

SPRING PRAIRIE

You are looking at the community which earlier had been known by several different names...Spring Brook, Franklin, and Hemenway. The latter was an adaptation of an early settler's name. Abigail A. Whitmore Hemenway suggested the name Spring Prairie because of the natural springs that discharged into Spring Brook, a branch of Spring Creek.

The central place of the early community was Dr. Hemenway's. His two story log home was built in 1837 and included his home, office, store, boarding home, public meeting place, polling place and tavern. His brick hotel was built in 1845. That building can be seen at the NW corner of the intersection of Highways 11 and 120.

According to Beckwith's History of Walworth County, Hemenway's brick house was sold in 1845 to William H. Rogers. Three years later the owner was Nathan A. Howes. In 1854, Franklin Walbridge became the owner and in 1857 it was bought by Capt. Ezra F. Weed. It continues as a private home.

The first sermon preached in the town was held at Dr. Hemenway's home. That first service was held on July 10, 1836. It was conducted by Col. Samuel Phoenix, a traveling Methodist minister and soon founder of Delavan.

Hemenway's house was also the first post office in Walworth County. Dr. Hemenway was the first Post Master beginning in 1838. The Post Office was first named Franklin. Within the year it was changed to Spring Prairie. According to the 1891 Plat Book, this building was located on the Northeast corner of the intersection of Hwy. 11 and 120. The first frame house in the community was built in 1836.

Mr. Hemenway's house was a site of the Underground Railroad in Walworth County. No slave was ever recaptured here in Walworth County. Dr. Hemenway was known for his hospitality. Everyone was welcome at his home.

According to the 1882 History of Walworth County, the first township meeting held to elect officers was held in April, 1842. According to the 1873 Plat Book, Spring Prairie Township had several excellent schools and three churches. In 1850 the population of this community was 1419; in 1870 the population was 1209.

The first settler was Palmer Gardiner, who came April 15, 1836. Palmer Gardiner had the first grindstone in the county. It was too heavy to borrow and took two men to turn. It was a good day's work to get an ax or scythe sharpened. The first death in Walworth County was the daughter of Sylvester G. Smith on Spring Prairie or Gardner's Prairie on July 3, 1837.

In 1847 Josiah Puffer opened a shoe and boot shop. He had come to the area in 1839 from Massachusetts and was a farmer at first. He had learned shoe making in the east at the age of 14. A vinegar and cider factory is shown on the south end of Spring Prairie on the east side of the road in the 1891 Plat Book.

GERMAN SETTLEMENT

Have you ever driven through German Settlement? You have, if you drove through the intersection of County D and Church Road in the Town of Spring Prairie.

German Settlement was a busy community in the early days of this county. The church is the only building remaining at that intersection.

It was built in 1880. This was not the first building used for church services of the German Methodist congregation. When it was first organized for people in the northern part of the township, the Funks offered the use of their log cabin as an initial meeting place.

Meetings in the homes continued until the German Settlement School was built northeast across the road. The larger building was more convenient for the growing congregation and they continued to meet here for some years. About 1850, the group decided that a church must be built. Mr. and Mrs. Treffinger offered land on which to build a church and establish a cemetery. By 1853 the building was completed.

In 1880 there was a need for a new church. The pews were divided to separate the men from the women. By 1904 services were conducted in English.

The cemetery was established in 1850. In reviewing the records at the East Troy Historical Museum I found a listing of the burials. Some of the early burials included: Eley Noblet, daughter of P & L Noblet, 1 yr. 3 mo. The date was December 12, 1845. John Schein - January 1, 1853, Eve Schwartz - September 28, 1854, Rosina Funk - July 1, 1858 and Maria Dietz - October 12, 1859.

In 1921 the Cemetery Association was organized. On July 30, 2011 the German Settlement Cemetery Association and the Walworth County Genealogical Society held a program at the cemetery. One of the people portrayed that day was Henry Mohr. He was born in the Town of Spring Prairie in 1850. In 1874 he married Martha Katzman. He died on February 16, 1911.

In 1956 the church was deeded to this association. The church would remain in their care as long as it was maintained in good condition and no alcohol was allowed on the premises. The church has been closed since 1960 but it has been recently restored and is used for special occasions.

Immediately to the east and across the road was an early town hall or Grange Hall. In 1853 the district built a brick school house. Their first one had been either a log or frame building. Then in 1873 new brick school house was erected. This one was utilized until the school closed in 1943.

W. P. Meinzer of Honey Creek was the clerk in 1902. Florence Vaughn was the teacher for the 1909/10 year. She had 25 pupils and received \$35/month. Another report shows 32 students. In her report she wrote "I should like your approval in asking my board for new Histories, Geographies, Languages and Physiologies for the upper grades. The books we are using are not very new editions or the best of their kind."

There is a picture of the students at this school dated 1934 in the Good OL' Fashioned School Days book compiled by A1 Gruling. The teacher was Naomi Rhoda. Student surnames include Amon, Bartholomew, Fraser, Gaskell, Grunewald, Link, McCarthy, Miller, Mitchell, Peabody and Recknagel.

Dorothy Tober was the teacher in 1941/42. She had 12 students ranging in age from 7 to 13. Her salary was \$85 per month. Her school report indicated that they did not have hot lunch but they did have a radio and playground equipment. They did not teach farm accounting in 1942 but did teach it the next year. The value of all of the books in their library was \$250.

The 1942/43 school year was the last year that classes were held in this district. Dorothy Tober again was the teacher; she had only four students. A picture was taken at the June, 1943 school picnic. Those pictured included Dorothy Tober Barker, Kenneth (Chuck), Robert and Raymond Katzman, Lindy Conrad, and Richard Gaskell.

The Gruling book includes some memories of Tober/Barker's days at the school. Her first day of teaching in 1941 found her with eleven boys and two girls. The reason the attendance dropped so

drastically was that one of the families moved from the area and three students graduated.

Tober remembered her supervising teacher, Miss Josephine Turner. Those visits were appreciated as well as those from the County Superintendent of Schools, Mrs. Laura MacDougall. She came to review the physical aspects of the school. This included the two outhouses, the wood shed and another small shed that once housed the teacher's horse during the school day.

After the school closed the students from this district went to Honey Creek School. The old school house was sold to Eugene Katzman. He razed the building and built a home on that property. In 1951 the district officially consolidated with East Troy.

VIENNA

Did you know that you could drive to Vienna? Yes, Walworth County has a community by that name. It is on the very east side of the county in the Town of Spring Prairie at the intersections of County DD with Potter Road and Kearney Road.

John Martin came to this area in 1838. He had been a Judge in Connecticut. He had the water power on the pond which is now named Honey Lake. He built a saw mill which began operation in 1846. He mainly called himself a farmer in Section 24. His wife, Huldah, died October 26, 1844; he died in 1871.

The second post office in the township was established at Vienna back in 1845. Samuel Martin was the first postmaster and he called the office Martinsville. The first post office in the county was in Spring Prairie.

Winslow Page Storms came to the township in 1845. Storms built several houses, a store and post office. In 1848 he built the Vienna House, a combination hotel and tavern. It later became a private home. He was township treasurer in 1857 and town clerk in 1859 and 1860. He was town chairman for 1861 and 1862 and served as a county supervisor in 1861. He was town treasurer again in 1876.

A cooper, blacksmith, shoemaker, wagon shop and flour mill soon helped populate the community. Residents soon started arguing about the name of the community.

Storms took over as Postmaster in the latter part of 1845. He decided the name needed to be changed. He wanted the name changed to Vienna after a village in New York.

The Martin family didn't want to give up the name and it finally cost Storms \$800 to get the change. It became the name of the Post Office and the community. Storms was also able to get daily mail delivery rather than once a week via horseback carrier.

In 1853 Edward Zahm remodeled the sawmill into a grist mill on the shores of the pond. In addition to milling cattle feed he also ground wheat. His flour was well known for several years. Then his sons, Cornelius and Victor, took over the business. It stood for a few years in disuse and then burned.

A prominent Spring Prairie citizen was almost "dunked" into the pond, Honey Lake. This man believed that runaway slaves should be returned to their owners. Spring Prairie was a stop on the Underground Railroad and most residents felt that runaway slaves should be protected.

MARKER DENOTING EARLY BURIAL

As you travel from Spring Prairie to East Troy on Hwy. 120 have you ever looked closely at the woods on the west side of the road? In one corner you can see a memorial stone signifying where a child was buried as their family traveled west in the early days of settlement. When I first came to the county the grave was marked by a plain wooden cross. Now there is a more permanent marker.

This is not the only grave of a child who died in the county while the family was traveling west. Another site in this county is in the Town of Whitewater on what people in the area know as "Baby Hill." According to a former resident who owned the farm on which these graves are located a family came to Utter's Corners in the late 1840s with two very sick children. They got off the stage coach to stay at Utter's hotel until the children were better. The children died after a few days. The mother requested that the children be buried on the highest hill in the area.

The two children were buried on a high hill which is between the Richmond/Whitewater Town Line Road and Stader Road. A rock was placed on top of the grave. Then the family left. No one seems to remember their name.

INDIAN TRAILS MARKER

This marker showing where two Indian Trails crossed can be found on the south side of Spring Prairie Road between North Lyons and Hargraves Roads. This marker was placed by the DAR (Daughters of the American Revolution).

One of the trails was the Williams Bay/Mukwonago Trail. It started north of Williams Bay and headed toward Lake Como where it connected with the Lake Como/Williams Bay/ Fontana Trail. It then continued to Spring Prairie and up to Mukwonago. This particular trail was said to have been very deep and visible for many years after the white settlers arrived in the area.

The other trail was the Lake Geneva/Lake Michigan Trail. This path started in the area of the NE parts of both Lake Como and Lake Geneva. It continued in a northeasterly direction heading up to Spring Prairie and then east toward Lake Michigan. Some early Wisconsin territory maps show this trail.

THE VOREE MEMORIAL AT THE WHITE RIVER

You are looking at the Memorial Stone located just east of the White River on the south side of Hwy. 11, just before you enter Racine County. This is the area where James Strang declared it the Kingdom of Voree, the only declared kingdom in the state. If you stop to look at the plaque, on both sides, you can see a map of this community and learn about its existence.

On September, 1845, five men trudged to the top of the hill near the White River and started digging under an oak tree. About 4 feet down they came upon a box 6 inches square and 12 inches long. Inside were 3 illustrated copper plates. According to James Jesse Strang, they were left there by the last surviving prophet of the ten lost tribes of Israel ... and this proved that he was the true successor to Joseph Smith, leader of the Mormons and who had been murdered the year before. He established the town near the White River ... Voree ... the garden of peace.

Soon there were 400 people living in Voree and the surrounding area farms. The community had a store, tavern, church, schoolhouse, and several homes. However, many of the people lived in crude log huts and tents. Voree had its drawbacks; land was too expensive for the followers to purchase. In 1846, he moved to Beaver Island near Mackinac. In 1856, he was shot by a disgruntled follower and Strang

returned to his old home at Voree and died July 9, 1856. He is buried in the Cemetery of the Saints at Spring Prairie (located on the Bernard Yanny farm. Mormon Road, 2nd farm on the west side of the road ... off Hwy. 11).

Voree was a utopian community where all land was held by the church with Strang as the trustee. He would receive the profits from all industry and agriculture of their lands.

The death of James Strang did not end his settlement in the county. Some of his followers made their way back from Beaver Island and continued their lives on the lands around the White River. The Wingfield Watson family was one of them. Watson, his wife and their three day baby were forced to leave Beaver Island at gun point. They were able to return to Voree and stayed here for the rest of their lives.

He lived to be almost 100 and was an Elder until he died in 1922. He is buried in Hudson Cemetery in Lyons Township. In 1928, Samuel A. Martin of Colorado was appointed Elder to succeed Watson. By time he came back to Voree the settlement was almost deserted.

Nearby is the old Mormon church of stone construction. A stone quarry opened in 1850 on the banks of the White River. The church no longer is used for regular services; the little cemetery (across the road and about 1/3 mile south of the church) has been abandoned and now is pasture.

This group of Mormons was one of three groups which had been driven out of Illinois. Two groups came to Walworth County ... one led by James Jesse Strang; the other led by Joseph Smith II and his son, Joseph Smith III. The third group was led by Brigham Young and headed west.

MARKER NOTING LOCATION OF THE KINGDOM OF VOREE

This marker is just east of the bridge over the White River on Highway 11, almost to the county line near Burlington. As I mentioned in an earlier article in this series, when the Mormons were driven out of Illinois after the death of Joseph Smith I, they were split into three groups. The earlier article discussed the Belfry Theatre which was originally the church for the Mormon group lead by Joseph Smith II and Joseph Smith III. A second group was led by Brigham Young who headed west and eventually settled in Salt Lake City. This is where another of the groups settled.

This group was led by James Jesse Strang. According to old records, five men trudged to the top of a hill near the White River in September, 1845. They started digging under an oak tree. About four feet down they came upon a box, six inches square and twelve inches long. Inside were three illustrated copper plates. James Jesse Strang said they were left there by the last surviving prophet of the ten lost tribes of Israel... and this proved that he was the true successor to Joseph Smith. He established a town near the White River ... Voree ... the garden of peace.

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Voree had its drawbacks. Land was too expensive for his followers to purchase, hi 1846 he moved to Beaver Island near Mackinac, Michigan. In 1856 Strang was shot by a disgruntled follower and he returned to his old home in Voree and died July 9, 1856. He is buried nearby.

The death of James Strang did not end his settlement in our county. Some of his followers made their way back from Beaver Island and settled on their land around the White River. However, by the late 1920s the settlement was almost deserted.

There are still other “pieces of evidence” that this community existed. Perhaps some of them might appear as a future mystery picture.

HICKORY GROVE CEMETERY

You are looking at the Hickory Grove Cemetery located in the Town of Spring Prairie on Town Line Road. The cemetery was on land that the 1857 Plat Book shows as owned by A. Blakeman. The gate more recently was donated by the Amon Family.

The cemetery was laid out by Major Nathional Bell. Because it is on the line between the towns of Spring Prairie and LaFayette it is used by both townships. The first person to be buried in this cemetery was the wife of William Baumis.

According to their records, the first meeting of the Hickory Grove Cemetery Association was in

1875. At that meeting it was voted to have a new fence for the cemetery at a cost of \$140. J. Keyes would be paid \$17.62 for moving the fence and for 21 fence posts. Geo. Green was paid \$54.70 for additional land and Geo. W. Wylie was paid \$33.75 for grading and staking out the grounds.

The 1878 minutes refers to a bill for \$22 for care of the hearse for 2 years. \$7 had been received and \$15 was due. The 1880 minutes showed a discussion about the need for money to keep the hearse in repair. Members were to be charged \$1 for its use and others would be charged \$2 unless they were too poor to pay. Then it would be free. The 1884 minutes indicated that J. O. Puffer would get 75% of the earnings of the hearse for taking care of it.

In the early days the cost of a lot was \$3. In 1885 the minutes indicate a discussion about the cost of procuring a pump, digging a well, building a tool house and a vault on the grounds. In 1889 a committee was formed to repair the well and put up a hitching post and rails.

The 1892 minutes show that the treasurer was to take charge of the hearse and all matters pertaining to it. Many of the following meetings included a discussion about building and maintaining the cemetery fence. All meeting from the very beginning involved the election of officers and trustees.

The 1937 minutes indicated that the sexton would be paid \$6 for digging a small grave and \$10 for digging a large grave and removing the surplus dirt. The following year showed that the sexton would be paid \$12 for opening a grave in bad weather. In 1944 the price for opening a large grave increased to \$15; the cost for a small grave remained at \$6. By 1962 the cost of a lot had increased to \$60. The cost per lot now is many times more.

If you have never visited this cemetery before you might enjoy viewing the many interesting tombstone you will find there.

MT. HOPE CEMETERY

You can find Mt. Hope Cemetery in Section 23 in the Town of Spring Prairie. It is on Spring Prairie Road just west of County DD. This cemetery which is located on the David Stowell farm has been known over the years as "Billing's Burial Grounds" and "Mrs. Lord's farm." Only 25 burials were evident in this cemetery. In October, 2010 a radar penetrating machine was used and twelve new graves were discovered. However, only 21 of these are known. Most of the deaths were from before 1870.

Work was done to restore the grounds. Ken Amon is now the caretaker of the cemetery. The known names of people who are buried here include: Billings, Bunnell, Craker, Dame, Dyer, French, Gardner, Manvaring, Patten, Pool, Quackenbush, Raleigh, Van Horn and West. The youngest child, Francelia E. Patten was seven months and 22 days old. The oldest person, 88 years old, was Charles Dyer.

The name of Palmer Gardner, who died at age 85, should be familiar to historians. According to Beckwith's History of Walworth County he came to the township in 1836, built a cabin and raised potatoes and grain. He served as a representative to the last (fifth) Territorial Assembly for their first session.

In 1839 he was directed, along with Richard Chenery and Daniel Salisbury to view a road being laid out in Section 25 of the township. In 1847 he served as Town Clerk.

On February 14, 1844 he married Margaret Williams. She died at age 49 and is also buried in this cemetery. The Genealogic Library records show her name as Margarete. Their daughter, Lucretia May, is the other Gardner in this burial ground. She died at age 20.

Mary Dyer married Alexander Hervey Bunnell on November 20, 1839. She died at age 25. He then married her sister, Harriet in 1848. They were the daughters of Charles and Mary (Galusha) Dyer. Both are buried here; Charles at age 88 and Mary at age 73.

Frank Patten died at age 26. A Frank Patten served as a teacher in the township in 1856-7. Beckwith also mentions a Frank Patten serving as an Associate Town Supervisor in 1900. They cannot be the same person.

SPRING PRAIRIE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

You are looking at the United Methodist Church located on the west end of Spring Prairie on Hwy. 11. The Congregationalists, who were using Wortman School (east on Hwy. 11) for their services and the Methodists joined together in February, 1852 and became known as the Union Church. In 1860 they built a church in Spring Prairie on the north side of the road. The community donated \$925.00, the cost of the structure. The main building was 32 feet by 50 feet and could seat 300.

The first Methodist Church in the township was organized in 1837 by Rev. Samuel Salisbury.

Their first meeting was held at the home of Daniel Campbell. The Congregationalists organized in 1840.

Soon after the Union Church was built, the number of Congregationalists decreased and members of that society joined with others in Burlington. In 1860 their minister was Rev. C. O. Pillsbury. For sometime after this the church was a Methodist Episcopal Church and finally became only a Methodist Church.

In 1967 the Methodist Churches united with the Evangelical United Brethren Churches and became known as the United Methodist Church.

FORMER ARROW LODGE SCHOOL

At the corner of Hwy. 120 and Potter Road you can see the former Arrow Lodge School house, now the Town Hall for the Town of Spring Prairie. This former school district, Jt. #4 with the Town of LaFayette, was also known as the Whitmore School and The Old Red School at various times.

One of the early Plat Books show this school located about a half mile north of its present location on the same side of the road. This is when the school was known as the Old Red School. The last term taught in this building was in the Spring of 1885. Miss Sarah Tomlinson was the teacher; she had nine pupils.

In 1885 Alva Whitmore offered an acre of land for a school on the southeast corner of this intersection. However, it was decided that the land here was too low. Land on the southwest corner was purchased from George Vaughn for \$100. The deed for this purchase was not recorded until 1890. It states that this land is assigned forever to Jt. District #4 of Spring Prairie and LaFayette.

After the new schoolhouse was started the old one was auctioned off along with the old seats and benches. Twenty-five dollars was the highest bid for the building. However, Henry Vaughn, on whose land the school house was located, said that it was his. When it was not longer used for school purposes, it all reverted back to the farm to which it originally belonged. That was found to be true according to the school laws of the state. Therefore, the building wasn't sold.

Miss Sarah Tomlinson was also the first teacher of Arrow Lodge as the new school was now called because of the large number of arrow heads found in the area. School began on November 9, 1885 with sixteen students registered. Miss Tomlinson's salary that year was \$25 a month.

During the 1909/10 school year, the teacher was Luella Wolfe. She received \$35 a month for teaching 15 students. Ten were in the primary grade and ranged in age from five to twelve years of age. Three children, ages 9 and 10, were in the Second Intermediate grade. One, age 11, was in the First Intermediate grade and one, age 14, was in the advanced group. In one of her reports that year, Miss Wolfe indicated that the school was in good condition and that the blackboards were made of slate.

The brick portion of the building which was the school house was built in 1919. The mason work was done by Mr. Ebert of East Troy. His son, Albert, did his first brick laying on the walls of this school. The carpenters were contractors from Lyons by the name of Host. Mr. Woodruff, along with some of the local men, did the painting.

The school closed in 1959. It is now the Spring Prairie Town Hall. A meeting room was added to the south, as well as the porch/shelter in the front. The original school area is now offices and a kitchen.

WORTMAN SCHOOL

Spring Prairie School District #9 was called Foote School at one time and later named Wortman School. The school house located on Highway 11 at the intersection with North Lyons Road was built in 1919. The original school was built on this site in 1893. That school house was 27 feet long, 23 feet wide and 12 feet high.

According to the 1882 History of Walworth County, an earlier schoolhouse was built across the road in Section 26 in 1840. This school, named District #5, held the first winter school in the township. It was taught by Mr. Daniel Salisbury during the winter of 1840/41. It had 30 pupils.

The 1873 and 1891 Plat Book both indicates that School District #9 was located to the west of the current site - on the same side of the road. The owner of the property surrounding the school listed in the 1873 Plat Book was Estate of Ephraim Foote. The 1907 Plat Book shows the school at the SW corner of the intersection, where you can now see the old brick school house. The property owner of the surrounding land was listed as Alonzo Wortman.

In the 1909/10 school year, the teacher was Della Burritt. She was hired at a salary of \$30 a month and had 18 pupils. In July, 1953 this district consolidated with Vaughn School. In 1960, the district joined the Burlington School District.

The Congregationalists, including people from Burlington, Spring Prairie and Gardner's Prairie, organized in 1840 and held their meetings in the Wortman Schoolhouse.

THE HEMENWAY HOUSE

You are looking at the old brick building on the northwest corner of Highways 11 and 120 in the community of Spring Prairie. Dr. Ansel A. Hemenway came to this area in 1836 and settled in Section 30.

The central place of the early community was Dr. Hemenway's. His two story log home was built in 1837 and included his home, office, store, boarding home, public meeting place, polling place and tavern. His brick hotel was built in 1845. His tavern license cost five dollars; store owner licenses at that time cost ten dollars. He served as a town school inspector in 1839.

The first sermon preached in the town was held at Dr. Hemenway's home; the first service being July 10, 1836. It was conducted by Col. Samuel Phoenix, a traveling Methodist minister and soon founder of Delavan.

Hemenway's house was also the first post office in Walworth County (in 1838) with Dr. Hemenway as the first Post Master. He served until 1845. According to the 1891 Plat Book, this building was located on the Northeast corner of the intersection of Hwy. 11 and 120. The first frame house in the community was built in 1836.

The old house on the NW corner of Hwys. 120 and 11 was a site of the Underground Railroad in Walworth County. No slave was ever recaptured here in Walworth County.

According to the 1873 Plat Book, Spring Prairie Township had several excellent schools and three churches. In 1850 the population of this community was 1419; in 1870 the population was 1209. The first settler was Palmer Gardiner, who came April 15, 1836. Palmer Gardiner had the first grindstone in the county. It was too heavy to borrow and took two men to turn. It was a good day's work to get an ax or scythe sharpened. The first death in Walworth County was the daughter of Sylvester G. Smith on Spring (Gardner's) Prairie on July 3, 1837.

In 1847 Josiah Puffer opened a shoe and boot shop. He had come to the area in 1839 from Massachusetts and was a farmer at first. He had learned shoe making in the east at the age of 14. A

vinegar and cider factory is shown on the south end of Spring Prairie on the east side of the road in the 1891 Plat Book.

Original names included Spring Brook, Franklin, and Hemenway (an adaptation of an early settler's name). Abigail A. Whitmore Hemenway suggested the name Spring Prairie because of the natural springs that discharged into Spring Brook, a branch of Spring Creek.

JOHN AND MARGARET BELL HOUSE

The John and Margaret Bell house is located at 554 Spring Prairie Road in the Town of Spring Prairie. It is just west of County DD. The house was listed on the register of the Wisconsin Historic Homes and the National Register of Historic Places on September 15, 1994.

The home is a wonderful example of side-gable vernacular stone. It has hints of both Greek Revival and Italianate styles of architecture. It is both larger and longer than most homes in the area. The two story house was built from sandstone which was quarried locally.

The window placement and the details of the front entry are typical of Greek Revival. The brackets under the eaves give it a look of an Italianate house. It has thicker walls than most stone buildings of that time.

John and Margaret Bell lived in the house between 1852 and 1902. It was kept in the family until 1914. Bell came to this county in 1837 and settled in Section 23 of the Town of Spring Prairie. The 1857 Plat Map shows J. Bell as the owner of 80 acres. It also shows an extensive orchard.

The first nursery in the county was established by Bell, who moved from Ypsilanti, Michigan for that purpose. He leased ten acres of land from Palmer Gardner and brought trees from Ypsilanti via Detroit and Milwaukee by water.

He started with 400 trees and by 1858 his nursery numbered 250,000 trees. His first nursery entry shows a sale of 75 apple, 15 pear and 10 plum trees plus 2 grape vines and 3 currant bushes. In 1852 he bought 100 acres across the road from his nursery and built his home. He had married Margaret O'Conner in 1844.

Bell was chairman of the Board of Supervisors in 1852 to 1853. He was a member of the Wisconsin Assembly in 1853. Bell's brother, Nathaniel, settled in the Town of LaFayette. He was chairman of the first County Board of Supervisors and the last territorial sheriff for the area. Bell's sister, Mary Ann, was married to Dr. Jessie C. Mills. Earlier I wrote about their farm as a part of the Underground Railroad.

In 1853 John Bell was awarded a medal from the Wisconsin Agriculture Society; he had 10 of the best apples and 6 of the best pears in the state. He gave up the nursery in 1858 because of "bark louse" and did farming. In 1904 he sold the property to his sister, Anna Bell Cocroft. She sold it in 1914 and it has had many owners since. A two story frame carriage house on the property was built around the turn of the century.

THE FORMER L. W. MERRICK HOME

L. W. Merrick was an early owner of this home which you can see on Spring Prairie Road east of that same crossroad community. It is west of Hargraves Road on the north side of the road.

According to Beckwith's History of Walworth County, Leroy Willeston Merrick was the son of Austin Leonard Merrick. A. L. came to the Spring Prairie area in 1836 from Delaware County, New York.

He first bought land in Section 29. Within a year he sold that land and purchase land in Section 21. The 1857 Plat Map shows him as owner of a 320 parcel in that section.

At the County Board session on March 18, 1839, Austin was selected to serve on the grand jury at the April term of court. In 1839 A.L. married Ester Celestia Cook. Leroy was born on March 12, 1840. In 1842 he served as the town treasurer, town chairman in 1844, 1847 and 1852 and was on the County Board in 1847. Ester died in 1855. A. L. married a second wife and he died on December 19, 1887.

Leroy married Luella J. Ellsworth. He served as town treasurer 1878-79 and 1907. He was the town clerk 1881-82, 1898 and 1900. He was a member of the County Board 1885-86. L. W. served as Justice of the Peace in 1892-93, 1895-1901 and 1906-07. Around 1894 he was named Postmaster of the Spring Prairie Post Office.

The 1873 Plat Book shows two separate parcels in Section 21. One owned by A. L. and the other

by L.W. Merrick. In the 1891 book both parcels are shown as owned by L. W. Merrick as well as a parcel in Section 28. The 1907 book shows that the parcel owned by A. L. in 1873 was sold. Leroy kept his original parcel and the land in Section 28. The 1921 and 1930 books show the owner of the parcel in Section 21 as Tim Enright. The 1966 book lists that parcel's owner as Carl and Myrtle Quirk. George and Pat Sandstrom are listed as owners of that land in the 1982 Plat Book.

SIMONS FARM

The J. and E. Simons farm is located at N6292 Paradise Drive in the Town of Spring Prairie. It is located off of Potter Road near the community of Vienna. You will see a sign that the road does not have an outlet, but drive ahead a short distance and you will see the barn on your right.

The barn quilt is called "Ohio Star." It is easily seen from the road. The day I drove past the area I also saw some lovely horses.

The 1857 Plat Map shows Jacob Griner owning 200 acres in Section 14 where this current barn is located. Paradise Road did not exist at that time.

The 1873 Plat Book shows the owner of this property as W. Potter. In 1891 the owner is listed as Woodruff Potter. The Potter name continues in 1907 with C. H. Potter as the owner. The book shows the farm is named "Valley Farm."

The 1919 Prairie Farmer's Directory of Farmers and Breeders list a Charles H. Potter living in Section 14 in the Town of Spring Prairie. He was married to Emma L. Stelter. Their children were Sidney, Archie, Ray, Fannie and Harry. Harry no longer was living at home. Charles drove a Studebaker Six auto. There was a stave silo on the farm. Charles came to the county in 1855.

Beckwith's History of Walworth County indicates that Charles is the son of Woodruff There was another son, Harrison, who moved to Texas. Charles took a course at the Bryant & Stratton Business College in Milwaukee before spending all of this time farming. He served as township clerk and was on the township board.

Delving into these two books of county history brings up additional information. Beckwith has a biography of Charles and lists his wife as Catherine Schaub. Their children are the same as listed above.

However, Catherine died in 1903. Three years later he married Emma.

The 1930 Plat Book indicates the owners are the Potter Bros. In 1966 the owners are listed as Kenneth and Joan Potter.

In 1975 and 1977 the farm owner is now shown as One Ten Corp. c/o Fern Welch. From 1980 and through the 1986 plat book the owner is shown as Fern Welch. Finally in the 1980 book a small start to Paradise Road is shown in the plat book.

The 1988 through the 1994 books in the listing of owners, E. Eloise Simons is shown as owner in Section 14B. In the 1996 through 2002 books, there is a separate listing of ownership in Section 14B for E. Simons and for J. Simons. Starting with the 2004 book the listing of owners shows it as J & E Simons.

YUPPIE HILL POULTRY FARM

You can see the Yuppie Hill Poultry Farm at W1384 Potter Road, very close to the county line with Racine County. Their barn features a very appropriate barn quilt, Hen and Chicks. Their small farm is in Section 16 in the Town of Spring Prairie.

Lynn Lien left her job in the health care service in 1999 to farm with her father. In 2004 she came to this seven acre location. Her venture with poultry began when her children came home from school with two hens. The family built and furnished a house for the chickens. It was finished inside, complete with curtains. Apparently the neighbors would drive by and say, "Look at those yuppies on the hill!" The name stayed.

The two hen operation soon became a dozen. That quickly grew to 2500, the number that could be housed in the original barn. A new state of the art barn was built in 2008. The poultry enjoy a cage-free environment. The farm is now up to 10,000 birds and they are looking to double that figure.

The original barn now houses a café. It is open for breakfast on weekends and for special dinners.

The farm website indicates that they raise Cornish Cross Rock hens, broilers, bronze turkeys and Berkshire pigs. Their main production is brown eggs. The birds are fed a vegetarian diet.

The land on which this farm is located was originally owned by Charles Martin, according to the 1857 Plat Map. That ownership continues in the 1873 Plat Book. Martin came from New York to this Spring Prairie location in 1844. In 1846 he married his cousin, Elizabeth Cornell. She died in 1850. He then married Caroline Fowle in 1853. She died in 1892; he died in 1906.

Martin served as town treasurer in 1847, 1856 and 1861. He was secretary of the Walworth County Agricultural Society in 1860. He was vice president of that society in 1870 and 1872 and then served as its president in 1875. He was superintendent of the Baptist School in Spring Prairie. After he stopped farming he moved to Elkhorn. His daughter, Helen, served as the County Superintendent of Schools.

The 1891 Plat Books show the owner of this farm as Wm. Cado. Then in 1907 the owner is listed as Wm. Kadow. This name continues through the 1930 Plat Book when it is shown as Wm. Kadow Est. Could the two names belong to the same person?

In the late 1930s the farm was owned by John Oster. His ownership continues until the 1970 book which shows John and Robert Oster. The dual ownership continues through the 1975 book.

The 1977 and 2002 plat books indicate that the land now was owned by the Junior South Corp. The 1990 book gives an additional clue. Ownership is listed as Junior South Corp. c/o Robert Oster. Then the 2004 and 2008 books list the owner as W. & W. Ventures L.L.C.

THE FORMER JOHN OSTER, JR. FARM

You can find this farm just east of the intersection of Hwy. 120 and County D. It is in Section 5 of the Town of Spring Prairie at W1961 County D.

The 1857 Plat Map shows the owner of this land as Alexander Porter. The Plat Books through 1907 continue showing the owner as Alex Porter. Beckwith's History of Walworth County reports that Porter was born in Galloway, Scotland in 1803. His wife, Isabella was born in county Roscommon, Ireland in 1813.

Beckwith has John Grunewald coming to this area with his parents from Germany in 1855 at the age of 13. He enlisted in Company K, 28th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry during the Civil War. By 1911

he had acquired this farm and built a “fine residence” on it. After the war he married Elizabeth Dietz. They had eight children: Henry (who had died before 1912, Albert, Mary, William, Edward, Rose, Arthur and Frank.

The 1930 Plat Book indicates the owner is Albert Grunewald. This continues in the book labeled “after 1936 and before 1942.” According to the Prairie Farmer’s Directory of Farmers and Breeders he married Mate Miller. Their children were Florence, Forest, Harold, Walter, Gladys, Glen and Myrtle.

Their 380 acre farm was called “Carnation Stock Farm.” They raised Shorthorn beef cattle and Duroc Jersey hogs and had stock for both for sale. He drove a Kissel car and had an Eagle tractor. There was a concrete silo on the farm.

John Oster, Jr. was the next owner as indicated in the 1948 plat book. He was the son of the founder of the John Oster Manufacturing Company. It started out in his garage in Racine making ladies hair clippers.

Oster bought the Stevens Electric Company which made drink mixers. Eventually research and development produced the blender. The company moved to Milwaukee and John Jr. was named president of the firm. The purchase of the land in Walworth County was a result of the successful of the Oster Company. The company was acquired by Sunbeam Corp. in 1960.

Oster continued ownership of the farm through the 1975 plat book. His farm manager was Goodwin (Goodie) Jacobson. I remember that they raised Brown Swiss cattle. It was great seeing them in the cattle parades at the Walworth County Fair, complete with their bells.

In 1977 the owner of this farm was shown as Junior South Corp. This continued through 2002. The plat books, 2004 through 2008 have the owner as W & W Ventures L.L.C. The 2010 plat book indicates the owner as J & C Raboine. In 2017 the latest owner is Carey Radtke.

THE FORMER ALDRICH FARM

You are looking at the former William Aldrich farm. The 1857 Plat Map shows him owning 400 acres in Section 35 in the Town of Spring Prairie. The 1873 shows those acres divided. A. M. Aldrich is indicated as owning 240 acres and Wm. A. Aldrich owning the 160 acres. The only difference in the

1891 book is that the 160 acres are listed as being owned by W. H. Aldrich. This continues through the 1900 Plat Book.

In 1907 the owner of the 240 acres is shown as C. F. Aldrich. W. H. Aldrich continues as the owner of the 160 acre farm. C. F. lists the farm name as “Old Homestead Farm.” This ownership continues in the 1921 and 1930 Plat Books.

The Prairie Farmer’s Reliable Directory of Farmers and Breeders, Walworth County has only Charles F. Aldrich as owner of a farm in Section 35. He married Minnie Bliss and their children (as of 1919) were: Bruce, Burnell and Beulah. Their farm was called “Glennwood Farm.” It indicates that their family came to this area in 1866.

There appears to be two cars on this farm: a Jeffery and a Ford. Their farm had a cement silo.

Beckwith’s History of Walworth County lists William H. Aldrich as the president of the Walworth County Agricultural Society in 1900. He was an Associate Town Supervisor 1854 to 1855, 1869, and 1893 to 1895. He was the Town Chairman and on the County Board of Supervisors in 1870, and 1896 to 1897.

That book has a short biography of Alma Montgomery Aldrich. She was the daughter of William and Hannah (Montgomery) Aldrich. The parents were born in New Hampshire. Alma was born in Ohio on May 6, 1837. The family came to Walworth County and the Town of Spring Prairie in 1847.

An unnamed son is also mentioned in this biography. He served eight terms on the County Board and was elected to the State Assembly. In 1865 he married Elizabeth Hewitt. He moved to Burlington in 1899 and died there in 1902. Charles F. Aldrich served as Town Chairman and on the County Board in 1899 and 1900. He was the Town Clerk from 1908-1912.

The 1977 and 1982 plat books show the owner of the 240 acres as Aron H. Franco. The 160 acres was owned by Leland S. Barney in both of those books. In 2010 the plat book shows Kevin P. McKillip as the owner of the 239 acre farm. Lafayette Springs, L.L. C. is listed as the owner of the 132.43 acre farm. It appears that Hwy. 11 expansion carved out some of the acreage. The 2014 plat book shows Jerry E & Lori Warntjes as the owner of the 235 farm. Lafayette Springs L.L.C. continues ownership of the other farm.

THE MILLER/GOETSCH FARM

You are looking at the Centennial Miller/Goetsch farm. It is located at W450 Hwy. D in Section 1 in the Town of Spring Prairie. You can see their lovely home on the north side of the road. They believe it was built in 1865 because that year the assessment value jumped.

Orlie J. Miller came to this area in 1878. He owned a livery and boarding stable in Burlington. In March, 1916 he and his wife, Mae, sold this business and purchased this farm. They had four children: Miriam, Donald, James and Nancy.

Nancy was born on the farm in 1922. If you look in the Prairie Farmers Directory of Farmers and Breeders, she is not listed because that book was published in 1919. She lived on this farm all but 8 years of her life.

The electric lines did not come to their area until 1936. Orlie and Mae raised Ayrshire cattle, pigs, chickens and vegetables. They sold the excess eggs and vegetables to local people. The cucumbers were sold to the pickle plant in Honey Creek. According to Nancy, Orlie and Mae had a love of horses and never drove a car. There was a cement block silo on the farm.

Nancy married Arthur Goetsch in June, 1943 on the Miller farm. Nine years later they moved on the farm and lived with Orlie and Mae. In 1960 they purchased the farm.

Arthur and Nancy had three children: Karen, Linda and Kenneth. I remember Karen, who was very active in 4-H. She did beautiful pen and ink drawings. Sadly, I learned she died six years ago from cancer. Both Linda and Kenneth were also 4-Hers. Kenneth was active in the gardening and home grounds projects. Nancy was a 4-H leader and active in Extension Homemakers.

Arthur and Nancy milked 18 cows, raised beef cattle, pigs, sheep, chickens and field crops. They did not have any horses. Eventually they sold the cows but kept all of the other animals.

The land was farmed on shares with a neighbor. Arthur had a fulltime job in Burlington for 30 years and eventually retired.

The farm was named "Maple Range" because of the large number of maples on the property. Several of the old maples have been replaced with new maple trees. It is interesting to note that the

Prairie Farmers Directory called the farm, "Maple Valley Farm." However, I was shown a picture of their barn with the name, "Maple Range" painted on it.

Their 60 acres have been leased for raising crops for over 40 years. Kenneth maintains the lawn gardens and buildings. He lives just to the east in Honey Creek. He hopes to retire soon and do more work on the historic buildings. He might even add a barn quilt to the barn.

Nancy still enjoys life and remains quite active. She has 11 grand children and 16 great grandchildren.

In looking at their abstract I found that on March 6, 1839 this property was purchased by John E. Hopkins and his wife, Ann. The 1882 History of Walworth County indicates that he was born in Vermont. When he came to this area he first settled in Section 26 of this township but soon sold that land and bought in Section 1. He lived there until his death in 1866. John married Ann Hoyt. Their one son, J. C. still lived on the place at the time of this book's publication. John E. served as one of the township assessors in 1842 and 1848 and as an associate town supervisor in 1844.

The next name on the abstract was Gilman Haynes Hoit with a date of March 28, 1840. I think this was a misspelling. A. A. Hoyt had land in both Sections 1 and 2 on the 1857 Plat Map. The 1882 book states that Avery A. Hoyt had two sons, Gilman and A. A. and two daughters. Ann was married to John Hopkins and Eliza who married Samuel Britten. Samuel came to the area in 1839 and settled in Section 11.

Some changes of the names on the abstract may seem confusing. I learned that originally Orlie's farm was divided. He had a small amount of acreage around his buildings but the other fields were in another section. Later, he was able to sell those fields and buy land which surrounded his home and barn.

On October 4, 1846 the owner was John H. Creger, Sr. and his wife, Elizabeth. The 1857 Plat Map shows Jn. Creger owning 120 acres in Section 1 in the Town of Spring Prairie. Next listed was John H. Crego, Jr. and Lura Crego, his sister, on October 4, 1865. It appeared that this was a new spelling for the family or someone couldn't decipher the spelling.

ED WIENERS FARM

You are looking at the Ed Wieners farm which is located in Section 28 in the Town of Spring Prairie. It is on the north side of Hwy. 11 east of the community of Spring Prairie. This year the Wieners are celebrating 125 years of family ownership of this farm!

Back in 1889 Edward Wieners bought the farm. Today his grandson, Ed is the owner. They call their farm, "Oak Shade Farm."

According to an August 26, 2010 article in the Lake Geneva Regional News, Ed and his wife, Bev Baker moved into the family farm house in 1989, one hundred years after his grandfather bought the property. The house in which Ed grew up burned in 1930, so they moved into the replacement house.

They have three daughters, Maura, Megan and Dana. Bev was the 1980 Walworth County Fair Queen; Maura was the 2009 Walworth County Fairest of the Fair. This year the group celebrated a 50 Anniversary Reunion of this event at the fair.

Ed has a degree in Agriculture Economics from UW-Madison. In college he thought this would lead to a non-farm career. It was not to be; he came back to run the family farm. Bev is the Racine County UW-Extension Family Development Educator. She also serves as department head.

In 1889 the farm was bought from Rufus and Julie Billings. It began as a dairy farm. On the 120 acre farm there was a creamery. The building still exists but is now used for storage. I have a listing of dairy plants in Walworth County for 1907-1908. The Spring Prairie Creamery is listed with Wm. Vaughn as the manager.

The name of the farm probably came from a huge oak tree which was in front of the house. The tree was 15 feet in circumference with a canopy of 67 feet. When it fell during a storm, it landed parallel to the house. There are now two oak trees near the house.

The 1857 Plat Map shows the owner of this farm as M. H. Foote. According to the 1882 History of Walworth County, in 1864 he was elected as a town supervisor. He declined the office and O. T. Hubbard was appointed in his place. However, Beckwith's History of Walworth County lists him as serving that office. He is listed as Mark Harmon Foote. That same history shows him as serving on the Walworth County Board. That usually means he served as chairman of the Town Board.

In 1867 he represented the township on the Walworth County Agricultural Society Board. At that time there was a representative from each township on the Board. The 1873 Plat Book shows the owner as R. M. Foote.

BRITTEN FARM

This is a continuation of Walworth County's history related to the Underground Railroad. You are looking at the house on the Britten farm. It is located at W1248 Potter Road in the Town of Spring Prairie.

Marcus Reynolds Britten owned this farm at the time when Joshua Glover was being hidden in this township in 1854. Information in the BuR SPUR Trail map states that Mrs. Mary Bell Derthiek, niece of Dr. Jesse C. Mill, says this was the first place to which Glover was brought from Racine. He needed to be hidden until he could be taken up into Canada. I wrote about Dr. Mill's farm several weeks ago.

Grover spent about four weeks in the Spring Prairie area. Generally, slaves were not kept in one place for many days. It tended to be safer to move them around.

Britten owned this land beginning in 1839. His original purchase was 400 acres. He went back to Little Falls, New York where he was married to Caroline Klock on January 3, 1841. He returned with his bride to his property in 1841. The Britten's had four children: Ellen, Almy, Riley T., and Agnes M.

He joined the Rochester Baptist Church and became a deacon. In 1843 he became an abolitionist. According to the 1882 History of Walworth County, he then became a member of the American or Anti-Secret Society party. He opposed Freemasonry.

The house has been enlarged. You can visualize the original house by following the gable lines. Grover was held in the section with the high gable.

M. R. Britten is shown as the owner through the 1891 Plat Book. By then his farm is shown as 200 acres. In 1907 the owner is listed as E. Britton. In 1921 the owner is shown as Jas. Vanetta; in 1930 the spelling was changed to James Van Etta. He kept the property until sometime in the 1940s.

The 1948 plat book shows John Oster as the owner. He continues as the owner through the 1964 book. From 1970 through the 1975 book the property was owned by John Jr. & Robert Oster. The Oster family owned the Oster Corporation in Milwaukee, makers of a variety of electrical appliances.

For many years this farm, “Ostaval”, was managed by Goodwin Jacobson and his wife, Catherine. They raised pure bred Brown Swiss cattle. I remember seeing these cattle as the Walworth County Fair for many years. Goody and his daughters would lead their animals complete with Swiss bells during the parade of champions.

In 1969 there was a dispersal sale of all of the dairy animals. They then raised veal animals and crops.

In 1977 through the 2002 books, the owner of this property was listed as Junior South Corp. Some of the books list it as Junior South Corp. Robert Oster. The 2004 book shows the owner as W. & W. Ventures, L.L.C. This ownership continues through the 2012 book.

SMALL STONE BARN ON WILSON FARM

You are looking at one of the small stone structures on the Ralph Wilson farm located on County DD on the eastern edge of the county. It is one of two small buildings that remain from the early days of settlement.

This farm was first established in 1836 and was known as Gardner’s Prairie. It was located on both sides of Hwy. DD. It is now the Scott Wilson farm.

Palmer Gardner was the first white settler in the township of Spring Prairie, arriving on April 15, 1836. On May 2nd, he began the process of cultivating the soil and by May 25th, 25 acres of oats had been sown and a garden planted with corn and potatoes. This was the first garden planted and the first grain sown in the township. Gardner had a home on his farm and another larger one in Burlington, a town to the east.

Gardner was born in Massachusetts, February 23, 1803. After his schooling he became a surveyor and engineer, working on canals on the east coast. In 1835 he began his journey west, looking for promising land. He decided that Wisconsin was the best choice and purchased 480 in Sections 25

and 26 in the Town of Spring Prairie.

The 1882 History of Walworth County, relates one of Gardner's frustrations. His farm was quite isolated and one day found that his plow needed sharpening. This meant he had to travel to Pike Creek (Kenosha), which was the nearest place to have it done. This happened on a Monday. He returned with a sharp plow on Wednesday evening. The next day he returned to his plowing, only to hit a large stone which broke his plow. This meant another trip to Pike Creek. He returned home on Saturday night and decided that he needed to buy his own grind stone. He did this on his next trip to Milwaukee.

Gardner served as a member of the county's grand jury in 1839, Town Clerk, Road Commissioner and was elected to the Territorial Assembly in 1847. During the illness of his first wife he built a home in Burlington. After her death, he moved to this new house and remarried. He continued owning that farm until his death on January 19, 1888.

The 1907 Walworth County Plat Book indicates that this farm was owned by John C. Wilson. It has been in the Wilson family since then.

FINCUTTER FARM

The Fincutter farm is located at W2347 Hwy. 11 just west of Spring Prairie. Here you can see the barn quilt titled "Blazing Star."

The 1857 Plat Map shows the owner of this property as C. Hempstead. In 1873 the Plat Book lists Jeremiah Sheffied as the owner. I was not able to find any information about these two early property owners.

The 1891 Plat Book shows the owner as W. Hemstreet. Then in 1907 the owner is listed as Fred Hemstreet. Frederick Hemstreet was an associate supervisor for the Town of Spring Prairie in 1902 and on the County Board from 1903 to 1905. He served as Justice of the Peace for the township in 1909 and 1910.

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Hemstreet became the Superintendent and Matron of the County Institutions on April 1, 1919. In reviewing the County Board records I found that Mr. and Mrs. Hemstreet made a report to the County Board about the County Farm and Home on November 1, 1927.

Fred continued to be listed as the Superintendent of the County Farm, Home, Asylum and Hospital through 1943.

The 1966 Plat Map shows this farm as being owned by their daughter Ellen. Ellen was listed in 1944 as the Superintendent of the County Farm, Home and Asylum. She continued in this position until 1963. In 1948 the word “asylum” was eliminated from the title but “hospital” was included again.

The 1977 Plat Book shows the property owners as Ray and Bernice Fincutter. This continued in the 1982 book. The current owners are Anthony J. and Diane L. Fincutter.

MEL CODY FARM

The history of this farm, according to the Abstract Title, began in 1841. The patent for the land in Section 19 and 30 in the Town of Spring Prairie was granted to Israel Williams by President W. H. Harrison on March 25th. The farm was 157 and 56/100 acres.

A mortgage for \$350 was given to Israel and Harriet Williams by Daniel Shaw on October 12, 1844. This was satisfied and full ownership conveyed back on August 29, 1846. It is interesting to note that this was not recorded until November 2, 1854.

Another mortgage was recorded between Israel and Harriet William by Samuel White on August 14, 1846 for \$500. This was satisfied on December 30, 1850. This again was not recorded until November 2, 1854.

Next there came an exemplified copy of a land patent signed by President John Tyler and dated March 3, 1843 and given to Israel Williams. It appears to be the same acreage as noted above. This contained one hundred fifty seven and eighteen hundredths acres.

A mortgage was given to William by Solomon Dwinnell on October 1, 1845 for \$500. It was recorded that same day This was followed by record of power of attorney given to John Wadsworth by Solomon Dwinnell. Dwinnell lived in Massachusetts and gave authority to Wadsworth who lived in the Town of LaFayette. This action was signed on January 15, 1845 and recorded on January 5, 1850.

A record of the satisfaction of the mortgage between Dwinnell and Williams was made on

September 16, 1854. This was done in the presence of Charles A. Perry, Deputy Register of Deeds.

Williams and his wife took out another mortgage with Abiel D. Williams on December, 16, 1846 for \$1600. This was acknowledged before Daniel Salisbury, Justice of the Peace. This was satisfied on November 2, 1854 and recorded in the presence of John A. Perry, Register of Deeds.

On January 31, 1849 the Williams gave one acre of land to the Towns of Spring Prairie and LaFayette for a burying ground. Consideration for this exchange was \$1.00. The land was conveyed to Ephrain Foot, J. P. Langmaid and Jonathan Leach, supervisors of the Town of Spring Prairie and Harvey M. Curtis, Peter Hinman and Ralph Patrick, supervisors of the Town of LaFayette. The deed states: "And in consideration of the above bargained premises the inhabitants using the same for a burying ground are hereby bound to keep the same fenced with a good and sufficient fence." (I hope they meant the relatives of the inhabitants and/or the supervisors.)

In June, 1849 a quitclaim deed was recorded that Williams gave to Wellington Hendrix the right to flow water over land owned by Williams to maintain the water wheel at the mill. Consideration was \$100. This was acknowledged by E. D. Smith, Notary Public. On October 31, 1849 a warranty deed was given to Cynthia Hendrix by Wellington and Abigail Hendrix. Consideration was \$100 and it was acknowledged by Smith.

The mill was located on a lake in the lower part of Section 19. The 1873 Plat Book shows the lake and the Spring Prairie Mill. The lake can be seen on early plat books; it no longer is shown on more recent ones. There was a stipulation in the deeds regarding the mill and its effects on surrounding land.

That stipulation indicated that Israel Williams was released of all damages which might incur if the dam level was changed. "...raising the dam... to a height of twenty-one feet and six inches from the surface of the apron now under the main water wheel of said Mill, which height is understood will reach the bottom of the upper girt to the floor of said Mill and I do hereby release all damages which may accrue by reason of raising said dam to the height (sic) [height] aforesaid."

A bond for deed was given by Hiram McArthur to Cynthia Hendrix on June 28, 1849. The bond was \$750.00. This was recorded on January 28, 1850. McArthur was given an undivided one fourth part of the mill and distillery and appurtenances belonging to each. The property was about eight and sixty seven hundredth acres. Interest charged on the above \$750 was seven percent. A schedule of payments was included.

On November 2, 1850 McArthur assigned interest in the bond for deed to Robert S. Hendrix. Cynthia Hendrix discharged the bond with R. S. Hendrix on March 19, 1866.

On January 23, 1852 Cynthia Hendrix gave a warranty deed to John Clague for all land acquired by quit claim deed from Israel Williams to Wellington Hendrix. The consideration was \$100.

On October 12, 1857 John and Ann Clague gave a warranty deed to Alexander McClurg and Samuel B. Appleton. Consideration was \$4000.00. Next there was a warranty deed from John P. Wylie and his wife, Hellen to Susannah Fox. This was dated November 1, 1864; the consideration was \$4000.00. This was followed with a mortgage to John Wadsworth on the same date by Susannah Fox. Consideration was \$1000. This in turn was assigned by John Wadsworth to George Green on February 26, 1866 for \$500.

George Green recorded a satisfaction of the mortgage by Susannah Fox on September 10, 1866. The mortgage satisfaction between Fox and Wylie was recorded on the same date. A warranty deed by given by Jonas Fox and Susannah Fox to William H. Fox and Edward Blakeman on that same date. Consideration was \$6000.

On the same day William Fox and Edward Blakeman obtained a mortgage from Chester F. Ellsworth for \$3000. This was paid in full and recorded on February 12, 1877.

A warranty deed was given to Datus E. Ensign by Jonas and Susannah Fox, and William and Eugenia Fox on March 22, 1869. Consideration was \$5500. Next, Datus E. and Martha M. Ensign gave a warranty deed for the property to Chester F. Ellsworth on December 28, 1876 for \$2500.

Chester died on October 19, 1877 in the village of Elkhorn. He left his widow, Harriet and three children: Luella, married to Leroy Merrick, Cora, age 14 and Elmer, age 10. He left an estate with a value of about \$7000 and real estate valued at about \$6000. His debts were between \$25 and \$30. November 26, 1877, Virgil Cobb was appointed administrator and posted a bond of \$14000. (I question if an extra 0 was added to this amount.)

There followed a number of court cases determining that the mill property needed to be sold. Its value was decreasing and in the children's interest this was approved. L. W. Merrick had been appointed guardian of the two minor children.

On February 20, 1878 a report of the sale was filed. John Saunders agreed to a cost of \$1000 for the mill property. The guardian's deed was given to Saunders on March 13, 1878. Final Judgment was given to the Ellsworth estate on October, 28, 1879.

On March 13, 1878 John Sanders gave a quitclaim deed to William Sanders for a consideration of \$1.00. That same day Harriet R. Ellsworth of Elkhorn and Luella J. Merrick of Spring Prairie gave a quitclaim deed to William Sanders for the consideration of \$1000. A warranty deed was given to William Sanders by John Sanders, a "widower" for a consideration of \$1000. Also on that day William and his wife, Annie, took out a mortgage from John Sanders for \$800.

On March 10, 1888 John Sanders estate was filed in Probate Court. He died intestate in the Town of LaGrange. He had five adult children: John Sanders, William Sanders, Jane Lean, Sarah Dunbar and Elizabeth Ketchpaw. The latter petitioned the court to name William the administrator of the estate. In May of that year it showed that William had Marginal satisfaction of the mortgage.

On March 23rd of that year, William gave a warranty deed to Charles W. Beetow for the consideration of \$2500. It was acknowledged that date before J. F. Lyons, Justice of the Peace and recorded that same day in the County Register's Office. The land was described in part by stakes and chains connected to two different oak trees. One was described as two feet in diameter; the other was 2½ feet in diameter.

That same day Charles W. Beetow and his wife, Amelia took out a \$500 mortgage from G. W. Dwinell. On October 4, 1899 they received a marginal discharge of that mortgage. However, the next notation in the abstract show another \$500 mortgage taken out by Beetow from J. V. Clawson dated September 9 1889 and acknowledged before Jaynes B. Wheeler, County Judge on December 9th of that year.

That mortgage was "reassigned" to Charles P. Greene on October 12, 1892 by J. V. Clawson Knight. She apparently got married during the interim. This was acknowledged by County Judge Wheeler on December 12 of that year.

There follows several notations between Greene and Beetow ending with the date October 12, 1892. However, there was one earlier notation (4th earlier) dated March 17, 1894.

Then things shift back to November 2, 1854. This acknowledges a warranty deed from Israel

Williams and his wife, Harriet to Aaron Blakeman for land In the southwest quarter of Section 19 and the northwest quarter of Section 30. Land sold for a burying ground was not included. The area contains around 314 acres.

That same day Aaron recorded a mortgage from Abial D. Williams for the consideration of \$1500. This mortgage was satisfied on March 4, 1858. Aaron took out another mortgage for \$1000 from Ebenezer Adams on October 7, 1859. This was satisfied on June 28, 1864.

On October 20, 1863, Aaron and his wife, Lydia sold a portion of land to supervisors of both the Town of LaFayette and Spring Prairie to enlarge their burying grounds. This was for \$25.

On May 7, 1864, Aaron and Lydia gave a warranty deed to George Greene for their property in Sections 19 and 30 for \$9000. On March 29' 1875 George and his wife Sarah sold a portion of their land to the Trustees of the Hickory Grove Cemetery Association for \$100.

On June 13, 1885 the estate of George Greene went into probate court. He died intestate on June 2nd leaving an estate, not exceeding \$14000 and real estate. His survivors were his wife, Sarah and four children: Charles, Annie, Alice and Clara, all over 21 years of age. Clara apparently was married with the last name of Flanders. Final judgment was given on March 1, 1887.

Anna, Alice and Clara sold and conveyed all rights and interests in the estate to Charles subject to dower and homestead rights of Sarah. On June 25, 1885 the daughters received a bond of \$3750 to be paid by Charles within 30 day of the death of their mother. Alice was married to Thomas L. DeCowdres on February 4, 1891. It was further noted that Sarah died on September 26, 1894. That mortgage was satisfied on June 22, 1895.

Beginning on April 18, 1911 there was an exchange of this property from Chas. P. Greene and his wife, Lillian to D. P. Webster. The next month it went back to Chas and Lillian and then another the same month from D. P. Webster and his wife Jane to Lillian. (I imagine that was to clear any differences in the deeds.) Then in 1916 Lillian gave a warranty deed for reference to the Hickory Grove Cemetery Association for land that they owned.

The abstract jumps back to January 14, 1885 to record a lease of land from H. D. Barnes and his wife, Mary to C. R. Dyke. There was no mention of Barnes in the abstract up to this time. I checked the Plat Books. The 1857 Plat Map shows the property owned by Joseph Barnes. In both 1873 and 1891 the

Plat Books show the owner as H. D. Barnes. Those books also show the Spring Prairie Mill to the north. Beetow is shown next to that area. The 1907 Plat Book indicates that Mrs. H. D. Barnes is the owner. Also, a house and separate acreage is shown around that house.

Apparently C. R. Dyke and his wife, Mary, were the first ones to occupy the five acre farm on which Mel Cody now lives. In 1917 Henry D. Barnes had to testify about the accuracy of the lease to C. R. Dyke and his wife, Mary. Henry was H. D.'s son. H. D. gave his estate to his children: Herbert R., Lovinia R., Mary L. Lockney and Henry D.

Testimony included the fact that C. R. Dike erected the building on the property and he and his wife lived there until Mary's death in 1891. C. D. then sold all interest in the property to H. D. Barnes and his wife, Mary. Part of the will required that the heirs had to erect a monument and markers on the lot where their parents were buried and give the Hickory Grove Cemetery Association \$100. This was acknowledged as accomplished in the quitclaim deed recorded on November 19, 1915.

On June 14, 1916 the children of Henry D. Barnes gave a quitclaim deed to the property to Lillian B. Greene for \$1.00. Then the document gets more confusing to me. Mel Cody tells me that apparently while Israel Williams was serving in the Union Army during the Civil War there were squatters on the land. They took over ownership. Courts established the original owners but also determined that the squatters helped to maintain the property and were awarded compensation.

The more recent ownership continues with Lillian Greene selling to Ernest L. von Suessmilch in 1918. Then he sold the property to William John Granata and Alfred J. Borah in 1944.

William John Granata and his wife, Violet sold the property to Alfred J. Borah in 1946. Owners of the property/mortgages included Alfred J. Borah and his wife, Jane, Arthur T. Thorson, Trustee 1947, Equitable Life Assurance Society, LeRoy Hazelo 1947, Borah and Hazel, Chauncey C. and Martha P. Maher in 1949.

There is appears another gap and next I find that the Spring Prairie Methodist Episcopal Church Society is owner of the property. Next it appears the owners are Edward A. and Louise M. Thom beginning in 1966. He is the one who built the new barn on the property. If you look closely at the picture of the farmstead you can see parts of the foundation of the original barn east of the new barn. Edward A. and Louise M. Thom sold the farmette to Helen H. Wyman on January 23, 1969. Mel and Gail Cody bought the property in 2000.