The history of the Town of Norway dates back to 1838. The first pioneer settlers in this area were of Norwegian ancestry. They came via sailing ship from Norway, to New York, to Lake Michigan, then to Milwaukee. In Milwaukee, merchants persuaded the Norwegians to settle near Muskego Lake. The first settlers arrived in the Town of Norway and found a large Potawatomi Indian village on the shores of Wind Lake. They came to this area where fertile soil was surrounded by lakes and forest which provided wood to build their log homes. It bore a true resemblance to the area they had left in their homeland. People that immigrated here were John Nelson, Soren Bache, Johannes Johannesen and Even Heg. A few years after the settlement was established, cholera took a great toll of people.

In 1843, the first Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church was organized. In 1845, the first log church was built on Norway Hill. It served the people until 1869, when a brick church was built on the hill.

James Denoon Reyment was editor of the first Norwegian newspapers in American called "Nordlyset" or Northern Lights. He was also instrumental in getting a plank road built from Janesville to Milwaukee. The first copy of Nordlyset was printed in Even Heg's barn on July 29, 1847. The first town meeting was held on April 6, 1947.

The land around the outer rim consists of high land which is clay, sandy soil and black loam. The center was swampy land, marsh or muck soil. This land was not drained and in its virgin state was a haven for prairie chickens and all sorts of wild life. In a 1860 platbook, the swampland consisted of 1,840 acres. In June of 1861, the Town of Norway had the authorization to sell the land at a dollar and a quarter per acres of $50 for forty acres. This swamp land of Wind Lake was at that time from 4 to 6 feet under water.

The first dredging of a canal from Wind Lake to Rochester was in 1877-8, a distance of seven miles with a fall of 1.75 feet. This lowered the lake by 4 feet. In April 1891, the James Reynolds Company received permission from the state legislature to make a second dredging of Big Muskego and Wind Lake. This second dredging started in the Big Muskego Lake area, through the Muskego Canal to Wind Lake and then down the Wind Lake Canal to the Fox River in Rochester. This lowered both lakes another 4 feet. At this point, Wind Lake had lost most of their shoreline and that the beauty of the lakes was gone. On June 19, 1896, the State Supreme Court ruled that the State Legislative body did not have the power to grant title to James Reynolds Co. The former action, therefore, was rescinded. A group of local farmers in 1901 hauled stones to build a stone dam at the outlet of Wind Lake to hold the water back, this proved to be ineffective.

When the T.M.E.R.&L. was constructing the line to St. Martins, they felt it was in their best interest to restore Wind Lake to its first dredging. In 1910, the T.M.E.R.&L. Co. with the local farmers, build a concrete dam a short distance above the stone dam. The dam was 32 feet wide with only a 6 inch cut 16 feet long for flood control. This was done to restore the fertile soil for growing crops and to attract the city people to the many resorts around the lake.

During the construction on the line, many local farmers with their team of horses and wagons were hired on the grading crew. They were paid from $1.75 to $2.00 per day as Edward Johnson did.

The first passenger car service was on June 19, 1909. Two stations were named Wind Lake. Passenger waiting stations were at four sites within 2 miles. These stations were known as
Wind Lake, 23.22 miles from Milwaukee; Edgewater (formerly Wind Lake), 23.62 miles; Waubeesee, 24.30 miles; and Norway Hill at 25.18 miles.

At Norway stop, a milk platform was there so farmers could ship their milk to Gridley's Dairy in Milwaukee. On one occasion, a local farmer was placing milk cans on the platform. His wagon was parked over the tracks and was hit by an interurban car. No one was hurt.

At Wind Lake a 300 foot run around was provided for local freight at Hoganson Lumber Co., where lumber and coal was delivered. At Edgewater there were double tracks because the Edgewater Resort was a popular spot. It was also stated the resort included slot machines. At Waubeesee stop, people could go to Hoganson's, Frank Turna's and Gumpert's resorts along the west shore of Wind Lake.

Resorts along the north shore of Wind Lake included Zenisek's, Frank Bruck's, and the Idle Hour. Resorts along the south shore of Wind Lake included Krause's, Mengert's and Peterson's. Mengert's was largely known for its dance hall while the other two featured picnic and beach areas. On a typical summer weekend, six interurban cars would be at the Edgewater Station to accommodate the people back to Milwaukee on a Sunday night.

A typical resort provided cottages, groceries, drink, ice for the icebox, and other supplies as well as facilities for picnicking, boating and swimming. The resorts, by drawing people to the area for the temporary stays, also created a desire for lakeshore living that quite often culminated in the building or buying of a summer cottage.

Combined summer and year around residents created the need for another set of businesses that supplemented the resort business. General stores like the Bungalow and Irclinks were located in the main business district. Also located there was Goetz's Wayside Tavern, Wayside Garage, Huckstorf's Garage and a barbershop. In the mid 1920's, the main street (Hwy. 36) was concrete paved, which provided a better road to the area.

When the TM was abandoned in 1938, it barely affected the life style of the area since most people traveled by automobile to their cottages and started to remodel the lake cottages to year around residences.
WIND LAKE STATION LOOKING WEST 1913

WIND LAKE STATION SOUTHBOUND CAR 1916
WIND LAKE STATION LOOKING NORTHEAST

WIND LAKE MAIN ST. CIRCA 1940 (WAITING STATION BEHIND 2ND CAR ON RIGHT)
STEAM SHOVEL CUTTING THROUGH NORWAY HILL 1908

On July 2, 1937, the east end of Watertown was nearly wiped out. The disaster, worth $50,000, was the result of an explosion in a gas tank in the center of town.

One by one the buildings caught fire. In the end, the whole town was in flames. One by one the buildings caught fire. In the end, the whole town was in flames.

CAR 1121 AND TRAILER 1139 AT EDG EWATER STATION 1911

The village of Watertown was waiting for the outcome of the trial, and the jury decided to be kept in the dark for some time.