

BROOKFIELD

A Fine and Fertile Land

*An Early History of the Town of
Brookfield, Waukesha County,
Wisconsin*

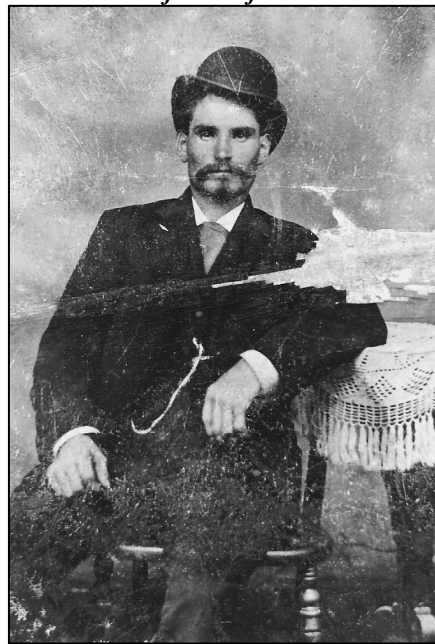
Volume 1

*Compiled & Edited
by Thomas Ramstack*

*Wisconsin Immigrant Stories
Milwaukee, Wisconsin*

bayernimmigrant@aol.com

*Unidentified Early Resident
of Brookfield*



*Taken from a tintype
Courtesy of Elaine Moss*

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Your reaction to this work would be of great value to me. Questions, comments, or to purchase the book, in two volumes, please contact the author by e-mail at:

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Cover Photo: *circa 1871--The parents are Brookfield, Wisconsin immigrants, Anna Kunigunda (Ramstöck) Winzenreid of Gemmersberg, Bavaria, and Benedikt Winzenreid of Canton Bern, Switzerland. Their daughter, Julia Anna, married Emory Eble on May 23, 1882. The Ebles raised 12 children on their Bluemound Road farm, today, identifiable as the home of Eble Park Ice Skating Arena.*

*Unidentified Child
from Brookfield*



*Taken from a tintype
Courtesy of Elaine Moss*

*To Mary, and our sons,
Sam and Thad*

*-- All share a love
for family, music, and
Wisconsin's local history*

*In loving memory of our dad
Joseph Ramstack Jr.*

**Joe Ramstack Jr.
& Gordon Schiltz—a cousin**



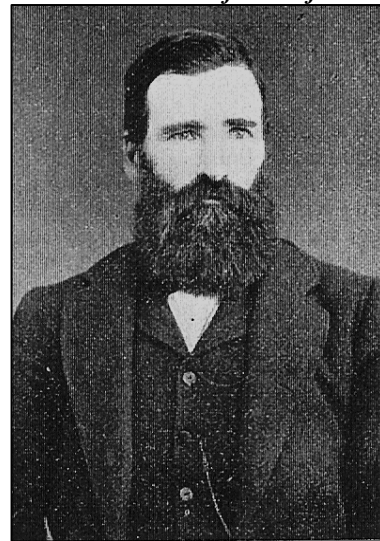
*Dad was bat boy for the 1928
Elm Grove baseball team.*



"It is said that the Yankees are great rovers, but that is not the case with me, and I claim to be a Yankee as my great-grandfather was a Minute Man and took part in the battle of Lexington, April 19, 1775. My daughter and I made a trip to New York City and Washington this year and saw many wonderful things and had a lovely time, but I could not be hired to live in those large cities. There is no place like the farm in Brookfield for me."

--Lauren Barker, May, 1914

Lauren Barker of Brookfield



***Courtesy of Historic Photo Collection /
Milwaukee Public Library***

*Unidentified Child
From Brookfield*



*Taken from a tintype
Courtesy of Elaine Moss*

*Unidentified Wedding Party
From Brookfield*



*Taken from a tintype
Courtesy of Elaine Moss*

BROOKFIELD
A Fine & Fertile Land

Contents

Volume I

Foreword.....viii

Acknowledgements.....xiii

Chapter 1: *“The Poor Immigrants Arrive Daily”*.....3

Chapter 2: *“Arise! Awake, or Be Forever Fallen”*.....27

Chapter 3: *“The Iron Horse and the Mare of the City of Bricks”*.....49

Chapter 4: *“The Greatest ‘Next Year’ Country on Earth”*.....61

Chapter 5: *“Hard Times Come Again No More”*79

Chapter 6: *“Go Andrew! Your Country and the President Need You”*96

Chapter 7: *“The Fighting Just Goes On & On”*108

Chapter 8: *“To Make Him High Minded”*126

Chapter 9: *“A Macabre Dance of Death”*145

Chapter 10: *“Some Dreadful Disease Always Appeared”*176

Chapter 11: *“A Degenerative Age”*197

Volume II

Chapter 12: *“Our Freeman Correspondent”*229

Chapter 13: *“Thrown From a Load of Hay”*252

Chapter 14: *“Leisure Times”*278

Chapter 15: *“Passing Through Our Town”*300

Chapter 16: *“Cow County U.S.A.”*321

Chapter 17: *“Accidents on Our Roads”*353

Chapter 18: *“Look Out for the Cars!”*377

Chapter 19: *“Conflagrations”*406

Chapter 20: *“All Things Modern”*...430

Bibliography.....449

Index.....457

Brookfield: A Fine and Fertile Land

Foreword

In 2007, there is a relatively new Irish tavern owner in the village of Elm Grove named O'Donahue. Now this O'Donahue is likely a fine fellow, but I suspect that our grandpa, Joe Ramstack Sr, would just about roll over in his grave if he knew that an Irishman had inherited his fine tavern. Nothing personal, but there was a time when Wisconsin's Germans looked down on the Irish. This all gets a bit confusing, but here in America, we seemed to have developed an ethnic pecking order. And yet, I am not exactly sure how some of us Germans got to thinking we were something more than the Irish. We were immigrants too!

Still, eighty plus years ago, during the 1920s and 1930s, long before the sounds of Irish reels and Irish folk songs reverberated inside O'Donahue's spacious hall, you would have more than likely heard the sounds of German polkas or schottisches played over and over again on grandpa's Victor-Victrola.

Three other German families, the Reusch's, the Hintz's, and a second Ramstack family, also, strategically planted taverns along the old Watertown Plank Road in Elm Grove during the second half of the nineteenth century. The point of all this is to make it clear to you that for many years, the tiny village of Elm Grove, Wisconsin, had more than its fair share of taverns, beer drinkers, Germans, as well as Ramstacks.

I am not here to lecture you on any morality nor immorality of taverns or drink, but simply to emphasize two positive qualities that all good tavern owners seem to inherit--that is a penchant for listening as well as a gift good story telling. Our dad, Joseph Ramstack Jr., himself an Elm Grove tavern owner, inherited both of these qualities.

My main interest in compiling this long account stemmed from delightful stories told to

us by our dad related to his neighbors in Elm Grove & Brookfield during the 1920s & 1930s. When we were still children, dad told us tales of several colorful Brookfield characters attached to unique events, such as—"Capt." George Gebhardt and the Schlitz Palm Gardens," "Old Yahkup and Grease Beer," "Great-Grandpa 'Peg Leg' Frank and the Angelus," "The Fighting Mitchell Boys and the Railroad," along with "Lena Nass and the Outhouse." His story telling was vivid and his way of spinning accounts of their lives was fun to hear. If you listened, you could sense the humanness in these people and I found myself sensing a special connection to many of them which, today, seems a bit hard to explain.

As I got older, I became interested in expanding my knowledge of other early Brookfield residents and events—particularly among those of whom dad provided no accounts. During the 1980's, I began gathering historical accounts of several Brookfield names and seeing what descriptors came with those names as provided in the "All Name Index" of the *Milwaukee Sentinel* (1836-1889) located at the Milwaukee Public Central Library. On these cards, I came across Brookfield names attached to reports of shootings, train wrecks, suicides, murders, and all sorts of other astonishing events. From here my curiosity grew into a passion or, might I say, it escalated (for better or for worse) into an obsession. But, I kept at because it was always thrilling to uncover new insights into the experiences of the many people who had resided here in earlier days.

My initial notion was that compiling these accounts in a meaningful way would be of great interest and enjoyment for Brookfield area residents from dad's generation. They would certainly recall many of these families or at least identify with their names. I quickly realized, however, over the course of the past

Foreword

two decades, that dad's generation has been quickly passing on. There certainly are, however, more than a few of you "old timers" still around. I want you to know that this book is something that I wanted to do for you.

But what about you newer residents who may have no real family ties to "old" Brookfield? Would these families have any real interest in all this? Marion Bruhn, Sally Clarin, Arline Kirkham, Dorothy Reinders-Haley, Steve Hauser, and others, convinced me that there are many newer area residents who do indeed have a genuine interest in learning more about the lives of our "town's" earlier inhabitants. Well I hope you do, because I would certainly enjoy sharing this with you, as well!

This project wasn't designed as a simple summary of historical events. Nor is it intended as a glossy report of all the good stuff. There certainly were a large number of social issues confronting early Brookfield residents that we, today, may want to consider. In doing so, we might begin to identify with the lives of many of our nineteenth and early twentieth century neighbors. Several of our town's earlier inhabitants were courageous, and yet others were scoundrels; there were strong minded individuals, while, others suffered with indecisiveness. Numerous local residents suffered from depression. Suicide was not uncommon. There were a surprisingly large number of young men from Brookfield who fought courageously during the Civil War, while others apposed the draft, several of these moved to Canada, others deserted. Many of our citizens spoke out against racial inequality, while others snubbed their noses at certain newly arrived European ethnic groups. The German and Irish long struggle to be accepted by the dominant Yankee culture is a major focus in this account.

There is no intention here of placing my own personal values on any of this. I just want to

put it out there for you to absorb and allow your mind to make sense of it in your own way.

Most of the text is comprised of newspaper stories taken, primarily, from the *Milwaukee Sentinel* & the *Waukesha Freeman*. I attempted to organize this account in such a manner that you might see yourself identifying with real families and not simply reading about some unrecognizable name attached to some brief news account. With this in mind, family descriptors follow most newspaper stories. Family photographs were selected, and accounts from diaries, journals, official documents, and personal recollections have been purposefully intertwined throughout to support what you read in the news accounts.

I feel, too, that it is particularly vital for young people in our community to have the opportunity to read and become more aware of our town's early history. You will have the opportunity to read localized accounts of: Manifest Destiny, the California Gold Rush, slavery, temperance, woman's suffrage, the invention of the telegraph, the American Civil War, the Great Depression, urban flight, the invention of the automobile, World War I, and others. My hope, therefore, is that this account might hold some value at our local schools as an educational tool.

You will also have an opportunity to become more aware of the many calamities which brought much suffering to early Brookfield families, involving: mental illness, alcohol abuse, slavery, thievery, poisoning, murder, untreatable disease, divorce, child mortality, depression (melancholy), suicide, war, spousal

Brookfield: A Fine and Fertile Land

abuse, assault, family abandonment, and others. Though several of these concerns may not appear nearly so traumatic to us today, consider how many of these same circumstances continue to plague many of us in our present day lives.

But do not get the wrong impression. This is not intended all about the “dark” experiences of earlier day neighbors. You will find plenty of upbeat accounts as well. There are wonderful descriptions of good fortune, romance, humor, and friendships. I think that you will find that, like many of us today, our earlier day Brookfield neighbors, despite their difficulties, knew how to enjoy and bring humor into their lives!

Each chapter introduction is followed by a caption entitled: “All The News From Our Town--In Brief,” including very brief descriptions of events related to the following: “Happenings In Time,” “Leisure Time Activities,” “Illness,” “Farm Production,” “Social Concerns,” “Business Interests,” “Adversities Taken on By Our Farmers,” “Railroad Work,” “Labor Unrest,” “Train Accidents,” “Thievery,” “New Farm Technologies” and several others. These brief accounts are presented as a means of emphasizing certain major topics which constantly appear throughout the time span provided in these two volumes.

Plat maps have been strategically placed throughout the work so that you might have the opportunity to see the exact location of virtually every farm described in both volumes.

Aside from J. H. A. Lacher’s accounts, which are research oriented, I have also provided accounts from several Brookfield area residents describing their own experiences while residing in the town during the nineteenth century. Their memories provide us with an opportunity to sense of the human feature of the lives of our early day residents.

Three or four of these individuals achieved national and even international notoriety in their own lifetimes.

A short biography of each follows:



Roy Aitken (1882-1976): born in Brookfield at Goerke’s Corners, Roy and brother Harry played a major role in the early years of the motion picture industry in California. With their formation of Keystone Pictures, the Aitken brothers helped to ignite the careers of Charlie Chaplin, Mary Pickford, Lillian Gish, and others. Many years later, Roy returned to Waukesha County and wrote several recollections of his boyhood days at Goerke’s Corners for *Landmark*, including--“Breaking Horses,” 1968; “Bringing in the Sheaves,” 1968; “School Days,” 1968; “Summer Ice,” 1969; “Shaping a Shoe,” 1970; and “Old Swimming Hole,” 1974.



Lauren Barker (1837-1917): was born in Oswego, Jefferson County, New York and came with his family to Brookfield in 1845. Mr. Barker kept a diary throughout the Civil War and often referred to it in his presentations at regimental reunions, including: “Some Incidents Regarding the 28th Regiment,” (1897); “A Recitation by One of the Boys of the 28th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry,” (1909); “Battle of Helena, Arkansas, July 4, 1863,” (1913). He also talked about his family’s early years in Brookfield in a presentation he gave to the Waukesha County Historical Society entitled, “Pioneer Days in Brookfield,” (1912), subsequently published by the *Waukesha Freeman*.

Rev. Roscoe Barnes (1868-1949): served as minister for the Methodist Episcopal Church of Wisconsin at several locations throughout the

Foreword

state from the 1890s-1920s. He presented “Biography of Porter Barnes,” a memoir of his father and his own early recollections of 19th century Brookfield in a presentation to the Waukesha County Historical Society in June, 1920, and published in the *Waukesha Freeman*, June 17, 1920.

Laura (Grover) Carpenter (1836-1929): as a young girl, Laura lived with her family on a Brookfield farm during the 1840s. Laura married H. C. Carpenter and spent most of her adult life in Oconomowoc. She reminisced about her family’s early years in Milwaukee and Brookfield in a talk she offered to the Waukesha County Historical Society entitled “Recollections of Early Days,” and published in the *Waukesha Freeman*, June 1, 1911.



Adda Howie (1852-1936):

Historically speaking, Adda Howie may be one of our town’s best kept secrets. Mrs. Howie received world wide attention for her innovative approach to dairy farming during the earliest decades of the twentieth century. Often referred to as, “the greatest woman dairy farmer in America,” Mrs. Howie presented numerous talks for the *Wisconsin Farmers’ Institutes*, a lecture series for Wisconsin farmers created by the University of Wisconsin outreach program. She spoke about: “Why I Love to Farm” at Oshkosh, March, 1901; “Cleanliness in Dairying,” at Oconomowoc, March, 1902; “Raising the Best Hens,” at Marshfield, March, 1903; “Raising Calves,” at Kaukauna, March, 1904; “Some Domestic Problems,” at Kaukauna, March, 1904; “Cow Stall,” at Eau Claire, March, 1905; “Women In Agriculture,” at Plymouth, March, 1906; and “Dairy Cows,” at Richland Center, March, 1908.



J. H. A. Lacher (1856-1936): a shoe salesman from Ohio, who just happened to love history. Mr.

Lacher settled in Waukesha, organized the Waukesha County Historical Museum, and, eventually was appointed vice-president of the State Historical Society. Mr. Lacher proceeded to focus much of his writings on the German element in Wisconsin. Among his works referencing Brookfield are-- “Mr. Lacher’s Observations: Compares Name of Towns in New York with Those of Wisconsin.” from the *Waukesha Freeman*, Nov. 5, 1906; “The Taverns and Stages of Early Wisconsin,” published by the Wisconsin Historical Society (1915); “Brookfield” & “German Pioneers of Brookfield,” found in *Wisconsin Domesday Book--Town Studies*. Vol. 1, also published by the Wisconsin Historical Society (1924); a letter to Mr. Adolph Schmitz of Waukesha (Jan. 8, 1928), found in the archives of the Wisconsin Historical Society; “Waukesha County,” which appeared in *Southeastern Wisconsin: A History of Old Milwaukee County*. v. 2. (1932); and “European Immigration Aids Development,” from the *Waukesha Freeman Centennial Edition*, May, 1934.



George E. Robinson (1853-1937):

moved with his family, as a young boy, from Illinois to the small village of Brookfield Junction in 1861. Mr. Robinson attended the University of Wisconsin Law School during the 1890s, after which he became a prominent Oconomowoc attorney throughout the decades of the 1900s-1920s. His son, Edgar, received his A.B. degree from the University of Wisconsin in 1910 and became a highly regarded professor of history at Stanford University where he served for nearly forty years. George E. presented two

Brookfield: A Fine and Fertile Land

talks at the Waukesha County Historical Society sharing his memories of childhood days in Brookfield which were afterwards, published in the *Waukesha Freeman*-- "Brookfield's Romances and History Told," *Waukesha Freeman*, May 9, 1923 and "Historical Sketch of the Bible Christian Church of Brookfield," *Waukesha Freeman*, June 15, 1927.



Grant Showerman (1870-1935): was born in Brookfield and graduated from the University of Wisconsin in 1896. He became an instructor of Latin and professor of classics at the university and received the "Cavalier of the Crown of Italy" award from the King of Italy in 1929 for his translation of classic Roman texts. Between his vast literary writings and translations of classic civilizations, Mr. Showerman took time to write two books-- *A Country Chronicle* (1916) and *A Country Child* (1917), an article which appeared the *Waukesha Freeman*, June 3, 1915 & June 15, 1915 entitled "'Old Sugar Bush' At Brookfield," along with several short stories published in regional periodicals-- "A Country Christmas," Dec, 1917; "The Dance," Sept, 1916; "Old Neighbors," Oct. 1917; "The Runaways," Oct. 1916; "Summertime," Sept. 1917; and "The Wheat Harvest," Aug. 1916—all of the above presented semi-biographical accounts of his childhood days in Brookfield. I borrowed substantially from *A Country Chronicle* as well as "'Old Sugar Bush' At Brookfield."



Kate Gregg-Warren (1855-1908): lived with her family on a Brookfield, section 25, farm during most of the decades of the 1850s & 1860s. Afterwards, Kate married Joseph Warren and managed a household in

Wauwatosa throughout most of her adult life. In 1905, she wrote a detailed journal focused on memories she held of her family's life on their farm in the Elm Grove area during the 1850s and 1860s.

This is a long account—probably too long. My suggestion is to take it in small bites. Focus on the stuff that might interest you the most. This is not written as a novel where you have to read every single page to have the end make sense. However, if you persevere, I do promise that you will, indeed, find intrigue, romance, drama, as well as suspense—albeit not in incredibly large doses.

No work is perfect and this one certainly is not. I apologize, in advance, for those families whom I may have left out, and to others whose families may have been presented in a negative light, or in outright error. Remember, too, that most primary source material—census records, newspaper accounts, diaries, etc., are loaded with misspellings and incorrect grammar. However, as primary source documents, I am compelled to present them as they were written in the original.

The identification we can make with our former residents can be valuable and enlightening. I'm not asking you to look back 800 or 2,000 years to some early world culture, but, simply inviting you to peer back over your shoulder, about 150 years ago or less, and allow yourself to imagine the experiences of some of our town's earlier neighbors. You might just come to realize there is actually no great space between us at all—that the real gap between us in the new millennium and our nineteenth century neighbors represent a mere hiccup in time. My greatest hope is that you might find some enjoyment in being aware of the connection we can make with the many of our earlier day neighbors of "our" town!

Acknowledgements

To make a project such as this achieve a reasonably qualitative state, takes the assistance of many people. We in the state of Wisconsin have been privileged to have had many outstanding writers of our states' history. I have gleaned references from several of Wisconsin's best for their descriptions of selected topics. Among these, I have included short excerpts from-- Jerold Apps, H. Russell Austin, Steven Avella, William Beaudot, Charles Brown, James Buck, John Buenker, Zachary Cooper, August Derleth, Kathleen Ernst, Robert Gard, John Gregory, John Gurda, Lance Herdigan, Frank Klement, Rudolph Koss, J. H. A. Lacher, Judith Leavitt, Michael Lesy, Patty Loew, Dennis McCann, Grace McDonald, Robert Nesbit, Ronald Numbers, James Pula, Lavern Rippley, Joseph Schafer, Grant Showerman, Alice Smith, Robert Wells, Richard Zeitlin and Jerry Zimmerman.

It would be impossible to provide a meaningful account of nineteenth century Brookfield history without the use of primary sources. Jean Alonzo Curran, M.D. made available the personal letters of Charles Curran who resided in Brookfield during the summer of 1868 as he came to realize that he was dieing from tuberculosis. Alan Mitchell wrote an account of his family's Brookfield farm during the time period of the nineteenth century. Willis Spaulding, of Oconomowoc, kept a diary providing several accounts of his stops at Brookfield's Phoenix Hotel during the late 1870s. Gene Nettesheim wrote a complete history of his family which he generously shared. The School Sisters of Notre at Elm Grove were gracious in providing accounts from Mother Caroline Friess' and the S.S.N.D's earliest years in our community.

I would also like to express my sincere thanks to the several individuals and many

organizations who generously loaned photographs for this work, including-- Gilbert Dechant, Jane Doud, Steve Hauser, Elaine Moss, Gene Nettesheim, Jerome and Rose Marie Nettesheim, John Schoenknecht, the School Sisters of Notre Dame, Larae Svehlek, along with Roger and Marion Woelfel. I would like to particularly thank Arline Kirkham, as she allowed me total access to her comprehensive collection of Brookfield area historic photographs. Arline has been photographing Brookfield's old barns and historic homes since the late 1960s, but the best part of her efforts is that she always took the time to get to know the families who lived inside those long-standing farmsteads.

The Chicago Historical Society, the Elmbrook Historical Society, the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, the Library of Congress, the Maritime History of the Great Lakes website, the Milwaukee County Historical Society, the Milwaukee Public Library, the Milwaukee Public Museum, the New York Public Library, the Waukesha County Historical Society, the University of Wisconsin Digital Collections, the Wisconsin Historical Society, the Wisconsin Marine Historical Society, as well as the Wauwatosa Historical Society, all, provided images for this account.

I would especially like to thank the Waukesha County Historical Society for their constant support throughout this project. Terry Biber-Becker was their archivist when I first began nosing around the society's research library back in the mid-1980s, with great interest, but not knowing with any certainty what questions to ask. But, questions soon surfaced. Where was our family's farm? Why did so many European immigrants settle in Brookfield? Did the library have any materials related to early

Acknowledgements

Brookfield families? Terry was always enthusiastic, patient, and very helpful.

I would like to, also, thank the society for their permission to use excerpts from numerous articles published in *Landmark*, the quarterly publication of the Waukesha County Historical Society. These commentaries provide current Waukesha County residents with valuable insights into life throughout the county during earlier days. I borrowed, primarily, from those articles referring to Brookfield families.

Articles written by Einer Abrahamson, Roy Aitken, Susan Apker, Mildred Carpenter, Joyce Fitzgerald, Douglas Hennig, Grace Kieckhefer, Adell Krebs, Harriet Loomis, Libbie Nolan, Charles Phillips, Ruth Schmidt, Maralyn Wellauer, and Edward Wicklein were wonderful additions. I would like to specifically thank Libbie Faulkner Nolan, for all of the energy and enthusiasm she has put into directing the ongoing written documentation of Waukesha County history as provided in *Landmark* over the past several decades. Present Waukesha County Historical Society archivists, Eric Vanden Heuvel, and current *Landmark* publications director, John M. Schoenknecht, were especially generous in their support.

Jerry Apps, (historian of rural Wisconsin life), Stephen Hauser (Elmbrook area historian), Kent Peterson (historian for the 28th Wisconsin Volunteer Regiment), Louise Wasserman (historian for the village of Germersberg, Bavaria, Germany), and Jerry Zimmerman (historian for the Wisconsin State Fair), were amazingly generous with their enthusiasm and encouragement.

Finally, I would to thank my wife Mary and our two sons, Sam and Thad, for their love and support, eventually leading to our boy's recurring reminder, "Mom says you need to stop now!" It was not recently that I began to understand the seriousness nature of this retort.

CHAPTER 1
“The Poor Refugees
Arrive Daily” (1830s-1840s)

Immigration

Most of the land that became designated as Brookfield Township during the decade of the 1840s had, for the most part, been the home of the Potawatomi who fished, hunted, and grew crops here for hundreds of years. During the summer of 1838, however, in the process of opening up Wisconsin for new settlement, the local Potawatomi were moved away.

Immigration to this new land began in earnest beginning in the late 1830s. New Yorkers and other eastern Americans arrived in Wisconsin, for the most part, through the port of Milwaukee, by the thousands. By the decade of the 1840s, it was the European immigrants who were streaming here by the thousands. Milwaukee, as historian H. Russell Austin described it, “was all the rage!”

I wish that I could show you a picture but, in the beginning, there was no photography to cover this historic episode. Imagine their feelings—fear, excitement, despair, hope—but precious few personal accounts portraying the thoughts and feelings of Brookfield’s significant Yankee and European immigrant population exist. Who could have envisioned that families from so many different places—New York, Pennsylvania, Ireland, England, Germany, Scotland Switzerland, and others — would, over the span of one decade, settle in this small six by six mile parcel to make new homes. Thus, there evolved a somewhat miscellaneous assortment of old and new world cultures which, for the most part, came together to form the new town of Brookfield.

What husband and father would put his family at such risk? What made them leave? Why did they come here? What must have run through their minds when they first laid their eyes on this new land—the lakeshore and the endless trees? They were risking life and limb on a land with virtually no social structure, nor infrastructure. There were no reasonable roads, there was no

reasonable health care, and there was no guarantee that the land would provide for them.

You might ask, “Why should we bother, today, to reflect on their experiences?” That question, I feel, is best answered by looking at their accomplishments. Wisconsin’s immigrants of the 1830s and 1840s took this fertile land and made a life out of it. We owe them our gratitude for their courage, fortitude, and persistence! Those who had the courage to stay and who were not torn away by the adverse fortunes that did come their way, created a community of people, who, in many respects, formed the foundation of our present way of life as vital citizens in a representative, though often imperfect, Democratic society. What a time it must have been, sorting through all the confusion, uncertainty, and fears and make a go of a new life in the locality which our town fathers saw fit to name-- Brookfield.

**ALL THE NEWS
FROM OUR TOWN—IN BRIEF**

Local Potawatomi

1830s—the trail from the Potawatomi villages at Milwaukee enters Waukesha County through Brookfield Township; May, 1838—Jacques View Jr., with a large party of white settlers, lead the local Potawatomi west out of Wisconsin.

Immigrants from New York State

1842—Ezra Chapin of Prattsburg, Steuben County, N.Y. and his young wife, arrive in the town; June, 1842, Andrew Proudfit of Argyle, Washington County, New York, takes possession of a farm in the town of Brookfield; Spring, 1844—The William S. Barker family from Jefferson County, New York, arrive in the town; 1850s—several Methodist camp meetings are held on the Robert Curran farm and, later, the Hendrick Gregg farm.

Immigrants from Ireland

Easter Sunday, 1842, Francis Bell of County Tyrone, Ireland, purchases land in Brookfield Township; 1843, the Irish Catholic congregation of northern Brookfield, construct a log church consecrated to St. Dominic; 1846—James Burns, an Irish immigrant, stakes a claim on land in Brookfield and builds himself a log cabin.

Immigrants from England

1844—John & Elizabeth Lumb, natives of Lincolnshire, England, settle in the town; 1855—English immigrants establish the

Brookfield: A Fine and Fertile Land

Brookfield Methodist Episcopal Church; 1859~ Charles Hart, an immigrant farmer from Lincolnshire County, England, is operating a saw mill in Brookfield.

Immigrants from Württemberg

October 11, 1842, an immigrant party from Sulzbach, Württemberg, arrive in the town; 1847—the Württemberg colony establishes the Zion Evangelical Church of Brookfield; 1859~ Charles Sheets begins his career as a cooper

Immigrants from Bavaria

April 14, 1819, Lorenz Pfister, of Germersberg, Bavaria, is discharged from the Bavarian army; August 1, 1845—the Wölfel family of Rollhofen, Bavaria, leave their home destined for Wisconsin; March, 1851—the Bavarian Catholics, near Elm Grove, build a log church consecrated to St. Ambrose.

Immigrants from Switzerland

1848—the Ochsner family of Canton Thurgau, Switzerland, arrive in Brookfield; 1849, the Wellauer family, a large family, of Wagenhausen, Canton Thurgau, Switzerland, arrive in Wisconsin; 1850, Javcob Spycher, of Canton Bern, Switzerland, arrives in the town.

The Potawatomi Had Resided Here

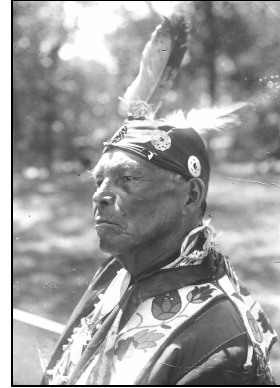
❖ “Some Returned”

Publius V. Lawson--“In Birch Bark Canoes,” (fall--1833):

SIMON KAHQUADOS (QUITOS): speaker of the Forest County, [Wisconsin], POTTAWATOMIE, states that in fall of 1833 Chief **Nah che wine** and other chiefs together with Indians from Milwaukee, Waukesha, Racine, Kenosha, Ozaukee, Creek, Sheboygan, Manitowoc, Two Rivers, Kewaunee and Door County left their former homes in birch bark canoes for Canada. Some returned the following year.¹

¹ Publius V. Lawson, “Sheboygan County Indians in Forest County.” *Wisconsin Archeologist*. Milwaukee: 1920, v. 19, n. 3, p. 133. The Pottawatomi roamed freely throughout the region which would soon make up Waukesha County for nearly 200 years previous to the beginnings of Yankee and European immigration into the area starting in the late 1830s. In accordance with promises made during the 1833 Treaty of Chicago, the Potawatomi agreed to leave southeastern Wisconsin within five years for reservation land in Kansas. Not real enthused about a forced removal, many areas Pottawatomi scrambled in search of other options for relocation. Publius V. Lawson’s, interviews with Simon Kahquados (Quitos), speaker of the Forest

Simon Onanguisse Kahquados



*Simon Kahquados (1851-1930) of Forest County, was the last hereditary chief of the Potawatomi in Wisconsin. (circa 1925)
Courtesy of Wisconsin Historical Society WHI-24373*

❖ “Tributary of the Fox”

Charles E. Brown, “Potawatomi Indian Villages,” (1830s):

This TRAIL from the Potawatomi Indian villages at Milwaukee entered Waukesha county through Section 25 of Brookfield township, a short distance south of Elm Grove, and ran westward through Sections 26, 27, 28, and 29, following the line of the present Elm Grove to **Blodgett [Goerke’s Corners]** road. In Section 29 it crossed a tributary of the Fox River. Just east of this crossing it divided, the southern trail running in a southwest direction to Prairie Village, the Potawatomi village at Waukesha. The northern trail ran west through Blodgett northwest to present Pewaukee village...

When the first white settlers came to Waukesha county, in 1835 and 1836, there were many small camps and a few large Potawatomi villages on the banks of its streams and lakes...

Everywhere throughout the county fish and game were abundant. Wild rice grew in some of the streams and lakes, and nuts and berries could be gathered in quantity. Materials for the making of stone implements were at hand. The Potawatomi Indians of Waukesha county are thus described: “None of these Indians were permanently located. During the season of corn-planting, their women and children occupied the higher lands among the lakes and rivers throughout the county, and pursued their

County Potawatomi, reveals one attempt, on the part of local Potawatomi to evade removal.

Chapter 1 – “The Poor Refugees Arrive Daily”

primitive methods of agriculture, while the adult males spent the time in hunting, fishing and lounging about the camp.”²

“Into the Drays”

H. Russell Austin, “Rumbled off Towards Kaskaskia, Kas.” (May, 1838):

JACQUES VIEW, Jr., got the contract for moving the Indians westward. In May [1838] he rounded up hundreds of them at INDIAN FIELDS, where the present Forest Home cemetery is. Every team and vehicle that could be spared had been brought to the fields, and many farmers had left their plowing to pick up some easy money on the transportation contract. Some who saw Milwaukee for the first time then, returned later to live here. When a large caravan had assembled, the Indian men, women and children were herded into the drays and the procession rumbled off towards Kaskaskia, Kas.³

From the Chicago Democrat.

“THE LAST OF THE MOHIGANS”

We are gratified to learn that preparations are made for the removal, this season, of the remaining Pottawatomie and Chippewa Indians, in this state [Illinois] and the Territory adjoining [Wisconsin], to the country allotted to them west of the Mississippi river. The emigrating parties are now organizing in the vicinity of this place and Milwaukee. The whole are to be concentrated upon the Desplaines river by the 15th of July, when they will take up the line of march for a country better calculated to supply their wants...

We say let them go! and the sooner we loose sight of a race who once roamed free and uncontaminated, but who have been compelled to give way to the restless tide of civilization, the better; we have nothing to remind us of that destiny which still pursues and awaits them all...

[*Milwaukee Sentinel* July 17, 1838]

² Charles E. Brown, “Waukesha County--Northern Townships.” *Wisconsin Archeologist*. Milwaukee: v. 2, n 1. January, 1923. pp. 11-13. The immigrants of the 1830s-1840s, who came into Wisconsin, arrived in a region that stood as our nation’s new west. All local travel was undertaken along footpaths formed by years of foot travel by local Native Americans. For the newly arrived Yankee and Europeans, these old paths became their first roads.

³ H. Russell Austin. *The Milwaukee Story: The Making of an American City* (Milwaukee: The Milwaukee Journal Co., 1946), p. 61.

❖ “Chains and Leg Irons”

Patti Loew, “The Trail of Death,” (spring, 1838):

Among the Pottawatomie who made the trip west, the removals became known as the “TRAIL OF DEATH.” the forced removal of Chief **Manomin**’s (also known as Menominee) Band in 1838, which claimed five or six lives each day, was particularly brutal. According to oral history, Pottawatomie warriors were placed in chains and leg irons, crammed in wagons, and denied food and water until the end of each day’s march. Any tribal member caught trying to slip food or water to them were severely punished.⁴

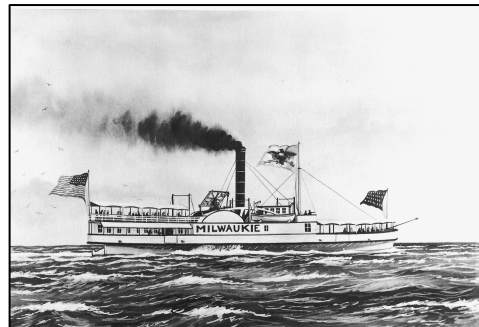
Farmers Arrive from New York State

IMMIGRANTS

Are flowing into Wisconsin beyond all former example. During our sojourn here last summer, great numbers of visitors arrived; no considerable portion of whom, however, came for the purpose of “operating” in speculative enterprizes, and departed before the season ended. But those who came this year are generally *bona fide* “Settlers,” prepared to cultivate the soil they occupy...

[*Milwaukee Sentinel* June 27, 1837]

Steamboat Milwaukee



The side-wheeler passenger & freight steamship “Milwaukie” manufactured in New York during the 1830s, represented the earliest form of steam transportation on the eastern Great Lakes. (circa 1832) Courtesy of Wisconsin Historical Society WHi-5678

⁴ Patti Loew, *Indian Nations of Wisconsin: Histories of Endurance and Renewal* (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2001), pp. 91 & 92.

Brookfield: A Fine and Fertile Land

❖ “About Eight Miles”

1880 History of Waukesha County, “A Western Mud-Hole,” (1830s):

[An immigrant party heading into the interior of Wisconsin during the spring of 1837 found that] at ELM GROVE, we had our first experience in a Western mud-hole. We had to strip the harness from our four horses and pull them out one by one; and they looked more like mummies than anything else. By this time it was noon, and we had made about eight miles of the sixteen. After feeding our team and partaking of our lunch, we moved on a little more cautiously.⁵

❖ “Summer of 1837”

1880 History of Waukesha County, “Very Early in the Spring,” (1837):

JACOB STAMM came in [to Brookfield—section 25] very early in the SPRING of 1837, with his family, the snow being quite deep when his house was built... **Maj. Farr** and family, and **E. A. Parker**, his son-in-law, a brother of **John G. Parker**, the Canadian patriot, came in the summer of 1837 and made permanent claims and built houses. **Augustus Story** came in and settled at the Plank Road Junction about this time. **Moore Spears** came in 1837 and settled near Elm Grove; **Ezra Maynard** came in the summer of this year, and **Mr. Van Vlek** also.⁶

❖ “Immigrants From New York”

IMMIGRANTS FROM NEW YORK STATE ARRIVE IN BROOKFIELD

Heads of Early Brookfield, Wisconsin, Families from New York State, (1830s-1840s):

WILLIA S. BARKER: a *farmer* from *Oswego Co., New York*--came to Brookfield Township, Wisconsin Territory, in 1845.

⁵ *History of Waukesha County* (Western Historical Co., 1880), p. 494.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 729. Settlement in the town of Brookfield began in earnest literally weeks after Garret Vliet’s survey of the town was completed on April 17, 1836. Many New Yorkers left their stump infested, energy depleted soils for the fresh soil of Wisconsin beginning in the late 1830s. The 1880 *History of Waukesha County* provides a description of the arrival of the earliest families from the east, into the town of Brookfield. All of the families mentioned hailed from New York State.

PORTER BARNES: a *farmer* from *Chautauqua County, New York*--came to Brookfield Township, Wisconsin Territory, in 1839.

JOHN H. BEVIER: a *physician* from *Cayuga Co., New York*--came to Brookfield Township, Wisconsin Territory, in 1847.

C. A. BLODGETT: a *miller* from *Erie Co., New York*--came to Brookfield Township, Wisconsin Territory, in 1843.

WILLIAM BLODGETT: a *farmer* from *Ontario Co., New York*--came to Brookfield Township, Wisconsin Territory, in 1842.

C. V. BROWNELL: a *farmer* from *Genesee Co., New York*--came to Brookfield Township, Wisconsin Territory, in 1846.

EZRA CHAPIN: a *farmer* from *Steuben Co., New York*--came to Brookfield Township, Wisconsin Territory, in 1842.

ANDREW CLEVELAND: a *farmer* from *Ontario Co., New York*--came to Brookfield Township, Wisconsin Territory, in 1845.

T. J. COLEMAN: a *farmer* from *Orange Co., New York*--came to Brookfield Township, Wisconsin Territory, in the 1840s.

NATHAN FARR: a *farmer* from *Madison Co., New York*--came to Brookfield Township, Wisconsin Territory, in 1841.

JOHN FOSTURING: a *farmer* from *Madison Co., New York*--came to Brookfield Township, Wisconsin Territory, in the 1840s.

AARON V. GROOT: a *shoemaker* from *Schenectady, New York*--came to Brookfield Township, Wisconsin Territory, in 1843.

HIRAM HATCH: a *farmer* from *Chautauqua, Co., New York*--came to Brookfield Township, Wisconsin Territory, in 1838.

CHARLES LELAND: a *farmer* from *Madison Co., New York*--came to Brookfield Township, Wisconsin Territory, in 1839.

DAVID MERRILL: a *farmer* from *Madison Co., New York*--came to Brookfield Township, Wisconsin Territory, in the 1840s.

JAMES NOBLE: a *carpenter* from *Livingston Co., New York*--came to Brookfield Township, Wisconsin Territory, in 1847.

ORRIN G. PHILBROOK: a *farmer* from *Yates Co., New York*--came to Brookfield Township, Wisconsin Territory, in 1845.

EUGENE PHILLIPS: a *farmer* from *Genesee Co., New York*--came to Brookfield Township, Wisconsin Territory, in 1844.

SHERIDAN PUTNEY: a *farmer* from *Madison Co., New York*--came to Brookfield Township, Wisconsin Territory, in 1836.

MOORE SPEARS: a *farmer* from *Madison Co., New York*--came to Brookfield Township, Wisconsin Territory, in 1837.

JACOB STAMM: a *blacksmith* from *Madison Co., New York*--came to Brookfield Township, Wisconsin Territory, in the 1830s.

HARMONIOUS VAN VLECK: a *physician* from *Madison Co., New York*--came to Brookfield Township, Wisconsin Territory, in 1837.

GIDEON WALES: a *farmer* from *Madison Co., New York*--came to Brookfield Township, Wisconsin Territory, in 1838.⁷

⁷ William H. Tuttle, *Names and Sketches of the Pioneer Settlers of Madison County, New York* (Interlaken, New York: Heart of the Lakes Publishing, 1984). pp. 87, 106, 113, 163, 146, 188, 261 & 262. Madison County, New York, was the home of a considerable number of families who were among the first to settle in Brookfield. The families of H. Van Vleck, Hendrick Gregg, Nathan Farr, S. G. M. Putney, Edward Parker Jr., Charles Hart, David Merrill, John Fosturing, Charles Leland, Augustus Story, Moore Spears, Jacob Stamm and G. F. Beebe all came into Brookfield from Madison County, New York, and brought along the name of a local township to name their new township here in Wisconsin ---Brookfield.