

## FIRST FAMILIES



The following is a roster of the first families who settled in Spencer and remained here to help build a town and whose names appear frequently on the pages of this book.

John K. Hayward, the second white settler to arrive here, was born in St. Lawrence County, N. Y. and came to Waupaca County with his parents when he was 14 years old. There he married Rachel Amanda Blazer.

He arrived in Spencer in 1872, put up a log house and sent for his wife and six daughters. He later built a large frame house, in time for the birth of the second of his five sons.

George Berten Reas and wife, Elizabeth came with their family to Spencer in 1873 from Berlin, Wisconsin, and lived here the remainder of their lives, as did their sons, Bert and Fred.

Mary Catherine Holman, when six years of age, came with her parents from Springfield, New York to Wisconsin. She married Edwin Heath at Almond, Wisconsin in 1872 and in 1875 they came to Spencer. After his death in 1909, Mrs. Heath continued to make her home here until 1920 when she went to Kenmare, South Dakota, to live with her daughter, Irene Heath Gross.

John Gardiner, who was born in Canada in 1837, spent his early years on a farm near Beloit, Wis. When only 14 years old, he worked on the river in Stevens Point. He left for Colorado but soon returned to Stevens Point to work in the woods and later became the freight agent for the Wisconsin Central and was also City Marshall. He married Jennie Swan at Portage, Wisconsin in 1869. They came to Spencer in 1874 and went into store business, his first one being where the Stoltenow saloon was later located. Mr. Gardiner built a store later on the east side of the tracks on Clark and Front Street (now Pacific Street).

Solon Duane (S.D.) Graves, married Louisa Katherine Norton at Iron Ridge, Wisconsin. They came to Loyal, Wisconsin where he operated a store and mill with his father, John Graves. In 1876 S. D. and family came to Spencer to enter the merchandising business.

After living here 26 years, he and his family, with the exception of John, Mert, and Spencer, moved to Long Beach, California. S. D. purchased a small ranch and later subdivided the land into home site lots, which later proved to be within several blocks of a fast growing business district. John, Mert, and Spencer remained in business here. Within two years Mert heeded the advice of Horace Greely who advised "Go West young man," to join his family. However, S. D. paid frequent visits to the old home town and attended the G. A. R. Encampments (conventions) whenever they were held in the east.

Melvin C. Blake and Elizabeth Wood were married at Nasonville, Wisconsin in April 1876, where she had come when just a small girl. That same spring they moved to Spencer where he engaged in the sawmill business with his father-in-law, Mr. Wood.

Adolph Wendell, of Washington County, Wisconsin, and Louisa Straub, of Germantown, were married in 1882 and came directly to Spencer, where he had already established a home in what was then a deep forest. He invented the divided hay rack used by many farmers in this area.

Hoel (called "Dad") Crowell was attracted, as most pioneers were, by the prospect of work in a new town and came to Spencer from Calumet County in 1875, a month or two ahead of his family, to provide a home for them. He built the original part of the Len Hardy residence and his wife, Frances (Wauby), and two daughters arrived in November of that year. The Charley Plomer, James Voight, George Ress and Pulcifer families were their neighbors on the east side of the railroad track.

In 1898 they left to care for Mr. Crowell's sister at Brothertown. Then, in 1900, they returned to Spencer and built another home on the corner of Wisconsin and East Mill, which is now the remodeled home of Mr. and Mrs. Warren Jacobitz.

"Dad" Crowell was an intensely patriotic man, of Dutch and American Indian extraction and his wife was of full Indian heritage. He was a Civil War Veteran and a Charter member of the local G.A.R. Post. In 1902 he was granted a veteran's pension of \$6.00 per month.

In later years he sold his home and he and his daughter, Rizpah, bought a small home adjoining the Veterans Home at King, Wisconsin. He became a member of the Home though not residing on the grounds and Rizpah continued her trade of dressmaking. She had formerly been a school teacher and became a teacher of the Bible Class at the Home.

"Dad" Crowell returned to Spencer each year, without fail, for the Memorial Day observances and was always a guest at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Bert Andrews. On his last trip, he died suddenly on the



morning of May 31, 1921 while sitting in a rocker on their porch.

The Crowells were a prominent pioneer family and were very active in Civic and Church affairs. Both Mrs. Crowell and Rizpah had beautiful alto voices and were members of the Methodist Church Choir.

D. M. Hanson came to Spencer about 1875 from Spokeville, where he had located on a farm in the woods. For several winters he taught public school in Clark County. He went into business, first with his brother-in-law, George Farrington, and later established his own Hardware Store on Clark Street.

Mary Durand, born in Quebec, Canada in 1855, married Septimus (Charley) Plomer in 1871 at Big Suamico. They came to Spencer in 1875 where Charley worked as an engineer in the mills. They built and resided in the house on Pacific Street where Mrs. Clarence Hendrickson now resides. They left Spencer and lived in Nebraska for a few years, but in 1907, after her husband's death, Mrs. Plomer returned to make her home with her son-in-law and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Bert Andrews.

Mr. and Mrs. Chauncey Richardson of New Port, Columbia County, moved to Strong's Prairie, Adams County, and from there to Spencer in 1875. Upon learning that James L. Robinson was putting up a mill and helping to start a new town, he wanted to be a part of it and became Spencer's first school teacher. They had three children, Verna, Victor, and Vinton. Verna remained here in the house her father built on West Main Street until 1913.

Anna M. Groff, who came to Wisconsin with her parents from Cranny Hill, Canada, married David W. Bodle in Hartford, Wisconsin. They came to Spencer in 1875 but left a few years later to manage hotels in Rib Lake and Medford. After his death, she returned to Spencer in 1904 and purchased the Thayer farm, where once stood the Thayer sawmill. She and her son, Harry, who operated the farm, and her daughter resided in the spacious Thayer homestead for many years.

Wilbur F. Blaisdell and Mary E. Duffy were married at Colton, New York in 1872. They moved to Dorchester, Wisconsin and from there to Spencer in 1873.

Herman and Hannah Anna Ehnert, who were married at Milwaukee in 1866, came to Spencer in 1875. Their home was the site of the present Jim LaSage residence.

Joseph S. and Susan Clark Damon migrated from Lubec, Maine, to Strongs Prairie, Adams County, in 1869. When James Robinson was back in Lubec on a

visit, he told Mr. Damon and other men that there was plenty of work in Wisconsin. A party of them returned with the Robinsons, including Mr. Damon, who bought 80 acres of land and built a house for his family. The family arrived at Strongs Prairie on Thanksgiving Day after having traveled one week on crowded trains. In 1874 Mr. Damon came to Spencer to work for James Robinson, who had erected a mill here. His family joined him here in 1875 and they continued to spend the rest of their lives here. Mr. Damon and his sons later operated logging camps and a mill of their own.

Benjamin Griffin, born in Strousbridge, Worchestershire, England, married Kate Bradley on Christmas Day, 1872, at Birmingham, England. On October 8, 1879, Mr. and Mrs. Griffin, with two small daughters, Selena and Edith, landed in America and came directly to Marathon County, locating in Spencer. Their home on West Mill Street is now owned by Mr. and Mrs. McGowan.

Herman Prehn and Louise Schleunz (who was born in Manitowoc County) were married at Wausau, May 15, 1886, and came to Spencer, where Mr. Prehn was engaged in contracting business.

Jefferson Genett and Eliza Phelps, of Pillar Point, New York (who had come with her parents to Janesville as a child) were married at DePere, Wisconsin in 1875, and came to Spencer where he was engaged in milling. In 1892 they moved to a farm south of Spencer on V.

Albert Gatchell, a native of Litchfield, Maine, married Lydia Staples at Lee, Maine, and in 1871 moved his family to Black River Falls, where he and another native of Maine manufactured boots under the name Gatchell & Clapp. In 1874 he became interested in a new town springing up in Central Wisconsin where there were said to be miles of virgin timber. He came to Spencer and purchased a lot in a section on the west side of the Wisconsin Central tracks, then called Irene. In later years he lived with his daughter, Mrs. Messer, and had a shoe shop on Clark Street.

Mrs. Livonia Gatchell Messer, familiarly called Aunty Messer or Grandma Messer, was born in Lee, Maine, married Cyrus E. Messer and lived in Enfield, Springfield and Lincoln, Maine. Mr. Messer, who was a school teacher, also taught music and preached for the Baptist denomination. Mrs. Messer, then a widow, came with her father's family to Black River Falls with her three children, Flora, Ernest and Ansel. Mrs. Messer had a tailor shop there and sewed pants for lumbermen. In 1875, having been persuaded by her brother, Jeremiah, to go with him to Spencer, loaded her household goods into two wagons and started on a journey which was to take her over hazardous trails or "tote roads" winding through dense woods. Their last



night on the trail was spent with a homesteader (named Clark) at Cole Corners, the only cabin they had seen since leaving Loyal. With an early start the next morning, they arrived in Spencer at 2:00 P.M. She moved into the back of her father's store.

Calvin Loveland and Elizabeth Jones, who was born at Baldwinsville, New York, and had moved to Lawton, Michigan in 1855, were married at Paupau, Michigan. In 1875 they moved to Spencer and built a home on the corner of East Main and Pacific, which has since been remodeled and is owned by Mrs. Verna Dering.

William and Mary Jane Andrews came from the town of Mitchel, Sheboygan County, to Spencer in 1891, and located on land south of Spencer later known as the Hoftiezer farm. They owned and operated Hotel Andrews on Pacific Street, now the property of Charles Vanderhoof. Mrs. Andrews was also co-owner of the Driscoll, Colby, Andrews Mill, the last large sawmill erected in Spencer. Their son, Bert Andrews, and daughter, Mae, who married Lawrence Driscoll, remained in Spencer throughout their lives.

Charles Stoltenow, of Berlin, Germany, married Augusta Berndt at Berlin, Germany. They came to American in 1873 and settled in Iron Ridge, Wisconsin, Dodge County. In 1876 they moved to Spencer, where Mr. Stoltenow became engaged in various business activities which are recorded in this review.

Collin Williams and Julia Holmes were married December 25, 1870. Mrs. Williams, who was born at Antioch, Illinois, came at the age of 15 with her parents to Clark County to live on their homestead. After their marriage, Mr. and Mrs. Williams lived on a farm southwest of Loyal, two years later moving into Loyal, and from there to Spencer in 1875.

John Neidlein, born in North Milwaukee in 1861, left home at the age of 14 years and worked at wagon making in the Milwaukee area. In 1882 he came to Marshfield but soon after came to Spencer to work for Ed. Wendell, who had heard of him and was anxious to procure competent help, which was scarce at that time. John had charge of the wagon shop while Wendell ran the blacksmith shop. Two or three years later he started his own woodworking shop, building wagons and sleighs and later selling farm machinery and supplies.

Here, on December 7, 1890, John Neidlein married Henrietta Schluenz, who, when 12 years old, had moved here with her parents in 1882. They lived in a new house, now known as the old Neidlein house, across from the bank.

After their marriage, James and Henrietta (Hayward) Driscoll settled on a farm a mile south of

town on Highway 13, later known as the Hoftiezer farm. They later moved to town, living in a house located on Pacific Street in the area of the A. Boock residence. Here, on September 27, 1876, their son, Lawrence, was born. Lawrence lived here all of his life with the exception of four years when, as a teenager, he resided at Rib Lake. He married Mae Andrews and later became a co-owner of the Driscoll, Colby, Andrews mill with his brothers-in-law, Bert Andrews and Charles Colby. He was our first rural mail carrier on Route 1.

The family of George Farrington, his parents, his sisters, Mary Ann and Sophia, his brother, Joe, and himself, came from Manchester, England to Clarkson, New York and later to Dodge County, Wisconsin. There another son, William, was born, and there Mary Ann married Charles Cole, who later published a newspaper in Loyal.

George Farrington was one of our early merchants and had a store on Clark Street for years. He also owned the "Farrington farm on the hill" across from the cemetery west of town on Highway 98. His brother, Joe, who had been gone for some time, came back to operate the farm for him. Sophia Farrington had married D. M. Hanson, the hardware merchant, and their daughter, Mary Hanson, kept house for her Uncle Joe, who was a widower. In later years she lived in the Hanson home on Clark Street, where she took care of her parents and her Uncle George in their declining years. She spent her entire life in the town of her birth.

Other first families whose records we were unable to obtain are the G. I. Follettes, the Halls, and Otto Plathner.

---

The Spencer W.C.T.U. while not in its heyday in 1909, was still to be heard from. A few years previous they had placed in the Upper Grade Room of the school a large framed picture of Francis D. Willard, noted educator and champion of Woman's Rights and President of the National W.C.T.U. The new school principal, being a lover of the great outdoors, placed a picture of a beautiful country scene within the frame and over the likeness of Mrs. Willard. Thereupon Mrs. Follette, President of the local W.C.T.U., went to the school board to protest and her dialogue was so lengthy and emphatic that they were glad to tell Prin. H. Fromm to remove his picture.

---