

I watched with Grandma Milligan the last night of her life. Helen, her unmarried daughter had been an invalid for years when young, but had then been well for fifteen years, and at this time had a millinery store, but to her mother she was ever young and needing care. On this her last evening on earth—our good pastor called and I heard him ask, "Shall I pray with you dear friend?" Her answer told better than any words of mind can tell, the unselfishness that had characterized her whole life—"If you will", she said faintly—"but don't mind about me—pray for poor little Helen, for I don't know who will care for her when I am gone." Helen was fifty-six.

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CORDELIA AVERY TRUAX

Author—Emily S. Prechtel

Eau Claire

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Cordelia Avery was born in Allegheny County, New York, March 22, 1830. She married Peter Truax September 23, 1852 and lived on a farm near her home for two years. Having a relative in Southern Wisconsin they decided to come out here.

They sold the farm, packed what they needed and could be taken with them and started in what she called a "breaking team." Oxen were used with it.

They drove to Buffalo where they took a boat which brought them to Sheboygan.

They rented a wheat farm of one hundred acres in Big Foot Prairie. Having a good crop the first year they sold it at the market in Kenosha. That fall they decided to come north. In the spring of 1855 they loaded their household goods in a wagon, also a crate of chickens, and tied a three year old colt to the back, and with a fine horse team were ready to start. Mrs. Truax's brother was with them so he drove the two ox-team hitched to another wagon containing chains, ox plows, and other equipment for breaking land. He also had a

cow tied behind his wagon. They liked the appearance of this country so selected the land now called Truax Prairie which consisted of eighty acres.

In these early days Eau Claire was called Clear Water. There was one family here, people by the name of Reed. Mrs. Truax stayed two weeks with these people until the men were able to build a shack on their land. She did not see another woman for three months. It was some time before other settlers came and her nearest neighbor was two miles away.

She tells a story of how frightened she was one day when she saw a man coming through the woods. When he was near enough he called to her and told her not to be afraid as he was her nearest neighbor.

They had a number of Indian scares, but nothing serious near them. There were many wolves which would howl near the cabin at night, also an occasional visit from a bear. Those early days were days of hard work for both of them.

Mrs. Truax has many interesting things to tell of pioneer days. Their first winter was very severe, with heavy snows. The second season they added a granary to store the grain and built a house and later added eight acres more to the land.

Then other settlers began coming and they held the first school in the granary of a neighbor. With the arrival of a Mr. Kidder they had church services and Mr. Kidder did the preaching.

During the Civil War the women organized to roll bandages and made lint, also knit socks for the soldiers and cared for the soldiers' families in their midst.

Later Mr. Truax began buying timber which eventually became an extensive lumbering business.

Much more could be written of the pioneer days but I must tell something of the Mrs. Truax of today. She is a dainty, bright and happy old lady with eyes that twinkle and a laugh as spontaneous as a young girl. I had the pleasure of spending the most delightful hour

with her this past week, and the only request she made was not to flatter her when I wrote this little sketch, so I can't say half what I think about her.

During these years a fortune was accumulated by these pioneers. Mr. Truax died March 18, 1909. The past fifteen years Mrs. Truax has given thousands of dollars to various organizations, and has the great privilege of knowing the joy and pleasure it is giving to others. She is a member of the First Congregational Church where her greatest interest lies and which has received large gifts from her, also the Endeavor Academy near Portage, Northfield Academy and College at Ashland. Every Protestant church in this community has received a substantial gift as well as the Luther Hospital and Young Men's Christian Association. Her gifts range from one thousand to twenty-five thousand dollars at one time. Mrs. Truax will be ninety-four years old March, 1924.

Mrs. Truax died ten days after she gave the interview for this paper.

MRS. JOHN F. JOHNSTON  
Author—Her son, W. H. Johnston  
Appleton

Mrs. John F. Johnston, pioneer, and first white woman to arrive and settle in Appleton, Wisconsin, was born June 7, 1826, at Jay, Essex County, New York; daughter of Isaac and Martha Finch.

Her father was one of the prominent men of that section, a state senator and member of congress. She came west to visit her sister, Mrs. O. P. Clinton, at Menasha, Wisconsin, where she met and married John F. Johnston, March 26, 1846, at Neenah, Wisconsin, in the old council chamber, by the Rev. O. P. Clinton. It