Bell disposing of his “Belleville” interests to John Ap Jones and Evan Ewards. The village then officially became known as Cambria.

In 1857 Cambria was connected by rail to the outside world. At this point the early history of Cambria ceases, and she becomes a part of the bustling ante-bellum United States of the mid-1850’s.