

## CROSS PLAINS.

BY HENRY WINKLE, Esq.

THE town of Cross Plains, or town No. 7, north of range No. 7 east, is situated just fifteen miles west of Madison. The town was first settled in 1840, by Edward, Hugh and John Campbell. They were soon followed by John W. Thomas, Berry Haney, Francis Wilson, Thomas Arland and Sylvester Bell, who settled in the northern part, and William and Samuel Showers, Ripha Warden, Sidney Morgan, Jno. H. Clark, George P. Thompson, William Howry and David B. Carden, the last gentleman still a resident of the town, in the southern part.

The organization and first town meeting was held on the 6th day of April, 1847, and Ripha Warden, Ira Campbell and Jno. H. Clark were elected *supervisors*; Berry Haney, *clerk*; William Showers, *treasurer*; William Howry, *assessor*. Four school districts were organized. Shortly afterwards schools were opened and teachers supplied.

The town received its name from two military roads—one from Galena to Fort Winnebago, and the other from Prairie du Chien to Green Bay—crossing on a plain or piece of prairie land, about the middle of the town, and hence the name “Cross Plains.”

The town was a favorite hunting ground among the Indians, and was also noted as the residence of Robert Steele, a hunter and trapper, who, as the town became settled, moved away to some other place more suited for his business. In 1845, John Howry came from Virginia and settled on section 19, where he still continues to reside.

A great deal of suffering was endured among the early settlers, especially among those who came late in the season. Some were obliged to hunt for roots and herbs to sustain them until harvest brought them their grain, which they carried to Madison to be sold, or rather exchanged, for what was then called *store goods*. Their grists were taken to Pokerville, in Iowa county, about fifteen or twenty miles distant, and sometimes a great deal farther, if they were unfortunate in finding the mill undergoing repair.

The Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul railroad crosses the town on the north, and the Madison, Mineral Point, or Madison and Dodgeville stage road, crosses on the south. The population of the town is about 1,500.

The northern part of the town is laid out in three villages, of which the first is Cross Plains. It was platted by the Baer Brothers, who kept a general stock of merchandise suitable for a country store. John, one of the brothers, is still doing an excellent business. Adrian Virnig has a grocery and saloon; Engel Uebersetzig, saloon and public hall; Joseph Marx, blacksmith; and Peter Schut, wagon maker. Near-

ly opposite John Baer's there is a neat Catholic Church, built in the Gothic style, and with a parsonage attached for the use of the pastor, Rev. John Friedl, and a large building for the use of the parish and parochial school, which is taught by two of the sisters. Toward the northeast part of the village the Hon. Peter Zander, a wealthy and prosperous farmer, and our ex-assemblyman of 1876, has his farm.

The next village is Christina, platted in 1856, by P. L. Mohr, Esq., then living in Madison, who had selected this spot for a village, on account of the loveliness of scenery it presented, and gave it its present name in honor of his wife. The Indians, in early times, had their wigwams raised there, and visited it often for a number of years after the white faces had taken possession of it. The three story stone grist mill at this village was built in 1858, by Oscar Mohr and Dr. Francis Fisher, who also erected a number of dwelling houses, and carried on a farming and milling business for eight years. A. Dederich and Charles Herman kept hotel in the village in those times. Herman Zinkeisen, who afterwards perished on the ill-fated steamer "Schiller," carried on the first and most extensive general store and produce business in the village, which he afterwards sold out to R. Pickhardt. In 1856 the mill was sold to A. Kimball, who ran it for three years, and then sold it to Gustave Hering, who put in steam power. Besides being in the milling business, he is largely engaged in

the sale of agricultural implements of every description, and adds to his extensive business both energy and thrift. Herman J. Dahmen is located on the opposite side from the mill, and has a general stock of merchandise, with a saloon attached; then there is Cross Plains postoffice and harness shop, kept and owned by F. H. Fredericks, who is doing a lucrative business, and whose handsome princely residence is a short distance from the store. Next comes Michael Stricker, hardware store and lumber yard; Edward Lampman, general merchandise store; and two thrifty blacksmiths, Charles Brendler and Chr. Koch, with Ph. Baerenklau, as wagon maker. There have recently been erected two new district school houses two stories high, where the higher and lower branches of education will be taught.

The next village is Foxville, platted in 1857, by Abijah Fox, one of the oldest settlers of the town, then a farmer, on whose land the depot was located. Mr. Fox bought and shipped the first bushel of wheat from that station, in his block warehouse. Joseph Virnig and Louis Saemann each keep a saloon here, while the Brendler Hotel, owned and kept by Michael Brendler, is widely known among commercial travelers as a first class hotel, and where mine host, Michael, seeks to make his guests comfortable and at home. William Marxs keeps the blacksmith shop; and Carl Jacobi, a first class store of general merchandise.

Looking from the depot toward the northern bor-

der of the town, in the vicinity of Black Earth village, is a large rift of bare rocks, and going south about four miles, you find yourself on a small hill in the center of the town, on the farm of John Laufenberg, an old settler and wealthy farmer; and still farther on you behold the valley of Pine Bluff, one of the richest valleys in the town, about three miles square, and a perfect picture in beauty of landscape. It is called the "Ridge."

Pine Bluff is a solid ledge of high rocks, on the top of which grow quite a number of fine pine trees, a scarcity in this part of the country, which gives the valley quite a romantic aspect, and from which it takes its name.

The Sugar river rises in the southwest corner of the town, on section 32, and passes through sections 33, 34 and 35, in an eastern direction, into the town of Springdale, in the northeast corner. There is a branch or spring that rises on section 27 and unites on section 35. Near where it enters the town of Springdale is the Mormon Baptismal Pond. In the early history of the town several Mormons settled here, and the whole neighborhood for years were kept in a fevered excitement by the Sunday carnivals they often held. George P. Thompson, T. S. Lloyd and George Harlow were some of the leaders among them. George was a son of old Isaiah Harlow, whose grave is in the beautiful burying ground on the hill that is overshadowed with the grove of trees, on Jeremiah Murphy's farm, section 31. There are several

of this family buried here, as seen by the neat gray slabs or headstones that mark their last resting place. These graves are designated by some of the neighbors (but by mistake) as those of the Mormons. The only member of the family who became a Mormon was the son George, but who afterwards renounced and would have nothing to do with them. Near this same spot is the grave of Mrs. Odell, whose sudden and mysterious death filled the neighborhood with amazement.

In approaching the town of Cross Plains from the east, on the Madison and Mineral Point road, we come to the dividing ridge or ancient beach, so well defined and preserved as to be observed by every student of geology. This beach, or ancient sea shore on this road, comes within ten rods of the east line of the town of Cross Plains. On its summit there is yet to be seen an old log, behind which Ebenezer Brigham (the first white settler of Dane county) and Zach. Taylor (ex-President of United States), slept all night.

From the highest part of this ridge, on the Mineral Point road, we have one of the finest landscapes presented to our view that can perhaps be found anywhere in our state, taking in the beautiful valley in which the head waters of Sugar river rise. This valley is surrounded on all sides by the dividing ridge and its spurs, except an opening of about forty rods on the southeast, through which Sugar river flows. There is a painting now in the land office at Wash-

ington, D. C., taken from a point on this ridge near where the Mineral Point road descends into the valley, which is pronounced by good judges as being the finest landscape painting in that department. It was made by a celebrated English artist, and takes in the valley with its undulating prairie, the surrounding hills, and the Blue Mounds in the distance.

Any one approaching this valley from the east during one of our beautiful summer evening sunsets, and who may have paused to view this landscape, presenting miles of the most gorgeous and grand scenery, must have been convinced, as the English artist was, that here was a view worthy to be transferred to canvas by any artist.

Politically the town is democratic. During the late rebellion, on the first call for men, it sent twenty-two, of whom Hubert Kremer died in the hospital, while most of the others served through the war. It furnished its full quota of men, so that no draft ever occurred with us.

St. Mary's Catholic Church is built on a small hill near the bluff, and attached to it, is a parsonage and the sisters' house. There is also a new district school, where John Loehrer keeps store and saloon; William Cullen, of the Pine Bluff tavern and blacksmith shop, and well known as a veterinary surgeon. Henry Winkle is postmaster, and the mail is distributed about four times a week. [Mr. Winkle has filled the office of postmaster very acceptably for over seven years. He keeps store and has a general stock of

merchandise. Besides being engaged in business, he has also a farm.]

Mr. James Bonner lives in the first house built in the town, and known as the old stage house, and which for many years was occupied by Edward Campbell as the relay house for the stages between Madison and Mineral Point.

The Hon. Matt. M. Anderson is one of the leading farmers in our town, owning about 350 acres of the best land in the valley. His farm is known by the name of "Anderson's Willow Grove Stock Farm." He is largely engaged in the raising of stock, and has also a large dairy, from which he manufactures a very choice butter, and ships direct to the Philadelphia market. In 1871 he was member of Assembly for our district. James Farrell, Richard Farrell, M. Casey, Henry J. Bollig, Jacob Kalscheuer, Joseph Wallraff, Jeremiah and Ed. Murphy are some of the leading farmers and stock raisers in the southwestern part of the town.

The present town officers are: Henry J. Bollig, chairman, Jerry Murphy and Joseph Schaefer, as *Supervisors*; Henry Winkle, *Clerk*; Bernard Bollig, *Treasurer*; J. A. Mueller, *Assessor*.

The town has seven substantially built school houses.