

The following text has been taken from

## “History of Vernon County, Wisconsin

Together with Sketches of Its Towns, Villages and Townships, Educational, Civil, Military and Political History; Portraits of Prominent Persons, and Biographies of Representative Citizens; History of Wisconsin ...

1884”

This wonderfully rich book is available online, free, for reading and download through various internet searches.

## CHAPTER XLIX.

## THE TOWN OF WHEATLAND.

Wheatland is in the extreme southern part of Vernon county, with the Mississippi river for its boundary on the west, the town of Genoa on the north, the town of Sterling on the east and Crawford county on the south. It comprises parts of towns 11 and 12, ranges 6 and 7 west, and contains about twenty-six sections. The only water course within this town is a small stream called Battle creek, which takes its rise on section 3, town 11, range 7, and flows into the Mississippi river from section 9, of the same town and range.

Not unlike the other towns of Vernon county, which border on the Mississippi river, there is a large amount of rough untillable land, a part of which is covered with heavy timber. The valleys are very productive and even the hillsides are not worthless, as they are utilized as pasture lands for sheep, which are quite extensively grown.

## SETTLEMENT

Ira Stevens was the first man to settle in this town. He located at Victory, in January, 1849. Other pioneers are mentioned at length in the history of the villages of Victory and De Soto. At these two points was effected the first settlement in this town. The eastern portion of the town being settled at a much later date.

Aaron Cooley settled on section 18, in the autumn of 1854. On the breaking out of the Rebellion he enlisted in the Union army, though at the time he was upwards of sixty years of age. He was taken sick while in the service, received a furlough and succeeded in getting as near home as the residence of Davis Sumner, in this town, but

being unable to proceed further, he there died. He was a drummer while in the service. His family continued to reside in the town for several years after his death, but finally all moved away except one son, Charles, who resides on section 17. Another son, Franklin, was a Congregational minister in Dakota, in 1883. Egbert Benedict settled at about the same time as did Cooley, on section 18, on land afterward owned by Robert Angel.

The following settlers were among the number who came in 1855; L.P. Miller, who located on section 17; Samuel Huntington, on section 12; Willard Fosdick, also a settler of section 12; a man named King made a claim on section 1, but the land was finally entered by another party. Jonathan Law also settled that year on section 31. This farm is now known as the Law place. Arvin and A. D. Chase settled on section 32, and J. T. Shaw on section 29.

Samuel Huntington came here with his family, then consisting of his wife and two children, one son and one daughter. In 1883 the family were all dead except the wife and mother, who moved to New York state.

Still others who came in 1855, were Moses Sanderson and his sons, Clark W. and Bridane. The sons settled on sections 5 and 8; but the father located in the town of Sterling. J. J. Tenney settled on section 8, where he still resided in 1884. Richard Morgan and family located on section 5, on lands entered by Elijah, Reuben and Stephen Powell, the previous year P Jay Miller settled in this town in November 1855. He was a native of New York. He married Julia, a daughter of James

Lawrence, of Crawford county, this State. In 1884 he lived on section 5, on land purchased of Samuel Morgan.

Peleg Coffin settled in the town of Freeman, Crawford Co., Wis., July 5, 1855. He was born at Yarmouth, Cape Cod, Mass., Nov. 20, 1795. He followed the life of a sailor for a number of years and afterwards learned the machinist's trade, which he pursued for some years. He was a soldier in the War of 1812. His wife, Zylpphine Crowell, was a native of Yarmouth, born Sept. 27, 1808. They had nine children, three of whom died in infancy. The six who lived to maturity are – George, a resident of Dakota; William, a resident of Rockford, Ill., Mary, wife of Thomas Lawrence, born in Massachusetts, in 1841; Esther, wife of James H. Rogers, of Viroqua. Mr. Coffin died July 20, 1882. His wife died in 1875.

Thomas Lawrence, although a resident of Freeman, Crawford Co., Wis., was with his father, an early resident of Vernon county, owning a farm near Liberty Pole, which was first occupied by John McCulloch, the first settler of Vernon county. His father, James Lawrence, located at Liberty Pole July 5, 1851, and settled on the farm now owned by William Clawater. James Lawrence was born in Monmouthshire, England, in 1809. He emigrated to the United States in 1851, making his first settlement at Liberty Pole, where he remained until the spring of 1854, then removed with his family to the town of Freeman, Crawford county, being the first settler in the neighborhood, and where he resided until his death Aug. 23, 1883. In 1832 he was married to Mary Williams, who still survives him. Father Lawrence, as he was called, was a member of the Bible Christian Church in England. When he came to the United States he united with the Methodist Episcopal Church and remained a firm believer until his death being a member of these Churches for over fifty-five years. He was an earnest and sincere Christian and his memory will long be cherished and his name remain a prominent one in the pioneer history of Vernon and Crawford counties. His surviving children are – Thomas, Mary, wife of Nathan Coe, of Viroqua; Julia, wife of L. J.

Miller, of the town of Wheatland; James W., Matthew E. and Jane E. They lost one child, a daughter Emma. Thomas, the eldest child, was born in England, in 1834. He resides in Freeman, Wis., at present, but was for several years a resident of De Soto. He kept the Bay State House in 1862-3 and a meat market from 1874 until 1877. His wife was Mary Coffin, a daughter of Peleg Coffin. She was a native of Massachusetts. They have three children – Ellen J., William and Allie Z. They lost their eldest daughter.

#### FIRST EVENTS.

The first birth in the town of Wheatland was that of Thomas D. Carlyle, son of Adam and C. L. Carlyle, who was born Feb., 14, 1856.

The first death was Mrs. Frank Huntington, in the spring of 1855.

The first marriage was that of J. B. Wixcox to Maria Page some time during 1855.

The first house destroyed by fire in the town was one owned by V. H. Story in the village of De Soto in 1857.

#### ORGANIC.

The town of Wheatland was organized in 1857 and the first election held that year, at which the following officers were elected to fill the town offices:

Adam Carlyle, chairman; Joel Shaw and Hiram Furgeson, Supervisors; George G. Van Wagner, Clerk; William Furgeson, assessor; C. B. Stevens, treasurer; J. C. Kurtz, town school superintendent.

The officers for 1883 were: H. H. Morgan, chairman; A. Cole and Alexander Latshaw, supervisors; James H. Rogers, clerk; Richard M. McAuley, treasurer; Woodbridge Dyre, assessor.

#### RELIGIOUS SOCIETIES.

A society of the Congregational Church was formed in 1863, at the school house on section 33, in the town of Sterling; though most of its members were residents of the town of Wheatland. The first members were: Richard Morgan and wife, E. Cilley and wife, C. W. Sanderson and wife,

Samuel Morgan and wife, Dr. D. A. Bean and wife, J. I. Tenney and wife, and perhaps a few others. This society and the one at Retreat were consolidated in 1879. The ministers have been the same as those who served at De Soto.

#### SCHOOLS

The town of Wheatland has always been fully up with the other towns of Vernon county in its school and other educational advantages. The first school was taught in the fall of 1853, by Nancy Berry, daughter of John C. Berry, at a point near where the village of Victory now stands. In 1884 there were six schools in the town, held in districts Nos. 1, 2, 3, 9, joint district No 3, and at the village of De Soto.

In district No. 1, the school building is a small frame house situated in a pleasant spot on the main road from De Soto to the Bad ax valley. The population is mostly of an American element, who attend the school with a good degree of regularity. The foreigners of this district are principally Germans.

District No. 2 is located in little village of Victory, on the banks of the Mississippi river. This district has a good school building, and always has a fair attendance.

District No 3, proper, is located on the ridge above De Soto and Victory. The building here is a fair frame structure, situated in a beautiful place overlooking the great Mississippi valley country, with its many picturesque scenes. The school population is chiefly American.

Joint District No 3 is provided with a good building very well furnished. The American element predominates; there are, however, many Norwegians within this district.

District No. 9 is along the ridge, in the vicinity of the John Davis farm and three miles from De Soto. This district was lately provided with a new frame building, which took the place of the old one, which was burned in 1880. This school has ever had a good average attendance, made up principally of American children.

De Soto union schools, located within the village of De Soto, are kept in a fine two story

building, which accommodated three departments until within a few years, but of late, only two. Very earnest and efficient work has been performed in these schools, which have always been of much credit to De Soto.

#### RED MOUND POSTOFFICE

In addition to the postoffices of De Soto and Victory which have been already mentioned in the village history, the town of Wheatland has another known as "Red Mound," which is located on section 5, town 11, range 6 west. It was established March 15, 1872. L. J. Miller was appointed postmaster, and was still holding the position in 1884.

#### CEMETERIES.

In 1884, the town of Wheatland contained three cemeteries. One situated near the village of Victory; one on section 12, town 12, range 7, and one on section 15, town 11, range 7.