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THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WISCONSIN

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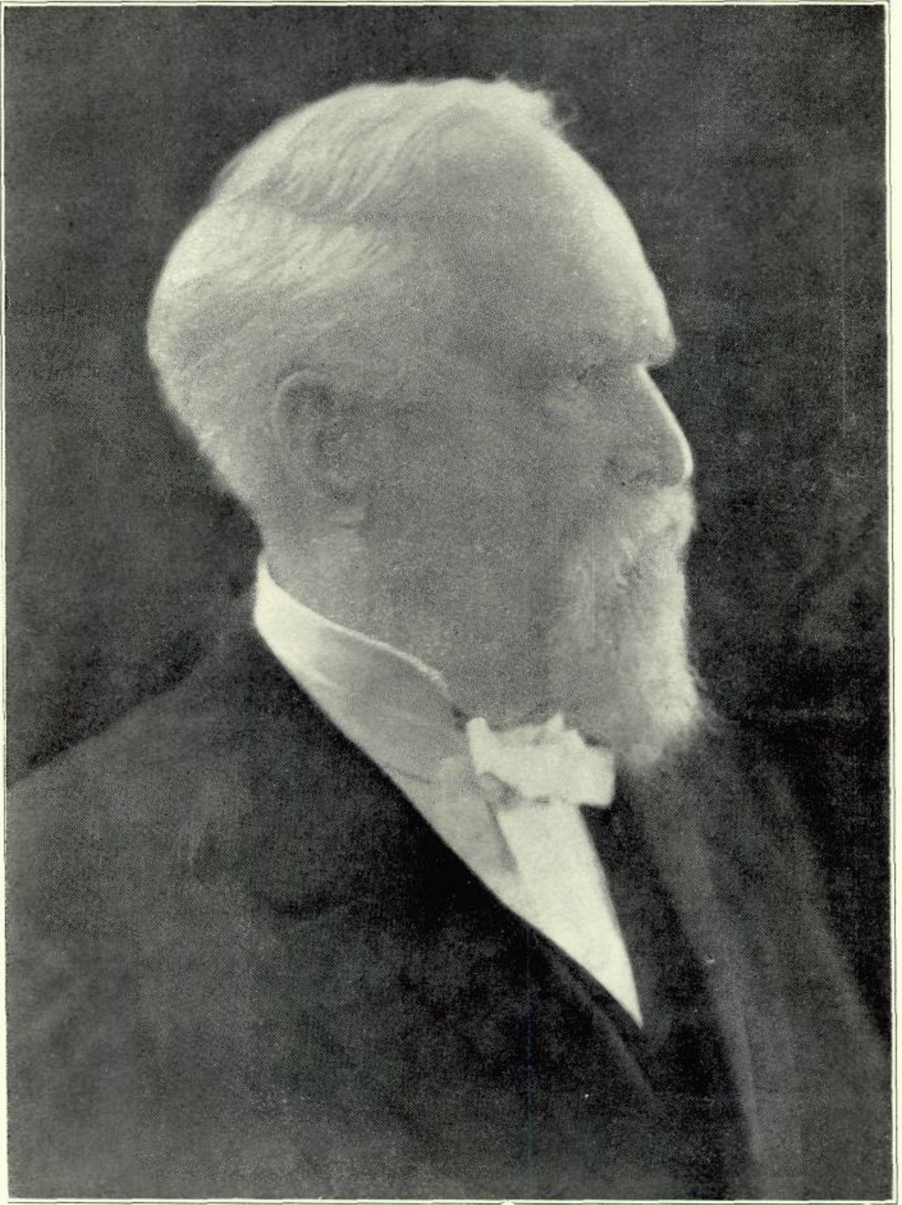

JOHN BARBER PARKINSON

VOL. V 1921-1922

THE WISCONSIN MAGAZINE OF HISTORY

PUBLICATIONS OF THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WISCONSIN. JOSEPH SCHAFER, Superintendent, MILO M. QUAIFE, Editor

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MEMORIES OF EARLY WISCONSIN AND THE GOLD MINES

JOHN B. PARKINSON

The Parkinson family is of English origin. My Father's grandfather, who was a Virginian, served as a captain in the Revolutionary War. The family afterward removed to eastern Tennessee, where my Father was born in 1805. My Mother's maiden name was Valinda Barber. Her family was of Scotch-Irish origin, coming to America from the north of Ireland. Her father, James Barber, was a Cumberland Presbyterian minister. She was born in North Carolina, but removed with her parents at an early age to southern Illinois. My Father's parents removed from Tennessee to Illinois while he was still a boy, and there Mother and Father became acquainted about the year 1817.

My Father was a farmer by occupation. A relative, Colonel D. M. Parkinson, had settled in southern Wisconsin in 1827, and he induced my Father to move there in 1836. Although I was but two years old I can still remember some things about the journey. We came in a covered wagon drawn by a span of horses. At night we camped out unless, as sometimes happened, we were fortunate enough to find a place to lodge. I do not recall these incidents, but I remember our arrival at the cabin Colonel Parkinson had in readiness for us. Father tried to strike a fire with a flint and his powderhorn, but through some mischance the powder exploded, burst the horn, and cut Father's forehead. Not until many years later were friction matches used. Fires were struck with flint and a little powder, and once started, people took great pains to keep them going. Sometimes, when the fire had gone out, coals were borrowed from the nearest neighbor. I can recall, when a boy, going on such errands.

The farm on which my Father settled was near Fayette, in Lafayette County. He lived there until his death, in 1887. My Mother died in 1845, at the early age of thirty-eight. Several years later Father married Margaret McKee. Her sister was the mother of the late Bishop Bashford of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and of Judge Bashford of the Wisconsin Supreme Court. Besides myself my parents had one child who died in infancy, and my sister Margaret, two years my elder, with whom I grew up.

Colonel D. M. Parkinson came to Wisconsin in 1827, and was here during the Black Hawk War. He had three sons, Peter, Nathaniel, and William; Peter was located about two miles above the place where Father[1] settled. The log house into which we moved on coming to Wisconsin had a single room, perhaps sixteen by twenty-four feet, which served as parlor, kitchen, dining-room, bedroom, and in fact for all the needs of the family. Over it was a loft which was reached by climbing a ladder. The floor was made of puncheons—half-logs laid with the split surface up—and there was a huge fireplace. There was but one door, on the side of the cabin, and, I think, two windows. Through the door Father would roll in backlogs for the fireplace, so large that one of them would be two or three days in burning. Aside from keeping the house warm, all the family cooking was done over the fireplace by my Mother.

I attended the first school ever taught in the town, which was held in this house. Before long Father built a new house, and our removal from the old one made it possible to equip it with benches for the pupils. My first teacher was a man by the name of Trevoy, who later lived in Madison. The teachers were usually young men, generally from the East, who boarded around in the district, and whose pay was subscribed by the parents who sent children

[1]Professor Parkinson's father was called "Sucker Pete" to distinguish him from his kinsman, "Badger Pete."

to the school. The pupils in this first school were not numerous, but they ranged in size from small children to grown men. One of those who went there with me, Mrs. Horace J. Woodworth of Minneapolis, recently died at an advanced age. When I was seven years old I went with my sister Margaret across the prairie about two and one-half miles to school in another log cabin. We went there the following summer and winter, also, and had the same teacher to whom we had first gone in Father's cabin. My third school was in the Bashford home, about a mile from our house. My next, which was my last before going to Beloit, was in a stone schoolhouse which had now been built in the village near our home.

I worked pretty faithfully on the farm, for a boy. It cost less to keep oxen than horses, and Father always kept them, as well as cows and horses. Some of his horses were rather fast and he was fond of a horse race. I followed the plow with a yoke of oxen from the time I was able to hold a plow. We had a large pasture, and Father used to turn the oxen out to graze with their yokes on. We had a root house in the pasture, an excavation in the hillside, which was covered with timber and sodded over. One day a yoke of oxen which had been turned out to graze disappeared. We hunted the surrounding country for ten days, and at last, quite by chance, found them in the root house. They had stepped up on it to eat the grass growing there, and the boards being too weak to support such a weight had broken through. There was a pile of old potatoes in the house, which had supplied food and moisture enough to keep them alive during the ten days they were trapped there. It used to cost nothing to keep oxen in the summertime, and they lived on straw in the winter.

Threshing at that early day was an interesting process. We had a great structure, with a center pole, and around that, making a good, big circuit, we had posts and timbers run-

ning up to the pole, and all covered with straw. Around this structure the grain was stacked. At threshing time it was thrown into the ring with the heads of the sheaves of one row laid against the butt ends of the next row. Then a good many young horses were let into the enclosure, and a young Indian boy whom Father used to hire for this work drove them around the ring. After a little time the horses would be turned out and the straw shaken up so as to let the grain already threshed fall to the bottom. Then the horses would be turned in again and the process repeated until the grain was thoroughly threshed out. The grain when threshed was raked to the center pole and a new supply was brought into the ring for threshing. The final process was to fan the grain, thus separating the clean grain from the chaff. It took a week or more to thresh in this way, and this process was followed for years. I never remember threshing grain with flails. One curious fact I recall is the natural fear the horses seemed to have for an Indian. We never could get them into the ring until the Indian boy went out.

Small grain was cut in those days with the cradle. This was skilled work, and an awkward boy could not do it well. When I went home from school for summer vacation, the next day would find me binding in the harvest field. Most of the harvesting was done by men from Illinois who would come up into Wisconsin for the harvest season, a period of several weeks. Sometimes we had half a dozen men cradling, each cradler being followed by a man binding. My Mother boarded the men, but they would sleep in the barn. My Mother never worked in the field, and I do not think women commonly did in those days. They had enough to do attending to the housework and cooking for the hired help.

You ask how farmers could make a living with the low prices of those days. The answer is that they bought little,

and the things they produced cost little aside from labor. Hogs could be raised very cheaply; they could live on acorns in summer, without any feeding. They were sold at two or three dollars a hundredweight, but corn was raised easily and it did not cost much to fatten them. My father used to send potatoes to Mineral Point by ox team—twelve miles—and sell them for twelve and a half cents a bushel. But we could then raise four hundred bushels of potatoes to the acre. Wheat usually sold for about fifty cents a bushel. My Father would haul wheat to Milwaukee, one hundred miles, with four-yoke ox teams, and bring back a load of lumber or other goods. It was fully a week's trip with one load of wheat at fifty cents a bushel—perhaps a little more at times. I think farmers were just about as happy under those conditions as they are now. It is true, they worked harder. Now men ride, instead of walking, when they plow, and machines now do many things then done by hand.

Our nearest town of any size was Mineral Point. Wiota was then a little village in the heart of the mining section. It was called Hamilton's Diggings down there. I knew William S. Hamilton, the son of Alexander Hamilton, who gave the name "Wiota" to it. I think this is an Indian name, but I do not know its meaning. Mineral Point used to be called Shake Rag. It was a mining center in those days, and it got this name from the practice at noontime of shaking a sheet or other cloth as a signal to the miners to come home to dinner.

The Black Hawk War took place but four years before we came to Wisconsin, and there were still many Indians in the southern part of the state. Our nearest neighbors when we moved into the log cabin were some Winnebago who had their wigwam in a grove belonging to us, about half a mile from the house. They had a tent of skins, with a small opening at the top and a fire built on the ground in the center. They stayed through the winter in this tent, living

chiefly by hunting. The Indian vanished from this section with the wild game. The boy whom my Father employed to drive the horses in threshing belonged to this group, and sometimes Father would get the men to work for him also. They could talk English only imperfectly, but we soon learned some of their words and we managed to understand each other pretty well. They dressed in skins mostly, but sometimes in woolen cloth. We always got along well with them, but some of the neighbors did not treat them well, and after a few years they moved on. They used to visit us often, coming frequently to sharpen their knives and hatchets on a grindstone Father had brought with him to Wisconsin. We children used to be frightened when they came on these visits and Father and the hired men were out in the field. I think Mother was frightened, too, but if so she did not show it.

The Indians were great beggars. Mother was always ready to give them something to eat, and they never stole from us. One time Mother had made a nice lot of biscuits and had put them in a cupboard, when two Indians came along and wanted something to eat. They would always take all they could get, so she handed out to them what she thought they ought to have. After they were through eating, one of them pretended he wanted a drink of water, and while at the water-pail he stole the biscuits, hiding them in his blanket. Another time a girl about the size of my sister came to the house. My sister had on some shoes which were worn out at the toes. The next day the Indian girl came back and presented her with a pair of beautiful moccasins. Mother then made a cake, and we took it over to the girl. They made much of our visit to the tent, and spread some skins on the ground for us to sit on.

When I returned home from Beloit for the spring vacation in 1852, I found Father outfitting a party to go to California. Excitement over the gold mines was running

high; in every neighborhood men were preparing to cross the plains. The party Father was outfitting was to number four men; three of these were already chosen, while the fourth remained to be found. I was urged to take the place, and after some hesitation on my part and more on my Father's, I consented, and our party was made up. It consisted of an Irishman, an Alabamian, a Buckeye, and a Badger—a curious combination, although it was but tamely illustrative of the motley hordes that were gathering across the mountains.

Father's share in the venture was to supply the outfit, for which he was to receive six hundred dollars. Two of the party had been employed by Father, and the third was a neighbor. The Irishman, Duffy, had a wife and three or four children, whom he left in Father's care during his absence. The other men were young bachelors. The Alabamian proved unfaithful to his agreement, for my father never received the one hundred and fifty dollars due from him.

Our equipment consisted of two light covered wagons and eight yoke of oxen, or, to be more exact, two yoke of oxen and two yoke of cows to each wagon. These animals ranged in age from three to six years; most of them had just been "sent under the yoke." Thus the very teams we drove afforded another illustration of the leveling tendencies of these expeditions—no distinction as to age, sex, or "previous condition of servitude."

This yoking of cows into the service was something of an experiment at that time. Besides being in greater demand at the mines, the theory was that cows, being lighter, would stand the trip better than oxen.[2] Our own experience tended to bear out this theory. The alkali dust, gravelly mountain roads, and desert sand were very trying on the feet. Our heavier oxen had all to be shod. The cows went through

[2]Cows were used by Oregon immigrants as early as 1843.—J. S.

in good condition without shoeing; the youngest, too, seemed to stand the hardships of the journey best.

The theory that prevailed in 1848-49 in regard to the weight and strength of wagons and teams that would enable them to stand the journey had been completely reversed before we went out. At first the heaviest wagons and log-chains, with provisions for a twelvemonth, were thought necessary. The result was the teams were worn out by the excessive weight they had to drag. A year or two later the needed supplies were definitely known; and everything in the outfit was made as light as possible consistent with the strength necessary to stand the wear and tear of the journey.[3]

We set out from home May 3, 1852, and crossing the Mississippi at Dubuque proceeded across Iowa by way of Cedar Rapids and Des Moines. The main part of our supplies—our flour, bacon, etc.—was taken from home; the remainder we laid in at Dubuque. We had expected to cross the Missouri where the Mormons had crossed on their way to Utah. But there were so many people ahead of us waiting to be ferried over the river, that we drove about fifteen miles north to another ferry, where we were able to get across the river promptly. The Missouri at this latitude was then the extreme border of civilization and settlement. There were some buildings at Council Bluffs, but not one on the present site of Omaha. Nor did we see a single permanent habitation from the time we crossed the Missouri until we reached the Sacramento, a distance of two thousand miles.

We entered Nebraska June 1, and camped for the night on the Elkhorn River, a small tributary of the Platte. Here we found a large camp of Pawnee Indians, as if to introduce us at the very start to the denizens of the wild expanse upon which we were about to enter, and to warn us to be hence-

[3]Cf. Burnett "Letters," Ore. Hist. Soc. *Quarterly,* III, 418.

forth literally on our guard. The warning was heeded, for not a night passed, from that time on, that a guard was not detailed to keep ward and watch over the faithful animals that were to carry us through the mountains.

Our route was along the north side of the main Platte, and continued on the same side of the North Fork of the river to its great bend near the South Pass—thus following the Platte for a distance of seven hundred and fifty miles.

Owing to the great overland rush in 1852, there was much difficulty in securing feed for the teams. Over a great part of the route there were well-marked camping places. Even at these places, however, it was often necessary to drive the stock back from camp one, two, and even three or four miles, to find suitable grazing. Advance, under such circumstances, was necessarily slow, from ten to fifteen miles a day being a good average. The chief inconvenience up the Platte, however, was a scarcity of fuel. Green willows and an occasional piece of driftwood were luxuries; for a good part of the way the sole reliance was buffalo chips. Here was a scene for an artist.—Camping ground reached—teams unyoked—and a delegation, self-appointed—five, ten, sometimes twenty men, each with a bag, hurrying out over the little low sand knobs that fringe the Upper Platte Valley, picking his way among the bristling cacti and gathering buffalo chips for the evening camp fires.

The region of the Upper Platte was the pasture ground and paradise of the buffalo at the time of which I am speaking; and yet in the brief space of forty years—thanks to the criminal recklessness of sportsmen and the negligence of the government—scarcely one was left upon our territory to tell the story of the treatment of his race.

It was only an occasional straggler from the ranks that we chanced to see along the road up the Platte—and these at a distance. The main herds kept well back from the river. But a rare treat awaited us at the great bend in the Platte

River, where, indeed, we parted company with that stream. The mountains here hug close to the river, but within the bend or angle is a rich little meadow where the herds came down at intervals to feed. We had halted here for nooning, and were in the midst of lunch when the shout of "Buffaloes!" was raised. As we looked across the river, a herd of more than a hundred full-grown fellows was seen coming slowly down the mountain toward the meadow. The Platte at this point has a swift current. But no matter; it must be crossed. A dozen men plunged into it, wading and swimming, as necessity demanded, with gun held overhead. Several shots were fired, but no game bagged. The herd when fired into made for the river, or rather for the mountain beyond. The very earth seemed to tremble beneath its feet. Not the slightest halt was made at the steep river bank, but plunging down and crossing the stream, the buffaloes made their way up the mountain and were soon out of sight.

We encamped that night a few miles out from the Platte on a sort of prairie-like undulating plateau. About daybreak next morning one of the night-guard came running into camp with the shout that buffaloes were coming right up among our cattle and that there was danger of a stampede. This at such a time and such a place was a very serious matter. A reinforcement was soon on the ground, but the buffaloes in the meantime had retired in good order.

I had a little experience of my own that morning, which I will venture to relate. I had wandered off about a mile from camp and was taking a little survey of the country and wondering whether civilization would ever reach out as far as this, when turning I saw coming around a knoll about thirty rods away, and making directly toward me, five full-grown mammoth-looking buffalo bulls. My first impulse was to make for camp. But second thought was wiser. This was a golden opportunity and must not be lost.

Turning a little to the right and filing along one after another, these great bulls came up to within seventy-five paces, when they halted, giving me a broadside exposure, but at the same time turning full upon me their long-whiskered, shaggy-browed, sand-matted faces. They were magnificent looking creatures, in comparison with which, as they stood there defiant, upon their native pastures, the wretched specimens exhibited in menageries and zoological gardens look puny enough. Drawing a bead upon the leader, fortunately for me and unfortunately for the buffalo, my rifle "missed fire." That is, it didn't "go off," and neither did the buffalo. Picking the flint, or rather, putting on another percussion cap, the buffalo ague was given time to subside, and the next time I was more successful and brought down my game. He was a monster, estimated by good judges to weigh two thousand pounds. Another was killed the same morning and, selecting the choicest parts, we feasted upon "jerked" buffalo meat from that time on. Just as we were breaking camp that morning, there came in sight about a mile away a herd of at least five hundred buffaloes—little, big, old, and young, and their bleating and bellowing could be distinctly heard at that distance. What an opportunity would this have afforded sportsmen, a few years later! The temptation to tarry even at that time was very great, but as the summer was creeping by and the trying part of our journey was still before us, we were admonished to move on if we hoped to clear the Sierras before snowfall.

Following up the valley of the Sweetwater, a small tributary of the Platte, we passed over the backbone of the continent at the South Pass in the Rocky Mountains. This is one of the easiest passes in the whole chain of these mountains. The ascent at the pass is so gradual that one hardly realizes that he is scaling a mountain at all. We had been climbing and climbing for weeks, and for no little

part of that time had been scaling smaller chains and spurs until, even at this low divide, we were nearly eight thousand feet above sea level. Here one is literally at the "parting of the waters" and through the clear atmosphere, for a distance of a hundred miles east or west, one can trace the outlines of the streams as they make their way on the one side toward the valley of the Mississippi, and on the other to the Columbia and the Colorado. The journey to the South Pass was not difficult, but from that on, it was very trying to man and beast. There for three or four hundred miles the emigrant roads, instead of following the streams as heretofore, lay across them. This meant the climbing of one mountain after another, with water scarce and feed scarcer.

Crossing Green River—the chief tributary of the Colorado—then bending around Bear River and leaving Great Salt Lake and Mormon City to the south, then passing through Thousand Spring Valley, we finally reached the headwaters of the Humboldt.

The Indians thus far had given us a wide berth. In fact we had seen very few since we left the Pawnee camp at the Missouri. Occasionally one, more curious than his fellows, would come dashing from the hills on his pony, decked out in feathers and war paint (that is, the Indian, not the pony), as if curious to know when that long procession was going to end. The Indians along the Humboldt were known to be very treacherous. Accounts of their attacks upon emigrants in other years were fresh in our minds. Hence it was customary for trains to double-up a little here in self-defense. The Humboldt is a small stream in midsummer, but is bordered along most of its course with a thick growth of willows which afforded excellent hiding places for the Indians.

About twelve o'clock one day, as our train of a dozen teams was making its way slowly down this stream, two or

three gunshots were heard in quick succession just around a bend in the road. Suspecting trouble ahead and hurrying on as rapidly as possible, we soon came in sight of two teams that had halted for their nooning, and a little way from them and making off with a wounded companion were eight or ten Indians. There were but four persons with these two teams —two men and their wives—but they were genuine backwoodsmen, women and all, and were armed with trusty rifles which they all knew how to use. It was this that made them a little reckless in their way of traveling. The Indians had crept up close to them as they sat at their lunch and had fired upon them with a shower of arrows. They had been quickly answered with rifle-shots, with the result already mentioned. Suspecting that the Indians had reinforcements close by, our teams were quickly corralled and everything made ready for defense. There were about thirty men in our company—all well armed—and perhaps one-third that number of women and children. In a short time about seventy-five Indians on ponies came in sight and rode up within a quarter of a mile of us, circling around, first in one direction and then in the other, as if carefully taking measure of our strength. This they kept up for more than an hour, and then slowly retreated to the mountains. This was the closest call to an attack by the Indians that we had upon the route. They succeeded afterward, however, in spiriting away some of our cattle—once upon the Humboldt River and again at the foot of the Sierra Nevadas.

Leaving the Humboldt about seventy-five miles above where it sinks into the sand, we followed the old Lassen Trail across the Black Rock Desert, striking the Sierras at the head of Honey Lake Valley. Honey Lake is one of several little sheets of water that nestle close to the foot of the Sierra Nevadas on the eastern side, and which were greeted by the thirsty, footsore emigrants like oases in the midst of the desert. The Nevadas by this route are not

difficult to pass, and they compensate in some measure for the weary waste behind by their wealth and majesty of forest, and by their buttes and lakelets and their thousand unique forms of nature.

We finally reached and crossed the Sacramento on the eleventh of October, having been more than five months making the distance now traversed in Pullman cars, with all the conveniences and luxuries that modern ingenuity has devised, in three or four days. To make such a journey with ox teams was trying on soul and body, but it was at that time the accepted way and was deemed by far the most certain and safe.

My experience in the mountains and mines of California was not essentially different from that of thousands of others, and I need not recite it at length. I spent three years in the northern mines—the first winter near Shasta City, or Reddings Springs, the next summer at the newly-discovered mines on the Pitt River, the chief branch of the Sacramento, and the remainder of the time in the Siskiyou-Klamath region, near Mt. Shasta, and close by the great Lava Beds, afterward made famous by the desperate stand of Captain Jack and his Modoc bands. The winter of 1852-53 was long remembered by Californians on account of its immense snowfall in the mountains, and its rains and devastating floods in the valleys. The Sacramento reached out to the very foothills, and moved with a current that carried everything before it. The capital city was under water. The flocks and herds from the ranches fled to the hills when possible, but thousands were swept away by the floods. Just one-half of the faithful animals which our own little company had so carefully guarded across the plains was buried in this sea of waters. All communication with the upper mines was cut off. Prices knew no bounds. Flour rose to two, three, even five dollars a pound, and soon none could be had at any price. Salt was sixteen dollars a pound,

potatoes twenty-five cents apiece—with little regard to size —and other things in proportion. The truth is, men gave freely as long as they had anything to give, and then submitted as gracefully as possible to the situation. I have a very distinct recollection of paying as high as a dollar a pound for flour, but being practically a penniless "pilgrim" (all newly-arrived immigrants were then called "pilgrims") I soon ceased to be a purchaser and settled down to more modest rations—baked beans.

Pack-trains, attempting to cross the mountains, were blocked by the snows and in some cases were compelled to winter on the spot, subsisting upon their animals until the snows melted. I remember passing one of these desolate camping grounds, high up on the Trinity Mountains, on the Fourth of July, 1853. It was a dreary spot. The drifts were not even yet melted away. A rude hut had been constructed out of the scrubby pines that grew even at that height, and the bleaching bones of the pack-mules lay scattered about it, telling a story of hunger and suffering better than words could do.

Mining on one's own account, whether for gold or for silver or what not, is largely a game of chance. As such, it has a sort of charm for most men who enter upon it, which it is difficult to break. Mining for gold has a peculiar fascination. It is like seeking at first hand that which in other industries comes through exchange, or it may be a series of exchanges. Here we go straight to the treasure vaults. "Gold-dust" is money with the miner, and among the "Argonauts" of '49 and the fifties always passed current with the merchant. Money, at best, is only a means to an end, but how many fully realize it? The notion that it is something more—that it is an end in itself—is one of the most difficult to eradicate.

The certainty of reward and the feeling that what one earns is his own has a magical effect not only upon his dispo-

sition to work, but even upon his powers of endurance. Nothing illustrates this better than the cleaning up of the "bedrock" of a rich placer claim, where the clear water, as it carries the sand and gravel down through "sluice-box" and "long-tom," reveals in the bright yellow metal that lags behind the exact contribution of every shovelful handled. There is no "striking" here, nor eight-hour law demanded. Men, under such circumstances, will work knee-deep in water and forget they are working at all. To many cheerful, impetuous, even intelligent men, the very ups and downs of mining life are full of fascination. If not always blest, they are always "to be blest." Anything to such men is better than dull monotony—even though it be the monotony of success.

Very many of the earlier "Argonauts" were naturally roving, restless spirits. Many more were made so by their environment. It is not in average human nature to see others run and hurrah, and not be tempted to join in the procession. The most extravagant stories were continually set afloat. Men were rushing pell-mell to "Gold Bluff," "Nugget Gulch," and "Lucky Canyon," and a hundred other as loudly trumpeted regions. They searched ridge and ravine southward to the desert sands, and northward to the barren lava beds. They explored the most difficult recesses of the Coast Range. The result of all this was a vast amount of territory soon imperfectly prospected, and a vast number of men kept financially "dead broke," while growing wealthy in experience.

In the beginning the mines put all men practically on a level. Social distinctions were swept out of sight. Letters of introduction counted for little—family connections, manners, money, clothes, for less. The whole community seemed to be given an even start. Every stranger found a welcome and was bidden to stake off his claim and go to work. The veriest greenhorn was as likely to "strike it rich"

as the wisest professor of geology; and the best claim on the gulch might give out without a moment's warning. No one who was willing to help himself was allowed to suffer or to go without the means to make a start.

There is said to have been a short time in California, immediately following the discovery of gold, when crime in the mines was almost absolutely unknown—when bags of "gold-dust" were left unguarded in tents and cabins while the owners were at work on their claims. This state of things was partly due to the rich surface deposits which were then rapidly discovered and to the consequent feeling that the supply was practically inexhaustible. It was easier to earn money than to steal it, and infinitely safer too. Miners at that time pitched their tents close together in clumps of chaparral and manzanita. The bonds of fellowship were strong and sincere. Leeches and parasites had not yet fastened upon the community. The wretch who could steal from his comrades in those busy, friendly camps was hopelessly hardened. An old pioneer speaking of these very early mining days once said: "In 1848 a man could go into a miner's cabin, cut a slice of bacon, cook a meal, roll up in a blanket and go to sleep, certain to be welcomed kindly when the owner returned." This Arcadian era lasted much longer, too, in the Northern mines, where the American element more largely predominated. When disturbances and conflicts did set in, their coming was often attributed to the influence of the lawyers. "We needed no law," many an old miner would say, "until the lawyers came"—a curious but very common confusion of ideas. As a matter of fact, there were plenty of lawyers all the time working as quiet citizens in the gulches, only waiting until there was a demand for their services. They made themselves known when wanted. Nine-tenths of the crimes and misdemeanors that appear on the docket of an ordinary criminal court were impossible in the mining camp, and a larger propor-

tion of the ordinary civil cases were equally out of the question. The best of lawyers would have starved in such a community. But there was "law" from the beginning, and for the time and place it was the only serviceable kind. It was unwritten, simple, and went straight to the mark. And there was a court to enforce it—an assembly of freemen in open council. All who swung a pick or held a claim—boys of sixteen and men of sixty—took part in its deliberations. No more perfect democracies ever existed than these early mining camps. They had government, but its three departments were fused into one, and that one was administered directly by the people.

One of the best illustrations of the gold-miner's method of settling serious disputes occurred on Scotch Bar—a mining camp neighboring to my own, in northern California. A discovery of some very "rich gravel" or mining ground was made on this Bar, and in such a way that two equally strong parties of prospectors laid claim to it at the same time. Each group was entirely honest in believing its own claim the better one. The contestants at once began to increase their fighting numbers by enlistments from the rest of the camp, until twenty or thirty men were sworn in on each side. The ground in dispute was so situated that it was best worked in partnership, and thirty claims of the ordinary size took up all the territory in dispute. So here were two rival and resolute companies ready to begin work, and no law whatever to prevent a pitched battle.

It began to look very much like fighting. Men were asked to take sides and bring their bowies, revolvers, and shotguns. The two opposing parties took up their stations on the banks of the gulch. There was some further and very excited talk, and at last eight or ten shots were interchanged, fortunately injuring no one. By this time the blood of the contestants was fairly roused. The interests at stake were very large, and neither side proposed to yield. It now

seemed that nothing could prevent a terrible hand-to-hand conflict. The next minute must precipitate it. But just at this crisis another power asserted itself—that which in every mining camp, and indeed in every pioneer Anglo-Saxon community, makes so forcibly for law and order. The very moment the first shot was fired, the camp, the neighborhood, the little community at large had taken the field. Dozens, hundreds of men who, five minutes before, were mere spectators of the difficulty, now insisted upon a parley, negotiated a truce, and urged a resort to legal methods.

The moment this compromise was suggested, the combatants laid aside their weapons. They knew there was no legal authority within twenty miles, and no force, even in the camp itself, able to keep them from fighting. It was a victory of common sense—a triumph of the moral principles learned in boyhood in New England villages and on Western prairies. Men more thoroughly fearless never faced opposing weapons. But the demand for a fair trial in open court found an answering chord in every bosom. Both parties willingly agreed to arbitration, but not to the ordinary arbitration of the miners' court. The matter in dispute seemed too serious. They chose a committee, sent it to San Francisco, had three or four of the best lawyers to be found there engaged for each party, and also engaged a judge of much experience in mining cases. It was a great day at Scotch Bar when all this legal talent arrived. The claims in dispute had meanwhile been lying untouched by anyone, guarded by camp opinion and by sacred pledges of honor, ever since the day of the compact between the rival companies.

The case was tried with all possible formality, and as scrupulously as if it had occurred within the civil jurisdiction of a district court. With a simple sense of fairness it had been agreed by the parties that the winners should pay all

costs. When the verdict came, there was no compromise about it. It was squarely for one side and squarely against the other. The defeated party accepted it without a murmur. Neither then nor at any other time were they ever heard to complain.

An eyewitness, speaking of this celebrated trial, said: "The whole camp was excited over it for days and weeks. At last when the case was decided, the claim was opened by the successful party; and when they reached the bedrock and were ready to 'clean up,' we all knocked off work and came down and stood on the banks, till the ravine on both sides was lined with men. And I saw them take out gold with iron spoons and fill pans with solid gold, thousands upon thousands of dollars." On the banks of the river, with the hundreds of spectators, stood the defeated contestants, cheerful and even smiling.

In the early period, mining interests took precedence of agricultural in the entire gold-field. Law was made by the miners for the miners. Even the state courts at an early date decided that "agricultural lands though in the possession of others, may be worked for gold"—that "all persons who settle for agricultural purposes upon any mining lands, so settle at their own risk." The finest orchards and finest gardens were liable to be destroyed without remedy. Roads were washed away, houses were undermined, towns were moved to new sites, and sometimes the entire soil on which they had stood was sluiced away from grass roots to bedrock.

Down in Grass Valley, one of the rich placer regions, two men fenced in a natural meadow. They expected to cut at least two crops of hay annually, worth one hundred dollars a ton. But before a month had passed, a prospector climbed their brush fence, sunk a shaft, struck "pay gravel," and in less than twenty-four hours the whole hay ranch was staked off in claims of fifty feet square, and the ravaged

proprietors never got a claim. Once grant that the highest use of the land was to yield gold, and all the rest follows.

But exceptions were sometimes as arbitrarily made and summarily enforced as the rule itself. In 1851 two miners began to sink a shaft on Main Street, in the business center of Nevada City. A sturdy merchant made complaint, but was promptly answered that there was no law to prevent anyone from digging down to "bedrock" and drifting under the street, and they proposed to try it. "Then I'll make a law to suit the case," said the merchant, himself an old ex-miner, and stepping into his store, he came out with a navy revolver and made the law and enforced it upon the spot, establishing the precedent that Main Street, at least in that city, was not mining ground.

The members of our party did not stick together after reaching the mines, although I was with Eaton much of the time. We found some gold, but none of us struck it rich. I had always looked forward to returning to Wisconsin and going on with my college course. I decided to do so when I received a letter from my grandfather telling me about one my family had received from Professor Emerson. In it he stated that my standing as a preparatory student at Beloit had been excellent, and lamented that I had sacrificed my prospects for a career, to become a gold miner.

I had had enough of crossing the plains and concluded to return home by the Nicaragua route. A group of miners were on the point of setting out for home, and I joined company with them. One of the group was a young man from Toledo, and with him I traveled the entire way. The first stage of our journey was made in a little democrat wagon, in which we crossed the mountains to Shasta City. At a place where we stopped for lunch, while descending the mountain, we came upon a posse of mounted men who were taking a murderer to Shasta City. We traveled along with them, and the next day were met by some officers

coming out to take the criminal into custody. He was lodged in jail, but I never learned what was afterward done with him.

From Shasta City we traveled by stagecoach and (later) by boat down the Sacramento River to San Francisco. Here we stayed over night; the next morning we embarked on the steamer, *Uncle Sam,* passed out through the Golden Gate, and began our voyage down the Pacific. Our company consisted almost wholly of miners returning, like myself, to the States. One incident of this stage of the journey I still recall vividly. While passing down the coast of Mexico, close in shore, another steamer came up from behind us, and the two vessels indulged in a furious race. There was great danger of our running upon some one of the many rocks which abounded in the vicinity; the incident frightened me more than anything I had encountered during my entire three years in the mines.

We landed at Juan del Seur, and crossed the Isthmus over the route which was long advocated for the interoceanic canal. From Juan del Seur a journey of about twelve miles over a low mountain range to Lake Nicaragua lay before us, and the transportation company offered us the choice of making this trip on horseback or in democrat wagons. I chose the latter, and set out with four other travelers and a native driver. Before we had gone far such a furious rainstorm as I had never witnessed before overtook us; night fell, and from time to time the passengers were compelled to walk ahead of the wagon to search out the road. At length we reached Lake Nicaragua; here we found but poor accommodations and spent the night on the floor. In the morning we took a little steamer across the lake, a distance of ninety miles. Then we entered the San Juan River. In descending it we had to leave the boat several times to pass around rapids, taking another vessel on the other side of them. The country was then perfectly wild;

parrots and monkeys were numerous on the banks of the stream, and to me it proved an interesting journey. At Greytown on the Atlantic, where we stayed all night, marks of the American bombardment the year before were still plentiful. Here we took passage on a steamer for New York where we arrived without special incident. At New York I stopped only long enough to exchange my gold (which I had carried in a belt) for coined money, and then set out by rail for the West. This was my first experience with railroad travel. From Chicago I took a train for Freeport, then the terminus of the Galena and Chicago Union, Chicago's first railroad. From Freeport to Fayette I traveled by stage-coach. It had taken me five months and eight days to cross the plains to California, and three weeks to return. Fifty years later I took the trip by rail, with my wife and daughter, in four days.

DOCUMENTING LOCAL HISTORY

JOSEPH SCHAFER

The following essay on the town of Newton is presented not as a finished piece of local history writing, but rather as an outline of significant facts derived from manuscripts and printed sources, which may serve as a skeleton to be clothed upon and rendered lifelike by a more or less extended process of local study. The criticism on local histories as customarily produced is that they are (a) unsystematic, illustrating only one, or a few, of the multiform interests which make up the complex of local community life; and (b) largely worthless, because the sources of information are chiefly vague recollections of the author or others interviewed by him, instead of being thoroughly documented. A third defect often noted is the absence of a feeling for general historical results, on the part of workers in the local field, which makes so much local history work comparatively barren.

With the vast collection of the primary sources of Wisconsin history filed at the State Historical Library, or available in Madison, it would be possible to prepare at that center an outline, similar to this one, on the history of every town in the state. In the first volume of the *Wisconsin Domesday Book,* now in course of preparation, we are bringing together the general materials on twenty-five selected towns. Some of these can be treated much more fully than I have treated Newton, for we have in the library much ampler data, and in most cases they will be in more extended form. There will be a plat or map showing the farms and farmers of 1860, with census data about the size, cultivation, value, and productions of the farms, also surveyors' notes descriptive of the land before it was settled; for 1860 there will be, also, a list of the inhabitants of

each town alphabetized according to heads of families as described in the census schedules, giving name of each person, age, nativity, and the occupations of adults. A general chart will supply comparative agricultural statistics, from the manuscript census schedules, for the periods 1850, 1860, 1870, and 1880. Another chart will display similar statistics taken from the printed state census for the periods 1885, 1895, and 1905. The main facts about the political history of all the towns will occupy another chart. There will be a general introduction in which historical problems emerging from the comparative study of the twenty-five towns will be discussed.

A reading of the subjoined sketch of Newton will convince the discriminating student that much remains to be done on almost every phase of the history. A part of the work will be in the nature of a study of local records—of the town, the school districts, the churches, and those near-by newspapers which reflected best, at different periods, the life of this community. Of course, the leaders in the distinctive lines of endeavor—farming, politics, teaching, and especially morals and religion—will have to be identified on the ground and studied as opportunity offers; here is a place for the interview with old men and women, also for the study of business records, private diaries, letters, and so forth. One entire section of the town history, and that by far the most important, will deal with moral, intellectual, and spiritual conditions. That is wholly left for the local researcher because general sources are too meager to help us much along these lines.

A splendid opportunity for good work will be found in tracing the antecedents of individuals or groups, making clear the conditions out of which they came, the circumstances inducing emigration from the old home and settlement in the new; the education and special training of the pioneer settlers, their personal characters and social ideals, are elements to be stressed in the study.

There are numbers of rural towns in Wisconsin, as well as villages and cities, whose history deserves to be written in the large and published for the benefit of their own children as well as for the benefit of the state. The time seems ripe for a movement to secure a good many individual town histories, especially since every community is anxious now to honor its soldiers, living and dead; and the State Historical Society is prepared to help in the manner indicated herein, and in all other practicable ways.

TOWN OF NEWTON, MANITOWOC COUNTY

MATERIAL CONDITIONS

The town of Newton occupies township 18 north of range 23 east, in the southeastern part of Manitowoc County, five miles southwest of Manitowoc. It lies in part on the shore of Lake Michigan, the lake cutting off portions of sections 36, 25, and 24, grazing also the southeast corner of section 13 (see plat). The surface is undulating and it is well watered throughout, the principal streams being Silver Creek, Yellow Creek, and Paint Creek, all flowing southeast into Lake Michigan.

Originally, the town was practically covered with a dense forest growth which included birch, linn, sugar maple, ash, cedar, elm, alder, beech, with some pine and tamarack in the swamps, also some oak, especially on the higher parts. The swamps were rather extensive while the country was still forest-covered, as shown by the surveyor's notes;[1] yet the township averages high in first-class land, and none of it was described as poorer than second-class. The soil near the lake was light, but yet fertile, while most of the balance was heavier and very productive when cleared. Much of the wet land was automatically reclaimed by removing the covering of timber.

[1] The township was surveyed in 1834 by Byron Kilbourn, who became famous as one of the founders of Milwaukee and president of the Milwaukee and Mississippi Railroad Company.

But there were no prairies or "openings," the whole requiring the heavy labor and expense of clearing, which helps to explain the comparative slowness of agricultural development in the town. While most of the land was purchased as early as 1848, in which year seventy-seven entries were made, the census of 1860 shows that few of the farms were opened to more than half their acreage by that time, and that many were only well begun (*Wisconsin Domesday Book*—"Farms and Farmers of 1860"). Computations based on the agricultural statistics of the three census periods, 1860, 1870, and 1880, give the following results: In 1860 Newton had 228 farms, containing a total of 5,150 acres improved land and a total of 8,749 acres unimproved land. In other words, the average farm had 22 acres improved and 38 acres unimproved. This "average farm" would be valued at $541, its implements and machinery at $33. The suppositious average farmer owned one third of a horse, 1 ox, 1 cow, 1 head of "other cattle," 2 swine, one-third of a sheep, and his total livestock was valued at $64. He produced 16 bushels of wheat, 44 of rye, no corn, 46 of oats, 9 of peas, 45 of Irish potatoes, and 4 of barley. He made 57 pounds of butter, and put up 2 tons of hay.

In 1870 the number of farms was 218, a decrease of 10. The improved land amounted to 8,401 acres, the unimproved to 6,813, showing that more wild land was now included in the farms, even while the farms were growing fewer in number, thus increasing the acreage by a double process. The average farm now contained 38 improved acres and 31 unimproved. It was valued at $2,066. The value of implements and machinery was $86. There was, to each farm, on the average, 1 horse and half an ox, 2 cows, 1 "other cattle," 3 sheep, 2 swine,—a total livestock valuation of $315. The average farm now produced 110 bushels of wheat, 40 of rye, no corn, 109 of oats, 28 of potatoes, 24

of peas, 10 of barley, 10 pounds of wool, 195 pounds of butter, and it made 7 tons of hay.

By 1880 the number of farms had increased to 292 and the total acreage in farms had increased greatly also. This was the decade of local railway construction, the Milwaukee, Lake Shore and Western being completed to Manitowoc in 1873. The amount of improved land is given as 13,991 acres, the unimproved at 9,508 acres. The average farm now had 47 acres improved land, to 32 acres unimproved, and was valued at $2,738. Implements and machinery are worth $142 and livestock $197. The total value of farm productions, on the average, was $342. There were 2 horses, nearly 4 milch cows and 2 "other cattle," 2 sheep, and 2 swine. The wheat crop amounted to 216 bushels from 13 acres, rye 18 from 1 acre, oats 184 from 7 acres, and barley 36 from 1 acre. There was still no Indian corn. The average farm produced 86 pounds of butter and 499 gallons of milk. The total number of milch cows in the town was 1,155. The farms may be regarded as "made" by 1880, and all the land of the township, swamps included, must have been reckoned within the farms to make the aggregate acreage; even then the total seems excessive.

Averaging only 79 acres, the farms of this town were smaller on the whole than those of any other of twenty-two towns compared with it. But the acreage of improved land was greater than in Prairie du Chien and Sevastopol, though less than in the other twenty. The kinds of production and the annual value of the production both indicate that, as yet, no considerable specialization had occurred except in the growing of peas. This town led all in that particular, the total production amounting to over nine thousand bushels, or 30 bushels to the average farm. The annual value of the total productions was, however, the lowest of the towns compared, with the single exception of Prairie du Chien, and one is forced to look upon the community as

made up at that time (1880) of families who were generally in very moderate circumstances. However, the census shows us a few good-sized farms. Four had 100 acres or more of improved land each, and an annual production of $1,000. These four farmers were distinctly in advance of the rest pecuniarily, other incomes ranging usually between $150 and $500, with a few below the minimum and a few above the maximum. It would be interesting to know to what extent differing incomes were evened by the fact that some of the surplus labor of the smaller farms was employed for wages on the larger farms. There was actually paid out, in wages, from incomes aggregating $16,300, the sum of $3,900, or a little less than 24 per cent.

By means of the state census it is possible to trace the agricultural history of the town down to the year 1905. We find that in 1885 Newton was credited with 13,374 acres improved land, and 8,080 unimproved and wood land. The cash value of the farms was given as $495,640. One of the new productions appearing prominently in the 1885 schedule is cheese, Newton being credited with a total production of 564,781 pounds, valued at $51,150. The butter record was missed, the town being accidentally omitted from the schedule exhibiting that item. Peas continued to be produced in considerable quantities, but there were only 14 acres of corn in the town.

In 1895 the improved acreage had risen to 17,539, and the unimproved had fallen to 4,457. The value had risen to $1,123,550, an increase of more than 100 per cent in ten years. The cheese production was 141,661 pounds manufactured in 11 factories located within the town, which drew milk from 928 cows. The production of butter totaled 85,000 pounds. There was one creamery. The combined value of the butter and cheese was less than that of the cheese produced in 1885, so that one suspects errors in reporting or in printing the returns.

In 1905 Newton had 304 farms, only 12 more than in 1880. The total acreage was 21,114—improved 17,299, unimproved 3,815. The cash value of farms was given as $1,690,000. The town was producing a little wheat, but more rye, oats, and barley, and especially peas. Its chief wealth was in cattle, particularly cows, of which it had 2,039, valued at $50,880. It produced 78,739 gallons of milk, valued at $7,662; also 63,914 pounds of butter, valued at $13,498. Its 4 creameries, with 144 patrons milking 1,028 cows, produced 146,059 pounds of butter valued at $30,494; and its 5 cheese factories, with 181 patrons milking 1,150 cows, produced 349,170 pounds of cheese valued at $34,233. The combined value of the products of dairy, field, pasture, and poultry yard was $228,600; and this, divided among 304 farms, assigns to them an average income of $745—a decided increase since 1880, when the average was only $342.

The forested condition of the township, while a distinct hindrance to the agricultural subjection of the land, afforded opportunity to the settlers not merely to obtain fuel, which for many years was over-abundant, and to obtain free fencing material, but also to add to their limited incomes by getting out for the market saw logs, hoop-poles, cordwood, and railroad ties. The presence of sawmills in the town or on its borders also made building material cheap to those owning saw timber. "Persons engaged in clearing," said the editor of the *Manitowoc County Herald*, Jan. 11, 1851, "always find more or less valuable timber which has a ready market and is thus made a valuable source of assistance in promoting early improvements." As late as 1869, and doubtless for some years thereafter, the majority of the farmers were still marketing "forest products"—some of them to the extent of $200 to $300, and from these figures down to $10 or $15.

The great road to Green Bay entered the town of Newton at section 30, and running northeast emerged at section

3 near Silver Lake. A branch of this road led east to Manitowoc, and other roads reached the county town from the south. From early times there were piers near where later the village of Northeim grew up, and stores at that point (with later a creamery) made it a great convenience to the farmers living in the southeastern and southern portions of the town. The rail line of the Milwaukee, Lake Shore and Western Railway enters from the south at section 34 and leaves the town at the northeast corner of section 1. Its station of Newport is in section 34. This line was completed to Manitowoc in 1873. There was a mill in section 7, one at Silver Lake, one at Manitowoc Rapids two miles from the north line of the town, and of course others at Manitowoc about five miles away. Blacksmiths and wagon makers were located within the town, and from the year 1855 there was a post office at Newtonburg in section 8, with later one at Northeim in section 35. By 1878 the town had two cheese factories, one in section 5 and another in section 28. From that time, factory dairying gradually developed until it became the dominant industry of the people, as we have seen.

SOCIAL CONDITIONS

Newton is known as one of the most distinctively German towns of Wisconsin. Among the original entrymen of the land were a goodly proportion of American names. But some of these were speculators taking up numerous tracts for resale to settlers. The earliest entries, numbering ten, in 1836 were all by Americans. After that no more entries are recorded until the year 1847, when 36 were made by Americans, but a larger number—41—by persons with foreign names. In the year 1848 the number of entries was 77, mostly made by foreigners. The latest date of entry for any of the lands in the township is 1858. It is noticeable that, while Americans frequently took up scattered tracts, showing that they were taken

for speculation, the foreigners generally bought one, two, or three forties in compact form for home making. In the total, foreigners entered 110 tracts, as against 81 entered by Americans (at least by English-speaking persons).

An analysis of the population has been made from the manuscript census schedules of 1850, 1860, and 1870. The results may be tabulated as follows:

NATIVITY	1850	1860	1870
U. S., except Wisconsin	30	33	28
Wisconsin	29	409	965
Austria	......	34	31
Baden	4	13	20
Bavaria	......	52	39
Bohemia	......	26	......
Brandenburg	4	......	......
Canada	9	7	1
Denmark	......	6	......
England	1	3	3
France	1	14	4
Hanover	35	57	......
Hesse	1	24	4
Holland	......	13	4
Holstein	......	8	......
Ireland	38	61	52
Lippe	......	......	36
Luxemburg	......	......	6
Mecklenburg	......	128	154
Nassau	......	5	......
Norway	112	3	......
Oldenburg	......	6	......
Poland	......	24	......
Prussia	64	446	578
Russia	1	2	......
Sardinia	......	1	......
Saxony	2	22	9
Scotland	......	3	1
Sweden	......	1	......
Switzerland	......	12	4
Württemberg	......	2	7
Total, Foreign-born	272	973	953
Total, Native-born	59	442	993

Some of the facts which emerge from this investigation are rather astonishing. For example, it was found that in 1860 only two heads of families were of American origin, all the rest being foreign and, with few exceptions, German. Many of the children of German parents, of course, were of American nativity, which gave the town its total of 442 natives as against 973 foreign-born. The census of 1850 shows 272 foreign-born and 59 native-born, or only 20 per cent native. By 1870 a decided change has come about, the native element being now slightly in the majority. From this point we rely on the state census, which was taken at the middle of the decade, and we find in Newton in 1885 a total of 1,892, of which 597 were foreign-born, or 31.5 per cent of the whole number, while 1,295, or 68.5 per cent, were American-born. Ten years later, 1895, the figures stand: 1,607 American and 532 foreign, or a fraction over 75 per cent American and a fraction under 25 per cent foreign.

The last state census examined, that of 1905, shows a reduction in the total population of the town from 2,139 (in 1895) to 1,741. This is doubtless due to the high mortality rate among the older generation and the partial dispersion of families through the withdrawal of adult young persons, the trend to the city having set in strongly. The proportions of native and foreign now stand: 1,451 native to 290 foreign. In other words, only 16⅗ per cent of the population were of foreign birth, while the native element made up 83⅖ per cent of the whole. Inasmuch as the entire state, in 1905, showed a native element which was only 77.34 per cent of the whole, it is clear that this town had been "Americanizing" at an exceptional rate, relatively to other communities.

A comparative study of nativities of twenty-five towns, including Newton, from the state censuses of 1895 and 1905 yields this result: In 1895 the town of Newton stood

number 14 on the list arranged to show the smallness of the percentage of foreign-born in the population, while in 1905 this town stood number 8. This proves that the process of change from foreign to native, as it proceeded in the town of Newton, was exceptionally rapid both positively and comparatively. To understand how this came about it is only necessary to contemplate the permanent occupation of the farms by the original German entrymen of the land, or the German emigrant purchasers of privately owned wild land. These emigrants, coming in the forties and fifties of the last century, were, as the census record shows, mainly young adults. Their children, so far as they were born in Wisconsin, would be natives and some of these children would inherit the lands on the death of the parents. When the older generation had passed away, the population would be entirely native, save for that comparatively small number of the younger generation who were born in Germany prior to the emigration of their parents.

That the above is essentially the process which changed the town of Newton in fifty years from an almost purely German to an almost purely American community is nearly, if not quite, demonstrable from documentary sources. It is noteworthy that, out of the 1,451 American-born in 1905, 1,434 (or all but 17) were natives of Wisconsin. Doubtless nearly all of them were born in the town of Newton itself. This view is strengthened by a comparison of the names of landowners in 1860 with those of later dates, as shown by the county maps. On the map of the year 1903 we identify 82 names of persons who owned land in the township in 1860. In most cases the land held was in the same sections and constituted in part or in whole the original farms. Recalling that the number of farm owners in 1860, according to the census, was 228, we see that the proportion of persisting families must have been very large. The biographies in the county history include

the names of 18 persons who resided in the town of Newton in 1910. In all cases they were then living on the farms on which they were born.

We implied above that the farms of Newton could hardly be said to be "made" until about 1880. And no doubt there was for a number of years some shifting about—some buying, mortgaging, and selling—among those holding inferior or small tracts. It would be more normal, therefore, to compare the owners of about 1880 with those of 1903. We have a county plat book for 1878, on which we identify 140 names appearing on the plat of 1903, twenty-five years later.[2] This shows that nearly one-half of the original farm makers' names cling to the soil of the township. Were we able to determine the cases where men from outside married daughters of the old families and substituted their own names, it would increase still further the roll of the permanent families. No comparisons with other towns have yet been made on this head, but one risks little in asserting that Newton has been socially one of the most stable farming communities in the state.

When we ask the reason for this stability, the answer will have to be sought partly in racial characteristics, partly in economic conditions, and doubtless largely in the facts of the early social organization. There is probably some truth in the oft reiterated assertion that the Germans "stick to the land" much more tenaciously than native Americans and most foreign immigrants. That would be more true, however, of those who live together in groups that are organized to practise their native speech, to enjoy their chosen religion and distinctive recreational and social life, than among those who are racially scattered dependently in the midst of an alien life to which at first they can but imperfectly adapt themselves. Now the Germans of Newton town, who were at first largely of the Lutheran

[2] Many names are badly misspelled but can be identified under their disguises.

and Evangelical Reformed faiths, had their own churches and parochial schools within the town, and at these doubtless much of the social and recreational life was centered. Stores, mills, taverns, repair shops, all existed locally at points convenient for the farmers, thus minimizing the necessity for frequent visits to towns, so unsettling to the habits of rural youth.

The fact that the land was hard to subdue to cultivation, but generously productive when cleared, may have had its effect. The original settlers bent themselves to the heavy task of "grubbing and breaking," devoting to it, with their families, in not infrequent instances as many as twenty or twenty-five years. Fields won by such persistent and prolonged toil, especially if they be rich and fruitful, are apt to be appreciated from a sentimental as well as an economic viewpoint. "I spent my life making this farm in order that my children may have a stake in the country," is an idea often heard among pioneer farmers, especially foreigners to whom landholding seems to confer social distinction and the founding of a family implies a landed property as a basis.

But there is another fact to consider in this connection. The period of farm making, which invariably deprives the children of those opportunities for education which become so abundant in later stages, and which readily fit youth to pursue almost any career, was here just about long enough to absorb the entire energies of the older children. These would be well trained to the routine of farm life, but having no other hope than to farm on the hard-won acres, would be very ready to take their parents' places. The younger children drifted easily into new occupations and fitted into new surroundings.

It will be interesting to determine, from comparative studies, whether the forest settler's family tends more strongly to persist than does the prairie settler's family,

or vice versa. Casual observation seems to suggest that the prairie family shifted much more readily. One important reason for this would seem to have been the habit and bent for wheat growing. No other form of early agriculture was so immediately remunerative under favorable conditions. Accordingly, whenever the lands in one region refused longer to produce good crops, the farmers who had been wheat growers and were equipped for that business moved west to new and ever new wheat lands. It is apt to be so with the growers of staple crops. It was so with the Virginia tobacco growers and the Carolina cotton growers. The devotee of a single crop, especially if his capital is invested in equipment to a greater extent than in land, because he dreads to make more change than he is compelled to make in his occupational habits and expenditure shifts his location and continues in the old lines of endeavor. The "mixed farmer," on the other hand, who learns to raise equally well a variety of products—"a little bit of everything"—is in much better case when new adaptations are demanded, for he can more readily modify his activities to suit the requirements. His training is more general and he is less bound by financial or social consideration to continue in the old path. So it is not surprising that the men of Newton, who "made a hand" with ax and mattock at the outset, drove the breaking plow through soil, grubs, and undergrowth, reduced the raw land to a high state of tilth, and grew all of the small grains indifferently, as opportunity, seasons, and prices suggested, meantime tending cows and other cattle, should be prepared when the right time arrived to stress more and more one of the old occupations—caring for cows—until that business became almost a profession.

Printed biographies of men and women who are natives of Newton tell us something about the early settlers, what manner of folk they were, what their worldly condition,

their training, and the mode of their entry into the community's life, with facts about their achievements. The *History of Manitowoc County* presents about forty such sketches. We have in them accounts of families settling on the heavily timbered wild land, usually beginning home life in a log hut—in one case, in a temporary shelter of bark—and gradually working their way to independence; of sons and grandsons who became business men, professional men, teachers, scientific farmers, inventors; of daughters and granddaughters who were the partners of successful men in all these pursuits. References to the pioneer ancestors reveal that the town of Newton was served by men of special training—that some who settled there were blacksmiths and worked at their trade, others wagon makers, others millers, others carpenters, and so forth. We learn that, while most of the immigrants were poor to begin with, a few came with appreciable sums of money, and these built grist mills, sawmills, taverns, and stores, and helped during the time of beginnings in promoting the construction of churches and schools, as well as in other public improvements.

The Civil War record of Newton is expressed mainly in the soldiers the town furnished. These apparently numbered forty-two,[3] as given in the *Roster*, of whom two were killed in action; two died of wounds received in battle; three others were discharged on account of wounds and disability; and six died of disease. Four earned the unenviable title of deserters. But it seems clear that these must have been "floaters," for their names—all non-German—are alien to the list of family names of the town in 1860. The amount raised by tax for bounties in the year ending May 31, 1865, was $2,100.[4]

[3] There may be a question about four of these. They are listed as from Manitowoc County, but their names seem to identify them as belonging to Newton families.

[4] Durrie, D. S., *Gazetteer of Wisconsin*, MS.

When the vast labor of compiling the records of soldiers of the World War shall have been completed in the form in which it has been begun by the Adjutant General of Wisconsin, it will be possible to give the results with measurable completeness.

Politically, the town of Newton was for many years overwhelmingly Democratic, which is normal for the period up to 1860, considering the prevailing nationality of its people. So nearly unanimous were the voters in the gubernatorial election of 1859 that Randall, Republican, received but one single vote, while his Democratic opponent, Hobart, polled 72 votes. Nevertheless, the next year, in the presidential contest, Lincoln was given a majority, 128, against 77 for Douglas and none for either Breckenridge or Bell. This was due, no doubt, to the powerful free-soil and antislavery sentiment which prevailed among the Germans. Manitowoc County gave Lincoln 2,041, Douglas 1,947, a result which astonished both Democrats and Republicans.[5]

Thereafter the county again voted regularly for the Democratic presidential ticket until 1896. The town of Newton, on the other hand, shifted from Republican to Democratic and back again in a most eccentric fashion, the causes of which call for investigation. McClellan received a majority of 44 in 1864, while Grant won by 36 votes in '68 and Greeley by 46 in '72. Tilden had a majority of 27 in '76, Garfield 25 in 1880, and Blaine 3 in '84. In 1888 Harrison and Cleveland each received 173 votes, as did the gubernatorial candidates also.[6] But in '92 Cleveland received 165 as against 98 for Harrison, the state ticket polling identically the same numbers. McKinley defeated Bryan 214 to 147 in '96, and 182 to 123 in 1900;

[5] See *Manitowoc County Herald*, Nov. 15, 1860.

[6] That makes the vote in 1890, for governor, appear on the face of it very strange. It stood: Peck, Democrat, 196; Hoard, Republican, 77. But the Bennett Law issue explains it.

while Roosevelt in 1904 received 207 against Parker's 109. At that election 7 votes were cast for Swallow, Prohibitionist; and 3 for Debs, Socialist. In 1908 Bryan obtained 132, Taft 182, Debs 8. Taft was leader in the town again in 1912, with 101; while Wilson received 77, Roosevelt 47, Debs 2, and Chapin 2. Newton was strongly Republican in 1916, giving Hughes 219 and Wilson 90, with no scattering votes, Philipp for governor running even with Hughes. The 1920 vote stood: Harding, 287; Cox, 27; Watkins, 3; Debs, 54.

INTELLECTUAL, MORAL, AND SPIRITUAL CONDITIONS

The biographical sketches we have of pioneers tell us something of the intellectual and moral qualities of the makers of Newton, but on this head a large amount of local investigation is demanded. This section of the history cannot be written from existing documentary sources.

A very little material can be gleaned with reference to the education of the young from the biographies of men reared in Newton. But we ought to know not only about the character of the public school and the parochial schools which existed in the town, and about the work of the most notable teachers who served them, but also about the young men and women who attended higher institutions of learning outside—normal schools, seminaries, colleges, and universities. A community's gift to the world lies largely in its trained young men and women.

A similar statement can be made relative to its religious leaders. We obtain a few facts from the printed records of churches, but only a few. It is known that the first church in Newton was of the German Reformed faith, and we have the names of several clergymen of that faith, but little more. The census of 1860 notes, among the families, that of John A. Salzer, thirty-seven years of age, clergyman.

He has a wife and four children, the eldest being a boy of ten. Mr. Salzer was a native of W rttemberg, but since all the children were born in this country—in Illinois and Iowa—he must have come to America a number of years before. Presumably, Salzer was pastor of the church in Newton. A few years later we find the Reverend E. Wagner described as pastor of the Newtonburg church; and for at least ten years—1874 to 1884—the Reverend E. Strube occupied that post. The work of these men, their congregations and their school, for the moral and religious life of the town, deserves to be investigated.

By the year 1878, according to the town plat of that year, there were five churches. We know from the *Catholic History* that St. Casimer's congregation (Catholic) was organized in 1868 and a church built at Northeim the same year, followed by a parochial school in 1874. Whether or not all of the other four churches were Lutheran or German Reformed we have no means here of determining.

Nothing has been said about the fine arts, like music, carving, painting, sculpture, literature. The germs of these things are sometimes found in more unlikely places than such a rural community as Newton, and a complete historical survey would have to take them into account.

HISTORIC SPOTS IN WISCONSIN

W. A. Titus

VIII. ST. NAZIANZ, A UNIQUE RELIGIOUS COLONY

> Tell me, ye winged winds, that round my pathway roar,
> Do ye not know some spot where mortals weep no more?
> Some lone and pleasant dell, some valley in the West,
> Where, free from strife for gain, the weary soul may rest?

Legend and history are strangely interwoven in the story of St. Nazianz, a religious colony founded in 1854 in Manitowoc County. The narrative begins in a foreign land in the middle of the last century, when Father Ambrose Oschwald, a priest in the Black Forest region of Baden, Germany, who had shown marked qualities of leadership, decided to bring the entire membership of his parish to America and there in the wilderness to found a colony in accord with his ideals. There were several reasons that contributed to their decision to leave the fatherland. The population had increased until the country was overcrowded so that it was difficult to secure profitable employment. Then, too, Germany had just passed through a period of revolution, and the country was seething with unrest. Many of the German people had already emigrated to Wisconsin, and this influenced Father Oschwald to plant his colony in the Badger State.

The group that left Baden for the New World numbered 113 persons; and as the entire community was included there were none of the heartbreaking separations so common in the cases of individual emigrants. By selling all of their property the community was able to raise 24,000 florins to pay the expenses of the long journey and to get a start in their new home across the sea. They left Strasburg in May, 1854, and after a voyage covering fifty-four days, landed in New York. Here they rested for

THE FIRST CHURCH BUILT IN ST. NAZIANZ

a time and then set out for Milwaukee, where they arrived in August and where they were greeted by the pioneer missionary, Archbishop Henni. While in Milwaukee the Reverend Oschwald purchased 3,840 acres of land in Manitowoc County at $3.50 per acre, on which he made a first payment of $1,500. An advance party of six men was sent to Manitowoc by boat and from there started westward on foot through the forests to the newly-purchased land that was to be their future home.

There is a legend that when they arrived at the eastern boundary of their tract, a white ox appeared before them and that they followed the animal in its winding path until it stopped on the spot where the first church was built and where it still stands. This story is supposed to explain why the streets of the village wind and wind without any apparent reason for their crookedness. The brothers of the community admit the existence of this legend but do not vouch for its authenticity. The statement made by some newspaper writers to the effect that Father Oschwald was commanded in a vision to proceed to America and found a colony on this exact spot is dismissed by the brotherhood of the present community as a fairy tale that originated in the mind of some outside narrator.

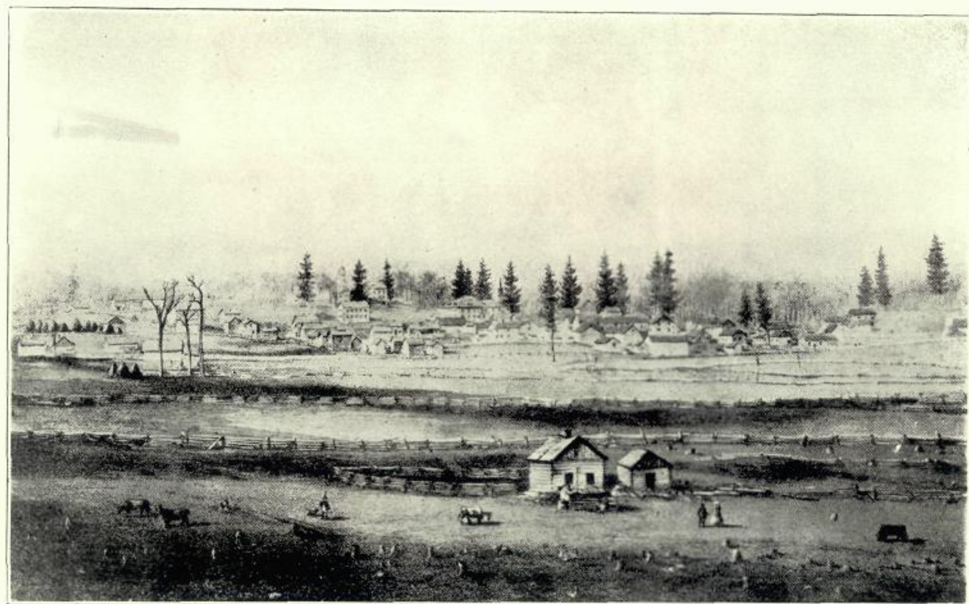
It was on a rainy Sunday that the advance party reached the site of the future settlement, and it is recorded that the first duty they performed was to fell a tree, fashion it into a cross, and set it up as a rallying place for their devotions. Next they cut trees from which to build a log hut, sleeping on the ground in the meantime, and subsisting on boiled potatoes without salt. As they were putting the roof on the first log house, Father Oschwald arrived with another group of colonists and, cheered by the presence of their leader, they set about their tasks with renewed energy.

The summer was cold and wet, and hardship and exposure brought on an epidemic of malaria from which

seven died and many others were greatly weakened. In spite of these handicaps, they cleared seventy acres and sowed them to rye during the first summer and fall. However, they were unable to raise any food during the summer to carry them through the succeeding winter. They lived for the most part on a thick potato soup; but, with the utmost economy, the cost of food amounted to $2,000 before they were able to harvest their first crop. Father Oschwald went to Milwaukee where he was able to secure a loan of $1800.

During this first summer they erected the old church which still stands, although it is no longer used for divine services. This church, which meant so much to the little community, was twenty-four by thirty-two feet and all the logs that entered into its construction were carried on the backs of the men. The records state that as many as sixteen men were required to carry a single log, and that twenty logs were thus brought together in a single day. Their devoted leader was always with his men, doing his share of the labor and encouraging his followers with cheerful conversation. At night they gathered around him while he told them stories and read to them from his scanty supply of books and papers. The primitive church was completed and the first service held in October, 1854. By Christmas day following, the colonists had completed four houses, a community kitchen, a stable, and a blacksmith shop.

The winter of 1855 was a severe one with much snow; very little clearing could be done, and the spring came so late that no grain could be sown. Twenty-two acres of corn and a considerable acreage of potatoes were planted, both of which crops yielded bountifully. During this summer a sawmill and several additional houses were built. The winter of 1856 was also a long one, and the crops of the following season were only fair. Ten acres of spring wheat



ST. NAZIANZ IN AN EARLY DAY

produced well and this supplied the community with bread for the next twelve months. Meanwhile a herd of twenty cattle had been acquired and a large barn for their stock had been built. The year 1857 was an unfortunate one for the colony. Fire swept through the village and destroyed several buildings, including the large stock barn. Six head of cattle were lost in a soft swamp where they had ventured for grazing, and the rest of the stock suffered much from lack of pasturage due to the dry season. Added to their other misfortunes the second payment on their land now became due and there were no funds with which to meet it. The land was advertised for sale by the creditors and the personal property was attached, but a wealthy man from Sheboygan advanced the money to meet all claims and the property was saved to the colonists. From a financial standpoint, 1858 was a satisfactory year and among other mprovements a convent was built for the Sisters. In 1859 there was an almost total failure of crops, and the community had to be maintained by contributions from philanthropic Catholics throughout the country; but this was the last occasion on which the colony needed outside assistance. From this time the community was self-supporting; and a few years later it became very prosperous. In 1864 a tannery was added to the increasing industries of the village, and there were also installed two looms for the weaving of cloth.

It is interesting to note that during the first twenty years of the history of the colony all property was owned in common and all service was rendered without compensation other than food and clothing. Meals were served from a community kitchen, the unmarried women being assigned to this service. The married people lived in cottages, while the single men lived in the men's dormitory and the unmarried women lived in the women's home.

After the death of Father Oschwald in 1873, the bonds that had held the community together were to some extent loosened. The Reverend Peter Mutz, who had been restored to health by Father Oschwald and had later studied for the priesthood, succeeded to the leadership of the colony. Father Mutz felt that the married members and their children were entitled to the fruits of their labors, and he accordingly conveyed portions of the lands to these families. As none were bound to remain, some of the members drifted away from the neighborhood, and the colony dwindled until 1898, when its remaining property was taken over by the Society of the Divine Saviour, who, with the Sisters, now control about a thousand acres of the original holdings. Many beautiful buildings were erected by these two societies, and St. Nazianz today has an atmosphere that is decidedly ecclesiastical.

From the records of the colony, as well as the accounts of his contemporaries, it appears that the Reverend Ambrose Oschwald was an unusual character. His ability as an administrator was exceeded only by his piety, zeal, and devotion to his people. He was fifty-three years of age when, in 1854, he undertook the great task of transplanting an entire community from its native land to a wilderness home four thousand miles away. From that time until his death in 1873, the good priest never ceased to labor for the spiritual and material advancement of his followers. He was a skilled botanist with a special knowledge of medicinal herbs. There was no physician within twenty miles, and people, both Catholic and Protestant, came to him from long distances for medical treatment. He is said to have been remarkably successful in the treatment of cancer; his reputation spread far beyond the borders of Wisconsin. To those of the Catholic faith who were ill, he taught the efficacy of prayer as an aid to healing, and thus the idea became prevalent that he cured by faith. This

A WINDING STREET IN ST. NAZIANZ

was denied by his close friends; it seems clear that his familiarity with medicinal herbs enabled him to treat disease in a professional way, without resort to miraculous methods. Many still remember the kindly pastor who ministered unselfishly both to their spiritual and to their physical needs.

The St. Nazianz of today is a quaint rural community which, with a sufficient population, has never seen fit to become an incorporated village. There is about it a reminder of a part of the Old World transplanted to the New. It is surrounded by a wealthy farming section, has a bank, stores, manufacturing plants, and all of the other adjuncts of a prosperous village. It has an artificial lake that was formed by damming up the outlet to one of the ravines, and on its banks may be seen the black-robed brothers of the Order in meditation and study, or the students of the seminary who are candidates for the priesthood. We also find here the lay brothers who spend their lives in seclusion and work the lands that belong to the Order. The whole ecclesiastical quarter is, while a part of the world, seemingly apart from the world. The casual visitor who is interested in this unique community will find the brothers kindly, hospitable, and willing to give him information about their work. They are happy in their environment, and the restful atmosphere of the place is in marked contrast to the strife and turmoil of the outside world.

A TREASURE QUEST

Some men stalk big game, some seek for gold, while some pursue treasures of an historical character. The writer of the following article is an enthusiast of the last-named kind, a loyal member of the State Historical Society, who describes the difficulties and thrills attending one particular conquest.—EDITOR.

He was eighty-five years old and had in his possession a precious newspaper-file which he had preserved, through many vicissitudes, for sixty years. This I had learned through correspondence with him. At once a mighty resolution seized me. I must get that file and deposit it in the vaults of the State Historical Society, where it would be practically safe forever, and where its rich resources of local history would be available to the future student and research worker who might be interested in it. It was, I reasoned, probably the only file, at least of anything like its size in existence, as the paper when printed had a circulation of only a few hundred, if indeed more than a few dozen, at first, and most of the copies must long since have disappeared. I had accidentally come upon a copy of an early issue of the paper while preparing an article on the beginnings of the nationality press in this country. A good friend, who also answered to the description of being "a great hand at saving everything," had found it among the many interesting literary effects of his father and had sent it to me. I saw at once that it was much more than a mere newspaper of the time. It was a great repository of local history pertaining to the immigrants from the district of Voss, in that it contained many names of newcomers and their destinations, together with notices of marriages, births, and deaths among them, as well as like

data from the same district in Norway. It was also, as it were, a bridge between the old home district and its representatives in pioneer America, in that it contained short personal letters written on both sides of the sea to relatives who might not otherwise be reached by them. I realized what a store of interesting information would be found could more copies of the paper be discovered. The sense of its rarity was the more impressed upon me when I found that no mention was made of its existence by other historians. Evidently they had not known of it.

As yet, of course, I knew nothing of the existence of this file, but some time afterward I wrote to an interesting old man who as a young immigrant had been connected with the then intellectual life of the nationality, to get such recollections as he might have of the newspapers of the time. Incidentally I mentioned that I had a copy of the little Vossing paper and inquired if he knew anything of its history. Imagine my surprise and delight to receive a letter from him stating that he had a practically complete file of it covering the three years or more of its existence. It was somewhere among the effects in his old trunks in the attic and some day, perhaps, I might see it.

When, later, the old gentleman came to a local sanitarium for treatment, I lost no time in calling on him and learning more about the precious file in his possession. Again he repeated his promise that he would let me see it sometime if he ever had an opportunity to unearth it. He informed me that he had a mass of other material, old books, letters, clippings, and scrap books in the same attic, a further interesting revelation. Doubtless in this accumulation were many other treasures of value, but for the present my heart was set upon that file.

The more I reflected upon the subject, the more urgent it seemed to me that some one should act and that it was up to me to do so. At his age, I reasoned, he might drop

off at any time, and with him might go his treasured trifles, so ridiculous from one point of view, so rich and valuable from another. His sons and daughters at home were active, energetic people of affairs, conducting a large farm and other activities, living distinctly in the present. They might take little time disposing of such effects, once he were gone; at any rate, it seemed the part of wisdom to deal with the aged owner of them himself, since his interest in them could not be doubted.

At last one beautiful summer afternoon I knocked at the door of his fine farm home, and happily enough was received by the patriarch himself. A delightful afternoon was spent with him. Tale after tale of early days in Chicago was told; how, when the future metropolis had but two lines of railway—one entering from the south and one from the northwest—the people went daily to meet the incoming evening train; how he had packed water from a pump on the prairie; of his musical studies and his ventures as a publisher of music; of the Great Fire, etc. He also showed me over his place and through his gardens, and treated me to grapes fresh from the vine. Three times, he said, he had been the victim of disastrous fires, first in the Chicago conflagration of '71, when all his plates and stock of music had been wiped out; next when his house, which stood on the site of the present one, had been destroyed; and lastly when all his grain-stacks and barns had once been burned up by a spark from a threshing engine. That the object of my quest should have escaped all these dangers seemed somewhat remarkable to me.

Having thus thoroughly ingratiated myself into his confidence, I finally broached the object of my visit, which was to see and, if possible, borrow his old newspaper file. Again he told me it was buried somewhere in the recesses of the attic, but that some day he would resurrect it and let me see it. I offered to help in the search for it, but was asked to wait until some more convenient time.

This, of course, did not get me anywhere; but, being a newspaperman and trained to get the essential thing wanted, I did not wholly give up. There was an afternoon train for home, but my host informed me that there was also a later night train, and if I would stay for supper he would himself drive me in his top buggy to the station. Here might be another chance. I accepted, and we continued our visit.

As we sat in the shade of the porch, looking out upon the lovely landscape where we could almost hear the heart of summer beating in the sunbathed fields and meadows, a bank of black clouds came suddenly rolling up from the west. In a few moments there was a dash of rain. Then one of the daughters came to the door and asked him if the skylight in the roof was closed. He believed not, and said he would go up and close it. "Would you like to see the view from our roof?" he asked me. "It is most charming." I should be delighted. So we climbed the stairs to the second floor, then up another into the attic, where at last, it was given me to see the numerous boxes and trunks which I knew contained the family relics and mementos and the particular object desired by me. From the attic floor a ladder ran up perpendicularly to a hole in the roof. Up this ladder we went in the rain and then stepped out upon the roof where we beheld a beautiful panorama spread out before us. I trembled with apprehension to see the old man climb this ladder, and more so when he stepped out upon the slippery roof and closed the window. It seemed to me that a misstep or a slip would send him sliding from the roof to a sudden death, and my quest and my pleasant visit have a most tragic result. But he was more sure-footed than I had imagined him, and we descended safely to the attic floor.

Now, I felt, was opportunity making her traditional and irrevocable knock at the door. I resolved not to quit

that attic empty-handed without a struggle and without exhausting every resource to attain my end. I engaged the old gentleman in conversation, and the consuming interest I showed in everything about me rekindled his own enthusiasm, and almost before he was aware of it I had thrown open one trunk after another and hauled out pictures, books, old watches, knives, rings, albums, faded manuscripts and letters, whose history one after another he told me. Finally, from the bottom of one of the boxes, he brought up himself the old newspaper file. At last I had it in my hands, and I never surrendered it until he indulgently agreed to let me take it along for safe-keeping in the great library of the state. Ordinarily I would have fled the house at once and the steaming supper awaiting us, but my story was not spoiled when I took the chance by remaining. My confidence was not misplaced and the file remained with me.

DOCUMENTS

SOME WAR-TIME LETTERS

Eldon J. Canright, the author of these letters from the front in the great war, was a graduate of the Wauwatosa high school with the class of 1912. For several years thereafter he was in the employ of a wholesale grocery establishment of Milwaukee. In March, 1917, he became a salesman for a firm of manufacturing chemists of Chicago; in May of the same year he enlisted in the First Regiment, Illinois National Guard, which unit was shortly afterward mustered into United States service as the One Hundred and Forty-ninth Field Artillery, which in time became one of the units of the famous Forty-second, popularly known as the "Rainbow" Division, of the American Expeditionary Force.

Canright received his preliminary training at Fort Sheridan during the summer of 1917, and sailed with his regiment for France in November of that year. He was soon promoted to the rank of sergeant and stationed as a dentist's assistant back of the line; but dissatisfied with this situation he asked to be relieved and joined the men as a private on the firing line. Save for a few days of illness, he was with his regiment on the firing line a total of one hundred and eighty days, during which time the Forty-second Division was several times commended for bravery by the French government and by our own. Upon the conclusion of the armistice Canright's unit was sent into Germany, where he remained throughout the winter and spring of 1918-19. His period of service covered, therefore, the entire period of American participation in the war on the Western Front. For copies of the letters, as well as for the facts here presented, acknowledgments are due Miss Amy M. Brown of Fairmont, Minnesota, a cousin of the writer. In printing the letters, entries of an intimate or inconsequential character have not been reproduced.

ON ACTIVE SERVICE WITH THE
AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE
NOVEMBER 5, 1917

MY DEAR FOLKS: I suppose you have been wondering why I haven't written, but this is the first opportunity that I have had, as we have been traveling since I wrote you last.

We had a lovely voyage across the ocean. The weather was ideal. There were many exciting and interesting events, but I cannot tell you about them. We saw flying fish, dolphins, etc., too, but nevertheless we were very glad to see land.

I am very much in love with France and with the French people. The refined or better class are *very* good looking. They have dark hair and eyes and olive complexions, but there are a few fair complexioned people. They think the American soldiers are kings—everywhere we are treated with the utmost respect and courtesy, although they cannot understand us. But they have a rather embarrassing habit of kissing you on both cheeks. (Of course, when some pretty French girl kisses you, you don't mind!)

Needless to say, I am in love with the children. They are all very cute and pretty, and I've made several friends, although we can't talk to each other. We just make motions and you'd laugh to see me trying to make them understand.

Of course everything here is very different from the good old "U.S.A." The streets are very narrow and so are the sidewalks, and the houses are all built of brick or stone and the poorer classes have thatched roofs but some of the houses are very pretty although, of course, all of them have high stone fences around them. They have lovely yards and gardens and everything is clean—much cleaner than in the cities or country in the United States. There is really no country here; we think of it because the farms are very small, not much larger than a truck garden, but are intensively tilled.

Fruit is very cheap. You can buy apples or pears, all you can eat for fifty centimes (10c), but other foodstuffs are expensive. Pie is three francs (about 60c in our money) and ice cream and candy bars one franc, etc.

The time here is six hours earlier than yours so I am getting ready for bed when you are eating your dinner. (I go to bed early here for reasons that I can't tell you.)

Mail is very irregular and uncertain so I don't know when, if ever, you will receive this letter.

I cannot buy good cigars here, at any price, so for Christmas all I want you to send me is *cigars;* send either Tom Moore or Robert Burns brand of cigars.

With heaps of love, I am

Yours,

ELDON,

149th Field Artillery, Sanitary Detachment, A.E.F. Via New York

SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE
December 14, 1917

MY DEAR FOLKS: I received your most welcome and interesting letters just a few days ago, and am hastening to reply as this is the first chance I have had to write. Please excuse pencil and bum stationery. It's all I have.

Mail is very irregular here as we only receive mail once or twice a month. I am sure if our friends and relatives at home knew how much letters from "The States" mean to us, and how anxiously we await mail day, they would not "count" letters with us and would feel well repaid for their trouble.

Blanche asked me if this country looked different from ours. Well, it certainly does—no matter where you go, in the city or small towns or country. And the French people are just as lovely and charming as they have been reported to be.

I was fortunate enough to get a few days' leave last week, so I went to one of the large cities near here and was a gentleman of leisure once more, and *believe me* it sure did seem good! I stayed at one of the nicest hotels in the city—had a lovely room too. You cannot imagine how good it seemed to sleep in a real bed once more and have clean sheets and a pillow! And to be able to sleep as long as I wanted to in the morning instead of getting up at reveille every morning. My room had a great big fireplace in it, too; so it was always warm when I got up, as the

"bellboy" (an old man) always came in and started the fire before I got up. The hotel was steamheated, too, but nevertheless they used the fireplace.

They have some very queer customs in this country. For instance, no matter where you go, even the most modern hotels and restaurants serve you a *whole* loaf of bread with your order, and you are supposed to cut off a slice as you want it, which would be bad enough if the loaf were small like ours; but they are great long affairs, about two and a half feet long (we say they must sell it by the yard), and shaped about like a baseball bat. So you can imagine how graceful (?) "yours truly" looked cutting (or rather trying to) a huge loaf of bread. And with the dining room filled with French people looking on! They never serve coffee with your meals, but you have all the wine or champagne you want. They also consider roast snails a delicacy but excuse me! However, I wish you could have some of the lovely French pastry, as they sure do know how to make delicious pies, cakes, etc.

The trains here are very different from ours. The coaches are divided into sections with side doors entering into each section. There are about eight sections to a car and each section seats six persons—three ride facing forward and three backward. The section, of course, extends the entire length of the car, just as our open street cars. The conductor does not come through the train when it is in motion, but climbs in or rather sticks his head in while you are at the station. The sections (first class) are very beautifully upholstered and are about the same size and the side doors are just like the doors to a limousine. They even have the strap for raising and lowering the window! They do not have any dining cars on their trains, as they stop at certain towns along the way, and everybody gets off and goes to a hotel or restaurant. Nor do they have any sleepers. They generally stop off at some town over night or just sleep in the sections. Their engines are not like ours either, but I'll not attempt to describe them except to say that they look like a 1618 model instead of a 1918. But nevertheless it is very comfortable riding on their trains. Oh! yes, I forgot to say that while their roadbeds are very well made, still they are not laid out like ours,

but wind in and out, and instead of cutting through a hill or filling in a low place, they just climb up over the hill and coast down into the valley, so one minute the old engine is puffing and tugging up hill (sometimes you think she isn't going to make it), and the next minute you are going "hell bent for election" down hill! I wish you could travel through this country as the scenery is very beautiful and so different from ours. The French are very religious and every city or town has a large church or cathedral right in the middle of it. Their churches and other buildings are very beautiful—have wonderful carvings, paintings, etc. As you go through the country you pass the farmhouses—always small, stone affairs, but whitewashed and very clean. You will see the French peasants plowing with oxen, or perhaps driving to town in a great, high, two-wheeled cart with a brake on it operated by a crank, just like our old-fashioned street cars. It looks funny to see the guy spinning that crank when he comes to a hill. Perhaps the car is drawn by two oxen (horses are scarce) but, if so, they are not hitched side by side as we do but one in front of the other. I rode to a small town near here in one last Saturday and was terribly afraid I'd fall out of the old thing, but I hung on all right. And always you will see the cider press, a huge old-fashioned thing. The poorer people drink cider instead of wine and they just dry out the part of the apple that is left after the juice has been taken out and cut it into squares and use it as fuel in their fireplaces. (Wood is very scarce, you know.) Every house has a huge fireplace extending along one whole side of the room. Oh! and I forgot to tell you that the house and barn are all one building. Sometimes the family lives upstairs, over the stable, or else they live in one end of the building and the cattle in the other. But no matter where you go the French treat you with the utmost respect and courtesy. They are very polite, even the children.

I have met and made friends with a very fine young French soldier. He helps me with my French and I help him with his English. You should hear me (or rather see me!) trying to talk French.

France is a beautiful country and the French people are charming; but for all that, there are too many thousand miles

separating me from the good old U.S.A.! We are "strangers in a strange land" and there is nothing can take the place of home and friends, you know.

Our camp is situated on a high hill or young mountain and we get a very good view of the surrounding country. You can see down the valley for miles, and see little towns here and there. The houses look like little white spots with the inevitable church spire in the center. And you can see the roads winding in and out, too. The roads in this country are very good. The trees are covered with bright holly berries and also mistletoe. It makes me think of the holidays and that makes me homesick. Gee! I sure will be lonesome this Christmas.

One of our men was buried the other day with military honors. It was sure impressive. The coffin was wrapped in the American flag and placed on a gun carriage drawn by six black horses. The entire regiment marched at half time behind the gun carriage. The band played a funeral march and the regimental standards were reversed. At the grave a volley was fired by his and one by the French firing squad. As the coffin was lowered the bugler blew "taps." Did I tell you I had taken out $10,000 life insurance for Margaret? Have you received any notice from Washington?

With much love, I am
E. J. Canright,
149th Field Artillery
Sanitary Detachment
American Expeditionary Force
Via New York

Somewhere in France
March 8, 1918

My dear Folks: We are now and have been for some time many, many miles from where we were when I wrote you last. We are now at the front and are doing our "bit" for sure. Some of us are stationed in the trenches and some of us in a ruined and deserted village just behind the lines. There is no one in the village but the soldiers and lots of rats. We sleep in empty buildings and at night the rats run away with our shoes (at

least it sounds that way). We sleep on the floor, too. However, I am detailed as dental assistant, so am located in a larger town, a little farther back. There are civilians living in this town, although it has been bombarded several times and many buildings have been destroyed.

We are within range of the guns and can hear them pounding away day and night. At night you can see the flashes of the guns and when the "Big Toms," as they call them, open up, you think sure the buildings are coming down because they shake so much. There are no lights in the town at night, all windows, etc., have heavy shutters and there are no street lights. Day and night the French scout machines fly over the city, constantly on the lookout for any German airplane that might try to come over. We have had two or three pretty exciting air battles already.

We wear our gas-masks at all times, or rather I mean, carry them, as they can throw gas bombs in this town, too. It is a funny experience living in constant danger of shell fire, etc. But for all that the civilian population goes about its daily work or pleasures, very much as it does in times of peace. You can go out into one of the beautiful parks here, any Sunday afternoon, and you will see many French civilians strolling through the parks and probably an American band will be giving a concert; but along the drive where in times of peace automobiles would be going, you will see long rows of the "Big Toms" (the large guns drawn by motor trucks), and as I have said, you will hear the "purring" of the airplanes overhead and also the roar and rumble of the guns, and in almost every direction you will see buildings that have been destroyed by shell fire.

There are many beautiful homes and châteaus, as well as towns and villages along the front, that have been destroyed by the shells. It just makes you sick to see them, and you wonder what has become of the people who lived in them before the war.

Of course, the manners and customs of the people in this part of France are just like they were where we came from, with the exception of a few minor details. For instance, here, instead of making their bread in long loaves, as they do in the other part of France, they make them round with a hole in the center,

just like a huge doughnut. You can picture me most any afternoon strolling along the Rue de ——, with a loaf of that bread around my arm. You carry it by shoving your arm through the hole. Savy? The bread is very good and I eat lots of it. Another funny custom they have is of locking their doors, by simply stepping outside and unscrewing the handle to the outside doorknob. They take the handle in with them, of course. You see in that way they can open the door from the inside readily enough but not from the outside.

And you should see the way the poor peasants do their washing. They carry the clothes to the river and they have a board a good deal like our ironing boards. They dip the clothes in the river, then lay them on the board and soap them well. Then they take another board shaped like a paddle and pound the clothes with this board (of course they are spread out on the other board). Isn't that a funny way to wash? It's so much easier to take a scrubbing brush and use that on them. (I know from experience, as all soldiers wash their own clothes. It's great sport. Nit.)

If this war lasts much longer I may bring my sisters a young French girl for a sister-in-law! There surely are some charming ones here. They have the most beautiful complexions. (They are not artificial either.) And their manners are perfect. Oh, I'm hard hit all right.

Love,
E. J. Canright,
Sanitary Detachment
149th Field Artillery
A.E.F. via New York

Somewhere in France
March 14, 1918

My dear Mrs. Pierson: I am going to try and describe to you what it is like in the trenches. Understand, of course, I cannot describe any certain battle, but what I am going to describe can and does take place anywhere along our front.

Try and imagine yourself standing in one of the trenches on the "fire control" step, or in one of the advanced "listening

posts." It is a beautiful evening, with the stars shining overhead and everything is so calm and peaceful that it is hard to realize that there are hundreds, nay thousands, of guns and tens of thousands of soldiers lying waiting and watching. Perhaps you have been on duty for some time and you are tired and as everything is quiet you look at your watch and it is between two and three o'clock in the morning. Your thoughts turn toward home, and you wonder what your friends are doing as it is early evening there. You wonder if they can see the same stars that you can see overhead. Then all of a sudden a rocket goes up, bursting over "No Man's Land," casting a red or perhaps a green light. That is the signal and then "Hell breaks loose." (That describes it so pardon the word.) Guns begin to roar and pound on all sides of you—the noise is deafening. You can see the flashes of the guns as they fire and you can hear the "whine" of the shells as they go through the air. In fact, you can tell when a shell is coming toward you as you can hear it "whining" as it comes toward you and all you can do is to crouch down and pray God it will not strike where you are. If it does it will be "taps" for you (as we say), or rather what is left of you! You can tell a "high explosive" shell from a "gas shell" because when a high explosive shell bursts it gives a sharp "crash," destroying everything near it, while a "gas shell" explodes with a "pop," very similar to the sound a bottle makes when breaking, as a gas shell is filled with a liquid (i.e.—gas condensed under high pressure, which instantly vaporizes on bursting). Of course, if a gas shell bursts near you, you must stop breathing instantly, until you have put on and adjusted your gas-mask! Then you may have to work for hours with that on. I could write whole pages about the various gases used in this war and their different effects on the human body, but just let me say that they are all horrible and cause a lingering and painful death. I pray God that if I have to give up my life in this war it will be with a bullet and not gas! At intervals between the roaring of the big guns you can hear the "spit" of the rifles as the infantry open fire and high over head you will hear the purring of the airplanes as they go up to make observations, range corrections, etc. And the enemy airplanes go up to give battle and you can hear the

"drumming" of their machine guns as they fight, too. At about five minute intervals star shells are sent up. They burst away up over "No Man's Land," and hang suspended in the air, casting a very bright light over "No Man's Land." And in the town behind our lines you will see the powerful searchlights sweeping the sky for any enemy airplane that might slip through our lines. If one does, their anti-aircraft guns open up, too, and then more airplanes come up. And so it goes.

A day battle is just the same, only our hardest fighting is at night. And what makes me sick is to see the wounded horses and mules; they do not understand it all and are perfectly innocent anyway. So you see it is all a game of chance; if no shell strikes near you, or no stray bullet finds you, you are lucky, that's all.

Of course you can only stand the strain of the trenches a certain length of time. Then you go to a town behind the lines, but even there you can hear the distant roar, like thunder, of the guns; and the airplanes are constantly scouting overhead. There are no lights allowed at night—all the windows, etc., have heavy shutters, and there are no street lights. It seems very funny to stroll through the town in early evening and not see a light anywhere—big buildings, etc., but all dark. It makes it hard to find one's way around; however, thanks to you, I have the flash light you gave me, and I use it constantly. I don't know what I would do without it. There are no amusements here, and unless one drinks he is out of luck. There are plenty of cafés, but as I do not care for that stuff, I spend most of my time exploring old ruined châteaus of which there are several on the outskirts of the city. They are very beautiful and old-fashioned, some of them even have "moats" around them and great iron gates, etc., just like the castles you read about in olden times. I often wonder what has become of the people who lived there before the war. I also like to go out into the woods and fields and gather flowers. There are many beautiful ones here. Some that we do not have in America. Or perhaps I take a stroll through one of their beautiful parks, or play with the children. I know nearly every little French kid in town. The little boys love to put on my steel helmet and belt, etc., and play soldier, boylike. When they have

a gun on their hip they think they are "it." But I wish you could see them stand at "attention" and salute. Believe me, these little children know what war means!

Sincerely,
E. J. CANRIGHT
Sanitary Detachment 149th Field Artillery
A.E.F. via New York

SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE
March 21, 1918

MY DEAR BLANCHE: I just received your letter dated January 30, so you see how irregular our mail is.

You asked me if I had seen any signs of war, etc. I have seen many thousands of German prisoners. I saw them the very first day I struck France, as they were working around the docks. And there are thousands of them in every camp I have been in. They do all the building, repairing, etc., around camp. Of course there are no prisoners here as we are too near the German lines, and they might escape too easily. As for wounded—well, I have seen wounded soldiers of every nationality engaged in this war (including our own). And you speak of guns and airplanes. Gee, I can see and hear them even in my sleep! I have seen all kinds of airplanes and also guns of every size and description! And besides all of these I have seen many beautiful homes and villages destroyed by bombs or shell fire.

Last night the enemy tried to break through our lines, but I am glad to say he did not succeed. However, I wish you could have been here and seen and heard the fighting.

That reminds me of a little incident. Saturday afternoon I was going up town and as it was a beautiful day the aviators were out in full force. There had been several rather exciting air battles during the day. Well an enemy airplane squadron attempted to come over. They succeeded in getting over the town so the "alert" was sounded. (That is the signal for everyone to get off the streets and seek shelter in the buildings designated for that purpose.) Of course, everybody immediately ran for shelter and so, just to see what it was like, my friend and I also went down into the cave. But we couldn't stand that very

long; we wanted to see the fun. So we "beat it" altho the people thought we were crazy. We ran up the street to the Square so that we could get a good view, and really you would have laughed if you could have seen us. All the streets were deserted. You couldn't see any French people anywhere, but here lined up in a row, like a bunch of "hay seeds" just arrived, were the American soldiers all breaking their necks to *see* the fight. The airplanes, of course, were right over us but fortunately our airmen were keeping the enemy busy so he didn't have time to notice us. High overhead, so high that they looked like black specks, were the airplanes. You could not, with the naked eye, distinguish our planes from the "Boche," but we could hear the rattle of their machine guns and could see the bursts of the anti-aircraft guns, breaking all around the airplanes. Some bursting in front, some behind, some falling short, etc. It was very exciting. Our airmen soon drove them back.

It is the same in the trenches. When the Americans fire a shot everybody sticks his head over the gun pit to see if it hits the mark—if it does, we cheer, and if it doesn't, we swear—while the French all duck their heads when firing. Every American soldier over here comes from "Missouri," I guess, as they all have to see everything that goes on, even though they are apt to get "picked" off by some "sniper" when they stick their heads up.

We have not had a very cold winter—some snow but not much. It is very springlike now.

Love,
E. J. Canright
Sanitary Detachment
149th Field Artillery
A.E.F. via New York

Somewhere in France
May 2, 1918

My dear Jane: I am conceited enough to think that you would not recognize me now, as I have been for the past few days just covered with mud from head to foot. But, if you could see what we have been doing and how we are living, you would understand that it is impossible for us to pretend to keep clean.

I am stationed with one of the most advanced batteries. We live, of course, in an abri many feet below the ground. The abri is lined with steel and heavy beams and is covered with many feet of rocks and earth. It is always cold and very damp. The floor is covered with slimy mud and water, even though we try to bale it out every day. And, of course, our quarters are very cramped as we sleep in tiers, one above the other. You cannot sit up straight in bed. If you try to you will bump your head against the bed above you. And it is very dark as, of course, there are no windows and only one small door, and that does not let in much light as it leads down from the trench above. However, we have been so busy giving the Hun hell (pardon me), that we have very little chance to sleep, and when we do we are so tired that we just pull off our boots and crawl into bed and go right off to sleep, even though the big guns all around us are pounding away so that the air is constantly filled with their "shrieks" and "whines" and even way down where we are, one can feel the earth tremble from the shock of the guns as they fire. Of course, I am here to take care of anyone that gets hurt, and that is all I am supposed to do, but nevertheless I take turns "standing at the guns" and hauling ammunition, etc., and that is no easy task when you consider that we have to walk along a long, narrow trench, running from the abri to the gun pits. The trench always has six inches to a foot of water in the bottom, and on the bottom there may be some slippery, slimy boards or rocks, and the sides of the trench are just wet clay and mud. And then, to add to your difficulties, it is roofed over, which makes it dark as a pocket, and in places it is not deep enough to allow you to walk standing straight up, so unless you are pretty well acquainted with the position you are apt to get some awful cracks on your "dome," but thanks to your steel helmet it won't knock you out. You'll just "see stars" for a few minutes. One has to be pretty careful when carrying ammunition through there. It kind of gives you a creepy feeling when you think what might happen if you should slip when carrying a big shell in your arms and it should strike on a rock just right! You would be "pushing daisies up in skeleton park, tout de suite."

And then we take turns standing guard on the guns at night. We have to watch and be ready to fire instantly in case the signal for a "barrage" should go up. I was on watch night before last from three o'clock in the morning to six; and last night from eleven o'clock to three o'clock this morning. It is very interesting when you are on guard as you can see the flashes of the guns in the different batteries around you and in that way you discover batteries that you could not *see* in the day time. And you can see the star shells rise and burst over "No Man's Land" every few minutes; and when the big guns stop firing for a few minutes, you can hear the bursts of the machine guns. One will "open up" away off on your right; then another will start in, off on the left, etc. And one feels well repaid for all his hardships by the thrill that goes through him when *we* get the signal to fire and the men jump to their posts. Each one knows just what his work is. For instance, one cleans the shell and passes it on to the next man, and he greases it; then the next one screws in the fuse and shoves it in the breech, etc. This all takes only a matter of a second or so, and then the gun is fired. The order may call for a certain number of shells per gun per minute "at such and such a range," but it's great sport to stand there and watch our guns give the Hun hell (pardon me again). You have to plug up your ears with cotton, because if you didn't the terrific noise and concussion of the guns would break your ear drums. But, nevertheless, that's when I'm happy. Didn't I tell you that I was made a dental assistant right after we left Fort Sheridan and kept it until just a few weeks ago? I gave it up because I want to be here where I can take part in killing off the Huns. This is the life, in spite of all our hardships. It's lots of fun to watch when the Hun gets scared. You can always tell because he keeps sending up star shells so we can't surprise him. Now, that I have seen how he has destroyed beautiful little towns and villages and made innocent little children suffer, he gets no mercy from me.

Love,

E. J. CANRIGHT,

Sanitary Detachment, 149th Field Artillery

A.E.F. via New York

IN THE LAND OF THE BARBED WIRE
May 12, 1918

MY DEAR FOLKS: Sometime ago, when I was in one of the largest cities in this part of France, I met a very charming young French girl. Needless to say, we became very good friends and when I left that beautiful city she gave me a little "charm" which she said I should wear, always, and no harm would come to me; so I let her pin it on the inside of my coat, just for fun. But I am almost inclined to believe it is a charm. When I went on guard at three o'clock this morning it was very dark and foggy—in fact so dark that you could not see an inch in front of you. I was not in the trench but walking on top, and of course you cannot have a light—not even a flash-light, because if you did, a German "sniper" might see you and take a "pot shot" at you. (During the daytime you cannot walk up there at all.) Well, I lost my direction in the dark and the first thing I knew I felt myself falling—I had walked right on to the camouflage over the trench. The trench in that spot was about eight feet deep and lined with rocks. On the bottom was about a foot of mud and water. And on a short trestle, to keep it out of the mud, was a little railroad track—used for hauling ammunition. My steel "derby" protected my head from the rocks, and by a miracle I missed the railroad track and just hit the mud—so I had a nice mud bath. I was soaked through and my clothes were just covered with that awful, sticky mud! But I was lucky at that. I could easily have broken my neck. Of course, I was mad and had to "let off steam" by swearing! Here I was soaked to the skin and covered with mud and I had four hours more to stand guard. You cannot leave your post when you are on guard, no matter what happens. Your life as well as the lives of your comrades depend on your sticking to your post. It was a cold, raw morning, too, but I guess because I was so "hot" mentally I did not catch cold. So you see I was lucky all the way around, and perhaps the "charm" did help, and when I was relieved in the morning I could not build a fire in our abri as you cannot build a fire during the day because the Huns could see the smoke coming from the chimney, and then they would discover your location and you would soon be receiving some of

their "greetings," i.e., high explosives, gas shells, etc. You see this is a game of hide and seek—but it's great sport, believe me. However, to return to my story, the fellows took a knife and scraped the mud off of me and the sun came out about noon, so I soon dried off. Now I feel fine.

We have quite a few shell holes around our place, as the Germans shell us once in a while. But really they are doing us a favor (although they don't know it) as we have no way of washing here excepting in those shell holes. Every time it rains they get full of water and we use them to wash in (providing they are not shell holes made from gas bombs, as then the water would be poison). We do not even cook our meals here—our "mess" is brought to us each day. Nor do we have our horses here. They are back of the "horse lines." I had occasion to go somewhere in a hurry the other day, and I managed to find a bicycle—it seemed awfully funny to ride a bicycle after riding a horse so much.

There is, or rather was, a pretty little village just a little way down the road from here; but now it is nothing but ruins and deserted. It just makes you sick to go through here and see what was once a peaceful little village, with pretty and comfortable homes, etc., and now all ruined and desolate—nothing but rats living there. You can even see the furniture, and the pictures, etc., still hanging on the walls—where there are any walls left.

It is because of just such scenes as this, that I am the happiest when we are giving the "Hun" hell—and we have been giving it to him, too, I can assure you. Sometimes when we have been firing very fast our guns get so hot that we have to pour water down the barrel and place wet sand bags on them, etc., to cool them off. But even then you could fry eggs on the breech.

Sincerely,
E. J. Canright
Sanitary Detachment,
149th Field Artillery A.E.F.

Somewhere in France
May 24, 1918.

My dear Jane: They say that all good things come together and I guess that must be true because yesterday we got paid and

got brand new uniforms and had a nice, hot shower bath and a shave and a haircut—all of which I was sorely in need of. And today we received mail from the States!

A few days, or rather nights, ago we were relieved by another battery. As soon as it got dark they brought up our horses. (You see we had to move at night so the enemy wouldn't see us.) It was a beautiful moonlight night—a full moon. We could see the road like a ribbon winding down in the valley, below, and the woods and fields all bathed in moonlight. It was a wonderful scene and one that I will never forget. The road was fine—just like a boulevard and lined with beautiful trees. All roads in France are like that. I had a good horse and he was feeling good, too, so I trotted a little ahead of the rest. We were all feeling good just then as we had done some very good work with our guns that afternoon. I cannot tell all that we did but I will say that there were a few less Huns in the world when we got through. And then the beauty of the night affected us, too—why you could even smell the flowers growing in the fields and along the road—the air was heavy with their fragrance. We rode in silence, of course, but you could hear the tramping of the horses' feet and the rumble of the gun carriages and every now and then we could hear the distant "boom" of the guns or see a star shell go up, away off to our left. Shortly before dawn we arrived at our destination, just outside of a little village. I just rolled up in my blankets and slept out in the field the rest of the night. And believe me it sure did seem good to sleep out in the open where I could see the moon and the stars and smell the perfume of the flowers and breathe plenty of fresh air, after living in one of those dark, damp, musty, rat-filled abris. In fact I was enjoying it so much, I didn't go to sleep for a long time but just lay there and "took it all in."

I could hear the clock in the church tower, in the town, toll off the hours. But I did not get up for breakfast. I slept, instead. However, when I did get up, I found to my joy that there is a river running through here. The water is clear and cold, as the current is very swift; but nevertheless we lost no time "getting in" and we sure did have some fun swimming around. I go swimming every chance I get. Then after I had got all

cleaned up, I went up town. It seemed mighty good to see stores and houses and people again and children playing in the streets and people strolling along the walks. You see I hadn't seen anything like that in weeks as there are no civilians or stores or houses at the front. (The stores and the houses are all destroyed.)

As I told you in the beginning of this letter, I got all "dolled up" yesterday and I had also been given a gold service chevron, so I went up town again last night and had a French Madame sew my gold chevron on my sleeve (left), and while I was up there I met Bill Tursman (one of our fellows), and as we hadn't seen each other in a long time, we went in a café and sat down and told each other what we had been doing and our different experiences, etc. It was just getting dark when I left him and started back to camp. When I was walking through the field I noticed a little boy and girl driving some cows through the field and all of a sudden I heard a terrific crash and saw a puff of smoke, just a few feet in front of me! My first thought was that the Germans were shelling us; but then I knew that couldn't be it because I hadn't heard the whine of a shell. So then I looked up in the sky to see if any Boche airplane was dropping bombs, but I couldn't see or hear one. However, by that time the smoke had cleared away and I saw a little boy lying all huddled up in the grass. I ran to him and saw that he had evidently found a hand grenade and picked it up and it had exploded. A piece of it had gone clear through his little body, entering just below the stomach and coming out the back. I knelt down to see if I couldn't stop the flow of blood and to feel his pulse. When his little sister saw him lying there all covered with blood she began to scream; in a minute the little fellow's mother and another little sister came running. When his mother saw him she, too, screamed and threw herself on him and started kissing his face. But I stopped her and told her she mustn't do that. Then she threw her arms around my knees and looked up at me with the most agonizing expression I have ever seen and just begged me to say "non mort" (not dead) "non mort." She kept saying that and his little sisters stood there crying as though their hearts were broken. I knew there was no chance of saving the little fellow's life, but I picked him

up in my arms and started to carry him to the ambulance, but he died in my arms; one of his little hands (he was only four) was fastened tight around my fingers! He had blue eyes and soft, silky, light hair—made me think something of John, his little neck was just as warm and soft. I will never forget the little fellow as long as I live! My hands and clothes were covered with blood and when I looked at it I thought, Oh, why couldn't it have been *me* instead of him. He had his whole life before him, but was one of the innocent victims of this awful war.

The news of the accident had spread by the time I got back to camp, and the fellows were pretty thoughtful and sober, that night. They all began talking about their little brother or sister at home—it almost seemed as though they all had one.

Little children over here ought to be taught not to pick up things like unexploded shells or hand grenades, etc., as they are very dangerous. I have seen soldiers injured by the same thing.

Although I have seen wounded and dead soldiers, nothing has ever affected me as this little fellow's death—it was so sudden and unnecessary.

But enough of this—I shouldn't have told you about it, only it had made such an impression on me—so excuse me.

Love,
E. J. Canright,
Sanitary Detachment,
149th Field Artillery
A.E.F. via New York

Somewhere in France
June 18, 1918

Cher Ami: A few days ago I received a very nice letter from your mother and also one from your father—both of which I enjoyed very much and will answer in the near future.

We have been very busy of late, and what little spare time I have I use to try and catch up on lost sleep! I think I have become quite expert now on sleeping as I can sleep at any time and anywhere and under any conditon—I even think I could sleep standing on my head! But it's a great life, nevertheless, and I wouldn't take anything for the experiences I am having.

The other day we took some guns away up near the front line trenches. There was a little town down in the valley, and we were on the side of the hill, just outside of the town—right out in the field with no protection at all (no abris or trenches)! I wish you could have heard the German machine guns firing at one of our airplanes that flew over their lines. It sounded like New Year's Eve and the Fourth of July, combined! But that didn't scare us—we "opened up" and sent over a nice shower of high explosives, shrapnel, etc.! It was lots of fun. The old Germans got "mad as a hornet" because, I guess, our shells were "handling" them pretty rough—putting some of the Huns out of commission, etc.! So pretty soon we heard the whine of his shells coming our way! But fortunately he thought we were on the other side of the town, so he shelled the hill on the opposite side of the town! (It was one of those little "one street" towns that are so common in France.) I can assure you it was very interesting and very thrilling to watch those shells bursting across from you and knowing that they were intended for you! There was one house standing a little farther up the hill than the rest and I expected every minute, to see a shell strike and destroy that house, as they were bursting all around it—shooting up mountains of rock and dirt! The Germans kept that up until, I guess, they thought they had completely "wiped us off the earth"; then they stopped.

However, just about sunset and after our airplanes had come down, several "Boche" airplanes went up and began circling around way up over our heads, and in a few minutes we heard the "whine" of shells again, and this time they were bursting on our side of the town—just up the hill aways, in front of us! At first we thought the Boche airplanes had located us and were directing the fire, but I guess they were just trying to find us because they began sweeping the hill (as we say), but stopped before they hit us.

I was real good last Sunday night and went to church for the first time in months! It was some church too! It was held in an old and deserted stone quarry—the rocks and walls of the quarry were covered with moss and there were even flowers growing in the crevices! It was very picturesque. The soldiers

sat around on the rocks and ledges—some of them even climbed way up near the top. The sermon was delivered by a Y. M. C. A. man. It was good, too.

Sincerely,
E. J. CANRIGHT,
Sanitary Detachment,
149th Field Artillery
A.E.F. via New York

SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE
July 1, 19 8

CHER AMI: We have been touring the country for some time now, and I have not received any mail nor had time to write for a long time.

This certainly is a wonderful country and the more I see of it the better I like it. There are beautiful winding roads with quaint and picturesque little towns dotting the roads, here and there, with their red tile roofs and white plaster walls showing through the trees. The houses are all built together—that is, one is built right on to the end of the other. But there is no uniformity as to size—one may be anywhere from a foot to a whole story higher than the one next to it, or anywhere from a foot to ten feet wider. This gives a very funny appearance—like a house built on the installment plan—as it really looks like one long house on each side of the street. And always there will be one-half of the house occupied by two or three cows and a horse or so and perhaps a few pigs and chickens, too. One might think from such arrangement that the people would be dirty and untidy, but such is not the case. When you enter their homes you will find the "pots and pans" all polished and shining and the floors, etc., all spotless. In some of the houses they have queer tile floors, something like our bathroom floors.

The French are a very hard working people. Those peasants are up early in the morning and work until late at night, some of them in the fields and some making willow baskets, etc.

We were billeted awhile ago in a very pretty little town right on a canal. It was very picturesque—like the ones you see in the movies. Great big trees on either side and a path on each

side for the mules or oxen to walk when pulling a barge along the canal. I was even fortunate enough to spend an afternoon on one of these queer barges. The bargemen live right on their boats with their wives and families—it is their home. There was good fishing in the canal too, but I didn't catch any.

In our wanderings we have picked up and adopted three little French boys that we found half starved and only half clothed and with no friends or relatives left. They are wearing our uniforms, although they are large for them, as the youngsters are only about ten or twelve years old. And we have also picked up a whole flock of the cutest little puppies you ever saw. So you see we are doing our share. I wish you could see the little French boys standing in mess line with their "kits" or see them strutting around town wearing spurs and "lording it" over all the other little French kids in the town. I'm sure the other youngsters envy them. We always give them our odd change so they can have a little spending money, too.

E. J. Canright,
Sanitary Detachment, 149th Field
Artillery, A. E. F. via N. Y.

Somewhere in France
July 8, 1918

My dear Folks: I believe I have told you in another letter that because of the fine record we have made since we have been at the front we have been chosen for "shock troops." Well, we sure are being *shocked!*

Try and picture the very worst thunderstorm you have ever seen; then multiply it by about ten thousand and you will get some idea of the battle that has been and still is raging along this front and in which we are taking a very active part! The battle started shortly after midnight a few days ago and has been raging ever since! It started with a very heavy bombardment all along the front, and as the country here is very level and prairielike you can see for a long way, and I can assure you that it is some sight at night to see the blinding flashes of the guns all along the line—and even away off on the horizon you can see the pink glow flare up and die down and flare up and die

down again—very much like a city burning in the distance would look—and the roar and crash of the guns just seems to tear the air into shreds, and the concussion shakes the ground. And to add to the confusion you have the whine and shrieks of the shells, some coming and some going! And signal rockets of all colors and all descriptions are constantly shooting up into the air, as that is the way the army "talks" at night. It's a wonderful sight! The first night a shell struck an ammunition dump and rockets went shooting in every direction; it lasted for several minutes and was very thrilling!

Of course every little while the "gentle Hun" sends over gas, so that we have to be constantly on the alert for it and wear our gas clothes most of the time—and carry our gas-masks all the time!

We all have cotton in our ears, but, nevertheless, the concussion of the guns has made some of us temporarily deaf. We have not taken off any of our clothes or gone to bed since the battle started. When it slows up a little we just lie down on the ground, right by the guns, and get what little rest and sleep we can. Our meals are brought to us, as we may not leave the position long enough to go and get them!

The first day they brought down an observation balloon right near us. An aviator attacked it and hit it with an incendiary bullet from his machine gun. The balloon came down in flames, but the observer jumped and came down in a parachute! However, about a minute later, and even before the observer had struck the ground another airplane had rushed up after the machine that "got" the balloon. It was partly cloudy that morning and he was trying to get away and hide behind the clouds, but the aviator brought him down and he came tumbling out of the clouds with his machine a mass of flames. That happened three days ago, and the burned and broken airplane is still lying there, and so are the two aviators! They are an awful sight as all the clothes and nearly all the flesh is burned off of them. (And what little is left is all charred and cooked!) And when the wind is in the right direction (or rather wrong direction) we get a very disagreeable odor, as there are several dead horses, etc., lying out there, too; no one has had time to bury them yet!

During the daytime there are a great many airplanes flying overhead, constantly trying to "see" what the other side is doing. We have witnessed some very exciting air battles. It is nothing unusual to see anywhere from two to two dozen airplanes fighting and chasing each other in and out of the clouds as they maneuver to get into position to fire—we can hear the "spitting" of their machine guns as they fire; sometimes you can hear them fighting when they are above the clouds, too! And twice a very daring German aviator flew down over our position and turned his machine gun on us! We could hear the "whang and spit" of the bullets as they struck the ground within a few feet of us! He flew so low that we could see the black cross on the plane and see the aviators shooting at us! But they didn't stay long. They would just shoot down and fire and then away they'd go before we had a chance to shoot back at them. You see we are right out in the open with no trenches or abris to protect us and so are an easy mark for anything like that! And the Huns have been sending over "beaucoup" shells, too! So the field around our position is all torn up with shell holes—some big ones, too, as they have shelled us with their big "220." One of those big shells makes a noise like the rumble and roar of a freight train going about a thousand miles an hour! When we hear them coming we say, "Here comes another of the Devil's fast freights!" And when they burst a mountain of rocks and dirt shoots up in the air higher than the trees! They make a hole about eight feet deep and about fifteen feet in diameter. And shell fragments scatter for about three hundred feet! A shell fragment makes an awful wound, too, as it just tears a great hole in you, while a bullet just drills a clean round hole! So you can imagine what would happen if one of those shells should get a "direct hit" on our position!

There is or rather was a little town over in a clump of trees near here—now there isn't even a wall or a piece of a house standing. There are just broken bricks and pieces of plaster scattered around.

Another thrilling sight is to see the ammunition caissons bringing up ammunition. Each caisson is drawn by six horses hitched

in teams of two, and a man rides the left horse of each team. They generally come up just before dark and you can see the long line of caissons stretching away down the road, and coming at a gallop. The horses are covered with sweat and lather when they get here! We unload the caissons in a jiffy and then they start back again, at a gallop, as the Huns are apt to shell the road at any time—so they are running for their lives! In fact the other night the road was shelled when they were bringing up ammunition! The driver swung off the road and came through the fields, spurring the horses to even greater speed!

This kind of warfare means a great many killed and wounded, but nevertheless I prefer it, as it is the only way to even end the war—just kill off all the Germans!

I have given you details and described disagreeable things, but I just want you to know what war is and what it means for us and for everyone!

But I think it's great sport and certainly am glad I'm here and taking part in this—one of the greatest battles the world has ever known.

Love,
E. J. Canright,
Medical Department
149th Field Artillery
A.E.F., A.P.O. No. 715

Somewhere in France
August 1, 1918

Cher Ami: To say that I am tired would be putting it mild, as we have been advancing right on the heels of the Germans! And that means, of course, that we have to travel over shell-torn roads and through woods and fields—any old way—so long as we get there! The weather has been bad lately, too, and the roads are very muddy and slippery, and the heavy caissons sink way in the mud, and they bump and slip and slide into the shell holes—sometimes you think they will certainly tip over or get stuck, but we always manage to get out some way—if a caisson gets stuck the men all take a hold and help the horses pull it out. It is very hard on the horses and on the men, too, and

especially at night because then it is so dark that you can't see where you are going—or even see the road! Twice my horse slipped in a shell hole but fortunately I felt him going in time, so I just took my foot out of the stirrup and slid off of him when he rolled over, so he didn't get on top of me. And in some places the roads are shelled so bad that we simply can't use them but turn off and travel through the woods and that is bad, too, because it is even darker there, and you have to watch out or some limb or branch of a tree will knock you out of the saddle. And so it goes! And when we get into "position" we fire until the Huns have retreated out of range of our guns and then we advance again, so you see it's pretty wearing on everybody and everything. But nobody complains—in fact we are all eager to keep going and drive the Huns back.

We are and have been for some time in territory just recently occupied by the Germans. The woods and fields—in fact the whole country around here—are full of dead Germans and dead horses—the stockyards in Chicago cannot smell any worse than the woods we are in right now! Most of the dead Germans here are either very young or quite old (the Germans retreated too fast to bury them). I have seen some rather pathetic sights, too. I found one German who had been shot in the knee and he was lying there with a photograph, evidently of his wife and two little daughters (they were nice-looking, too) still in his hand. But such is war!

When the Huns retreated they threw away some of their equipment—the woods are full of German ammunition of all kinds, hand grenades, rifles, bayonets, steel helmets, mess kits, canteens, and even clothes! So at last the "souvenir hunting" Americans can get all the souvenirs they want. The Huns must have stolen everything they could carry from the towns they captured as there is everything from baby carriages to sewing machines lying around in the woods and all kinds of civilian clothes, dishes, etc., and even tables and chairs.

Of course, we have a great deal of artillery here and keep pounding away at them day and night—the noise is deafening. The Hun aviators are constantly trying to slip past our aviators and drop bombs on us and swoop down and empty their machine

guns on us! I wish you could be here and see the fun when one does get through. Our machine guns open up on them of course, and we all have German rifles and "beaucoup" German ammunition that we have picked up and we get behind a tree or lie on the ground in the open and blaze away at them, *with their own ammunition*. It's great sport, I can assure you. The aviators never stay long, you may rest assured, as we make things pretty warm for them.

The other morning just as I was shaving, the Huns shelled the woods we are in. Oh Boy! but they sure did send them fast and one hit a tree just next to my bunk (we sleep on the ground) and cut the tree right in half. The concussion of the explosion made my ears ring for hours, and limbs and twigs and leaves fell all over me! I'll admit that for a second I thought it was "taps" for me. And do you know what flashed across my mind that instant? I thought of the good dinners I have had with you and now I would never have another. (You see our rations cannot keep up with us very well, so we are hungry all the time—that's why I thought of "eats.")

I used to fear death; but now I've seen so much of it that I do not fear it. Of course, I am young yet and enjoying life so do not want to die; but if I should be killed I would not be afraid.

Another very interesting sight was the towns we passed through coming up here that had not been shelled, as the Germans had not taken them; yet the people had gone away, as they feared the Germans would come—that was before we stopped their advance. We stopped in some of the towns and the place would be absolutely deserted, and yet the doors to the houses were unlocked and when you walked in you found everything just as the people had left it—dishes and silverware on the table and clothes hanging in the closets and sheets and pillows on the beds and pictures on the walls, etc., and stoves with the pots and pans and cooking utensils in the kitchen! And the big old "Grandfather" clock in the dining-room, too! The people who lived there will find things just as they left them when they return—we didn't take anything. Of course farther up towards the "front" it was the same old story—houses, churches, etc., all in ruins!

There are French officers and soldiers here with us too. I wish you could see them. They are a fine type of men and good soldiers, too. For instance, for the last day or so we haven't had any bread—and what little we did have was green with mold—so this noon the French gave us their bread. They will do anything for us! And they sure can fire their guns fast! And they "stick" to their guns and keep firing just as we do even when the shells are coming our way; and when you hear one coming it sounds as though it was going to hit right where you are standing—that takes nerve, too! You see we have no protection from shell fire and when they shell us, we just drop flat on the ground when a shell bursts near us, to avoid flying shell fragments as much as possible; and, believe me, they make a "*wicked*" whang and thud when they go over you and bury themselves in the ground! But the next instant we are on our feet and "feeding" the guns again!

Now have I explained enough why I do not write oftener? You see what little time we have, when we do not fire, we just drop down and sleep right by the guns (we have to sleep sometime you know). And we can sleep, too, even though the batteries right around us are firing—the roar and whine of the shells can't wake us!

Sincerely,
E. J. Canright,
Medical Department,
149th Field Artillery, A.E.F.
A.P.O. 715

August 2, 1918

Cher Ami: I wrote you a letter yesterday P. M. but have not had a chance to mail it yet. However I am glad of it, because last night we had the good fortune to bring down a Hun airplane. Several of them flew over just before dark and fired at us with their machine guns and we "opened up" on them with our machine guns and the rest of us seized our German rifles and ammunition and also fired at them and believe me it was some noise. But it's great sport and very exciting. Well, you can

imagine our joy when we saw one turn around and start to come down! I saw him just skimming over the tree tops and saw where he was going to land, so I started after him on the run. They lit in a field but purposely skimmed along the ground and ran the machine into the woods to damage it so that we couldn't use it—See? Of course, it hit the trees and broke the wings and propeller, altho the engine and body were all right. A Frenchman and I were the first ones to reach them, and the aviators, there were two of them, stepped out of their machine and held up their hands. They started to walk towards us but one of them staggered and fell. I saw that he was wounded so I dropped down to examine his wounds and give him first aid, while the Frenchman kept the other one covered with his rifle, as you can't trust a Hun—he might have shot me altho I was giving first aid to his companion. The pilot was wounded in several places, I discovered, after I had taken off his leather headgear and goggles and leather coat, etc. He was shot in the shoulder and on the leg and then I dug a shrapnel bullet out of his back. You can imagine my surprise when he started to speak to me in English! He said he used to live in Philadelphia. He told me he was twenty-nine years old and asked me if I thought he would die, and when I told him "No," he grabbed my hand and thanked me over and over again. Then he unpinned and gave me his aviator's badge—he said they would take it away from him anyway. I have it and shall keep it as a souvenir. I'll show it to you when I get back. Well, after I'd fixed him up, I saw that the observer had been wounded, too—shot just below the knee. It seemed funny to be giving first aid and trying to save their lives when just a minute or two before they had been shooting at us with their machine guns, trying to take our lives. But I consider that if I didn't do all I could to save them that I would be no better than they were. Of course a big crowd gathered in a few minutes and we sent the two aviators to the hospital in an ambulance, and under guard. As I said before, if they had been dropping bombs on some city and injuring innocent people, and I had got to them first, I would have shot them instead of giving them aid; but they were only shooting at us, and we are "fair

game," so it was a fair fight, and they should be treated accordingly. Wish you could have been here and seen it—you may see it anyway because they took pictures of it all.

As before,
E. J. C.

THE QUESTION BOX

THE MEANING OF MONDOVI

I notice in the December number of the WISCONSIN MAGAZINE OF HISTORY an inquiry regarding the name of the city of Mondovi, Wisconsin.

As near as I can learn, this name was given to the pioneer settlement on Beef River (called by the early French traders Rivière de Boeuf) by Elihu B. Gifford, who was born at Scott's Corners, Saratoga County, New York, and who came to what is now the city of Mondovi in the year 1856.

Mr. Gifford was well educated, considering the time in which he lived, and was an incessant reader. Like a few of the early settlers, all of whom were eastern Yankee stock, he was a subscriber to the New York *Ledger*, a weekly paper at that time edited by Robert Bonner. This paper was a voluminous publication, and in addition to current news always contained a few spicy novels, and generally devoted considerable space to history, and it is said that Mr. Gifford, in reading an account of the Napoleonic wars in this paper, was struck by the name Mondovi, a town in northwestern Italy where a battle was fought on April 22, 1796, in which the Sardinian forces were completely defeated by Napoleon.

Any American visiting Paris and making a careful inspection of the inside of the Arch of Triumph will find the name Mondovi in fourth place from the top, said list of names being the important battles fought by Napoleon in his Italian campaign.

Mr. Gifford went overland in an emigrant wagon to Spokane, Washington, in May, 1878, along with about forty others from the little village of Mondovi. Later he named the village of Mondovi, Washington.

D. A. WHELAN,
Mondovi

THE LANDING PLACE OF JEAN NICOLET

I would like to ask if you have an idea where the spot is where Jean Nicolet made his visit to a Wisconsin Winnebago Indian village in 1634. Was it on the shore of Lake Michigan or Lake Winnebago, and how can it be reached? I am a descendant of the Winnebago and would like to pay a visit to the place.

ULYSSES S. WHITE,
Greenwood

So far as historians know, Jean Nicolet was the first white man to visit Wisconsin, and at that time (1634) the Winnebago

were in possession of most of eastern Wisconsin. It was not until after Nicolet's visit that the Winnebago, in a fierce war with the tribes south of them, lost a large number of their warriors. Historians are not able to say definitely just where Nicolet first saw a Winnebago village; there seem many good reasons to suppose, however, that it was at Red Banks, on the southeast shore of Green Bay, that the village stood where Nicolet landed. We have only the briefest description of his voyage, given from hearsay by a Canadian historian. He reports that Nicolet came up the Ottawa River, crossed into Georgian Bay, and skirted Lake Huron to the Huron villages then on its southeast border. There he obtained a canoe and five Huron guides, and pushed north and west until he found the "men of the sea," as the other Indians called the Winnebago. These Indians received him as a god, since he carried thunder and lightning (two pistols) in his hands. They made a great feast for him of many roasted beavers, and entertained him with the best they had. He made a peace between the Winnebago and the Huron, and then returned the way he had come.

SOME WINNEBAGO CHIEFTAINS

We have a local county historical society of this county (Blue Earth) and have been gathering what material we can with reference to its early history. For some eight years during the fifties and early sixties a Winnebago reservation was located in this county, and some of the chiefs of that nation have bequeathed their names to various localities in the county; there is a village by the name of Good Thunder, a township by the name of Decoria, and a small stream called Winneshiek, and we have been trying to find some data with reference to these chiefs. The only one that we can find anything about at all is Chief Decoria; we can find nothing about Winneshiek or Good Thunder. They left this county for their reservation in South Dakota but only stayed there a short time, and I understand that they returned to Wisconsin, to their old hunting grounds there, and that the descendants of their bands are still located in central Wisconsin. Does your library contain any data with reference to these chiefs or any of them?

THOMAS HUGHES,
Mankato, Minn.

If you have access to the *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, you will find much about these Winnebago chiefs. The Decorah family was the best known of all the Winnebago. (This name is

spelled in various ways; we have settled on the above form.) The oldest Decorah, head chief of the tribe, died in 1836. He had several sons, brothers, and cousins. Waukon Decorah, or Snakeskin belonged to the La Crosse band. He was living in 1867; probably his family was the one for whom your township was named. His descendants still live in Nebraska. Angel Decora, an artist from this family, died last year in New York.

Winneshick was another prominent chief, with sons of the same name. They belonged to the Mississippi River bands. Young Winneshick died in 1887 near Black River Falls. He was what was known as a "good Indian." He returned from the Nebraska reservation to Wisconsin about 1872. Descendants of his live near Black River Falls.

Good Thunder's Winnebago name was Wakuntschapinka. He was in the Black Hawk War, apparently on the side of the whites (*Wis. Hist. Colls.*, XIII, 465).

If you will write to Dr. N. P. Jipson, 4310 Indiana Avenue, Chicago, he will tell you where you can obtain more information about these chiefs. He is writing a history of the Winnebago Indians and knows several of the present members of the tribe.

BRITISH OFFICERS AT MILWAUKEE

In working up the history of Milwaukee, the Milwaukee Historical Society has been making research for information as to whether England ever had a civil or military officer located at Milwaukee, and also, whether England ever had a war vessel on Lake Michigan.

C. M. Scanlan,
Milwaukee

There certainly was considerable activity at the Milwaukee Indian village during the Revolutionary period, although whether an officer was stationed there or not it is difficult to say. Charles Langlade and his nephew Charles Gautier de Verville were both officers in the Indian department and were frequently at Milwaukee when raising Indian auxiliaries and supplies. There were also at Milwaukee a trader named St. Pierre and his nephew Marin (Morong), who aided the British officers at Mackinac during the Revolutionary years. Whether either of them was an officer or not does not appear. The British had

several small sailing vessels on Lake Michigan, partly armed as ships of war. One named the *Welcome* was sent out in 1778 (*Wis. Hist. Colls.*, XI, 120); another, a sloop named the *Felicity*, was commanded by Samuel Robertson in the autumn of 1779 (its log is in *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, XI, 203-212). You will find a brief notice of Milwaukee in the Revolution, in *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, XVIII, preface, also note p. 375. The index volume, XXI, under the caption "Milwaukee," subhead "in the Revolution," gives references to all the material on the subject we have been able to find.

During the War of 1812 conditions were reversed. The Milwaukee Indians, who during the Revolution had inclined to side with the "Big Knives" (Americans) were in 1812 strongly pro-British. Robert Dickson had a subordinate officer at Milwaukee named Chandonnet. Dickson's letters show that he had a great deal of trouble with the Milwaukee Indians (*Wis. Hist. Colls.*, XI, 278, 281-82, 289, 293-96, 298, 302-305, 309). Thomas Forsyth, Indian agent at Peoria, attempted to influence the Milwaukee Indians to side with the Americans (*Wis. Hist. Colls.*, XI, 324, 328, etc.), but with very little success. Dickson and his men controlled their activities.

To speak of British officers without qualification as being at Milwaukee would be somewhat misleading. The men employed in the West both in the Revolution and in the War of 1812 were traders, both French-Canadian and British, who were employed by the Indian Department and given pay to use their influence with the Indians. However, Langlade, Gautier, Dickson, Chandonnet, and such men were certainly in the service and had their names on the pay rolls. The *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections* publishes more of the documents from the Canadian Archives than we have done. You might find additional material on these supplementary officers in their files.

EARLY KNOWLEDGE OF THE DELLS OF THE WISCONSIN

Can you give me any information as to when the Dells of the Wisconsin first became known to white men, and what are the earliest references to them in print?

H. E. Cole,
Baraboo

The early history of the Dells is quite obscure. The Winnebago term for the Dells was Neesh-ah-ke-soonah-er-rah—Where the Rocks Strike Together. We have been trying without success to determine who was the first white man to see the Dells. The Green Bay traders had trading posts on the upper river by the twenties of the last century. We find letters dated from the upper Wisconsin (*Au haut du Ouisconsin*) in 1827 and from that onward. Among the earlier traders were Jacques Porlier, Jr., who at one time had his family with him; Charles Grignon and his younger brothers, Paul and Amable. The latter seems to have made the upper Wisconsin his permanent home from 1829 onward. He was the youngest of Langlade's grandsons and was for some years a clerk for the Hudson's Bay Company in the Athabasca region. He returned home in 1823, just too late to see his mother, she dying in October of that year. At that time he brought a bride from Mackinac, Judith Bourassa, a kinswoman of his grandmother Langlade. It is said he took his wife and family goods in a boat up the Fox River to Portage, thence up the Wisconsin to Grignon's bend in northern Juneau County. Before this there had been considerable passing up and down the river for trading purposes. Amable opened a small farm on the upper river and sold his surplus produce at Fort Winnebago. Morgan L. Martin offered to go into partnership with Amable Grignon, to build a sawmill. Grignon secured permission from the Menominee, and Morgan from the War Department Indian Bureau. But they were anticipated by the shrewd Yankee Daniel Whitney, who got his permit and built his mill in 1831. In all this enterprise on the upper river we find no mention of the Dells. Trading on the Lemonweir River was older, apparently, than that on the upper Wisconsin. In 1810-11 Louis Beaupré wintered on the Lemonweir (*Wis. Hist. Colls.*, III, 268); and in 1820 the Grignons were among the Winnebago there (*Id.*, XX, 156-57).

All indications point to an early knowledge of the difficulties of navigation in the Dells, and to the name having been applied by the French traders of Green Bay and the Portage, but apparently without being recorded in any document.

The earliest document in which we find the locality mentioned is a letter of J. M. Street, Indian agent at Prairie du Chien, who August 28, 1832, wrote to the Secretary of War announcing the capture of Black Hawk. He says (we have a photostat copy of his letter): "The Black Hawk was taken about 40 miles above the Portage on the Wiskinsin River near a place called the Dalle." At the same time Chaetar boasted "Near the Dalles on the Wisconsin I took Black Hawk" (*Wis. Hist. Colls.*, VIII, 316).

The maps are even later than the documents in indicating the Dells. The earliest map we have found giving any sign is that constructed by George W. Featherstonhaugh in 1835 for the Topographical Bureau. He has placed upon the upper river the following caption: "A narrow passage with lofty mural sandstone banks." Featherstonhaugh did not in person visit the Wisconsin above the Portage. His report was thus from hearsay. Lapham, in his *Topography of Wisconsin* (1844), under Portage County, says: "At the 'Dells' the river runs for three miles between Perpendicular cliffs of rock about three hundred feet high and only forty feet across. It is said that the gorge is so narrow at the top in some places, that one may easily jump across it." Lapham's map of Wisconsin, 1845, has "The Dells—perpendicular Rock Bluffs 300 ft. high River 40 ft. wide." The earliest permanent settlers at the lower end of the Dells were Amasa Wilson, C. B. Smith, and R. V. Allen from Galena. Allen was living there as late as 1878; he was a famous river pilot. For some years Allen's was the only house between the Grignons' on the upper river, and Portage. When Kingston went to the Lemonweir in the first part of 1838, he speaks of the Point Bas trail as being then plain and much used, whereas the trail crossing the river at the Dells was untrodden.

THE ORIGIN OF VIROQUA

Please give me the name of an authentic history of Wisconsin. I wish all possible information concerning Viroqua, the Indian maiden for whom the county site of Vernon County (formerly Bad Axe County) was named. Was she instrumental in the winning of the battle of the Bad Axe? When and where did she die?

J. C. KENYON,
Royal Oak, Mich.

We have found an explanation of the name Viroqua in the Draper Manuscripts 12F114. Viroqua was the name of a Mohawk princess, sister of the distinguished Dr. Oronhyetetha. She lived in Canada, near Brantford. In 1886 she was giving entertainments in the opera house at that place. An early settler of Viroqua, Wisconsin, came from Canada, and no doubt had heard the name among the Mohawk on Grand River.

THE HOME OF THE INVENTOR OF THE SELF-KNOTTER

In or near what Wisconsin city is the farm house of John F. Appleby, inventor of the first twine-knotter for a self-binder reaper? Are there any of the original buildings on the farm which were in use during his days?

ALLEN P. CHILD,
Kansas City, Mo.

John F. Appleby was brought up on the farm of his stepfather, Marshall Newell. In 1857 Mr. Newell owned two hundred and fifty acres on section twenty-three of the town of Lagrange, Walworth County. The nearest large town is Whitewater, where Mr. Newell died. Before 1873 his farm had passed into the hands of John Taylor, whose descendants still own the place. If you will write to John Taylor, farmer, Lagrange, Walworth County, Wisconsin, you will probably get an answer concerning the buildings on the farm.

Young Appleby early left home, and was living near Mazomanie, Dane County, when on August 5, 1862, he enlisted in Company E, Twenty-third Wisconsin Volunteers. We do not find that he owned a farm near Mazomanie. He is not listed as a farm owner in the census of 1860, nor in that of 1870. It seems probable that his boyhood home was the only farm on which he lived.

THE NAMING OF NEENAH

Can you give me any information as to the origin and history of the name Neenah? Am I right in assuming the word Neenah to be the name of an Indian girl, and if so is there any possibility of obtaining a likeness or picture of what represents her, for reproducing same?

HARRY F. WILLIAMS,
Neenah

The word Neenah is the Winnebago word for water. The story is told that Governor Doty was once traveling with a

Winnebago guide, and pointing to Fox River asked its native name. The Indian, thinking the governor meant the word for water, replied "Neenah." Doty supposed it was the native word for that river, and always spoke of the Fox as Neenah River. Afterward, liking the name, he used it for the town. Other authorities apply the story to an engineer who was surveying for the government in early days, and who in his report gave the name Neenah to the Fox River. So far as we are aware, no tradition associates the name with an Indian girl.

HONEST AMASA COBB

The First National Bank of Lincoln has just been printing a semicentennial souvenir. Amasa Cobb, who, as you know, represented our old Wisconsin district in Congress for four successive terms, was the principal founder and the first president of this bank. He was a member of the Wisconsin Senate of 1855-56. I remember the story that he exposed on the floor of the Senate an attempt to bribe him, which won him the sobriquet "Honest Cobb." It was said also that this was the legislature of the "forty thieves." I supposed that the occasion was the exposure of the bribery of the legislature by the La Crosse and Milwaukee Railroad Company; but that came later. I am unable to find any references to the incident in question in the publications of your historical society. I think it will not cause you much trouble to illustrate the incident in question very briefly on my behalf.

I remember also that General Cobb was criticized for his alleged drawing of two salaries—one as member of Congress, the other as colonel of the two regiments which he organized for the Civil War. If the information is easily available, I should like to know whether or not he spent much of his time in Congress while the war lasted. I should like to know also the date on which he organized each of the two regiments of which he was colonel, and the names of the regiments. I have data covering these points, but I am not sure of their reliability.

ALBERT WATKINS,
Lincoln, Neb.

With respect to the early career of General Amasa Cobb we have found some interesting material. Cobb was a member of the state senate for 1855 and 1856. In the latter year a special session in September and October was called to accept the Congressional land grants for railroads. There was a powerful lobby for the Milwaukee and La Crosse Railroad present, and it was openly charged that bribery was the order of the day. We do not find that Cobb made an open protest in the senate sessions;

but when the bill was finally passed, October 9, 1856, he "moved that the senate adjourn for the purpose of prayer." In the Legislature of 1858 an investigation was ordered, and Cobb was called before the investigating committee and sworn. His testimony was as follows: (Appendix to *Assembly Journal*, 1858, 113-15).

AMASA COBB—SWORN

Question.—Were you a member of the Legislature of 1856, and if so' were you present during the adjourned or extra session in September and October of that year?

Answer.—I was a member of the State Senate for the years 1855-6, and was present at the adjourned session, in the months of September and October, of 1856.

Question.—Were any offers of any stock, bonds or other valuable things made to you by any person or corporation during such adjourned or extra session, to influence you to support or oppose, or to give your aid influence to procure the passage or defeat of any measure pending before the Legislature, relating to the disposition of the lands granted by Congress to this State to aid in the construction of railroads? If so, state when, where, and by whom such offers were made.

Answer.—Some five or six days before the final adjournment of the said adjourned session, Mr. William Pitt Dewey, who was then the assistant clerk of the Assembly, invited me to take a walk with him, and while walking around the capitol square in the city of Madison, he (Dewey) introduced the subject of the bill granting the land which has been granted to the State of Wisconsin to aid in the construction of certain railroads, to the La Crosse and Milwaukee Railroad Company, and which bill was then pending before the Legislature. During said conversation he informed me that should said bill pass, he would get a quantity of bonds. He stated the amount that he was to receive, and to the best of the recollection of this deponent, it was ten thousand dollars. He asked me what amount would induce me to cease my opposition and support the bill, or come into the arrangement. I asked him why, or by what authority he made the inquiry? He replied that he had come right from Kilbourn and was authorized by him to say that I might make my own terms. He further stated that "we had had a consultation at the Capital House, and concluded that I, (Dewey) being well acquainted with you (deponent), and we having been around together a good deal, that I could be more likely to come to an understanding, or arrangement with you, than any one else could." He further stated that "they were bound to carry it through anyhow, and that I might as well make something out of it, as the rest of them." This, as near as this deponent can remember, was the language used.

Question.—What reply, if any, did you make to his proposition?

(Deponent declined to answer this question; but upon the same being pressed by the committee, under protest, he answered.)

Answer.—I asked him what was the amount of the capital stock of the company? He replied, ten million dollars. I told him to say to Byron Kilbourn, that if he would multiply the capital stock of the company by the number of leaves in the Capitol Park, and give me that amount in money, and then have himself, Kilbourn, Moses Strong, and Mitchell *blacked*, and give me a clear title to them as servants for life, I would take the matter under consideration. I was strongly solicited several different times during the pendency of said bill before the Legislature by the Hon. Wm. Chappell, then a member of the Assembly, to support the bill; and on one occasion he stated to me, that if the said bill passed, he, Chappell, would make $20,000 by it, or out of it, and that he wanted to see me do the same. I asked him how I could make it? He replied that my position as a senator would command that sum from the La Crosse Company, or words to that effect. He did not pretend to be authorized by any one to make any proposition, but did give me to understand that there was an arrangement to the effect, that those senators who came into it should receive that amount.

Question.—Did you, while a member of such Legislature, or at any time afterwards, receive or accept, either directly or indirectly, or did any person receive or accept for you, from any person or corporation, any stock, bonds, money, or other valuable things in consideration, or as a reward for your official vote, or your official or personal influence in favor or against any such measure or measures, or as a gratuity, gift, or present? If so, state when, and from whom.

Answer.—I did not at any time.

Question.—Did you have, during such session, or have you since had any conversation with any, and what members of that Legislature, relative to accepting or receiving, or having accepted or received, or having been procured, or expecting to receive any bonds, stock, money, or other thing in consideration for voting, or using their influence in procuring, or opposing the passage of any measure or bill relating to the disposition of lands granted to this State to aid in the construction of railroads? If so, state with whom such conversation occurred, and what was the substance of it?

Answer was in the affirmative with bill of particulars.

This testimony certainly entitles him to the sobriquet "Honest Cobb."

Cobb was speaker of the Assembly in 1861 when the war broke out, and as soon as the session closed he began enlisting men, and speaking through southwestern Wisconsin in favor of volunteering. It is said that he urged an early adjournment of the Legislature for the purpose of recruiting, and that his example and enthusiasm had much to do with Wisconsin's prompt response to the call for troops. May 28, 1861, he was commissioned by the governor, colonel of the Fifth Wisconsin, sworn into the United States service July 12, 1861. The Fifth Wisconsin Infantry drilled at Camp Randall, Madison, throughout the summer of 1861, and in September was forwarded to Washing-

ton, where the regiment soon became part of Hancock's brigade. Its colonel was acting commander of the brigade at the battle of Antietam and during other lesser actions. December 25, 1862, Colonel Cobb, having been elected to Congress from the third Wisconsin district, resigned his command. He entered Congress in January, 1863; during the recess in 1864 Cobb returned to Wisconsin and actively engaged in recruiting another regiment. Of this, the Forty-third Wisconsin, he was commissioned colonel August 10, 1864, sworn into United States service September 29, 1864. During the autumn of 1864 he was in the field, returning to Congress for the session beginning in December. March 13, 1865, he was assigned to the command of the Third Brigade, first district of Middle Tennessee, which he held until June 17, being mustered out June 24, 1865. This record of his military service is combined from the Wisconsin roster and Heitman's register. It is evident that he did hold two positions under the government from August 10, 1864, to June 24, 1865—Congressman and military officer.

HISTORICAL NOTES

ADDITIONS TO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

During the three months' period ending October 10, 1921, there were fourteen additions to the membership roll of the State Historical Society. Five of these enrolled as life members, as follows: Walter D. Corrigan, Milwaukee; Claude Hamilton, Grand Rapids, Mich.; Dr. Ludvig Hektoen, Chicago; Mrs. William S. Hills, Grand Rapids, Mich.; Henry D. Laughlin, Ashland.

Nine persons became annual members of the Society: Edgar G. Doudna, Wisconsin Rapids; P. P. Graven, Menomonie; Elmer S. Hall, Madison; Walter B. Kellogg, Superior; Judge Jeremiah O'Neil, Prairie du Chien; J. W. Pryor, Barneveld; Mrs. Mae Ella Rogers, Crandon; Rev. E. Benjamin Schlueter, Markesan; Edward H. Smith, Madison.

KENSINGTON RUNESTONE

A volume, in French, of the miscellaneous historical papers of Benjamin Sulte has been published by G. Ducharme, Montreal. The special interest of the volume to readers of this magazine, is a paper entitled "Au Mississippi en 1362," which is a discussion of the Kensington runestone, about which several papers have been published in this magazine. The reviewer of the volume for the *Canadian Historical Review,* volume 2, number 3, says that the article on the runestone "is mainly remarkable because it appears therein that Dr. Sulte is now convinced of the authenticity of the runestone, and believes that the Norsemen actually penetrated to the headwaters of the Mississippi by way of Hudson Bay in the middle of the fourteenth century."

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Professor John B. Parkinson ("Memories of Early Wisconsin and the Gold Mines") himself discourses interestingly of his early life. His later career, for more than half a century, has been identified with the University of Wisconsin in the several capacities of student, professor, vice-president, and vice-president emeritus.

Joseph Schafer ("Documenting Local History") is superintendent of the State Historical Society.

W. A. Titus ("Historic Spots in Wisconsin: VIII. St. Nazianz, A Unique Religious Colony") continues, in this issue, his interesting series of local historical studies.

The author of "A Treasure Quest" prefers to remain anonymous.