An Intensive Architectural and Historical Survey Report of La Crosse County.

Containing three reports of surveys of the La Crosse County Heritage Corridor, Southern La Crosse County, and Northern La Crosse County compiled in 1995, 1998, and 2002.

LaCrosse River Valley Heritage Corridor LaCrosse County, Wisconsin

Intensive Survey Report
Architectural and Historical Survey Report

by

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Inc.
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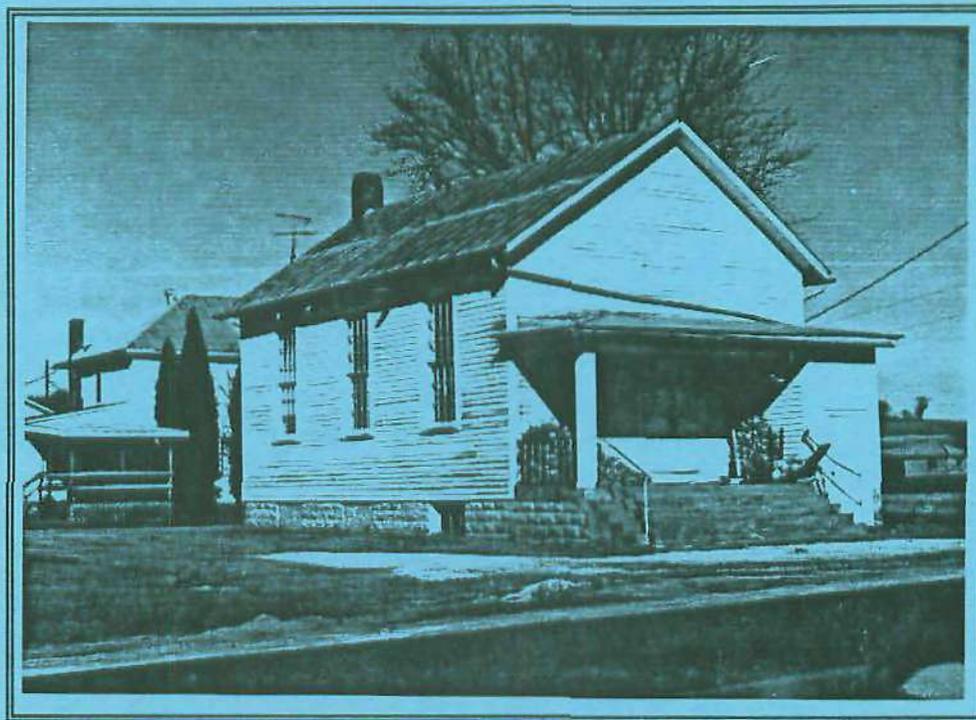
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Prepared for the
LaCrosse County Historic Preservation Sites Commission

LaCrosse County, Wisconsin

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Acknowledgements

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Chapter 1
Survey Methdology

The LaCrosse River Valley Heritage Corridor Architectural and Historical Intensive Survey was conducted between November 1994 and July 1995 by historical consultants U.S. West Research, Inc., based in LaCrosse, Wisconsin. The survey consisted of a number of final products:

- Intensive Survey Forms
- Intensive Survey Report

The scope of work for this project was initially established through the reconnaissance survey of the LaCrosse River Valley Heritage Corridor, which had been conducted in 1992-93 by U.S. West Research, Inc. The final recommendations and findings of that previous inventory were outlined in the document entitled *LaCrosse River Valley Heritage Corridor Project, LaCrosse County, Wisconsin*, dated 30 June 1993. Among the recommendations pertinent to this study are the following:

• Intensive Architecture/Historical Survey
The reconnaissance survey which was conducted in 1992-93 was not inclusive, due to limitations o the project. USWR (the consultant) suggests that an intensive architectural/historical survey be completed before future work is begun. The intensive survey insures that all historic resources within the project boundary are identified and recorded, and that potential National Register eligible properties are more intensively researched for development of historic context. Future survey work should also include the city of LaCrosse and the city of Sparta as anchors at each end of the corridor.

· Historic Context Themes
In order to place all historic resources in their proper context, the historic context themes must be developed. The State Historical Society of Wisconsin has developed a Cultural Resource Management program which has identified the historic themes which are prevalent in the state. These themes are developed within a statewide context, and are used to develop local contexts... Development of historic themes also assists historical resource organizations, such as the LaCrosse County Historic Sites Commission. in identifying rare and unusual property types and styles.

Based upon the recommendations mentioned above, the scope of work for this project included an intensive survey of properties within the boundaries of the LaCrosse River Valley Heritage Corridor and the development of historic contextual themes which are pertinent to events and properties located within the boundaries of the LaCrosse River Valley Heritage Corridor. The methodology for producing the final survey report will be outlined below.

Field Survey

The field work for the intensive survey was conducted in November-December 1994. Among the recommendations in that earlier report was to intensively inventory the fifty properties identified as potentially eligible, and add approximately twenty more to the intensive survey list. During the

field inventory, an additional 17 properties were identified by the field staff, including properties in the villages of West Salem, Bangor and Onalaska, as well as the rural areas. Additional houses, farmsteads, parks and bridges were added to the inventory.

Black and white photographs were taken of each property, as well as notes were taken for each property on description, date, and other pertinent information. All properties were plotted on a site map. Photo inventory cards were generated and all information about each property was entered into the State Historical Society of Wisconsin's database, HistoriBase.

As a result, this final survey report was generated. Components of the report include an introduction, methodology, historic overview of LaCrosse County, historical thematic chapters, survey results, recommendations and bibliography.

Burns Town Hall, LC 104/20

Historical Research

Historical research related to the LaCrosse River Valley Heritage Corridor project was tailored to meet a couple of different goals. First, general historical sources about the history of LaCrosse County were consulted in order to write the historic overview section. These same histories, as well as specific community histories, and sources about ethnic populations in the area, were utilized to write the thematic chapters. Finally, city and county tax rolls, Register of Deeds records and oral interviews were utilized to established construction dates and first owner names for many of the specific properties.

Most of the information utilized to compile this report was obtained from the LaCrosse Public Library, Murphy Library at University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse, and the LaCrosse County offices.

The historical content of this report and intensive survey is not intended to present the definitive history of the LaCrosse River Valley. The intent of this report is to document periods of the region's historical development in relationship to existing standing buildings and structures. It should be noted that sites of an archaeological nature were not included in this report, however a number of pertinent studies have been made about the prehistory of the LaCrosse River Valley.

Identification and Evaluation of Significant Properties

As part of an ongoing evaluation of properties for intensive historical research, an analysis of historical data on particular buildings was determined by the consultant in terms of their historical and architectural significance. Opinions of significance are based on National Register of Historic Places criteria utilized to guide State and Federal agencies in evaluating nominations for the National Register. The criteria are as follows, according to *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register for Evaluation* (U.S. Department of Interior, 1991).

Criteria for Evaluation

The quality of significance in American history , architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association, and:

A: That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or

B: That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or

C: That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or

D: That have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

Ordinarily cemeteries, birthplaces, or graves of historical figures, properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes, structures that have been moved from their original locations, reconstructed historic buildings, properties primarily commemorative in nature, and properties that have achieved significance within the past fifty (50) years shall not be considered eligible for the National Register. However, such properties *will qualify* if they are integral parts of districts that do meet the criteria, of if they fall within the following categories:

A: A religious property deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance; or

B: A building or structure removed from its original location but which is significant primarily for architectural value, or which is the surviving structure most importantly associated with a historic person or event; or

C: A birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance if there is no appropriate site or building directly associated with his (or her) productive life; or

D: A cemetery which derives its primary significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance from age, from distinctive design features, or from association of historic events; or

E: A reconstructed buildng which accurately executed in a suitable environment and present in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan, and when no other building or structure with the same association has survived; or

F: A property primarily commemorative in intent if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own exceptional significance; or

G: A property achieving significance within the past fifty (50) years if it is of exceptional importance.

Preparation of Inventory Cards and Intensive Survey

Inventory cards were prepared for all inventoried properties. These cards, pre-printed by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, each have basic locational information, including address, map code, as well as basic descriptive information, such as building

Big Creek Mills, LC 103/08

type, style, and materials. A black and white print photograph was mounted to the back of each inventory card, and these cards then became part of the file system which is maintained at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

Intensive survey information was entered into the HistoriBase database for all inventoried properties as well. Additional information as known, such as construction dates, owner names, and historical background was added to the data which was entered into the database. Hard copies were printed for the LaCrosse County Historic Sites Commission, and floppy disks were submitted to the State Historical Society of Wisconsin as part of the final deliverables for this project.

Preparation of District Survey Forms

Two potential historic districts were identified during the course of this intensive survey. The St. Johannis Church Historic District in the town of Barre, and the Commercial Street Commercial Historic District in Bangor were each identified as historic districts. Boundaries for the districts were set for the proposed districts based on architectural significance, historical significance and visual cohesiveness of the districts. Maps were made of the historic districts delineating boundaries, street names and contributing/non-contributing properties within the boundaries. Contributing properties either are significant historically and/or architecturally, or at least do not detract from the

Swarthout House, LC 118/31

overall sense of visual cohesiveness of the district. Non-contributing properties detract from the visual cohesiveness of the district.

Chapter 2
Historical Overview

The area of La Crosse County was first inhabited by Native American people about 12,000 years ago, but the first Euro-Americans did not begin to settle in the area until the 1850s. The name "La Crosse" is derived from French traders who in the late 1700s witnessed Native Americans playing a type of ball game on the prairie which they called "la crosse". The first Euro-Americans to pass through the area of present-day La Crosse were a group of missionaries in 1680, but the first attempt at settlement did not occur until 1841. In this year Nathan Myrick built a cabin on Barron's Island and began trading with the Winnebago Indians (*History of La Crosse County*: 329, 339).

In 1851 Crawford County was divided, which resulted in the formation of the area which was to become La Crosse County. The village of La Crosse was chosen to become the county seat (History of La Crosse County: 328). The boundaries of the county were changed several times with the present boundaries being established in 1918 (La Crosse County Agriculture: 2).

Presently the La Crosse River Valley encompasses six municipalities, including La Crosse, West Salem, Bangor, Onalaska, Barre Mills, and Rockland. The city of La Crosse was founded by Nathan Myrick who established the first permanent settlement in 1841 (*History of La Crosse County*: 339). The village of West Salem was first founded in 1858 when a railroad line was constructed through the township of Hamilton. The land for the rail line was provided by Thomas Leonard south of the village of Neshonoc. The store owners of Neshonoc moved their businesses closer to the rail line and established the community of West Salem (*History of La Crosse County*: 695). In the spring of 1854, the original plat for the village of Bangor was laid out on land owned by John Wheldon, the founder of Bangor (*History of La Crosse County*: 719). The village of Onalaska was born when Thomas C. Rowe, a native of New York, settled on the present site in 1851(Doblier: 10).

The La Crosse River Valley is located in the townships of Onalaska, Burns, Barre, Hamilton, and Medary. The Township of Onalaska was created in 1854 and by 1900 comprised over 30,000 acres (Doblier: 157). The first settlement in the township Burns occurred in 1851, but the first town meeting in Burns was held on 4 April 1854 (*History of La Crosse County*: 712). The town of Barre located in the Bostwick Valley had Euro-American settlement as early as 1850, with the original town being organized in 1853, however the town was reorganized in 1874 (*History of La Crosse County*: 711). Hamilton was originally included in the town of Neshonoc which was organized in 1853. Hamilton was formed out of the consolidation of Barre and Neshonoc townships in 1866, although the township of Barre branched off in 1874 (*History of La Crosse County*: 702).

The settlement of La Crosse County is centered between 1850 and 1900. The western frontier had reached the state of Wisconsin by 1840, and by 1850 it had spread to the Mississippi River and La Crosse County. During this period of settlement, people of German and Norwegian heritage were the largest ethnic groups of immigrants coming from Europe to the LaCrosse area. Other major ethnic groups were British-Irish, French, Dutch, and Bohemians. La Crosse County was a popular site for settlement because it was easily accessible by water. The Mississippi River provided an excellent means of transporting settlers. The La Crosse River Valley was also popular to settlers because of agricultural potential of the land (Wingate: 54, 55).

Early development of the La Crosse River Valley can be attributed to the rise of the lumber industry in the latter half of the 1800s. The pine forests of northern Wisconsin held a vast supply of lumber which was harvested by early settlers. La Crosse County was directly affected by the growth of the lumber industry, because the flat prairie along the Mississippi River was an ideal location for sawmills. The villages of Onalaska and La Crosse developed in part because if the wealth and prosperity that was brought to the area due to the lumber industry. The the saw mills and door and sash companies provided jobs for the residents of La Crosse County, and attracted a large number of settlers to the area. The prosperity of the lumber industry lasted only until the 1890s when the supply of and demand for lumber declined (Doblier:16).

The rich soil of the La Crosse River Valley was one of the factors that brought settlers to the area. Early settlers turned to farming as a way to support themselves and their families on the new frontier. The main crop grown during the period of settlement was wheat. Wheat was a popular crop because it had a low initial cost, was easy to grow, and it had a high yield. Wheat production in Wisconsin lead to the establishment of the grain milling industry. Every small community in the La Crosse River Valley had a local mill which processed wheat into flour. The cultivation of wheat provided a reliable income for settlers, but like the lumber industry, wheat production declined dramatically in 1890, and as a result so did the milling industry (Thompson: 10-15).

The development of the La Crosse River Valley was directly influenced by the expansion of the railroad to the valley. In the 1850s, railroads began to spread from Milwaukee to the rest of Wisconsin. The first railroad to reach La Crosse was the La Crosse and Milwaukee Railroad in 1858 (Gregory: 375). By 1893 three major railroad lines were running through the valley (Nesbit, 1985: 117). The influence of the railroad led to the establishment of West Salem, Rockland, and Bangor. The railroad opened the door for the transportation of raw materials, manufactured goods, and people from the La Crosse River Valley to commerce centers such as Milwaukee, Chicago, and St. Paul.

La Crosse County's early history is marked by prosperity, but by the turn of the century, the county's economy seemed to be less than stable. The residents of La Crosse County were able to overcome the downfalls of the lumber industry, wheat cultivation, and milling by turning their attention to dairying. The introduction of the dairy cows to La Crosse County was vital to the continued economic growth of the county. Dairying provided a stable economy for the county's

residents. The soil in the valley was well suited to the cultivation of crops such as corn and hay which were needed to feed the dairy herds. Milk production led to the creation of local cooperatives that specialized in butter and cheese production.

The ability of the people of the La Crosse River Valley to direct their efforts towards dairying has allowed for the continued growth of the county. Following 1900, dairying has developed into the leading industry in the state of Wisconsin as well as in La Crosse County. It has been agriculture that has provided the residents of the La Crosse River Valley with a stable economy. The size of farms in La Crosse county changed very little between 1890 and 1950; farms averaged 154.4 acres in 1890 and 168.0 acres in 1950 (La Crosse County Agriculture: 18). Agriculture has continued to be productive because of the developement of new technologies, in addition to the fact that farmers have shifted from focusing on one crop to a variety of crops.

The continued growth of the La Crosse River Valley can be attributed to the local people who have carried on the traditions of the early settlers. Today agriculture dominates the La Crosse River Valley, and the villages such as West Salem, Bangor, and Onalaska have developed into thriving communities, each with its own productive business and commercial districts. La Crosse County is anchored by the city of La Crosse which is one of Wisconsin's leading urban centers. Although the La Crosse River Valley has became densely populated, the land has not lost its beauty. The early settlers were intrigued by the numerous bluffs and coulees of the La Crosse River Valley, and that same beauty in addition to the local history of the towns and villages, is attracting visitors to the valley today.

Chapter 3
Settlement

Since the landing of Jean Nicolet at the banks of Green Bay in 1634, the state of Wisconsin has attracted foreign settlers (Nesbit: 10). Wisconsin was attractive to settlers for variety of different reasons, but the one feature of Wisconsin that stands out is its natural resources. Wisconsin has always been rich with an abundance of wildlife. The fur trade brought the first Europeans to Wisconsin. The fur traders were then followed by lead miners who sought to gain fortunes from digging into the soil of southwestern Wisconsin. The resources of the state called out to people who wanted a chance at a new and prosperous life. The lumber industry provided job opportunities for immigrants who were looking for alternatives to farming. The variety of cultures brought by the immigrants helped to shape the social and political views of Wisconsin, and the nation.

Wisconsin was organized into a territory in the year 1836 and at that time the population of Euro-American settlers was 11, 683 (Nesbit: 91). The state at this time was in its infancy, but the rich natural resources called out to settlers who began to pour into Wisconsin. The population of Wisconsin between 1840 and 1860 grew from 30,945 to 775,881. Wisconsin was a popular destination for the European immigrants as well as people who already lived in the United States and chose to relocate further west.

Available lands in La Crosse County were mostly settled by the turn of the century, and the census of 1910 recorded a county population of 43, 996 (Economic Development Summary: 35). After the turn of the century La Crosse County was known as the most populated county in the Mississippi region which included Monroe, Vernon Trempealeau, and Jackson counties.

The Land

Wisconsin at the time of settlement was heavily forested, but to the ambitious settler it offered many opportunities. The abundance of lumber led to Wisconsin becoming a national leader in the lumber industry. The price of land in Wisconsin was an attractive feature to settlers. By 1850 the western frontier had advanced as far west as the Mississippi River. The availability of land for a low price drove settlers west. The government sold land for $1.25 per acre which was very affordable for most settlers. A person could purchase eighty acres of land for one hundred dollars. With the passing of the Homestead Act of 1862, new western territories became even more attractive because the act made government land free. Because of the popularity of land in La Crosse County, a land office was opened in June 1853, located in the village of La Crosse (Wingate: 55).

Wisconsin's location was a factor in the settlement of the state. Wisconsin is bordered to the north by Lake Superior, to the east by Lake Michigan, and to the west by the Mississippi River. The availability of waterways meant that Wisconsin was easily accessible to the eastern populations. The Great Lakes, in addition to Wisconsin's numerous rivers, acted as transportation routes for supplies

as well as people. La Crosse County could be reached by traveling on the Mississippi River and then branching off on the La Crosse River. The lack of roads during the 1850s resulted in making waterways the primary method of transportation (Nesbit: 8, 1973).

After 1847 the Great Lakes became an important transportation route (Wingate: 50). Before this time, the commonly travelled route lead along the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. Milwaukee, located on the shores of Lake Michigan, became a popular port of disembarkment. After settlers arrived at Milwaukee, their route to western Wisconsin was either by land or water. The water route was by the Rock and Mississippi rivers. The overland route led from either Chicago or Milwaukee to Watertown, Portage, Mauston, and Sparta. The water route was a greater distance, but free from the perils of the overland route (Nesbit: 150).

The establishment of the Chicago and Milwaukee Railroad in the 1850s, and then to La Crosse in 1858, opened Wisconsin to the cities of the East. The railroad was an effective method of transporting freight as well as people across the country. The construction of railroads and the routes which they travelled greatly influenced the routes of settlement. La Crosse was at this time directly linked to New York by rail. New York became increasingly more popular as an immigrant port because of the railroads link to the west (Wingate: 61).

Ethinic Settlement

Many of the early settlers of Wisconsin chose the area of La Crosse to settle because they were recruited. In 1852 a law was passed which provided for a Commissioner of Immigration to reside in New York City. The immigration commissioner was responsible for informing new immigrants about the opportunities that were available in the state of Wisconsin. Immigrants based their decision of were to relocate on the information that was available to them. The first commissioner of Immigration for the state of Wisconsin was Gysbert Van Steenwyk. Van Steenwyk was himself from La Crosse and probably influenced a number of immigrants to settle in La Crosse (Wingate: 56, 57).

Information about Wisconsin was important in influencing new immigrants to settle in Wisconsin, but information in the form of letters from America also helped people decide to emigrate. The early settlers of Wisconsin commonly wrote letters to their friends and families back in their homelands. These personal letters brought to life the trials of life in America. Often these letters would be passed from person to person in countries such as Norway, which resulted in a large circulation of information. The letters of early settlers provided first-hand information to the people of Europe and were more influential than the books and pamphlets that were distributed around Europe. The letters acted as a link between the old world and the new. Europeans were given confidence to attempt the move to America as they were spurred on by the knowledge that they knew someone from their family or home village in the new country (Wingate: 58).

Prospective immigrants had information available to them in the form of letters, books, pocket maps, pamphlets, and newspaper advertisements. In addition to the Commissioner of Immigration, states advertised the appealing features of their region in a variety of publications which were circulated in

Europe. State governments put forth an effort to recruit immigrants to populate their particular states. The states of the union had to promote themselves, because rival states were doing the same thing (Wingate: 58-59).

In order for settlers to survive financially they had to have some source of income. Most of the people who came to Wisconsin could work the land and support themselves through agriculture. But immigrants also found alternative employment opportunities. Wisconsin was a major producer of lumber and the lumber industry offered a large number of jobs for immigrants. La Crosse's location on the Mississippi River gave it access to the pine forest of the Chippewa and Wisconsin river valleys, thus positioning LaCrosse as a center for the lumber industry. Additionally, wealth generated by the lumber industry caused a tremendous amount of new construction which required skilled labor. Jobs were available to immigrants in many different industries. The development of La Crosse as a city led to an increase of commerce and manufacturing. This job market of La Crosse County offered employment opportunities to immigrants (Wingate: 59).

The countries of Europe in the 1800s were heavily corrupted and many people looked to the United States for political freedom. The land of the western frontier provided people with the opportunity to own land and gave them a right to participate in the political system. In Europe political power was often controlled by an elite upper class. In America, unlike many European countries, the common person was entitled to an equal vote. Wisconsin was a state that was liberal toward foreigners. In Wisconsin only one year of residence was required for participation in voting by white males. Wisconsin at its time of induction to the Union, was debt free and therefore had lower taxes than neighboring states. The politic and social freedoms of Wisconsin made it an attractive state for immigrants (Wingate: 55-56).

The settlement of Wisconsin and the patterns which it followed can be linked to the ethnic groups who moved into the state. Each group followed movement and settlement patterns which distinguish them from other ethnic groups which resided in the state. In 1905 the settlement of La Crosse County had reached the point where settlers could be found in almost every area of the county. It was during this year that a census was taken which broke down population in relation to ethnic groups. The population of La Crosse County in 1905 was 42,850. The 1905 census listed twenty-one different nationalities in La Crosse County, but rather than dealing with all of these groups, this report will focus on the major ethnic groups (Wingate: 65,66).

Germans

The Germans made up the largest single ethnic group in La Crosse County in 1905. The German people chose to settle in Wisconsin because of the state's climate which was favored by the German people. A large concentration of Germans could be found in the southern region of La Crosse County due in part to the influence of the Catholic Church which had established in LaCrosse. The first and second bishops of the La Crosse Diocese were originally from Bavaria (Wingate: 69).

Norwegians

Norwegians were the second largest ethnic group in La Crosse County as of 1905. The Norwegians were a group that held strong cultural ties to their home country. They were the most homogeneous of the ethnic groups in terms of religion and language. The areas in the county where the Norwegian people settled were almost exclusively Norwegian. This group came from the counties of Hedmark and Oppland in Norway. The Norwegians tended to settle in groups that represented their home towns and local dialects. The immigrants from Norway were interested in Wisconsin because the climate was comparable to that of their homeland. These people were interested in obtaining land on which they could practice agriculture. The Norwegians concentrated their population in the northern and northwestern area of La Crosse County (Wingate: 74).

British-Irish

Of all of the immigrants that settled in Wisconsin, the English were the most easily assimilated into the Yankee culture. The British did not arrive in the west with their entire families' possessions, instead they had typically been in America for a few years and slowly made their way westward. The British settlers were likely to be businessmen and professionals, rather than farmers. Unlike other immigrants, they did not settle in areas where their culture was exclusive (Nesbit, 1973: 152-153). Many immigrants from the island of Great Britain settled in La Crosse County. Two of the main subgroups of the British-Irish were the Welsh and the Irish. The village of Bangor, which was established in 1854, derived its name from Bangor, Wales. Bangor, Wisconsin, was the center of Welsh settlement in La Crosse County (Wingate: 67).

The Irish came to La Crosse County by railroad. Many Irish were involved with the construction of the railroad itself. The Irish were not interested in agriculture, instead they preferred to locate in urban areas. The Irish often became involved with politics and for this reason they favored Wisconsin's liberal political policies (Nesbit, 1973: 154).

Bohemians

The Bohemians as a group arrived later than the other major ethnic groups in Wisconsin. The Bohemians at the time of settlement were part of the Austrian-Hungary Empire, but due to fundamental . They came to La Crosse County with plans to farm the land. The major areas of settlement occurred in the southeast corner of the county. This area is commonly known as Bohemian Ridge and Bohemian Valley (Wingate: 72).

Upon arriving in La Crosse, many immigrants took temporary residences at a camp named Castle Gardens. Castle Gardens was an immigrant camp that was founded by a Norwegian and a German, Charles Solberg and Frederick Fleisher. The camp was located in an ideal location, between the river and the Milwaukee Railroad depot. The camp encompassed one square block and was surrounded by a high board fence. The immigrants made use of a shed which was divided into sections for individual families where they could stay until they arranged for more

permanent residences. Each day as the trains arrived in La Crosse, someone associated with the camp would meet the new arrivals and provide them with food and medical care. The camp acted as a haven for the immigrants until they could contact friends and relatives, or they obtained employment (Wingate: 61).

Wisconsin was a state that had appeal to immigrants for a variety of different reasons. The climate in cooperation with the natural resources of the state were compatible to the needs of the immigrant farmer. Wisconsin was similar in many ways to the homelands from which the majority of immigrants came. The settlers of Wisconsin all shared the same goal of creating a better life for themselves and their families. The patterns of settlement in Wisconsin and in particular La Crosse County follow the needs of the people who came to this state and established themselves on the western frontiers. The immigrant's unique cultural beliefs and practices helped shape Wisconsin, for example the prominence of Wisconsin as a brewery state is due in part to the large German population. Wisconsin's ethnic groups helped to shape the state, and in return the state, like the rest of the United States with its diverse population, began to change its new residents. The process of Americanization caused the immigrants to lose some of their strong ethnic customs and become American. Although the immigrants belonged to different ethnic groups, the trials of creating a new life on the frontier transformed them all into Americans.

Chapter 4
Agriculture

The settlement of Wisconsin could not have happened if not for farming. Early in its settlement history Wisconsin attracted people who saw farming as a way of life. The people who came to Wisconsin were interested in owning and working their own land. The land in the west was full of opportunities for people who worked hard. When a family came to Wisconsin, they would often settle on a piece of property with the goal of producing a living. The land was cleared and seeds were planted. Farming allowed people to sustain themselves in the terms of food and clothing. The land provided food for the dinner table, and through efficient practice, agriculture led to a surplus, which could then be sold in order to buy goods which could not be produced in the home. The history of agriculture in La Crosse County centers around three important changes: (1) the change from producing crops mainly for the home to wheat production, (2) changing from wheat production to livestock, (3) the growth of dairying (La Crosse County Agriculture: 2).

The La Crosse River Valley has a variety of soil types that are divided into three regions - uplands, river terraces, and bottoms. The soils of the uplands cover the round ridges and some of the lower valley slopes which with the addition of fertilizer can be very productive. The river terrace soils are mostly silty loams which are productive for a variety of crops. The areas of the La Crosse River Valley which are commonly flooded compose the bottom soil region (Wisconsin Rural Resources: 29). La Crosse County has a climate that is marked by wide variations in temperature, the average temperature in January is 15 degrees Fahrenheit and in July 74 degrees Fahrenheit (Soil Survey: 76). The growing season on average is 163 days long, ranging from April 29 to October 9. La Crosse County receives an average of 28.92 inches of rainfall per year, a suitable amount for the variety of crops grown in the county (Soil Survey: 76).

An examle of a typical farmstead in the La Crosse River Valley is the Richards-Hauser Farm (LC 108/07) located on County Highway S in the township of Onalaska. The farm house, constructed in 1902 by R.L. Richards, is a two-story Queen Anne Revival home, built of red brick and sits on a foundation of heavy cut-stone. The house is accompanied by a variety of outbuildings which include a main barn, granary, ice house, chicken coop, corn crib, milk house and machine shed (Rausch: item 7, page 1-3). Historically the farmstead was located on 248.5 taxable acres, and the land was purchased by R. L. Richards of New York in 1901. The Richards family maintained the farm until 1912 when it was sold to William C. Hauser (Rausch: item 8, page 2). The Richards-Hauser Farm is a good example of a family operated farm in La Crosse County. The farm may have been involved with wheat production like the rest of La Crosse County during the nineteenth century, but there is not enough information known to support this statement. The Richards-Hauser Farm economy was most likely based on the sale of eggs, cream and some meat producing animals for cash, however farming was usually directed towards growing produce for home consumption (Rausch: item 8, page 3).

Grain and Livestock Production

The early European settlers of Wisconsin cultivated wheat as their first cash crop. Wheat was a relatively easy crop to grow. Once the plowing and sowing was done in the spring there was no need for further work to be done until the wheat was harvested in the fall. The limited amount of work needed to raise the crop made it attractive to farmers because of the high profitability. However, wheat did have a number of disadvantages. It was hard on the soil because it depleted the soil of nutrients, and the yield varied from year to year. The price of wheat was closely determined by the law of supply and demand which in turn led to an unstable market (Thompson: 3).

Wheat remained the primary cash crop throughout the 1800s. The growth of wheat can be attributed to the development of agricultural machinery that was suited to prairie conditions. The self-scouring plow invented by John Deere, which replaced the heavy wooden breaking plow, allowed for an increase in the number of acres a farmer could cultivate. The eastern part of Wisconsin first began wheat production on a large scale. The grain slowly began to make its way west. In 1869 western Wisconsin, which includes La Crosse and Monroe County, composed 16% of the state's total acreage of wheat. Wheat was slow to gain popularity in the western region of Wisconsin, but wheat maintained its popularity as the state's main cash crop. Wheat eventually established itself as an important cash crop in the west where it developed a strong following. By 1909 western Wisconsin comprised of 32% of the state's total wheat producing farmland (Wyatt, vol.2: 2-5).

The late 1800s saw a decline in the production of wheat. Eastern Wisconsin began the trend to abandon wheat for other cash crops such as corn and hay. Wheat production began to fall during the 1850s when farmers experienced a decrease in crop yield. Insufficient rainfall was commonly blamed for the poor yield from year to year, but soil depletion was the major reason for the decline of wheat production (Nesbit, 1973: 280-281). The southeastern region of Wisconsin began to shift away from wheat as a cash crop during the 1870s. Wheat production moved to the western portion of Wisconsin due in part to the introduction of the railroad which opened the fertile lands along the Wisconsin and Minnesota border. In 1869 wheat production in Wisconsin accounted for over one million acres of farmland, however by 1909 wheat was planted on only 140,000 acres with western Wisconsin leading in wheat production. While wheat was the ideal crop for pioneer farmers who needed a cash crop that generated a substantial profit, Wisconsin farmers turned away from wheat as their main cash crop by the early 1900s, although wheat production did experience a boom during World War I (Thompson: 10-15).

The farmers of the La Crosse River Valley raised a variety of crops and livestock. The most common crops in Wisconsin before 1900 were corn, oats, wheat, and hay. Wheat was the number one cash crop, but the importance of livestock to the Wisconsin farmer led to increased cultivation of feed crops. Animal husbandry was a major part of every farm. Draught animals were needed to work the fields, and cows and poultry were raised for milk and eggs. Livestock were unable to fulfill their dietary needs from grazing alone, so feed crops were required (Wyatt, vol. 2: 5-1).

In order for a farmer to be able to support a herd of cattle, he had to be able to increase the profitability of the herd. If a herd of cattle was being raised in order to produce milk for sale, the farmer had to increase the herd's yield by feeding them oats and hay. Feed crop production became one of the top priorities of farmers throughout Wisconsin. Oat, hay, and corn production gained popularity as markets for hogs, beef cattle, and dairy products, such as cheese and butter, became available to rural farmers due in part to the railroad in 1856.

The need for animal to work the field was apparent to the first settlers of Wisconsin. The farmers of the La Crosse River Valley were no different then the rest of Wisconsin in their need for draught animals to pull braking plows and wagons. Early farmers relied on their livestock to provide them with food for the table as well as help in working the land. Farm animals were also raised for milk, eggs, wool, and meat. Initially farmers raised cash crops such as wheat in order to make the money needed to pay for their farms. The decline in the wheat market in collaboration with the development of feed crops caused farmers to turn to animal husbandry and an alternative to cash crops. The demand for meat and dairy production created a viable market allowed for farmers to raise livestock for the sole purpose of sale (Wyatt, vol. 2: 8-1).

The first settlers of Wisconsin introduced cattle to the state. The settlers needed oxen for working the fields and commonly some cattle were raised in small numbers for beef. The boom in cattle production occurred after 1870 with the rise of the dairy industry. Farmers began to convert their fields to feed crops and pasture land production because of the rising demand for beef and dairy products. Dairy production brought herds of Holsteins and Guernseys to all parts of Wisconsin. Holsteins were the popular choice by most farmers but Guernseys were strongly concentrated in western Wisconsin (Wyatt, vol. 2: 8-5).

Dairy Production

Dairy cows were commonly seen on small rural farms because they produced milk which was used by the farmer's family. The establishment of cooperatives and new types of high yield feed crops made large scale dairy production profitable. As early as the 1850s farmers in La Crosse County and throughout Wisconsin began to shift away from wheat as a cash crop and turned to dairy. Holsteins and Guernseys were raised for their milk, which could then be processed into butter and cheese. The importance of dairy was evident by the number of creameries and cheese factories in La Crosse County. In 1859 La Crosse County was producing 100,000 - 299,999 pounds of butter. By 1907 creameries were located in Barre Mills, Bangor, Holman, La Crosse, Mindoro, and West Salem; cheese factories were in located across the county in areas such as Bangor, Dutch Creek, Middle Ridge, St. Joseph's Ridge, Washington, Shelby, and Greenfield (La Crosse County Agriculture: 4).

Two of the more prominent dairy businesses in the county were the Bangor Cheese factory, established in 1890 and the West Salem Creamery Association, started in 1886. The Bangor Cheese factory specialized in producing Brick and Swiss cheeses (La Crosse County Agriculture:

4).

Creameries and cheese factories where often operated by a cooperative. The cooperative was formed by local farmers who pooled together resources in order to purchase a creamery or cheese factory. The cooperative would operate the factory using milk supplied by farmers who were members of the cooperative. The farmers would be paid for their milk and the cost of gathering the cream would be covered by the cooperative (Leonard's Dream: 44). Through local cooperation and participation by farmers the cost of processing dairy products was kept to a minimum while the profits were returned to the farmers.

Dairying started from humble beginnings, but it grew to become the leading industry in La Crosse County. The evidence for this can be see in the following statistics. A production of 480,000 pounds of creamry butter in 1885 expanded to 3,756,000 pounds by 1950, and cheese production rose from 138,000 pounds in 1885 to 2,825,000 pounds in 1950. The production of condensed and powdered products increased form 33,000 pounds in 1921 to 5,013,000 pounds by 1950. And the manufacturing of ice cream in La Crosse County was 501,000 gallons in 1950 (La Crosse County Agriculture: 4).

Tobacco

Tobacco was one of Wisconsin's cash crops which provided the farmers of La Crosse County with an alternative to wheat. Tobacco was suited to the farm lands of Wisconsin due in part to the climate and soil type. Tobacco grown in La Crosse County was categorized as cigar-binder leaf. This type of tobacco was not, as the name implies, used exclusively as cigar binding. The quality of tobacco is dependent on year to year production. Tobacco was brought to the La Crosse River valley by Norwegian settlers who had tobacco growing knowledge.

The production of tobacco is closely determined by market and climate. The demand of tobacco has varied greatly through the years which resulted in an unstable market. Combined with the varying climate of Wisconsin, tobacco had the potential of producing high profits for farmers. In a year of ideal weather, tobacco growers produced a high quality product that netted a substantial profit. The sale of tobacco occurred only after the tobacco had been harvested and dried. Drying sheds can be commonly seen among the outbuildings of farms in Wisconsin. The farmer acted as his own agent and sold directly to tobacco buyers before the formation of the tobacco pool and the Wisconsin Tobacco Association (Wyatt, vol. 2: 7-2).

Milling

The agricultural industry lead to the necessity of milling. The surplus of crops, which resulted from effective farming, were sold to earn money for the purchase of other goods. The mill was an operation where local farmers brought their grain to be processed. Grains like oats and wheat were ground into flour, cornmeal or feed for livestock. Milling was a direct result of agriculture and is therefore mentioned in this chapter. Further development of milling as a major industry in

La Crosse County will be discussed in the thematic chapter on industry.

Cooperatives

Wisconsin farmers were often not individually able to afford the cost of transporting their products to market, nor they were necessarily able to buy large agricultural equipment like threshing machines. The formation of a cooperative was the answer to cutting the costs for a single farmer by dividing the cost among a larger number of farmers. Cooperatives were organizations or enterprises that were owned and operated by local members. Farmers who shared an interest in dairy or cattle production formed cooperatives in order to increase their profits be lowering individual costs and creating a viable market for their crops. Wisconsin's largest agricultural commodities, including dairy, livestock, cranberries, and tobacco, had their own local and state wide cooperatives.

Local livestock associations were a type of cooperative that assembled and shipped livestock for its members. Cooperatives helped regulate livestock production by educating members about the newest dietary and breeding practices, as well as informing farmers about markets, regulations, and prices (Swoboda:168). Dairy production in Wisconsin was centered around cooperatives. Local farmers would pool their resources in order to create a creamery. The creamery produced butter and cheese which helped the cooperative members in two ways. First it created a market for the members to sell their milk, and second the members profited from the butter and cheese sales. In 1925 Wisconsin ranked first in the nation in number of dairy cooperatives. Local cooperatives were linked to statewide associations such as the Wisconsin Cheese Producers' Federation, which opened state and national markets for cooperative members (Swoboda:165). Cranberry growers of Monroe County could find a market for their crops by belonging to the Wisconsin Cranberry Growers' Association (Swoboda: 166). Wisconsin also had a cooperative for the tobacco growers, the Wisconsin Tobacco Association. Cooperatives served the purpose of helping farmers market their products.

As agriculture developed in La Crosse County, a number of organizations that supported agriculture began to surface. In October of 1858 the La Crosse County Agricultural Society was organized and held their first annual fair. The organization owned property near West Salem that was used for exhibition purposes from 1859 to 1881. The Northwest Horicultural Society was created in 1879 and held a fair in 1881 which was associated with the Wisconsin State Horicultural Society. And in 1868 the La Crosse Board of Trade was organized; although the board was primarily associated with the promotion of towns, it did support agriculture (La Crosse County Agriculture: 4).

Influence of the Railroad

The success of agriculture in the La Crosse River Valley was aided by the introduction of the railroad. Dairy products such as butter and cheese, as well as livestock had to be shipped to a viable market. The railroad provided a way for the farmers of rural La Crosse County to reach the markets of large cities like La Crosse, Milwaukee, and St. Paul. In 1858 with the opening of a tunnel at Tomah, the Milwaukee Road railroad began to reach towns in the La Crosse River

Valley. The railroad had been operating on a regular schedule from Milwaukee to New Lisbon since 1857, but the rail did not reach West Salem until 1874 (Leonard's Dream:22).

During this time period the condition of roads, where they did exist, was very poor. The railroad was the only reliable means of transportation. The agricultural industry heavily relied on the railways in order to transport crops and produce to distant markets. The practice of raising livestock for sale was greatly influenced by the availability of markets. In addition to livestock, the railroad hauled freight such as wheat, flour, vegetables, live stock, dairy products, and farm implements (Memoirs:73). The influence of the railroad and the prosperity it brought with it was so great that towns often relocated in order to be in the path of a railroad. The towns of West Salem , Bangor, and Rockland were all established along of the railroad lines.

The establishement of La Crosse County can be attributed to the lumber industry; however it was agriculture that provided a stable yet productive economy for the county. La Crosse County was able to find profit in agriculture during its early stages of settlement from wheat production, but it was the adaptation of livestock production and then dairying that continued the economic growth of the county. Agriculture spawned the growth of other industries such the manufacturing of agricultural machinery, creameries, cheese factories, milling, and railroads.

Chapter 5
Industry

The state of Wisconsin is commonly seen as being a strong agricultural state, but it also has had a history marked by industry. The earliest of Wisconsin's industries were intended to meet the needs of the settlers, and to take advantage of the state's resources. Early industry was aided by water power. The abundant streams and rivers founded in Wisconsin, powered early industry. Sawmills and grist mills were among Wisconsin's first industries.

The early settlers came to Wisconsin because of its abundance of natural resources. They began to take advantage of Wisconsin's fertile soils and planted crops. The farmers of Wisconsin began their cultivation of the soil with the planting of wheat. This early cash crop grew well and became a valuable commodity which led to the establishment of Wisconsin as a strong agricultural state. Agriculture developed rapidly with the production of wheat, but it was the dairy industry which provided a stable agricultural based economy for Wisconsin. The soils of the state made it possible for the canning industry to develop, because crops such as peas, beans, and beets could be grown. Agriculture provided a basis for many of the leading industries of Wisconsin.

Wheat was the most important industry during the 1800s for the state of Wisconsin. Wheat was a cash crop that was grown by the majority of Wisconsin's farmers, because it was a crop that could be planted for a small cost and the yield produced a large profit. The reason for wheat's popularity can be credited to three factors. The first factor was the ability of wheat to grow in Wisconsin soils. The second factor was the open prairie lands of southern Wisconsin, which allowed large fields to be planted. And the third reason was the railroad, which as early as the 1850s provided a reliable mode of shipment for the grain (Thompson: 39,40).

During the 1880s the wheat industry began to sharply decline. Continued seasons of poor yields in addition to a decrease in market demand, contributed to wheat's decline. However, the city of La Crosse, unlike other state shipping centers, continued to grow in wheat exports. La Crosse was able to thrive due in part to its location. While wheat declined in eastern Wisconsin in the late 1800s, the farmers of western Wisconsin were leading the state in wheat production. La Crosse continued to be an exporter of wheat grown in western Wisconsin and Minnesota until the end of the nineteenth century. Also, wheat that was grown in the Dakotas passed through the port of La Crosse (Economic Development Summary: 20).

Before 1900, the farmers of Wisconsin were tied to a onecrop system of agriculture. The appeal of wheat as a cash crop was so great, that farmers ignored other types of crop cultivation such as oats, corn, and hay. The crash of the wheat market in 1893 put an end to the single crop cultivation practices of Wisconsin farmers. The farmers of Wisconsin turned to dairy farming as an alternative to wheat cultivation (Thompson: 20). Wisconsin's terrain, with its rolling hills and valleys, was far from being ideal for wheat, however the dairy industry was well suited to the

state's natural geography. The dairy industry became the dominant industry in the state of Wisconsin.

Milling

The agricultural development of Wisconsin led to the establishment of the milling industry. The surplus of crops, which is the result of effective farming, can be sold to earn money for the purchase of other goods. The mill was an operation where local farmers brought their grain to be processed. Grains like oats and wheat were ground into flour, cornmeal or feed for livestock. The mill owner would often charge for the service provided by keeping a portion of the farmer's grain. After the grain was processed, the farmer could use or sell the processed grain. The local mill such as the Steensen Mill (not extant) in West Salem owned by Hiram Lovejoy and Orrin Van Nees, was built along side a river or large stream. The water provided power to turn the large grinding stone. "The mill was used to grind hominy, patent flour and feed."(Kindschey: 34). Some grains that were processed at a mill are graham buck wheat, middlings and cornmeal scratch feed.(Kindschey: 34)

Milling was at first a local business where the local miller produced enough flour only for the farmers who brought their grain to the mill. The city of Milwaukee began to produce flour on a large scale because Milwaukee had access to the railroad and the Great Lakes. This allowed for Milwaukee to receive large amounts of grain as well as being able to ship the processed flour out of the state. Grain production increased with the rise of wheat as Wisconsin's leading cash. The wheat market in the state reached a peak in 1860 with a bumper crop. The following years saw a sharp decline in wheat production overall in the state. The decline of the wheat industry ushered in the decline of the milling industry (Thompson: 43).

La Crosse was a popular site for industry because of the railroads which ran through the city. The La Crosse River Valley was geographically an ideal route for east/west transportation access. The railway ran through the La Crosse River Valley to La Crosse and then turned north towards St. Paul, Minnesota. The railroad provided a reliable way of transporting products to major markets such as Milwaukee. The Mississippi River's steamboat traffic was also an alternative to the railroad and brought products to the cities along the Mississippi River such as St. Louis. The ability for the residents of La Crosse County to reach the transportation routes of the railroad or the Mississippi River was a factor in the development of the industrial base of the county.

Lumber

La Crosse acted as an important port for the lumber industry for a couple of important reasons. First the Black River, which terminates at the Mississippi River in the city of LaCrosse, was a main route for transporting harvest logs out of the northern Wisconsin forests and to the sawmills of Onalaska and LaCrosse. The logs were floated downstream where they reached a slough where the logs were sorted and sent to different mills. North of Onalaska and La Crosse a series of booms were set up that directed the logs towardthe proper mills. This system of booms in

cooperation with the mills that lined the shores of the Mississippi River were the second reason for La Crosse's involvement in the lumber industry. Sawmills established along the Black River and the Mississippi River from northern Onalaska to southern La Crosse between 1850 and 1900 (Doblier: 15,16).

The lumber industry dominated the economy of La Crosse and Onalaska in the second half of the 1800s. Many of the immigrants who travelled to the La Crosse River Valley came in search of jobs and were able to find them in lumber industry. Laborers were needed not only to cut the timber in northern Wisconsin, but to see that the logs reached their destinations at the sawmills. The logs which were sent down river were often placed together in log rafts so that they could be shipped down river. Logs which were simply floated downstream often did not make it all the way to their destination because they often became caught along the banks of the river. To avoid this hazard, the logs were bound together in large rafts which were then paused down river by steamboats (Nesbit, 1973: 302).

The Black River flowed into the Mississippi at a point just north of Onalaska. Once the logs neared the mouth of the Black River, they were funnelled into a series of piers and log booms which sorted the logs. The logs were then sent on the final leg of their journey which ultimately led to the sawmill. The wide open plain of La Crosse was conducive to the construction of sawmills. La Crosse and Onalaska became large lumbering centers. In the mills of these towns, thousands of board feet of lumber were processed into cut boards, shingles, siding, and doors. These products were in high demand to the settlers who were establishing themselves in the treeless prairies of the Great Plains (Doblier: 15,16).

The lumber industry brought wealth and prosperity to La Crosse County, but as with wheat the industry, reached a peak and then experienced a sharp decline. By 1890 the lumber industry had harvested the majority of timber from the forests of Wisconsin. With no product to sell, the lumber market which had helped to establish and develop the area of La Crosse quickly disappeared (Nesbit: 308).

When the lumber market began to falter, the communities that relied on the lumber industry for economic support had to look for other means of economic growth. La Crosse continued to grow because it was the only sizable community between Milwaukee and the Twin Cities of Minnesota. La Crosse developed alternative industries to fill the gap left by the lumber industry. The city became a center for agricultural equipment manufacturing, and because of the city's strong German heritage, a major beer producer (Economical Development Summary: 21). The city of La Crosse was unquestionably the region's industrial leader. The industries that could be found in rural La Crosse County were raw material orientated industries such as creameries, grain elevators, cheese factories and slaughter houses (Economical Development Summary: 22)

Canning

Fruit and vegetable processing had been viable industry in Wisconsin since the late 1800s. Wisconsin's strong agricultural base provided the fruits and vegetable for a processing industry, and by the second decade of the twentieth century the state was one of the leading producers of canned products in the nation.

Although the canning industry of Wisconsin was centralized around the eastern area of Wisconsin, the Onalaska Pickle and Canning Compnay was a leader in canning for western Wisconsin. The Onalaska Pickle and Canning Company was originally founded in 1901 as the J. S. Gedney Pickle Company. The company converted a bulding (108/02) which was at one time part of the Onalaska Brewery Company. The company chose Onalaska as a location for the canning operation because of the city's ideal transportation facilities (Doblier: 128).

The canning process first developed in France and was not introduced to the United States until 1819. Small vegetable gardens began to appear across the state as Wisconsin became settled. The soils of Wisconsin were fertile and supported a variety of crops, and large yields of peas in the east led to profitable fresh market sales. By 1880 a few communities along Lake Michigan had developed small canning operations. The early canning operations were basically home spun industries, family owned and run. Large scale canning production did not occur in Wisconsin until the turn of the century (Wyatt, vol. 2: 11-1)

The canning industry in Wisconsin developed slowly before 1900 for a variety of reasons. Large scale production of crops requires a large work force during the planting and harvesting periods. Canning companies needed large numbers of reliable laborers to work the fields. The fields of peas and beans that were used for canning crops were owned by the local canning companies, because private farmers did not have confidence in the early canning industry. As the canning industry became increasingly profitable, individual farmers began to plant their own fields of vegetables destined for canning. The canning industriy's slow growth was also due to the lack of appropriate machinery. All of the harvesting had to be done by hand which was labor-intensive. After 1900 the canning industry began to grow at a steady rate due to inventions of and improvements in machinery (Wyatt,vol. 2: 11-4).

The canning industry of Wisconsin produced a variety of canned fruits and vegetables, with corn, peas, and beets being the most profitable. Peas were first canned in Wisconsin in 1887, but the crop became established between 1897 and 1920. Pea production was aided by the development of new machinery which increased the amount of peas that could be processed. Before 1920 Wisconsin was responsible for producing one third of the nation's total production of peas. After 1920 the amount of peas produced in Wisconsin amounted to over fifty percent.

Wisconsin is located at the northern limit of the corn belt, but the state was still able to produce a substantial amount of sweet corn for canning. The majority of the corn fields of Wisconsin were planted as feed crops to support Wisconsin's dairy industry, but sweet corn is the second largest

crop canned in Wisconsin (Wyatt, vol. 2: 11-5). The canning of corn dominated the early canning industry of Wisconsin, but after 1900 corn was passed in production by peas (Krause: 56, 71).

The farmers of Wisconsin grew crops of beets which resulted in the processing industries of sugar production and beet canning. Gaining prominence during the 1920s, Wisconsin beet production provided thirty percent of the nations total production from 1920 to 1950. Beet production lead to two different food processing industries in Wisconsin. Beets were canned for consumption as vegetables, but sugar beets were proceed for sugar. Both of these industries were centered in the eastern part of Wisconsin. This area was better suited for the growing needs of beets. Due to limited transportation, beet processing facilities were located a short distance form the fields.

Wisconsin's canning industry was important to the overall economy of Wisconsin, but La Crosse County was not a leader in the industry. La Crosse County farmers contributed to the industry by cultivating peas, corn, and beets. The large canning plants of Wisconsin were mostly located in the eastern part of the state, yet La Crosse County had been the home of four canning plants (none extant) (Wyatt, vol 2: 11-11). As with many of the other industries in La Crosse County, the canning industry was prevalent because of the county's location. The farming community produced crops which were processed in local plants, and the access to the railroad provided a transportation route for raw materials as well as the shipping of finished products.

Brewing

Because of the large German population in Wisconsin, the state has been noted for its beer production. The German influence has affected the development of breweries in La Crosse County. In 1860 La Crosse County had at least five breweries in operation, the most notable being the City Brewery of John Gund and Gottlieb Heileman (1854). Beer production was a popular business in Wisconsin because of the availability of hops, barley, and fresh water. Wisconsin also had a reliable supply of ice, and the constant increase in German immigrants provided a skilled work force. The center of Wisconsin's brewing industry was the city of Milwaukee, which had a large German population, but beer production had spread to nineteen counties by 1880 (Wyatt, vol: 9-10).

The beer industry experienced a notable period of growth between 1860 and 1880. During this period, improvements in machinery and the brewing process contributed to increased production. Finding a market of German-brewed beer was not a problem. The growing public was fond of the German-brewed beers, because in comparison the English ales, the German beers were lighter and more palatable to the general public. By the turn of the century the brewing industry was firmly established in Wisconsin and breweries began to consolidate. Breweries originally produced beer for a local market, but the increase in public demand for beer led to the consolidation of Wisconsin breweries, with many small companies closing. The brewery industry encountered a set back in 1919 with the adopting of Prohibition. Prohibition and the Great Depression of the 1930s hurt the brewing industry, however technological innovations during World War II

revolutionalized the industry.

In the village of Bangor the Hussa Brewery Company (LC 104/06, LC 104/05) was one of the most productive breweries in the county. Founded in 1860 by Joseph Hussa, the Hussa Brewery Company shipped its product throughout the county, as well as to distant markets in Milwaukee and Chicago. The Hussa Brewery produced two outstanding beers, Paragon and Crystalline. The brewery suffered from a fire in 1911 that destroyed part of the brewery, but the company was able to survive from this disaster. Over 600 barrels of beer was stored in underground tunnels which were unharmed by the fire (Bangor Historical Society: 2).

Manufacturing

From early times there developed in the county manufacturing industries that were connected with farm production. Some notable farm implements manufactured in LaCrosse County were the Smith and Merrill Clipper Threshing Machines in 1861, A. Hirschheimer's La Crosse Plow Works in 1863, and the B. Otto and Joseph Barter invention of the twin binder in 1867. The manufacturing industries in the La Crosse County have been very influential to the development of the city and communities within the county.

La Crosse is unique in the fact that it was able to compete with larger manufacturing centers such as Milwaukee and Chicago. La Crosse, because of its location on the Mississippi River and also having access to major railroad lines, was able to import the needed raw materials for manufacturing as well as being able to ship finished products to consumers. La Crosse was able to produce goods for the farmers of La Crosse County as well as Wisconsin and Minnesota (Nesbit, 1973: 332).

The expansion of farming in the Midwest demanded new machinery in order to increase the amount of crops that could be cultivated. The first manufacturers were comprised of local craftsmen who produced a limited amount of products. The large scale manufacturers were started by businessmen who had funding from eastern banks. The individual craftsmen possessed the skills for manufacturing, but they did not possess the money to expand their operations.

The industries of early La Crosse County were centered around the abundant natural resources that were found within the county's borders. The lumber industry was the first major industry in the county which brought people to the area in search of employment opportunites. Lumber also was responsible for establishing an economic base for towns in the county such as Onalaska. The lumber industry faded in the late 1890s but the county was able to turn towards agriculture in order to survive. Agriculture has developed into the count'ys leading industry. The rise of agriculture, especially dairy production, caused industries like the manufacturing of agricultural machinery. La Crosse County's industries were aided in part to the availiblity of transportation in the form of the Mississippi River and the access to railroad lines.

Chapter 6
Transportation

The development of Wisconsin was directly influenced by its transportaion facilities. Transportation provided a way for people to move from the east with the hope of settling in Wisconsin, and it also established a vital link between Wisconsin and the cities in the east. In a time before modern communication links, Wisconsin relied on its waterways and railroads to connect the state to the rest of the country. The state of Wisconsin was fortunate to be located with Lake Superior to the north, Lake Michigan to the east, and the Mississippi River to the west. La Crosse County's development was shaped by its location on the Mississippi River, and eventually by the railroad route which ran through the LaCrosse River Valley.

Mississippi River

For thousands of years the Mississippi River and its tributaries have been used as routes of transportion. The Mississippi River provided Wisconsin's first inhabitants, the Native Americans, with a transportation route in addition to abundant natural resources. After the discovery of the Mississippi in 1673 by Marquette and Joliet, the river carried fur traders and European settlers to the region. The river and its tributaries allowed access to the pine forests of northern Wisconsin. With the introduction of the steamboat, the Mississippi linked La Crosse to river ports north and south. La Crosse's location made the city an ideal location for steamboats to stop in order to take on firewood for the ships boilers. From the 1850s to the present, La Crosse has served as a harbor and river landing (Cultural Resource Management: 3-5).

The river opened up western Wisconsin to immigration and settlement. People who were interested in settling in Wisconsin had an available means of reaching the state. The river during the surge of settlement in the 1850s provided a route for settlers from the east via the Erie Canal to the Ohio River and finally north on the Mississippi. Mississippi steamboats carried large numbers of settlers to Wisconsin until the 1870s, when the railroads became a popular method of travelling.

The height of La Crosse's involvement in Mississippi River transportation came with the lumber industry. Northern Wisconsin offered a seemingly endless supply of pine forests during the 1800s. The waterways of the Wisconsin, St. Croix, and Black rivers provided access to these pineries. La Crosse and Onalaska were founded due to their location where the Black River joined with the Mississippi. Because of this location, La Crosse and Onalaska were in ideal locations for the placement of lumber mills. After being cut, the logs were floated down river to the mills where they were finished into lumber. La Crosse and Onalaska between 1850 and 1900 were the sites of a large number of saw mills. The lumber industry brought prosperity to western Wisconsin in the form of employment oppurtunities.

Railroads

The interior of Wisconsin was made accessible to transportation by the construction of railroads. The railroad was designed from the beginning to ship grain, furs, lumber, lead, and agricultural products across the state and country. In addition to transporting freight, the railroads also carried passengers, as indicated by the many immigrants who travelled to Wisconsin by railroad. The lead industry in southwest Wisconsin created a demand for an economical method of shipping lead ore to ports along the coast of Lake Michigan. Railroads were the answer to cross-state transportional needs, because they were faster and therefore more economical than other overland routes. However, for the railroad to be more profitable for its investors, Wisconsin had to develop a stable agricultural-based economy. The cost of laying track was expensive and railroad investers needed to be able to get a return on their money. The lead region did not produce a sufficient amount of ore to be the railroad's sole supporter. Large scale agriculture was needed in order for Wisconsin to develop its railroad system.

The La Crosse & Milwaukee Railroad was first oganized in 1852, and was the first railroad to reach La Crosse, in 1858. The railroad headed northwest from Milwaukee to Watertown, and then on to Portage and finally to La Crosse (Gregory: 375). The final stage of the line's construction travelled through the La Crosse River Valley. This route was the long path which the railroad could travel to reach La Crosse. In 1876 the Green Bay and Minnesota railroad company completed seven miles of tracks which connected Onalaska to La Crosse. The city of La Crosse raised $75,000 in bonds for the completion of the line, which demonstrates how important the railroad was to the community (Gregory: 381). The influence of the railroad was so great that some villages such as Rockland were founded on the direct path to the railroad. The prosperity that the railroad brought to a village was so great that villages would often move their locations in order to be connected with the railroad. The villages of Bangor and West Salem also developed when they each relocated by a couple of miles to be along the path of the railroad in 1858. West Salem was preceeded by the village of Neshonoc, but the early village was not in the path of the railroad, so a station was constructed about of a mile south of Neshonoc and became known as West Salem (Bryant: 207, 224).

By 1893 the La Crosse River Valley had three different railroad lines crossing through the area. The Chicago and Northwestern Railway Company had a line that went from Milwaukee through Madison to La Crosse, and the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railway Company ran from Milwaukee to Portage and then through Sparta on the way to La Crosse. Running along the Mississippi River was the Chicago, Burlington and Northern Railroad Company which connected La Crosse to Onalaska and then to cities in the north such as Winona and Wabasha (Nesbit, 1985: 117).

Roads

The first roads in Wisconsin were a combination of trails and portages used by Native Americans. Early fur traders and missionaries made use of the network of trails that linked Native American

villages and trading posts. Settlers widened the existing trails in order to make them passable for oxen-pulled wagons. Stagecoachs and wagons forged the early road sytems which were rough trails at best. During Wisconsin's territorial period, the military felt that it was neccessary to construct roads for the purpose of transporting supplies between frontier forts (Wyatt, vol. 2: 7-1).

As the population of Wisconsin grew with an increasing number of immigrants, the public demanded a better quality of roads. Agriculture in Wisconsin was steadily increasing and farmers required roads in order to transport their crops to market. The state met this demand by passing laws which called for the construction of state roads. The responsiblity for financing the construction of state roads was given to the local governments. Many roads were founded by donation from the local citizens. In 1845 an ox and wagon trail was blazed from Prairie du Chen to La Crosse (La Crosse County Agriculture: 4). The 1850s saw La Crosse become a focal point for overland routes; short stagecoach routes and wagon roads. In 1850 a road linking La Crosse and Sparta was constructed. This road followed the LaCrosse River Valley, a length of nearly 27 miles (La Crosse County Agriculture: 4; Western Historical Company: 393).

Traveling on the early roads of Wisconsin was not always an enjoyable experience for the traveler. The roads often took round-about routes and were usually in poor condition. The early roads were dirt paths that had been cut through the dense forest. If the funds were availible, a road may have been constructed on wooden planks that were placed togther on the ground. Wisconsin's weather took its toll on the roads, which were frequently mud-clogged, full of ruts, and lacked sufficient bridges (Wyatt, vol. 2: 7-2).

Wisconsin's constitution stipulated that the state was not to be involved with the construction of roads. The state was only resposible for the administration of federal grants intended for transportation improvements (Nesbit, 1985: 139). Legislature in 1849 placed responsiblity for road construction onto local governments, who in turn passed responsiblities to road districts within the townships. Local citizens would then elect a neighbor to oversee the collection of funds for road construction. This process did very little to improve the condition of roads in the state (Nesbit, 1985: 141). In 1893, the roads of Wisconsin were aided by legislation that did away with road districts, giving responsiblity to the town boards who collected funds in cash. This process was more efficient than the old system. The roads also recieved a boost from the Federal Postal Service, which was experimenting with rural postal delivery, and therefore demanded improved road conditions (Nesbit, 1985: 145,146).

After the turn of the century, the road system was a great improvement over the older roads. Prior to 1900, the appropriation of funding for roads was handled by local governments, where the local citizens did not feel that it was neccassary to tax for road construction. In 1916 the federal government began providing funding to the states for the purpose of road construction. The construction of roads was then controlled by the state, resulting in an improved road system (Wyatt, vol.2: 8-2). In 1950, La Crosse County had over 800 mile of public highways, comprised mostly of county or town roads. Four Federal Highways ran through the county, one of them

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being U.S. Highway 16 which ran eastward from the city of La Crosse (Soil Survey: 75).

The assortment of roads that passed through the La Crosse River Valley as well as the railroad lines had to contend with the La Crosse River and its small tributary streams. Bridges had to be constructed to cross these waterways, and a number of historic bridges exist today. The very early
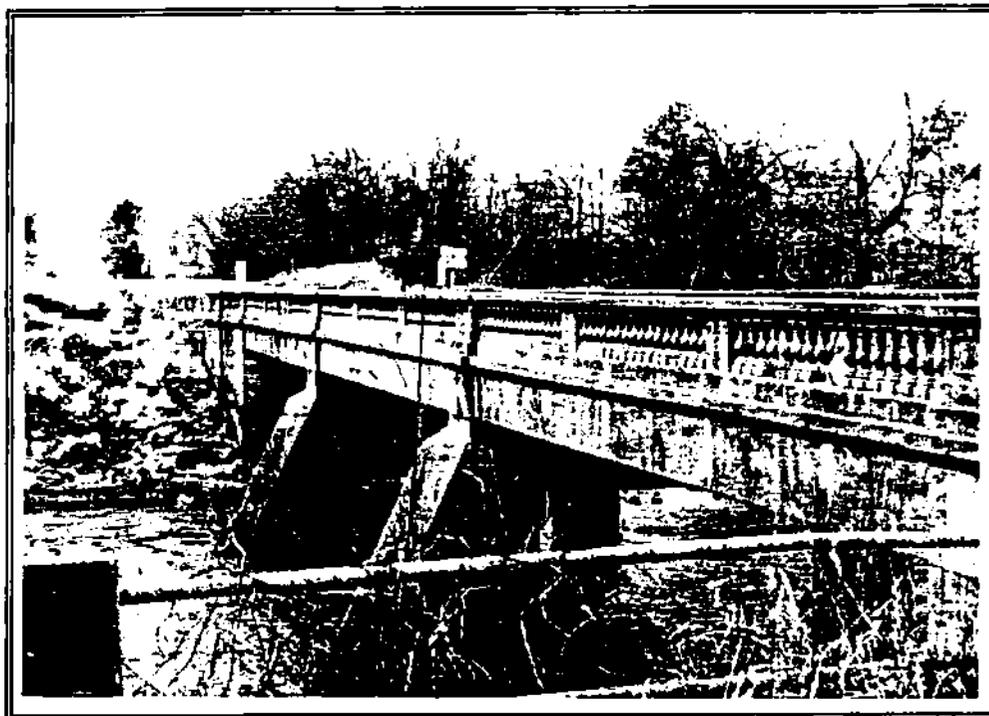
Bridge, LC 118/28

bridges were often wooden covered bridges (none extant), that were designed for horses and carriages. These bridges however were not suitable for automobiles and new bridges had to be constructed. Bridges like the concrete bridge (118/28) constructed on the northeast corner of Highway 108 and the La Crosse River, and the iron over-head truss railroad bridge (119/03) were constructed for the purpose of transporting automobiles and trains across the river.

The development of La Crosse County is due in part to the county's location which is conducive to transportation routes. La Crosse County is located on the Mississippi River which has been a major transportation route for thousands of years. The Native Americans were the first people to travel on the Mississippi in canoes. With the introduction of Europeans and Euro-Americans to the area, the Mississippi was a key route for the transportation of people and supplies. The lumber industry in La Crosse County is closely tied to the river for transportation of logs from the forests to the mills, and then to markets further away via the river north and south. The first roads through the La Crosse River Valley followed Native American trails through the coulees, and the age of the railroad brought rail lines to La Crosse County. The early railroads took the path of least resistance which was through the La Crosse River Valley to La Crosse. Today's modern highway system follows the same pathways to cross La Crosse County. Transportation routes have played an important role in the development of La Crosse County by providing a means of transporting people and supplies to the county as well as accessing the major cities of

the Midwest like Milwaukee, Chicago, St. Louis, and St. Paul.

Chapter 7
Education

During the 1830s, a large number of settlers from the eastern United States as well as Europe began to move into the state of Wisconsin, causing a rise in the state's population. These men, women, and children who chose to settle in Wisconsin came from different backgrounds and possessed a variety of values and beliefs. Many of Wisconsin's new residents believed that education was the key to a life of prosperity for their children. Popular demand for a formal education system in the state, in addition to nation-wide movements toward improved education urged law makers to establish a educational system in the state of Wisconsin.

Wisconsin was brought under territorial rule with the ordinance of 1787 which called for the formation of three to five new territories. The land of Wisconsin was divided between the territories of Michigan and Illinois until July of 1836, when Wisconsin was recognized as a territory (Doudna: 2). Education in Wisconsin began with the 1787 ordinance which called for the encouragement of schools and formalized education. The early schools of Wisconsin were formed under the school laws of Michigan; the laws were then transferred to the Wisconsin territory in 1836. The Michigan laws stated that every community with fifty or more families must establish and support a common school, and with the addition of every hundred families the community was required to create an additional school. In Wisconsin this law was modified in order to organize school districts. Each district was required to elect three directors who would then be responsible for choosing a location for the school, hiring a teacher for a minimum of three months, and levying a tax on the attendance of students. The cost of education for the children of families unable to afford to send their children to school, was assessed against the entire district (Doudna: 2).

The movement for the formation of Wisconsin into a state was brought about due to the increase of population in the territory. During the territorial period, Wisconsin grew in size from 11,000 to 300,000 residents (Doudna: 3). Wisconsin's bid for statehood was aided in part by the need for a state school system. The constitution of Wisconsin, which was formulated in the constitutional convention in 1847, called for the establishment of normal schools in addition to a school fund. The constitution had provided a means of education for the children of all people, for trained teachers, and for libraries (Doudna: 3).

Funding for the establishment of public education came from the creation of a number of different funds, which derived money from the use of federal land. The common school fund was created in order for the schools of Wisconsin to be supported. The fund worked in the following manner. Lands granted to the state by the general government for educational purposes was to be set aside for the school fund, and its income was used to support common schools, libraries, academies, and normal schools. The normal school fund was created in 1857, and earnings from the sale of lands were given to the state by the federal government (Doudna: 5). Land, which was

commonly classified as swamp land, was given to the state with the intent that a portion of any profits from the land use would be directed towards the support of education. The University Fund also acquired funds from the use of federal land. In 1836, an Act of Congress granted the territory of Wisconsin two townships for the establishment of an institution of higher learning. This land amounted to 46,000 acres, and in 1854 two additional townships were established. The proceeds of the first township amounted to $150,000 (Doudna: 6). These funds suffered from corruption at the administrative level, however the funds did contribute to the betterment of education in Wisconsin.

The government on state and national levels were trying to create a system of education through the nation, but the origins of education in states such as Wisconsin can not be found in the acts and laws of the state's government. Instead the history of individual communities and the people who founded the pioneer towns created the first schools. The early settlers of Wisconsin were animated about educating their children. As a community was settled, the first buildings to be constructed were houses, churches, and school houses. Early settlers believed in the importance of strong religious and moral character, and therefore following the construction of a place of worship as a means of education was created (Nesbit, 1973: 174). Most of the time the cost for raising a school was accomplished without the support of taxes. This cooperation by the local citizens to pool their resources in order to establish a school demonstrates the importance of education to the early residents of Wisconsin. This movement of community-supported schools was marked by the local citizens desire for a free school system where the community could determine what curriculum would be taught (Nesbit, 1973: 175).

By 1907, La Crosse County was divided into 70 school districts with a total of 70 school buildings (Bryant: 133-134). Due to continuing increase in students, the number of school districts increased to the level of 72 in 1917, although the number of buildings had dropped to 65 one-room schools. In 1927 the La Crosse County Superintendent of Schools reported that there were 3,000 students in La Crosse County being taught in 73 rural schools by 104 teachers. Of the 73 rural schools, only nine buildings had more than one room. The school of the 1920s may have been only been one-room buildings, however they generally possessed text books, hot lunch equipment, playground equipment, and sanitary water fountains (Bryant: 178).

Primary Schools

The early school buildings were simple in design and built to serve the purpose of housing students and their teachers during the school day. In 1852 there were 1,730 school buildings in Wisconsin, 66 of brick, 74 of stone, 812 were frame, and the rest of the schools (778) were log buildings. The majority of the buildings were void of comfortable furniture and blackboards (Doudna: 13). The early schools were equipped with wood burning stoves, and water for drinking had to be brought in from a nearby well each morning.

The educational system continued to expand and by 1923 the number of one-room schools had risen to 6,475, although most of the schools were located in rural areas (Wyatt, vol. 3: 2-7).

Throughout the development of the the the educational system of Wisconsin, one constant was the involvement of the students in the care and upkeep of the school. Thelma Haas, who attended Evangelical Luthern St. Johannis School from 1926 to 1939, recalls how each day the students would bring water from a nearby well to the school, carry wood inside to fuel the stove for heat, and after school, a few students would stay behind in order to sweep the school house (St. John's Ev. Lutheran School: 6).

The early residents of La Crosse County believed that the school served the purpose of educating the pupil with academic knowledge and moral values. The curriculum that was taught conveyed the attitudes of the local communities. The curriculum was diversified and included geography, spelling, arithmetic, history, language and grammar, and penmanship; for the parochial schools lessons in religion were also taught (St. John's Ev. Lutheran: 3). It is also interesting to note that many of the schools that were located in areas of strong ethnic populations, languages other than English were often taught. The communities of Norwegian and German populations taught students their native languages in addition to English. In some cases, all of the daily lessons were taught in exclusively in their mother tongues.

The La Crosse River Valley has a number of educational facilities which possess historic significance and demonstrate the educational history of the valley. The Smith Valley School (108/08) constructed in 1887, the Rockland School (103/07) constructed in 1928, the Pleasant Valley

Rockland School, LC 103/07

School (105/18), and Fauver Hill School (LC 119/22) built in 1924 are examples of small rural school houses. The West Salem School (106/26) constructed in 1917 is an example of a school in an urban setting in the La Crosse River Valley. The schools in La Crosse County were not exclusively public. The St. Johannis Evangelical Lutheran School (105/20) was a parochial school

that was supported by the church, and added a religious influence to the daily curriculum.

Secondary Schools

The need for secondary education developed in the state of Wisconsin for a number of factors. The rapid spread of voting rights given to white males, and eventually females and people of color, the increase of immigrants from Germany and Ireland, and the rise of industrialization of the American economy, were all factors in the rise of secondary education. These factors led to a need for a free democratic secondary school system (Wyatt, vol. 3: 3-1).

In the period before 1848 most of the schools in Wisconsin were small one- room school houses, where a single teacher instructed pupils of a wide range of ages. There was little effort made to classify to students, who often ranged in age from 5 to 18. The courses of study were limited to fulfilling basic levels of education including reading, writing, spelling, and arithmetic. The schools during this period were referred to as public schools, but funding did not come solely from the government. The funding came partly from public taxation, and from private donations and subscription (Wyatt, vol. 3: 3-1).

When the state of Wisconsin was settled, secondary education was commonly offered through academies. Academy was the name given to school whose purpose was to educate students past the elementary level. The curriculum of the private academies was focused on language, mathematics, literature, and modern history. The purpose of the academies was to further the education of students and to produce well-rounded citizens (Wyatt, vol 3: 3-2). When the state legislature began to move towards the establishment of a public school system, the need for secondary education was ignored because it was the common feeling that private academies would continue to meet the needs of secondary education (Wyatt, vol. 3: 3-2). The city of Onalaska had an academy which was known as the Onalaska Academy (non extant), established in March of 1854 (Doblier: 193).

Secondary education received a needed boost in 1875 with the passing of the Free High School Law. This law encouraged local districts to pool their resources in order to form a high school. The most significant part of the Free High School Law was the stipulation that the government would supply one half of the cost for the school. A special property tax was to be levied for the purpose of supporting high schools in Wisconsin (Wyatt, vol. 3: 3-4). This law encouraged the creation of high schools throughout the state, and in 1900 the number of high schools was 209. The secondary education movement continued to increase and in 1944 the number of schools had reached 441 (Wyatt, vol. 3: 3-5). As the number of high schools increased, there was a continuing change in the curriculum. Students became increasingly interested in agriculture, home economics, and commercial courses (Callahan: 333).

La Crosse County School of Agriculture and Domestic Economy

In 1907 a group of farmers from the West Salem area petitioned the state school supervisor for

the establishment of an agricultural school. In March of 1908 the La Crosse Board of Supervisors voted in favor of the plan, and the La Crosse County School of Agriculture and Domestic Economy (not extant) was created. The purpose of the school was to educate young men and women to be good citizens, and to prepare them for a profitable living (Doblier: 191). The school offered a variety of classes ranging from dairy husbandry to needle work to U.S. history and physics. The school was very popular in the first years of its creation, because La Crosse County residents could attend free of charge, but by 1917 enrollment had fallen to the point were the continued existence of the school was brought into question. In 1925 a year that marked the fifteenth year of the schools operation, attendance levels had continued to drop, and the school was closed at the end of the 1924-1925 school year (Doblier: 193).

The school system in the state of Wisconsin which establishes and controls the operation of education in the state, including La Crosse County, is very similar to that of its neighboring states. Wisconsin educational laws called for the creation of a state Department of Public Instruction headed by the state superintendent (Henderson: 73). The department of instruction is responsible for the education of Wisconsin residents, a task that is accomplished by creating primary, secondary, and college level schools. The department is also responsible for the regulation of teachers and curriculum. The schools of Wisconsin and the Department of Public Instruction all evolved out of the single room school house first started by the early settlers of Wisconsin. It was the desire of the residents of Wisconsin to provide a means of education to their young people, and this desire developed into the system of education that can be seen today in La Crosse County and the rest of the state.

Chapter 8
Commerce

Development of commercial centers is an integral part of the expansion and prosperity of all communities. Early commercial development tended to support the basic needs of settlers, however, as prosperity came to settlers and commercial business people alike, an increasingly wider selection of commercial goods and services were also made available. The commercial development of the LaCrosse River Valley villages reflected the trends of similar villages from the mid nineteenth century to the present.

Goods and Services

In La Crosse County's early development, people were in need of clothing, food, hardware, and other manufactured goods. Residents acquired these goods and services from the general and dry good stores which established within the county's villages. The first signs of commerce in La Crosse County came in the form of early fur traders who exchanged furs for a variety of goods with Native Americans and EuroAmerican hunters and trappers. As villages established and developed, stores, restaurants, saloons and stables were constructed in the centers of the villages, therefore constructing a commercial district.

The grocery store provided necessary food, clothing, and housewares to the residents of a community. In the village of Onalaska, residents could obtain staple goods such as flour, sugar, and canned food from the Buttles and Pierce General Merchandise Store (not extant), which was in operation in 1884. Thompson and Bailey's general store (not extant) was located on Third and Main streets in Onalaska, and the Gunderson and Kruger Building in Onalaska, which was located on the north side of Main Street between second and third streets, had a general store on the its lower level. This building was remodelled in 1950s and became Naas Clothing Store (Doblier: 123) Oscar and Pete Peterson were well known grocers in the village of Onalaska; their first grocery store was opened in 1898. The Peterson store moved its operation on two different occasions, but continued to do business until 1943 (Doblier: 122).

Financial institutions have played an important role in the economy of La Crosse County. Banks provided money for farmers to purchase land to start farms, and for store owners to build or expand their operations. In the village of Onalaska the Onalaska State Bank was a prominent bank. The bank opened for operation in 1900 and was located at the northeast corner of Main Street and Second Street (extant). During the 1950s the bank reorganized into the Bank of Onalaska (Doblier: 126). The first bank to be established in the village of Bangor was opened in the drugstore of Alex Johnson in 1881(Kindschy, 1981: 44).

Specialty Stores

While the grocery and dry good stores supplied the staple goods, it was the specialty store which offered a different kind of manufactured product. The Nelson Shoe Store in Onalaska was operated by Theodore Nelson. The store was opened in 1870 by Theodore Nelson's father and remained in business until the 1950s. The store received most of its early business from making shoes for the loggers. Each pair of shoes was constructed by hand and the whole process from start to finish took an entire day. Nelson's shoes offered the service of caulking shoes for loggers. Shoes that were worn by the log rollers were fitted with caulks, wedge shaped pieces of metal that were pounded into the soles of shoes in order to provided traction (Doblier: 121).

The local drug store provided the residents of towns such as West Salem, Bangor, and Onalaska with medicine and other items needed to insure good health. In Onalaska, the Aldrich drug store was in operation from 1888 until the 1950s. As of 1981 the original Aldrich Drug store, 214 Main Street, was occupied by Tom Monsoor News (Doblier: 48, 127). The drug store owned and operated by Alex Johnson (not extant) in the village of West Salem opened in 1881 and the store also served as a post office and bank. In the village of Bangor, Jacob Waterman opened a drug store (not extant) in 1865 (History of La Crosse County: 724).

Hotels and Saloons

The towns of the La Crosse River Valley, because of their location on the major railroad lines, attracted visitors from all parts of the country, who were often in town on business or were traveling through on their way to a other destinations. The need for rooms to rent was answered by the construction of hotels. Hotels such as the Jefferson and Riverside (not extant) in Onalaska offered rooms and food to visitors (Doblier: 123,124). The hotels were a popular place for dining because of the foods and drinks that were served on the premises. In 1857 Thomas Dutcher opened the first hotel in the village of West Salem (not extant) on the corner of Main and Leonard streets (History of La Crosse County: 695).

In the early history of the La Crosse River Valley the most popular place of entertainment for adult males was the tavern or saloon. The saloons were a thriving business for communities, although the establishments were frowned upon by many church-going residents. During the 1880s the Gust Elstrom's Saloon and Billiard Hall (not extant) was in operation in Onalaska. Saloons were very popular in Onalaska because of the large number of workers employed by the towns numerous lumber mills. One entire block on Second Street was known as the saloon strip because of the number of saloons located there (Doblier: 112).

As the population of a community grew the need for general information about local and national events developed. Newspapers were commonly found in operation in the small villages of the La Crosse River Valley. The *West Salem Journal* was established by George M. Reed in 1886 with the first issued being printed on 9 September 1886. Some of the articles in the first issue discussed the opening of school, the hop harvest, the county fair, and the spreading of hog cholera

(Kindschy, 1981: 43). The *La Crosse County Record* was the first newspaper in the village of Onalaska. The newspaper first started printing in 1855 and was an eight column weekly paper (Doblier: 119).

Utilities

The communities of La Crosse County from their early beginnings had stores which provided residents with needed supplies and manufactured goods, but as the communities grew in size new demands were created. The development of new technologies allowed for communities to benefit from services such as public water, telephone service, and electricity. The village of Onalaska had one of the earliest water towers in La Crosse County. The stand pipe water tower (not extant) was constructed in 1896 by the Nichols Lumber Company in order to supply water to the lumber mills of Onalaska. The stand pipe had a capacity of 166,000 gallons and was able to force water through the water mains of the city. The stand pipe was used by the city of Onalaska until the 1960s when a reservoir was constructed (Doblier: 68).

Onalaska was also fortunate to have telephone service as early as 1899. The Onalaska Telephone Exchange offered service to seventy phones and three rural lines in 1899. A major improvement to telephone phone service occurred in 1924 when an underground cable system and a new telephone building were constructed. Service in 1924 included 161 local phones and 53 rural phones (Doblier: 122,123).

The village of West Salem had electrical service in 1896, provided by the McMillian Mill and Power Company. The Neshonoc Mill which burned in 1895 was replaced by the McMillian Mill and Power Company who constructed a new powerhouse (105/09) in the same year. The mill was changed into a power plant which brought electricity to the village in 1896. The Mc Millian Power Company charged rates of $1.25 for eight lights, $1.50 for ten lights, and $1.67 for fifteen lights a month. The service was offered everyday from sunset to sunrise. The Swarthout family purchased the power plant in 1897. Electrical lines began to reach out to rural properties in 1919 towards the town of Barre. Also in 1919 West Salem installed street lights (Kindschy, 1981: 51). In 1940 the original dam was replaced by a new contrete dam (105/09). The new dam was fourteen feet high and one hundred and fifty feet long. Work was also done to the powerhouse which included the addition of a new generator (Kindschy, 198: 136).

The commercial district was vital to the developement of a community. The stores that lined the main streets of towns such as West Salam and Bangor provided the residents of that community with essential goods. And the utilities which developed as the community grew offered new technological breakthroughs like electricity and phone service. The downtown district often becomes the center of the village because of the activity of people buying and selling products, as well as attending to finacial matters at a bank, or even dining at a local restaurant. Commerce is therefore vital for a community to fully develop and prosper.

Neshonoc Dam, LC 105/09

Chapter 9
Religion

One of the factors that brought European settlers to the American West was the search for religious freedom. Since the days of the Mayflower and Plymouth Rock, people have been coming to America in order to practice their own religious beliefs in peace. Religion was an important part of the early settlers' lives, and their beliefs are as varied as the people. The La Crosse River Valley has a long history of religious influence, and it is this influence that helped to create a identity for the people and communities of the La Crosse River Valley.

Methodists

Methodism, which was founded in eighteenth century England, is a denomination of Protestantism that subscribes to the principles and practices proposed by John Wesley, an Anglican revivalist clergyman. In the United States today, the United Methodist Church is the dominant representative of the movement begun at Oxford University by Wesley (Wyatt, vol. 3:14-1). The Methodists are characterized by a simple, yet dignified pattern of worship, and they have preferred to construct their houses of worship in a simple architectural manner. The Methodists have had a general
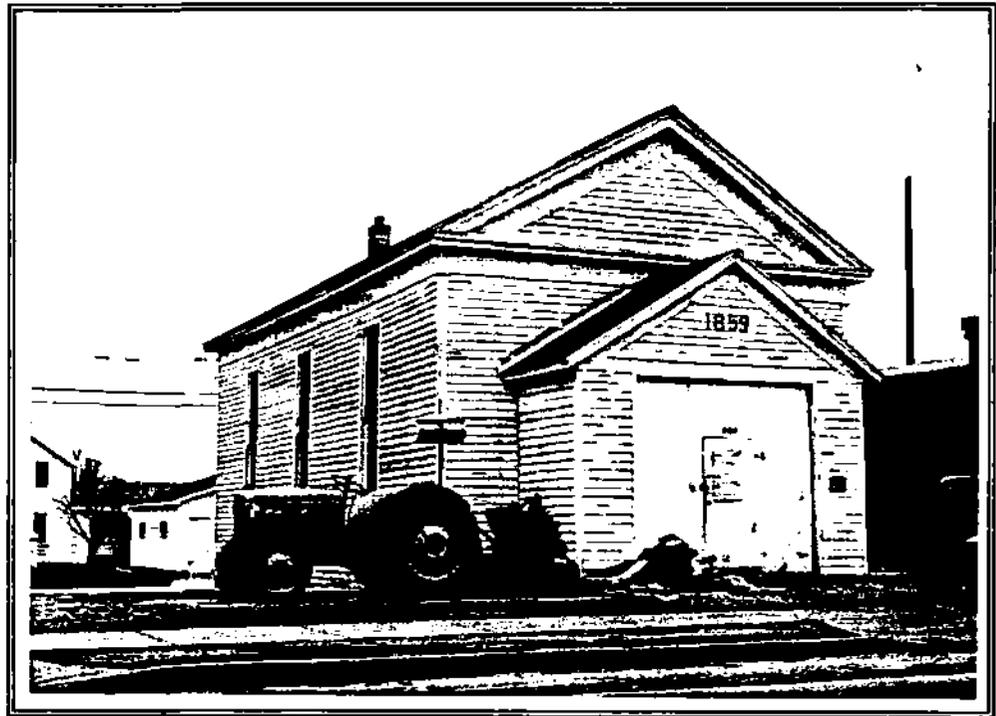
Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church, 103/12

desire for missionary work throughout their history. The Church members commonly come from the middle class, but the church attracts people from all classes. The Church has two ordained orders, deacons and elders. In America the Methodists have an episcopal tradition, with an

established system of districts presided over by a bishop. The Methodist Episcopal Church was the forerunner to the United Methodist Church. The Methodists first arrived in the state of Wisconsin around 1830 in two main areas, Green Bay and Platteville. The Methodists in Wisconsin continued their tradition of missionary work by reaching out to German and Scandinavian immigrants (Wyatt, vol. 3: 14-4).

The Methodists in the La Crosse River Valley were spread throughout the area. The Rockland United Methodist Church remains standing today. And the village of West Salem also had a strong following of Methodists who organized in 1854. The enrollment of West Salem Methodists was limited in the early years, but in 1859 a revival and camp meeting organized by Reverend John Medd increased the church's membership. In the years following the camp meeting of 1859 the Methodists of Burns joined together with the Methodists from West Salem (Kindschy, 1981: 26). In Onalaska the United Methodist Church was organized in 1856 by Reverend James L. Lake. The Onalaska United Methodist Church had only eleven members for the first ten years, but in 1901 the church's membership had grown to 123 (Doblier: 219).

The Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church was organized in Bangor in 1859. The Calvinistic Methodists are one of the many different branches of the Methodist faith. The Calvinistic Methodists of West Salem conducted services in the small community until 1916. The original church (103/12), built in 1859, is still standing in the village of Bangor, although it has not been used for religious services since 1916 (Bangor Historical Society: 6). It is interesting to note that the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists of Wisconsin were assimilated into the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America in 1920 (Wyatt, vol. 3: 16-2).

Baptists

The modern Baptist church can trace its history to the early seventeenth century when a separatist movement formed within the Massachusetts' Puritanism. The separatist movement was begun by John Williams who expressed views that questioned the Puritan beliefs. For this action Williams and his followers were expelled from the church. This group formed the first Baptist Church in America, and by the end of the nineteenth century the Baptists were the most numerous evangelical group in America (Wyatt, vol. 3: 2-1). In Wisconsin the Baptists found a strong Scandinavian following, including Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian Conventions. The German people of Wisconsin were also known to convert to Baptist beliefs, but they did so with less abandon than the Scandinavians (Wyatt, vol. 3: 2-4).

Baptist work among the Norwegian people first began in Illinois during the 1840s. The first strictly Norwegian Baptist Congregation in Wisconsin was established by Reverend Westergaard in 1866, and a second Norwegian Congregation was organized in 1869 at Halfway Creek (not in survey area) in La Crosse County (Wyatt, vol. 3: 2-5). The First Baptist Church of Bangor (104/09) began construction in 1860 and was completed in 1864. The congregation was formed out of the joining of the Barre congregation, which was organized in 1855, and the Welsh Baptist Church (Bangor Historical Society: 3).

Lutherans

Historically the Lutheran Church is a Protestant denomination that is based on the doctrine created by Martin Luther in the sixteenth century. In America the Lutherans for the most part were of German descent with a fraction being Swedish. First and largest Lutheran synod in America was founded in 1748. As the Lutheran beliefs spread across America, other synods developed, specifically the Norwegian Synod, established in 1853, and the Swedish Augustana Synod in 1860. The Lutherans have historically been bound together by faith and practices rather than by organization, but the increase of new synods prompted new organization. By the end of World War I it was apparent that a national organization was nearly impossible, and instead small faction began to form together. For example, three Norwegian groups united in 1917 to form the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America, and also the American Lutheran Church was formed out of 45 different groups (Wyatt, vol. 3: 13-1, 13-2).

One of the most prominent Lutheran churches in the La Crosse River Valley is St. Paul's Evangelical Luthern Church (104/10) of Bangor. St Paul's was first organized in 1888 when Pastor Richard Siegler of Barre Mills began to bring together the German speaking people from the area of Bangor in order to form a congregation. The first service was held in the Baptist Church (extant) in December of 1888. Attendance at the first services was encouraging enough that services were continued on a regular basis. In September of 1889 the congregation felt that they had grown to the point where they could officially organize and on 26 January 1890 the congregation was organized with eleven members (St. Paul Lutheran Church: 5). Services continued to be held in the Baptist church for two years until the congregation acquired a new building which was originally a school house (not extant). The new church was dedicated in 1890 with two services, one in German and the other in English. The acquisition of the congregations own church was key in the growth of membership. In 1893 enrollment had climbed to 40 families and the congregation joined the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (St. Paul's Lutheran Church: 6). In 1908 the church decided to construct a new church in the village of Bangor. The church (104/10) was dedicated on 10 October 1909 and the church is still in use today (Bangor Historical Society: 4).

In the Town of Barre, St. John's (St. Johannis) Lutheran Church has been a prominent structure since 1887. The roots of the congregation go back to the first settlers who arrived in the Bostwick Valley in 1853 (Centennial of St. John's, 1987: 3). St. John's was originally founded as a mission by the Friedreich Sprain, Adam Miller, and John Miller families. Early services were held in private homes, since the first church (not extant) was not constructed until 1871 (Kindschy, 1981: 29). After construction of the present church(119/06) in 1887 the congregation grew rapidly. The founding members of St. John's felt strongly about education, therefore the Evangelical Lutheran St. Johannis School (119/04) was created in 1890. The 1890 school is presently part of the St. John's complex in Barre Mills which also includes St. John's Church (119/06) and the St. John's Parsonage (119/07). St. John's was a popular congregation in Barre Mills partly because it was the only Lutheran church in the area before 1900, and also because of the Christian education that was provided by the congregation's school (St. John's, 1986: 20).

A group of Lutherans were holding meetings in the village of Neshonoc, near the present-day village of West Salem, in 1887 under the direction of Reverend Richard Siegler of Barre Mills. Services were held in the Baptist Church of West Salem for fifteen years, and in 1902 the congregation had grown to the size of 30 families and 100 communicants. In this year the congregation dismissed themselves from the Barre Mills Church in order to set up their own church. The new church (107/02) was dedicated in April of 1902 and named Christ Lutheran Church (Kindschy, 1981: 29-30). Christ Lutheran Church is a member of the Wisconsin Synod and the 1902 building can still be found in West Salem, adding to historic significance of the village.

Presbyterians

Presbyterianism in the United States is traced back to Scottish and English Presbyterianism, which is derived from the Protestant Reformation. The father of American Presbyterianism was Reverend Francis Makemie, who established the first general presbytery in 1706, which evolved into the Presbyterian Church in the United States. The Presbyterian Church is marked by their missionary work, proliferation of education, and their cooperation with the Congregationalists to work in unison on the frontier. The Presbyterians also believed in a strict policy of resident pastors who preached and taught in an assigned area (Wyatt, vol. 3: 16-1).

In the La Crosse River Valley the Presbyterians were present in the village of Neshonoc. The West Salem Presbyterian Church has evolved out of the Presbyterian Society that was organized at Neshonoc in January of 1858. The first church (not extant) was constructed in 1857, and the Presbyterian group moved to the village of West Salem in 1884, where the present church (106/24) was constructed in 1890 (Kindschy, 1981: 28-29).

The people who came from different parts of the United States and also Europe with the intentions of settling in Wisconsin brought with them distinct cultural beliefs. It is these beliefs in cooperation with ethnic backgrounds that defines people. Religion has always been important to the residents of the La Crosse River Valley which is apparent when one considers the amount of religious organizatons in the county. Historically a religious organization was created shortly after the establishment of a community. The religious beliefs of early settlers created a moral code which governed their daily lives, and this custom has been handed down from generation to generation. These religious beliefs are present today as are some of the early houses of worship; therefore religion provides a link between the past and the present.

Chapter 10
Architecture

The buildings of the LaCrosse River Valley represent a number of different stylistic influences spanning from the mid-1850s through the period of this study, the mid-1940s. The LaCrosse River Valley Heritage Corridor Intensive Survey study identified a total of 67 properties potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Most of those which were determined potentially eligible meet Criterion C (see Chapter 1 for definition of the National Register Criteria) for their architectural distinction. Criteria which has been established by the National Historic Preservation Act and the Historic Preservation Division of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin were used to determine the architectural, historic and/or engineering significance of all resources.

The first buildings to be constructed in the LaCrosse River Valley by Euro-American settlers were built of log. In 1842 Nathan Myrick built a log building (not extant) for his trading post on the east bank of the Mississippi River immediately south of the confluence with the LaCrosse River, and shortly thereafter added a warehouse, blacksmith shop and barn (not extant) to his buildings. By 1843 Myrick constructed a small house constructed of hewn lumber with lath and plaster walls and a shingle roof. In 1845 Mr. J.M. Levy came to LaCrosse from Prairie du Chien, some sixty miles to the south. He established his family in a log house at what was to become the corner of Pearl and Front streets. However, less than a year later Levy constructed the first frame building (not extant) between Prairie du Chien and Red Wing, Minnesota. The house, attached to his original log house, came to be used as a tavern until it was destroyed by fire in 1862 (Gregory: v.2; 582).

In the spring of 1854 in what was later to be the town of Washington in LaCrosse County, John Johun built a log cabin and soon thereafter had a number of neighbors. The village of Bangor was laid out in 1854 as well (Gregory: v. 2; 595).

Though none of the LaCrosse River Valley's original log cabins appear to be extant on site, many of the later houses, commercial buildings, and industrial buildings remain in the rural areas and villages of the valley.

Residential Architecture

The vast majority of properties determined potentially eligible for the National Register were residential properties. Residential architecture, by its pure volume as a property type, has lent itself through history toward a wider variety of architectural styles. Most of the styles which appear in this study as potentially eligible for the National Register are briefly described with local examples cited.

Vernacular

The vernacular forms of architecture for residential buildings cover a wide range of buildings, however, in general the term "vernacular" refers to residential, commercial and industrial buildings which are devoid of architectural ornament, and were usually constructed by local craftsmen and builders. Examples of vernacular forms in residential architecture include the front gable, side gable, gabled ell, cross gable, one-story cube, and two-story cube. Most of these forms were generally constructed in Wisconsin between 1870 and 1920.

The LaCrosse River Valley Heritage Corridor project revealed a few examples of vernacular form residential buildings. The house (118/06) located at 414 Fourth Avenue South in Onalaska is a cross gable form, constructed in circa 1890 of wood frame with a front wrap-

Cross Gable House, LC 118/06

around porch, a side bay and a rear one-story ell addition. The house (118/08) in Hamilton Township on Highway 16 is a two-story cube. Constructed circa 1910, this building is constructed of brick, and features a wrap-around porch, one-over-one sash window, a hipped roof and hipped-roof dormers. The house (118/22) located at 355 W. Franklin Street in West Salem is a later version of the two-story cube. Constructed circa 1925 of brick, it features a small portico over the front door, a hipped roof with hipped-roof dormer, and a two-tone appearance to the overall body of the house, with brick on the first story and wood shingle on the second story.

Octagon

The octagon style was generally constructed in Wisconsin between 1845 and 1860. It was first popularized in the mid-nineteenth century by Orson Squire Fowler who puported the octagon one

of the most functional, economical and natural of configurations for buildings, particularly houses. He felt that the eight-sided house would be cheaper to build because the exterior walls would enclose a greater number of interior square feet than a house built of the same amount of material in a square configuration. He suggested that it would be easier to heat in the winter and ventilate in the summer.

The greatest number of octagon buildings were constructed in New York, Massachusetts, and Wisconsin. Of the approximately twenty extant octagon buildings in Wisconsin, two are located in LaCrosse County. The Palmer-Lewis Octagon House (105/03), listed

Palmer-Lewis Octagon, LC 105/03

on the National Register in 1979, was built in circa 1855 and is located just northeast of West Salem. In 1858 the Palmer-Gullickson Octagon House (106/02) was built at 358 North Leonard Street in West Salem. This house was also listed on the National Register in 1979. Observation of these two unusual houses reveals one of the major flaws of the octagon design. It is difficult to attach a graceful addition to them, making them impractical for expansion.

Gothic Revival

The Gothic Revival style is another early design found in Wisconsin. Because it was primarily built in the state between 1850 and 1880, it is a relatively rare style in the state. The Gothic Revival style in residential architecture is characterized by steeply pitched roofs, pinnacles and battlements, as well as the standard pointed arch, most commonly seen in window and doorways. Houses often display decorative bargeboards and usually a veranda or porch. Most are constructed of wood.

The only extant example of the Gothic Revival style in the LaCrosse River Valley Heritage Corridor is the house located at 113 Jefferson Street (107/06) in West Salem. Constructed circa 1865 immediately north of the Thomas Leonard House (106/16), it is believed to have been built by Leonard for

Gothic Revival House, LC 107/06

his daughter. This house features a symmetrical cross gable plan with steeply pitched roofs, decorative bargeboard and a veranda porch. Finials jutting up from the gable peaks accent the decorative nature of this cottage.

Italianate

The Italianate style, which is distinguished by wide overhanging eaves, prominent brackets, gently sloping hipped or gabled roofs, and often a polygonal or square cupola on the roof, was popular in Wisconsin from about 1850 to 1880. A distinctive feature of the Italianate style is the ornate window hoods, which are often rounded. The massing of Italianate style houses is often boxy and square. Building materials are generally clapboard or brick, though stone examples do exist in the state.

The LaCrosse River Valley exhibits a number of impressive Italianate examples. The house located in Burns Township on Highway 162 (105/02) was built circa 1875. It was constructed of cream brick, and features a hipped roof with a square cupola, and brackets.

Another fine example of a brick Italianate style house in the West Salem area is the Hiram Lovejoy House (105/14) located on CTH M at the intersection with CTH B. This house is a gabled roof version of the Italianate, with an arched window in the gable, brackets, and a prominent square cupola.

The Italianate style house located at 436 North Leonard Street (105/35) in West Salem is a clapboard version of the style. It is two stories, with two-over-two sash windows, a square cupola, hipped roof, and a veranda porch.
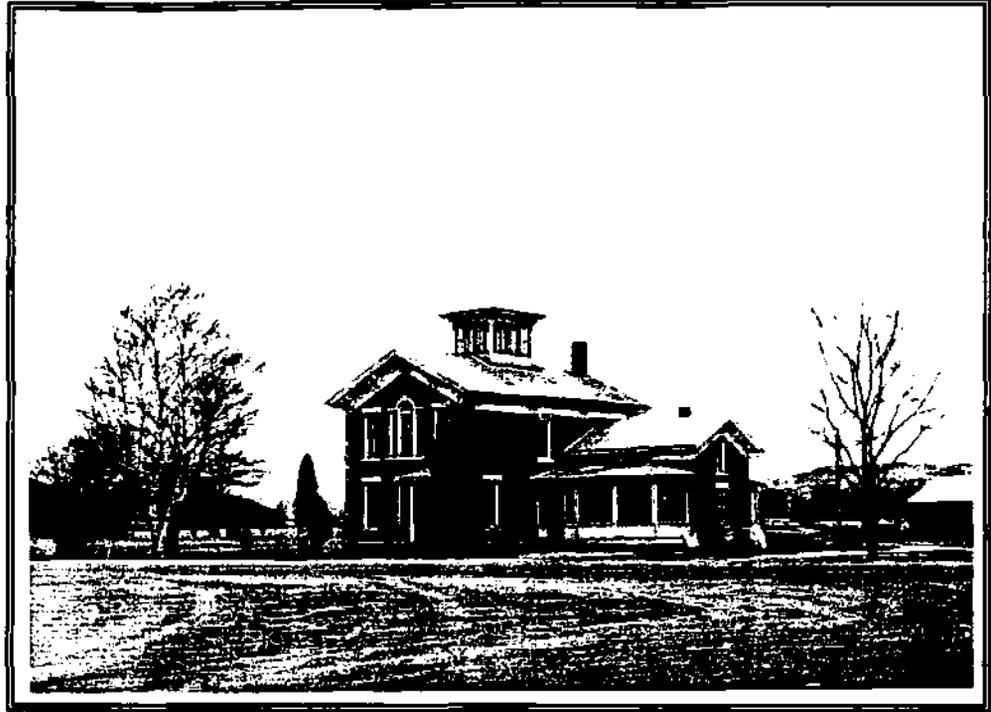
Hiram Lovejoy House, LC 105/14

Queen Anne

The Queen Anne is one of the most prominent nineteenth century styles found in LaCrosse County today. Generally popular in Wisconsin from 1880 to 1910, the Queen Anne style is characterized by irregular plans and massing, a variety of surface textures,

projections and roofs. Shingles and clapboard siding are often combined on the exterior to create texture. Roofs are generally steeply pitched and often feature round or polygonal corner turrets. Wrap-around verandas are common, and decorative features included turned and sawed gingerbread and bargeboards.

A number of significant examples of Queen Anne style houses were found to be potentially eligible in the LaCrosse River Valley Heritage Corridor project area. The circa 1880 house (106/19) located at 105 North Rose Street in West Salem is a good example of the Queen Anne style, with its cross-gable roof, ornate shed roof porch with turned posts and spindles, multiple bay windows, and use of clapboard and wood shingle to decorate the exterior.

The house (118/07) located at 530 LaCrosse Street in Onalaska, constructed circa 1880 of wood frame, is another nice Queen Anne example. It features a cross gable roof, wrap-around porch with turned posts and spindles, and decorative brackets in the gables. The house (106/20)

Queen Anne Style House, LC 106/20

located at 134 North Rose Street in West Salem was built circa 1890. It features classic Queen Anne elements such as a gabled ell plan with a second story octagon shaped turret culminating from the point of the gables joining. Numerous bay windows, porches with turned posts and spindles, a variety of window types, and decorative wood panels on exterior walls as seen on this house are all typical of the style.

Prairie School

The Prairie School style is a prevalent style in the upper Midwest. The earliest examples came from Chicago in the late nineteenth century and examples can be found into the 1920s. The style is generally featured by horizontal lines, low, long hipped or gable roofs, banded windows in horizontal ribbons, and a belt course or shelf roof between stories. Though the buildings themselves, which were generally wood, stucco or brick, tended to be fairly simple, ornamentation was often found in the windows through the leaded glass. Prairie School designs also generally feature interior additions such as built-in cabinets and benches.

Two examples of the Prairie School style are extant in the LaCrosse River Valley Heritage Corridor project area. Both examples are found in West Salem. The Dr. Guy Wakefield House (106/03) is located at 346 North Leonard Street. It is a two-story brick building with a crossed hipped roof, brick on

Samuel Harper House, LC 106/22

the first story and stucco on the second story, a one-story addition on the front, and the typical ribbon windows. The Samuel Harper House (106/22) is located at 224 Van Ness Street. It is a two-story brick building with a rectangular plan, brick first story and stucco second story, hipped roof, center entrance and windows which are grouped, though not banded.

Bungalow

The Bungalow style was one of the more popular early twentieth century residential architectural styles. Constructed in Wisconsin generally between 1910 and 1940, the Bungalow features are evident in low pitched hipped or gable roofs, large, open porches, prominent roof brackets, low, horizontal lines, and generally constructed of wood, stucco, and sometimes brick. Most were one

or one-and-one-half stories tall, though two story versions were often subdued visually to give the house a one-story look.

One good example of the Bungalow style was identified as potentially eligible in the LaCrosse River Valley Heritage Corridor study. The house (118/05) located at 445 Second Avenue North is a one-and-one-half story side gabled example with a low pitched gable roof, which extends to

Bungalow Style House, LC 118/05

include the porch, a gabled roof dormer, and wood siding with stucco in the second story.

Commercial Architecture

Commercial architecture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was widely varied like the residential architecture of that period. Often commercial architecture borrowed elements from some of the residential styles, such as Italianate, Queen Anne and Neo-Classical Revival. However, the LaCrosse River Valley Heritage Corridor study area featured primarily rural and small towns and most of the commercial architecture identified was Commercial Vernacular in form. Commercial Vernacular was seen in commercial districts all over the Midwest from circa 1850 to circa 1920. They are simply-designed commercial buildings which include large retail show windows on the ground story, with upper stories featuring simple window openings. Some sort of decorative cornice treatment was common, such as compound brick corbeling, wood moldings or metal friezes with finials or thick corbels on the ends. Transoms often break the first from the second stories visually.

The best examples of commercial vernacular form buildings are located in the proposed Commercial Street Commercial Historic District in Bangor. One of the best examples in the

district of Commercial Vernacular is the building at 1515 Commercial Street (103/05).
Constructed in 1898, it is a two story brick structure with large storefront windows, a transom
across the front, and a second story bay window. A corbelled cornice caps the building. The
building at 1516 Commercial Street (103/20) is a one-story example of the commercial vernacular
form. It was constructed in 1891 of brick and features a center opening with side windows,
transom, and a simple corbeled panel between the transom and the pedimented cornice.

Religious Architecture

Religious architecture in the mid-to-late
nineteenth century tended to, for first
generation buildings, reflect more
utilitarian features than ornate features.
Early churches were simple in plan and
other than a few basic needs, including
open interior space and the location of
a pulpit at the far end of the typically
rectangular building, these early
churches were often devoid of stylistic
features. As congregations grew and
populations became more prosperous,
second generation churches were often
constructed, reflecting the increased
wealth with larger, more ornate
churches which emphasized popular
stylistic trends which were common for
churches. Spires and belltowers, apses
and stained glass windows were typical
of second generation churches.

The LaCrosse River Valley Heritage
Corridor exhibits a few examples of
potentially significant churches. The
oldest is the Welsh Calvinistic
Methodist Church (103/12) built in
1859 at 504 Commercial Street in
Bangor. This is an excellent example
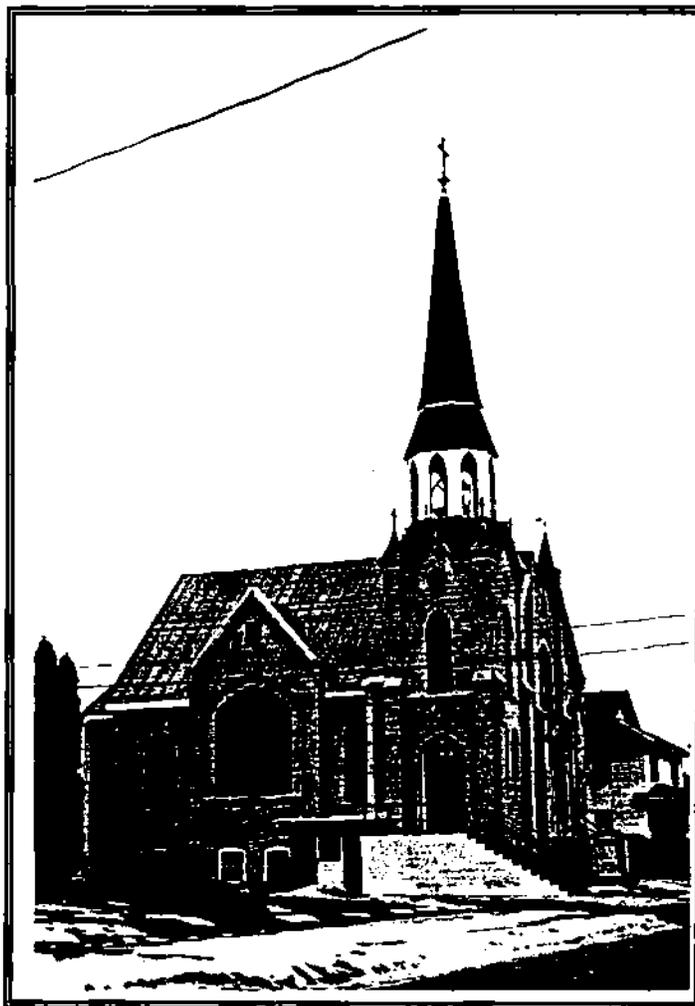
**St. Paul's Lutheran Church, LC 104/10**

of a first generation church. It is a front gable frame building with a smaller gabled entrance. It
features large, nine-over-nine sash windows and is absolutely devoid of decoration.

St. John's Lutheran Church (119/06) in Barre Township was constructed in 1887 and is more

typical of the second generation churches. This large building is brick and exhibits Gothic Revival features such as lancet windows with stained glass, a square belltower and six-sided spire. It has a rectangular plan with rear apse. St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church (104/10) at the northwest corner of North Sixteenth and Badger streets in Bangor, constructed in 1909, is also Gothic Revival in style. This brick building features a gabled roof with parapeted facade, a corner square belltower with a rounded turret and spire, lancet stained glass windows, and a six-sided apse.

Educational Architecture

Educational architecture begins as early as there was settlement in a community. Though initially schools were often held in homes or churches, by the late nineteen-hundreds, virtually every township had a number of rural schools. These schools were often one-room, one-story frame
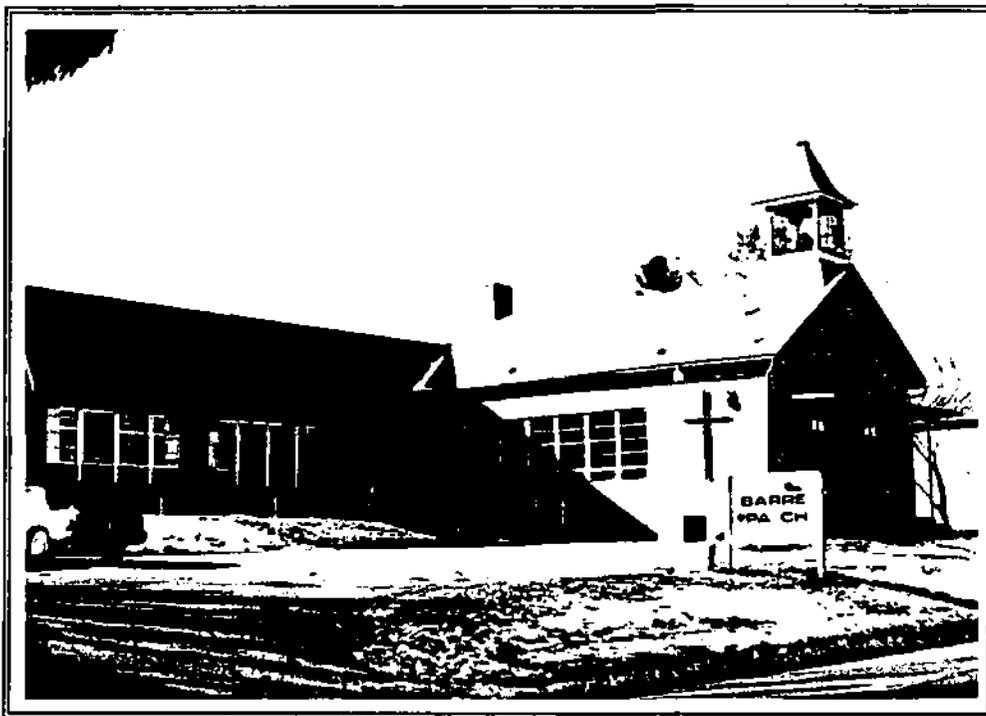
St. Johannis Evangelical Lutheran School, LC 105/20

buildings, though some communities built in brick. A good example of a rural school in the LaCrosse River Valley Heritage Corridor project area is the Smith Valley School (108/08, listed NRHP 1981). It is a one-story front gable brick building, constructed in vernacular form with segmental arch windows and a simple belltower.

As the school system became better funded by the government in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, many schools were built on standard plans. This is likely true of the Rockland School (103/07), located at the northeast corner of Oak and Center streets in Rockland. Constructed in 1928, this hipped roof one story brick school is also vernacular in form, with segmental arch windows, concrete water course, and a front gable projection. Another example of an early twentieth century school that was probably built according to standard plan was the

Fauver Hill School (119/19), built in 1924 in Medary Township on Highway 16. This one-story brick school features a hipped roof, central entrance with portico porch and sash windows.

Parochial schools were constructed according to whatever plans the affiliated church group chose. The only extant parochial school extant in the project area is the St. Johannis Evangelical Lutheran School (105/20). This one-story brick school was constructed in 1890 in association with St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church (105/22), located in Barre Township on CTH M, east of Barre Mills. The school is a front-gable building with double front doors and a hipped roof belltower. It has a modern addition on the east side.

Engineered Structures

Due to the fact that the LaCrosse River runs through the middle of the LaCrosse River Valley Heritage Corridor project area, a number of water related structures are extant in the area. From the time the river valley was settled in the 1850s, until technology allowed, most of the earliest
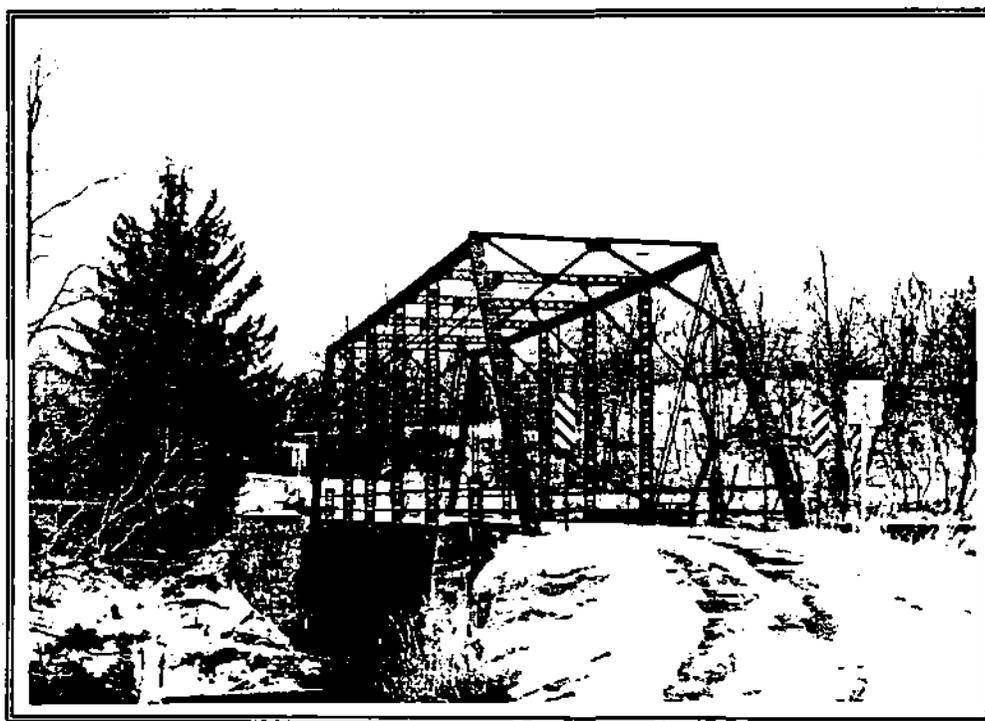
Bridge, LC 105/32

bridges were likely wood frame, though none are extant. The oldest extant bridge in the area is the overhead truss bridge on Old Highway B near Gill Coulee Road in Hamilton Township (105/32). This bridge, constructed of iron, was built circa 1900, prior to the time when the state highway department began designing standard plan bridges. This particular bridge is pin-jointed, as opposed to riveted, which allowed the parts to be manufactured elsewhere, shipped by parts, and assembled on the site without the use of specialized riveting tools. This bridge is the only one of its kind in LaCrosse County.

The other extant iron overhead truss bridge in the project area is the railroad bridge (119/00)

which is located in Bangor, near James Street and Sixteenth Avenue South in the city park. Built circa 1900, this large bridge was riveted. Today it is part of the LaCrosse River Bike Trail.

Another railroad bridge was built directly north of 119/00 in Bangor. This bridge (119/01) was constructed of reinforced concrete in 1911. It features a large arch which allows the creek to flow underneath.

Two concrete road bridges were constructed in 1926 near the Neshonoc Dam on Highway 108 in Hamilton Township. These bridges (118/28, 119/17) were both constructed at the same time by apparently the same contractor. They are reinforced concrete with concrete side-rails which feature collonettes. The bridges are supported by reinforced concrete pilings.

Another bridge which was built in this same era, however constructed of dressed limestone, is the Veteran's Memorial Park bridge (118/10). Built in 1927 at the same time as the park, the bridge is a single span bridges with a single arch, and has low stone walls on the sides.

The final engineering structure of note in the LaCrosse River Valley Heritage Corridor is the Neshonoc Dam (105/09). This dam, constructed directly south of the Neshonoc Powerhouse (105/09) was constructed to replace an earlier dam which was contemporary with the
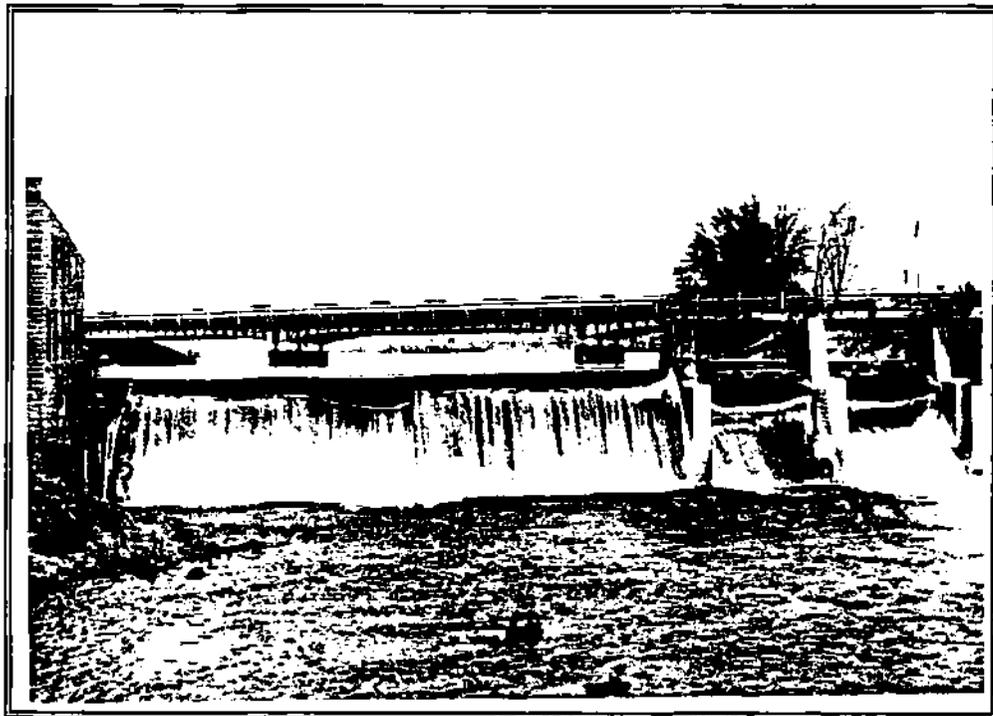
Neshonoc Dam, LC 105/09

powerhouse, in 1940. This dam, which features an open flowage and two tainter gates for flowage control, was built to continue control of the LaCrosse River at Lake Neshonoc, and to provide continued hydroelectric power to the village of West Salem.

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Chapter 11
Notable People

Throughout the written history of the La Crosse River Valley there has been mention of the first European settlers to migrate to the area in search of land and opportunity. But who are these people who took the challenge of clearing land, building homes, and establishing communities through hard work and dedication? They are the people who are responsible for the towns which are present today. Their influence can still be seen on store fronts, street signs, and local land marks, therefore they deserve recognition. The following is a sample of some of the notable people who have helped to shape the history of the La Crosse River Valley.

Nichols family

The Nichols family stands out in the history of Onalaska, Wisconsin. The family received its prominence due in part to their prosperous lumber industry which was a major employer in the community from 1856 until 1920 (Doblier: 11). Charles Mason Nichols, the family's patriarch, moved to Onalaska from Dane County, Wisconsin in 1852, and erected a sawmill on the east side of the Black River in Onalaska. The mill was known as the C. M. Nichols Lumber Co. until 1871, when the business was sold to his son Charles Haskell Nichols. Charles, along with his brother Frank Eugene, incorporated the lumber company in 1887. F.E. Nichols, born August 10, 1845 in Madison, Wisconsin, lived in Onalaska in a house located at 421 North Second Street (108/05) along with his wife Dora Green. The Nichols home was the center of social activities of Onalaska, and is noted as being the first resident in Onalaska to have gas lighting. F.E. Nichols continued to live in the Onalaska residence until his death in February of 1920 (U.S. West Research, Inc., sec. 8: 1-6).

Hamlin Garland

One of West Salem's most prominent residents was Hamlin Garland, born 14 September 1860 in the village of West Salem. During the Civil War the Garlands moved from West Salem to Iowa. In 1876 Hamlin Garland became a pupil at Cedar Valley Seminary in Osage, Iowa. After graduating in 1881, he began traveling across the United States, and in 1893 he purchased a house for his parents in West Salem (106/30). Though a fire in 1912 destroyed a portion of the home, Hamlin repaired the damage. Garland continued his traveling throughout the United States, yet he maintained his property in West Salem where he often spent his summers with his family. Following his death on 4 March 1940, he was buried in his family's plot in the Neshonoc cemetery. Garland achieved his notoriety because of the numerous books he had written. Garland based his works upon his own life experience, turning biography into historical fiction that portrait the lives and struggles of the people of America's Midwest. *Main Travelled Roads,*

Son of the Middle Border, and *The Trail Makers* are examples of Garland's works that were based on his life in the Midwest. Garland received numerous awards for his literate works; in 1918 he was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters, he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for the best biography in 1921 for his book, *A Daughter of the Middle Border*, and in 1926 the University of Wisconsin presented him with the degree of Doctor of Letters (Kindschy, 1981: 108-117).

Thomas Leonard

The founding of the village of Neshonoc can be attributed to Thomas Leonard. Leonard was born in Minerva, New York , 29 October 1806. He was married on 27 September 1830 to Belinda Mason, and they lived in New York for twenty years before moving to Wisconsin in 1850. Leonard

Leonard House, LC 106/16

is truly the father of Neshonoc, because after he arrived in the area of present day West Salem, he gave away land to a variety of groups and organizations, including the Baptist, Methodist, and Congregational churches, and for the Methodist parsonage. He also supplied land to the railroad, assorted businessmen, the Hamlin Cemetery, and the La Crosse Seminary. Leonard's first home in Neshonoc was a small log cabin which would be the first of four homes in the village. The last home, which is presently located at 99 Jefferson Street, West Salem (106/160) was constructed in 1859. Leonard was also the first farmer in the area to practice dairy farming (Kindschy, 1981: 19,20).

Joseph Hussa

Joseph Hussa was born in Czechoslovakia and came to the United States in October of 1849. Hussa was trained as a brewmaster in Prague and upon reaching Wisconsin, he settled in Juneau and Sauk counties. In the village of Watertown, Wisconsin, Hussa built a brewery, but he sold the business in 1855. In 1860 Hussa moved to Bangor, Wisconsin where with the help of some friends, purchased a two-story building within the village. This building was the beginning of the Hussa Brewery Company (104/06) of Bangor, Wisconsin; it is not known if the original building is part of the present brewery complex. As business for the brewery grew, Hussa constructed a home for himself and his family (104/05) as well as a new office building in 1904 (104/04). The Hussa Brewery became known throughout the state as barrels of Hussa's beer were shipped by horse train across Wisconsin. The Hussa Brewery Company remained in operation until around 1920 when the brewing operation was turned into canning plant (Bangor Historical Society: 2).

Chapter 12
Survey Results

List of Intensive Surveyed Properties

La Crosse River Valley Heritage Corridor

Total Properties Intensively Surveyed
 and Potentially Eligible for the National Register = 66
Previously surveyed = 49
New survey = 17
Listed on National Register = 5
Determined Eligible by State = 1

Map Code Number	Historic Name (if Known)	Location	Date
LC 103/02	House	Rockland, 102 Ondell St.	c 1900
LC 103/07	Rockland School	Rockland, NE corner of Oak/Center St.	1928
LC 103/08	Big Creek Mills	Burns TP, Big Creek Rd., 1 mi. N US 16	1869
LC 103/12	Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church	Bangor, 504 Commercial St.	1859
LC 103/14	Commercial Building	Bangor, 1507 Commercial St. (Bangor Commercial District)	c.1930
LC 103/15	Commercial Building	Bangor, 1515-17 Commercial St. (Bangor Commercial District)	1898
LC 103/16	Commercial Building	Bangor, 1523-25 Commercial St. (Bangor Commercial District)	c.1905
LC 103/17	Commercial Building	Bangor, 1529 Commercial St. (Bangor Commercial District)	c.1900
LC 103/18	Commercial Building	Bangor, 1535 Commercial St. (Bangor Commercial District)	c.1900
LC 103/19	Commercial Building	Bangor, 1539-41 Commercial St. (Bangor Commercial District)	c.1905

LC 103/20	Commercial Building	Bangor, 1516 Commercial St. (Bangor Commercial District)	1891
LC 103/21	Commercial Building	Bangor, 1520-26 Commercial St. (Bangor Commercial District)	1900
LC 103/22	G. Bosshard Building	Bangor, 1530-36 Commercial St. (Bangor Commercial District)	1900
LC 103/23	Meyer Building	Bangor, 1542-44 Commercial St. (Bangor Commercial District)	1899
LC 104/02	G. S. Cotton Building	Bangor, 1616-18 Commercial St.	1898
LC 104/04	Hussa Brewery Office	Bangor, 1710 Commercial St.	1904
LC 104/05	Joseph Hussa House	Bangor, 1714 Commercial St.	1881
LC 104/06	Hussa Brewery	Bangor, W end of Commercial St.	1858
LC 104/08	Wm. Price House	Bangor, 110 N. 17th Ave.	c.1880
LC 104/10	St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church	NW cor. N. 16th and Badger streets	1909
LC 104/17	M.C. Mengel House	Bangor, 304 S. 17th Ave.	c.1900
LC 104/20	Burns Towne Hall	Burns TP, Hwy 162, .5 mi. S of CTH B	c.1910
LC 105/02	House	Burns TP, W side Hwy 162, .1 mi. N. Jones Rd.	c.1875
LC 105/05	House	Burns TP, N side Hwy 16, .1 mi. E CTH D	c.1880
LC 105/09	Neshonoc Dam/ Powerhouse	Hamilton TP, NE corner of Hwy 108/La Crosse River	1895/ 1940
LC 105/11	F.W. Labus House	Hamilton TP, W side Hwy 108, .2 mi. S. Walker Rd.	c.1905
LC 105/14	Hiram Lovejoy House	Hamilton TP, W side CTH M, 75' S. CTH B	c.1875
LC 105/19	J.W. Ranney House	Barre TP, NE corner of Old CTH M/Swamp Rd.	c.1890

LC 105/20	E.L. St. Johannis School	Barre TP, S side CTH M, .5 mi. W Russlan Coulee Rd. (St. Johannis complex)	1890
LC 105/21	House	Barre TP, S. side CTH M, .5 mi. W Russlan Coulee Rd. (St. Johannis complex)	c.1890
LC 105/22	St. John's Lutheran Church	Barre TP, S. side CTH M, .5 mi. W. Russlan Coulee Rd. (St. Johannis complex)	1887
LC 105/23	St. John's Parsonage	Barre TP, S. side CTH M, .5 mi. W. Russlan Coulee Rd. (St. Johannis complex)	c.1890
LC 105/24	Barre Town Hall	Barre TP, S. side CTH M, .5 mi. W. Russlan Coulee Rd.	c. 1900
LC 105/26	Conrad Miller House	Barre TP, N side CTH M, .1 mi. W. Russlan Coulee Rd.	c.1900
LC 105/32	Bridge	Hamilton TP, Old B, .1 mi. E Gill Coulee Rd.	c.1900
LC 105/33	Palmer/ Lewis Octagon House	Hamilton TP, US Hwy 16, E side, .1 mi. N CTH C	c.1855
LC 105/35	House	West Salem, 436 N. Leonard St.	c.1875
LC 106/02	Palmer/Gullickson Octagon House	West Salem, 358 N. Leonard St.	1857
LC 106/03	Dr. Guy Wakefield House	West Salem, 346 N. Leonard St.	1913
LC 106/16	Thomas Leonard House	West Salem, 99 E Jefferson St.	1859
LC 106/17	House	West Salem, 143 Jefferson St.	c.1875
LC 106/19	House	West Salem, 105 N. Rose St.	c.1880
LC 106/20	House	West Salem, 134 N. Rose St.	c.1880
LC 106/22	Samuel Harper House	West Salem, 224 Van Ness St.	c.1930
LC 106/30	Hamlin Garland House	West Salem, 357 W. Garland St. (NHL/NRHP 1979)	1893
LC 107/06	House	West Salem, 113 Jefferson St.	c.1865
LC 108/05	F. E. Nichols House	Onalaska, 421 N. 2nd St. (NRHP 1993)	1888

LC 108/07	Richards-Hauser Farmstead	Onalaska TP, CTH S, E side , .2 mi. S of CTH S and SN (DOE 1986)	1902
LC 108/08	Smith Valley School	Medary TP, 4130 Smith Valley Rd. (NRHP 1981)	1887
LC 118/05	House	Onalaska, 445 2nd Ave., North	c.1925
LC 118/06	House	Onalaska, 414 4th Ave. South	c. 1890
LC 118/07	House	Onalaska, 530 La Crosse St.	c.1880
LC 118/08	House	Hamilton TP, .1 E of Moos Rd and Hwy 16	c.1910
LC 118/09	House	Hamilton TP, .6 mi. E of Moos Rd and Hwy 16	c.1880
LC 118/10	Veterans Memorial Park	Hamilton TP, S of Intersection of Hwy 16 and Hwy BM	1927
LC 118/15	House	West Salem, 412 N. Leonard St.	c.1900
LC 118/22	House	West Salem, 355 W. Franklin St.	c.1925
LC 118/23	House	West Salem, 341W. Franklin St.	c.1930
LC 118/28	Bridge (concrete, road)	Hamilton TP, NE Corner Hwy 108 and La Crosse River	1926
LC 118/31	Swarthout House	Hamilton TP, NE Corner Hwy 108 and La Crosse River at Neshonoc Dam	c.1930
LC 118/34	A.B. Newton House	Bangor, 1606 Cardinal St.	c.1880
LC 119/00	Bridge (iron, railroad)	Bangor, .2 mi. W of James St. and 16th Ave. S.	c.1900
LC 119/01	Bridge (concrete, railroad)	Bangor, N. of Bangor St., One Block W. of 16th Ave. S.	1911
LC 119/03	House	Barre TP, S. side CTH M, .5 mi. W. Russian Coulee Rd. (St. Johannis complex)	c.1890
LC 119/20	Bridge (concrete, road)	Hamilton TP, Corner of Old Hwy 16 and Hwy 108	1926
LC 119/22	Fauver Hill School	Medary, TP .1 mi. E of Hwy PA and Hwy 16	1924

Proposed National Register Historic Districts

St. Johannis Evangelical Lutheran Church Historic District

The proposed St. Johannis Evangelical Lutheran Church Historic District is located in the township of Barre, a few miles east of Barre Mills on the south side of CTH M, .5 miles west of Russlan Coulee Road. It is comprised of six buildings, five contributing and one non-contributing to the proposed district. The center of the complex is the St. Johannis Evangelical Lutheran Church (105/22), a large brick Gothic Revival church with a center bell tower and spire, gabled roof, and traditional rectangular plan. The St. Johannis Church was constructed in 1887. The surrounding buildings were constructed to support the activities of the church. The St. Johannis School (105/20) was constructed to the west of the church in 1890, and though has been altered through additions, still retains its original section and continues to function as a Christian elementary school.

The remaining three contributing buildings are all houses. One of the houses (105/22) is apparently the parsonage for the church. The house closest to the school (105/21) may have been the school teacher's house and the large house to the furthest west (119/03) may have been a home for the elderly and infirmed who were cared for by the church.

Additional research will need to be done in order to nominate this proposed district to the National Register.

Bangor Commercial Historic District

The Bangor Commercial Historic District is an intact, typical commercial district for a town of its size in Wisconsin. Developed at the turn of the century, the brick buildings found along the one block strip of Commercial Street in Bangor is representative of the vernacular commercial forms which are representative of commercial architectural development at that time in history.

There are ten buildings within the boundaries of the proposed historic district. The majority of the buildings, which are primarily two story brick commercial vernacular buildings, were constructed between 1899 and 1905, to replace buildings which were destroyed during a fire in 1899.

Further research will be needed to develop a detailed history of the commercial evolution of Bangor's commercial center.

Chapter 13
Recommendations

General Observations

The LaCrosse River Valley Heritage Corridor Intensive Survey Project was conducted in 1994-95 for the purposes of obtaining intensive level information on the ___ properties which were identified as potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places between surveys conducted between 1993 and 1995 in the project area. Two potential historic districts were identified, in addition to dozens of individually eligible properties.

Historic preservation activities are obviously a cultural priority for LaCrosse County, based on the County Board's continued support of the ongoing LaCrosse County Historic Sites Commission activities. Historic preservation should be seen as not only a way of maintaining a legacy for the future generations of LaCrosse County, but should also be view as an economic alternative to new construction, a way to bring various kinds of grant money to the area, and a way to improve the tax base and the general business climate. These benefits to historic preservation are summarized below.

Social and Economic Benefits of Historic Preservation

Social Benefits

The preservation of LaCrosse County's historic resources is important for a number of reasons which may not be immediately apparent to many people. It is common for people to live in a community all their life and not recognize the historic gems which surround them. Historic resources can provide a community with a strong sense of their unique history, based on the commercial, industrial, social, residential and educational resources which surround them daily. Older structures provide residents with a feeling of stability and continuity which is difficult, if not impossible to replace. Additionally, these older structures also can instill an appreciation of an era of high standards of aesthetics and craftsmanship which exist today in a very different version.

The LaCrosse River Valley's history is reflected through agricultural trends from wheat to dairy, the railroads traversing the valley, industries, commerce, and into the twentieth century, increased tourism. Agriculture has remained a strong component in the valley, with family farms persisting, and agriculture related industries and commercial establishments located in the small towns along the river.

Therefore, it is important socially for the residents of LaCrosse County to preserve their most important historic resources, to aid future residents in understanding an important past. In addition to this understanding, however, the people of LaCrosse County may reap possible economic benefits through their historic resources.

Economic Benefits

- Thousands of historic rehabilitation projects have been undertaken in the past few decades. Rehabilitation became a major national industry in the 1980s. As a result, information is becoming available which indicate that rehabilitation of older buildings is more cost effective than new construction.

- Rehabilitation projects usually cost about one-half to one-third less than similar new construction.

- Initial construction costs are lower because demolition costs are minimal as a result and there is little expense for foundation and/or structural work. As a result, rehabilition projects are usually faster to complete.

- Rehabilitation projects often provide central and convenient site location, sound and durable quality construction, unique aesthetic and design value, and the public relations of positibe image and greater publicity opportunities.

- Rehabilitation projects create more jobs and have a greater impact on the local economy and unemployment rate than comparable new construction projects. Rehabilitation projects tend to utilize 25% more labor than new construction projects. Fewer materials are used than in new construction, which makes more project money available for labor. As a result, more of the money spent on the project will be re-circulated back into the local economy.

- Preservation stimulates economic revitalization and private investment which in turn increases the local tax base.

- Preservation has a strong impact on the tourism industry, which is currently one of the largest industries in Wisconsin. In 1990, tourism generated approximately $6.3 billion in spending in Wisconsin, generating 128,000 jobs and generated ober $785 million in state and local tax revenue. Sightseeing is one of the most popular summer vacation activities, and historic sites are an important feature in sightseeing activities.

[The above economic benefits discussion was excerpted, in part, from a pamphlet entitled "Economic Benefits of Historic Preservation in Wisconsin," published by the Historic Preservation Division of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin in 1990.]

In addition to the social and economic benefits, there are programs which have been established by state and federal governments which encourage historic preservation.

Tax Incentives for Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings

Owners of income-producing National Register properties can claim a 20% federal investment tax

credit and an additional 5% state investment tax credit for rehabilitation expenses. Work must be sympathetic with the historical character of the building, follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and be approved by the National Park Service and the Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

Protection from Federal Projects

Properties that are listed in the National Register or State Register, that may be eligible for listing, receive limited protection from federally licensed or funded projects. Any agency or organization seeking federal assistance or permits should contact the Chief of Compliance in the Historic Preservation Division of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin at 608/2264-6509, to ensure that its projects comply with federal regulations.

It should be noted, however, that while listing on the National or State Register of Historic Places gives some protection from federally funded projects, it provides no protection from privately funded development. Only local Historic Preservation Ordinance (which LaCrosse County has), authorized by state statute, may allow the community to regulate new construction, exterior alterations, and demolitions which may adversely affect historic properties.

Wisconsin Historic Building Code

The Wisconsin Historic Building Code is available for use by owners of buildings which are listed on the State and National Register of Historic Places or owners of historic buildings which have been designated under a local historic preservation ordinance which has been certified by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. This code, administered by the Department of Industry, Labor and Human Relations (DILHR) is designed to facilitate the preservation or restoration of designated historic buildings through the provision of alternative building standards. Owners of qualified historic buildings are permitted to be subject to the Historic Building Code in lieu of any state or municipal building codes. For more information contact DILHR at 608//266-3151.

Recommendations for Future Action on Preservation

- List any and all properties listed in this report on local historic sites list;
- List any and all properties listed in this report on the National Register of Historic Places;
- Continue education program through public meetings, brochures, ongoing research;
- Establish road signage to direct tourists/visitors to Valley's historic sites;
- Establish contact with community historic preservation leaders and organizations to continue cooperation in project;
- Continue to collect site-specific information on individual properties.

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LaCrosse River Valley Heritage Corridor

LaCrosse County, Wisconsin

SOUTHERN LACROSSE COUNTY, WISCONSIN

HISTORIC/ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY

CIRCA 1845 TO 1950

SUBMITTED SEPTEMBER 1998

To the LaCrosse County Historic Sites Preservation Commission

and the

State Historical Society of Wisconsin

by

Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center

at University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse

Principal Investigator

Barbara M. Kooiman, M.A.

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ABSTRACT

LaCrosse County, which is situated in west central Wisconsin along the eastern banks of the Mississippi River, was among the earliest regions of Wisconsin to be settled. The rich soil and wide range of topography brought people from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds to the region. This document explores the historic context and themes of the rural townships in the five townships which lie south of the LaCrosse River Valley, which bisects the county east to west.

The architectural history of the county is an important part of its history. The farmsteads, rural schools, townhalls, and religious complexes which make up the environment help tell the history of this region. This report attempts to record and disseminate information about the county using its buildings as a vehicle to express that history.

LaCrosse County encompasses 481 square miles, equaling 307,840 acres. It is bounded by Trempealeau County to the northwest, Jackson County to the north, Monroe County to the east, Vernon County to the south, and the Mississippi River along its west border. For this study, the townships of Barre, Campbell/Medary, Greenfield, Shelby, and Washington were surveyed. One hundred ten (110) properties were surveyed at the reconnaissance level within the project area. Nine (9) properties were intensively surveyed, having been evaluated for National Register of Historic Places potential.

METHODOLOGY

In September 1997 the LaCrosse County Historic Sites Preservation Commission hired Barbara Kooiman of Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center at the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse as Principal Investigator for the Southern LaCrosse County, Wisconsin Historic/Architectural Survey. Kooiman, in conjunction with the Public History program at University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse, under the supervision of Dr. Charles Lee, conducted field work during the fall of 1997 and spring of 1998.

The research team of Kooiman and the UW-L students held a public meeting on 27 October 1997 at the LaCrosse Public Library. The meeting was held in conjunction with a Preservation Alliance of LaCrosse (PAL) monthly meeting, and approximately 30 people were in attendance, including the PAL board, the LaCrosse County Historic Sites Preservation Commission, interested parties in the community, and Mr. Joe DeRose, Survey Coordinator, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

Field work commenced almost immediately upon selection of MVAC to prepare the report. Kooiman organized the Public History students, comprised in the fall of 1997 of Stu Burnes, Dan Fruedenburg, Tim Gerber, Sandy Molzhon, and Brian Weigel. In the Spring of 1998, Burnes and Molzhon left the team, and were replaced by Travis Glasshoff. Kooiman and Professor Lee met with the students approximately once a week throughout both semesters, and Kooiman assigned readings in LaCrosse County history, writing assignments of thematic chapters for the reports, and once field work was commenced, research on particular properties within the project area which appeared to meet the criteria for National Register of Historic Places eligibility.

Field work continued from September 1997 through March 1998. Kooiman took one student at a time to conduct field work. Kooiman drove, and the took all photographs, while the students filled out field survey forms and plotted the properties on field maps, which was information that was later transferred to clean USGS maps. Virtually all public roads within the project area were driven.

Field survey criteria was as follows:

The properties were each located inside the project area, including the townships of Barre, Bangor, Campbell/Medary, Greenfield, Shelby, and Washington.

- A LaCrosse County highway map was used as a road map in the survey.
- Surveyed properties were at least 50 years old, and the main building had sufficient integrity to project a sense of its history. If the property was severely modified with additions, replacement siding, or non-historic windows or doors,

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it was not surveyed. Exceptions to this criteria were occassionally made for properties which were unusual or particularly old.

• Abandoned properties were surveyed if they had sufficient integrity, and dated from the nineteenth century.

• All schools, town halls, and other less common property types were recorded despite integrity.

• Not only buildings and complexes of buildings (such as farmsteads) were recorded, but structures, such as bridges, and sites, such as cemeteries were recorded as well.

• All properties were located on USGS maps using the SHSW survey map codes. One original copy of maps will be part of the deliverables for the SHSW for this project, and a second, photocopied set of maps will be submitted to the LaCrosse County Historic Sites Preservation Commission archives.

• All photos were taken with black & white 35mm film, produced on contact sheets, and prints, which were adhered to survey cards, which are submitted to the SHWS as final deliverables.

• Data entry of the field survey was made in the HistoriBase database program utilized by the SHSW Historic Preservation Division. The LaCrosse County survey was copied onto disk for the SHSW and submitted as part of the final deliverables for this project.

• Survey cards and forms were photocopied and presented a part of the deliverables for the LaCrosse County Historic Sites Preservation Commission.

The UW-L public history students did all the data entry into the Histori-Base database program for the project. They plotted all properties on maps, completed database entry, and as described above, wrote general LaCrosse County history, township histories, thematic chapters, and site-specific histories. Each student was given an independent study credit and grade through the UW-L Public History program under Professor Lee.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The Southern LaCrosse County, Wisconsin Historic/Architectural Survey began in September 1997 and was completed in September 1998 under the direction of Barbara Kooiman, Principal Investigator, at Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center for the LaCrosse County Historic Sites Preservation Commission.

The results of the survey were:

- Preparation and creation of the survey report
- Survey of 110 properties in southern LaCrosse County
- Preparation of field survey maps
- Database entry in HistoriBase database of all surveyed properties
- Intensive survey of nine (9) properties in survey area.

LaCrosse County Historic/Archtectural Survey
1997-98
Survey Results

Property Types

Township	Farm-stead	House	School	Reli-gious	Ceme-tery	Govt.	Comm-ercial	Bridge	Other
Bangor	7	0	4	0	2	0	0	0	1
Barre	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Greenfield	15	4	1	3	1	1	1	1	0
Meday	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shelby	17	9	2	0	5	0	0	0	1
Washing-ton	17	1	2	2	5	1	1	1	0
Total	60	16	9	5	13	2	2	2	2

Styles

	2 story cube	Queen Anne	Italian-ate	Front Gable	Side Gable	Gabled Ell	Cross Gable	Bunga-low
Barre	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0
Bangor	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Green-field	5	0	1	4	2	6	1	
Medary	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Shelby	13	1	0	1	1	7	0	2
Washington	5	0	0	5	3	5	0	0
Total	24	1	1	12	7	22	2	2

OVERVIEW HISTORY OF LACROSSE COUNTY

LaCrosse County was formed in 1851, with its final boundaries determined by 1857, however, first settlement occurred in the vicinity of the present-day city of LaCrosse as early as 1844. Up to the present, agriculture has remained an important part of LaCrosse County's economy. However, during the past one hundred fifty years there have been shifts in the types of preferred agricultural products. For example, in the late 1800s wheat production was very important to LaCrosse County, however, by the early 1900s the shift was made to dairy production, with corn and hay being important crops, while wheat became relatively rare as a LaCrosse County crop. The types of farm layout and outbuildings utilized would have also changed during this shift from a grain-based economy to a livestock-based economy. The relative wealth of farmers also shifted, and preferred house styles assist in reflecting those changes.

Wisconsin became a state in the year 1848, but prior to that time it had been a part of several different territories. The Treaty of Paris, signed in 1873, ceded all land east of the Mississippi River to the United States. However, it was not until the Jay Treaty of 1794 that the Federal Government retained complete control over the territory.[1] The first claim for this territory, which included the area of present-day Wisconsin, was claimed by the Virginia colonial government. Shortly after the Jay Treaty, Virginia relinquished this land to the United States Government.

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[1] Bryant, Benjamin F. (Ed). *Memoirs of LaCrosse County.* (Madison: Western Historical Association, 1907), 28

In 1785 and 1787 two different Northwest Ordinances were passed by the United States. These ordinances were set up as a form of government for the Northwest Territory, which included present day Wisconsin. The first act provided the guidelines for the rectangular land survey that established the townships and the section sizes throughout much of the United States. When the ordinance first went into effect the smallest size parcel a person could buy was an entire section, or 360 acres. However, the size of the parcel was reduced to forty acres prior to the first settlement of the area. It was this forty-acre parcel of land that most settlers initially bought, and became the American farm standard size. The second act provided that there would not be slavery in the Northwest Territory.[2]

By July of 1800 the area including present-day Wisconsin was part of the territory of Indiana, however, the area of Wisconsin was ceded to the territory of Illinois in 1809. When Illinois gained its statehood in 1818, the area of present-day Wisconsin became a part of Michigan's territory. The Wisconsin territory belonged to the Winnebago tribes until the November 1837 treaty, which required the Winnebago to yield their land that lay east of the Mississippi to the United States.[3] The territory of Wisconsin was established in 1836 and was granted its statehood in 1848.

LaCrosse County was not created until after the State of Wisconsin was itself formed in 1848. When Wisconsin was established the area of present day LaCrosse County was included in Crawford County which consisted of much of the western portion of the state. In February of 1851 the state legislature passed a bill creating LaCrosse County, and on 19 May 1851 the county was fully organized. Several boundary changes occurred over the years before the present boundaries of LaCrosse County were established. The present boundaries of LaCrosse County, consisting of 475 square miles, were designated and approved on 3 March 1857, six years after the county itself was created.[4]

The name "La Crosse," a word of French origin, was given to the area as early as 1805, when it was known as Prairie de la Crosse. The name "La Crosse" originally came from the name the French gave the ball game that the Indians played at this time, which utilized a stick which reminded the French of a priest's cross or staff. Nathan Myrick, the area's first permanent settler, shortened the name to La Crosse.[5]

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[2] Conlin, Joseph R. *The American Past: a Survey of American History.* San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanonich Publisher, 1984. 143, 146; Bryant, 28.

[3] Bryant, 29, 23.

[4] *History of LaCrosse County, Wisconsin.* Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1881, 315, 328; *Historical Atlas and Chronology of County Boundaries, 1788-1980.* Vol. 3 Michigan, Wisconsin. John H. Long, ed. Compiled by Hugo P. Leaming (WI), John H. Long (MI). Boston: G.K. Hall and Co., 1984. 204-205; Bryant, 47.

[5] *History of LaCrosse County, Wisconsin,* 329-330, 581.

Nathan Myrick arrived November 1841 on a flatboat from Prairie du Chien. Myrick came to the area from New York to trade with the native tribes. Originally he had set up camp on Barron's Island, which is present-day Pettibone Island. However, in 1842 he moved his trading post from the island directly across the main channel of the Mississippi River to the present site of the city of La Crosse.[6]

In 1844 the first Euro-American farmers moved to the area. John and Charles Nagel placed their farm at the foot of the bluffs between present day State Road and Mormon Coulee.[7] Between 1851 and 1855 settlers started to take outlying land for farms, while people were still settling in the village of LaCrosse.[8] In the fall of 1858 there were still some six hundred thousand vacant acres of land available in the county for settlement and farming. However, little speculation of the land was done, because most of the settlers made their claims for their forty acre parcels in person at the land office, which became easier once the land office was moved to LaCrosse from Mineral Point in 1853.[9]

The following table gives the number of land parcels and percentage deeded by month in the year of 1853. The smallest percentage of land registered was in the month of February, probably due to the severely cold weather that the area experiences during this month. The month of November indicates the largest number of land registered, probably because winter would soon set in and shelters needed to be built. The month of June represents the second largest amount of land registered, probably because there was still time to plant a crop and construct sufficient shelters.[10]

Month (of 1853)	Parcels Registered	Percentage
January	573	7.5
February	399	4.4
March	390	5.1
April	657	8.6
May	641	8.4
June	870	11.4

[6] Bryant, 23, 32. Myrick's Post was located near the present day intersection of Front and State Streets.

[7] History of LaCrosse County, Wisconsin, 332.

[8] Bryant, 34.

[9] Bryant, 50; Wingate, Robert George. Settlement Patterns of LaCrosse County, Wisconsin 1850-1875. Thesis, University of Minnesota, August 1975, 98.

[10] Wingate, 99.

July	683	8.9
August	436	5.7
September	504	6.6
October	654	8.5
November	906	11.8
December	612	8.0
Vacant land or Owned by Railroad	391	5.1
Total	7,716	100

Of these pioneers who came to the area between 1848 and 1862, the majority of them hailed from the eastern seaboard, such as New York and New England. European immigrants also arrived in the area. The two major nationalities that represented these early settlers were German and Norwegian. They tended to work primarily in lumbering or farming.[11]

The population of the county in 1855 was nearly 4,000 and by 1860 it was 12,186. The large jump in population was due to the railroad being established in LaCrosse in 1858. The population of the area slowed down during the Civil War, however once the war was over many people from the southern United States moved north. The population grew steadily for the next ten years to 20,297 in 1870. The growth slowed from 1870 to 1880 when the population was 27,073. Through the next two decades the population continued to rise, 38,801 in 1890 and 42,997 at the turn of the century.[12]

Many different nationalities were represented in the turn-of-the-century population of LaCrosse County. The foreign born population totaled 10,902 in 1900. Forty percent were Germans who settled primarily in the southwestern portion of the county. Norwegians, including Swedes, who settled mostly in the northwestern portion of the county, equaled thirty-two percent. Bohemians, who tended to settle in the southeast, equaled five percent. English equaled three percent, and Canadians (which included French, via Canada) equaled two percent of the population. The Yankees, English and Welsh all settled primarily along the LaCrosse River Valley and its tributaries.[13] One sixth of the population of Wisconsin in 1860 were from Germany, however, the English, American and Welsh settlers were among the earliest

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[11] Bryant, 48. By 1862 over eighty-five percent of the county was settled, Wingate, 101.

[12] Gregory, John G. *West Central Wisconsin: A History.* Indianapolis: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., Inc., 1933, 599; Bryant, 181.

[13] Bryant, 181.

nationalities in the LaCrosse area.[14] By the year 1905 LaCrosse County was almost entirely settled, and contained twenty-one different nationalities, of which the Germans and Norwegians were the predominate ethnic groups. The only land remaining unsettled in 1905 was 760 acres of sandstone soil that was held by the railroads.[15]

Foreigners generally learned of Wisconsin through the state's Bureau of Immigration. This governmental office was used to help recruit new settlers to the state. Along with the bureau, in 1852 state legislation provided for an immigration commissioner to be located in New York City to provide information about Wisconsin to the newly arrived immigrants. Another way that immigrants learned of the United States was through letters that were sent back to the old country from those who traversed their way to the new lands. These letters gave first hand knowledge of the voyage, land, and settlement opportunities in certain areas. All ethnic groups used this system as a major source of information which helped many in the decision to emigrate or to stay behind.[16]

The routes that the immigrants first followed to the LaCrosse area were of two kinds before 1858. The immigrants could follow one of the numerous water highways such as the Mississippi River from the south or from the north via the Great Lakes. The other choice was along the rough Indian trails that could be traversed by foot, ox cart, horse or stagecoach. A big change in area transportation took place on 23 August 1858 when the LaCrosse & Milwaukee Railroad became the first railroad to extend to LaCrosse. The railroad travelers followed the LaCrosse River Valley through the Driftless area to LaCrosse and the Mississippi River. This point was the only access that could be made between the Wisconsin and St. Croix rivers. The railroad followed one of the early transportation routes to connect LaCrosse to eastern Wisconsin.[17]

The first railroad in proximity to LaCrosse was located in Prairie du Chien and ran from Milwaukee. This railroad line was established in 1857. The Milwaukee and LaCrosse Railroad paralleled that of the Prairie du Chien and Milwaukee line. This line was important to LaCrosse because with it the city was connected to Chicago not only by river but also by rail, and created a southwestern node for Wisconsin and Minnesota.[18]

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[14] Raney, 218; Bryant, 181.

[15] Wingate, 63, 65.

[16] Wingate, 63, 65.

[17] Gregory, 508; Wingate 52, 53, 59. The Driftless area is the area of land that was not covered by the glacial ice during the last ice age 1.6 to ten thousand years ago.

[18] Gregory, 492; Wingate, 53.

The Milwaukee & LaCrosse was not the only railroad in LaCrosse. In 1867 the city of LaCrosse was linked up with the Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad. A merger between the St. Paul & Chicago and the Milwaukee & St. Paul in 1874 created the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad. Before Minnesota goods could be transported to LaCrosse and Wisconsin, a bridge was needed across the Mississippi River. In 1870 a winter bridge was built to connect LaCrosse to Barron's Island, then across the Mississippi River to Minnesota. During the seasons when the Mississippi River was navigable between the years 1870 and 1879, goods and passengers were transferred across the river to the awaiting railroad in Minnesota. The railroad bridge was constructed across the river in 1876. This bridge connected the Milwaukee & LaCrosse Line on the Wisconsin side to the Southern Minnesota Railroad on the Minnesota side.[19] By 1893 three major railroad lines were running through the LaCrosse River Valley, influencing the establishment and permanence of the villages of Rockland, Bangor and West Salem. The railroads enabled the transport of raw materials, manufactured goods, and people from the LaCrosse River Valley to commerce centers such as Milwaukee, Chicago, and St. Paul.[20]

LaCrosse County's early history is marked by prosperity, but by the turn of the century, the county's economy seemed to be less stable, with the loss of the lumber industries, and the waning of wheat growing in western Wisconsin. The county's residents diversified however, and one area where they developed was in the dairy industry. The introduction of the dairy cows to LaCrosse County was vital to the continued economic growth of the county. Dairying provided a stable economy for the county's residents. The soils throughout the county are well suited to the cultivation of crops such as corn and hay which was needed to feed the dairy herds. Milk production led to the creation of local cooperatives that specialized in butter and cheese production.

The ability of the people of LaCrosse County to direct their efforts towards dairying and other agricultural products has allowed for the continued economic and population growth of the county. Following 1900, dairying has developed into one of the leading industries of the State of Wisconsin, as well as LaCrosse County. Agriculture in general has remained a strong stabilizing factor in the county's economy, with the size of the county's farms fluctuating relatively little through out the historic period. In 1890 the average county farm was 154.4 acres, and in 1950 the average farm was 168.0 acres.[21]

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[19] Barbara Kooiman, "Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway Depot," LaCrosse, WI, National Register of Historic Places Nomination, section 8 page 2.

[20] Robert C. Nesbit, The History of Wisconsin, Vol. III. (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1985),

[21] University of Wisconsin Agricultural Extension Services, Wisconsin Rural Resources, LaCrosse, County. (Madison, WI: Wisconsin State Department of Agriculture, Crop and Livestock Reporting Service, 1957), 18.

This economic stability has brought rural LaCrosse County to its present state. The people, land, buildings and soils of the county have combined to make it an agriculturally rich area, with a strong sense of beauty, tradition, and hard labor. The following thematic chapters will illustrate how certain aspects of the county's history have influenced the built environment of LaCrosse County.

Southern LaCrosse County, contoured fields

HISTORIC CONTEXT THEMES OF SOUTHERN LACROSSE COUNTY

Settlement

Wisconsin was a prime spot for settlement after the population increases in the east. It was heavily forested at the time of European expansion into the area. The natural resources were abundant and the climate was harsh. The land was occupied by American Indians before the disruption of the Europeans. The earliest Europeans into the area where French trappers. With the exception of a few military forts and a few other settlements, permanent settlement of Wisconsin first began in the lead region of the southwestern portion of the state around 1826.[22] The population moved in from the Mississippi River because the later commercial centers on the Great Lakes were not yet developed. The first influx of settlers generally occupied the southern counties of the state[23], mainly due to the lead mines that were located in the area. The Black Hawk War of 1832 opened the southeastern portion of the state for expansion and the demand for cheap land brought about a rapid expansion. Once the expansion began, it progressed rapidly. The state's population grew from only 11,000 in 1836 when the territory was formed to 776,000 in 1860.[24] A high proportion of this population was foreigner born immigrants and Americans of New England background.[25]

The major reason for the expansion was the land. Wisconsin had abundant cheap land that was available to the early settlers. Although land was also available in the West, many enthusiasts believed that no where was good farmland so abundant and so cheap.[26] There was also a major push by the sate to bring in settlers. Legislation by the state of Wisconsin in 1852-3 provided a commissioner of emigration with an office in New York and a travel agent to entice immigrants to come to the state. The first commissioner of immigration was Gysbert Van Steenwyk from La Crosse.[27] The job

[22] H.A. Tenney and David Atwood. *Fathers of Wisconsin.* (Madison: WI: David Atwood, publisher, 1985), p. 14.

[23] Wyatt, Barbara, ed. *Cultural Resources Management in Wisconsin- Volumes I-III, A Manual for Historic Properties.* (Madison: Historic Preservation Division, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986.)

[24]Robert C. Nesbit. *Wisconsin: A History.* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1973), 57.

[25] Robert C. Nesbit. *Wisconsin: A History.* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1973), 57.

[26] Richard N. Current. *The History of Wisconsin: Volume II The Civil War Era, 1848-1873.* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1976), 47.

[27] Robert C. Nesbit. *Wisconsin: A History.* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1973), 57.

of the travel agent was "to see that correct representations be made in eastern newspapers of our Wisconsin's great natural resources, advantages, and privileges, and brilliant prospects for the future..." They annually distributed about thirty thousand copies of pamphlets in German, Norwegian, and Dutch language version.[28]

Not only did this attract foreigners, but it also drew a large number of native New Yorkers and New Englanders. Land had become a scare commodity in the East as populations increased there. In 1860, almost half of the Wisconsin residents born in other states were from New York.[29]

Another prominent reason for the influx of foreigners was the opening of the Great Lakes due to the Erie Canal. Opened in 1825, it provided a water path to the interior of the United States. This began a common mode of transportation for those who came to Wisconsin. The city of Milwaukee grew tremendously due to the trend towards water travel. In 1840, Milwaukee had 1,712 residents but by 1860, the city had grown to 45,246.[30]

La Crosse County lies in the unglaciated area, or driftless area, of Wisconsin. The area is also referred to as the western uplands, referring to the highland region that is bordered on the west by the Mississippi River valley.[31] The topography is characterized by deep ravines of steep-walled valleys called coulees, carved out by glacial ice waters.[32] The land along the Mississippi was prairie land.

The initial attraction of La Crosse County was for fur trade. French and British fur traders had been in the area trading with Native Americans. Later, the forests north of La Crosse provided a base for the lumber industry. The convenience of transportation to the area helped in the settlement. The end of the Black Hawk War opened the area up for European expansion. The war took away much of the perceived threat Native Americans had presented in the area. La Crosse was easily accessible via the Mississippi River and that helped with early settlement in the county.[33]

In 1847, a year before Wisconsin gained statehood , a survey was done by Henry Bliss of La Crosse County.[34] The land in present day La Crosse County was put up for

[28] *Ibid.*, p.45-6

[29] *Ibid.*, p. 78

[30] Robert C. Nesbit. *Wisconsin: A History.* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1973), 150.

[31] Robert George Wingate. *Settlement Patterns in La Crosse County, Wisconsin 1850-1875.* 1975, 16.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 17

[33] Robert George Wingate. *Settlement Patterns in La Crosse County, Wisconsin 1850-1875.* 1975, .56.

[34] Robert George Wingate. *Settlement Patterns in La Crosse County, Wisconsin 1850-1875.* 1975 , 50.

sale and a land office was opened in Mineral Point for the auctioning of this new land. With land prices of $1.25 an acre, a settler could purchase eighty acres of land for $100.[35]

Initial settlement of La Crosse County took place between 1850 and 1875.[36] Although the Welsh were the initial settlers in the county, in the following years the Germans and Norwegians would settle in larger numbers. The Germans and Norwegians first purchased land in the county in 1850[37] and settled in large numbers both in 1853 and 1855.[38] Of these early settlers, the Germans settled in the Mormon Coulee and the Norwegians settled in the La Crosse Valley.

Much of the southern part of La Crosse County was settled later than the northern and western portions.[39] Travel was difficult to these areas and isolation was the norm. The townships of Shelby, Greenfield and Washington were some of the last townships in the county to be populated. No towns existed in the southern part of the county and only a few unincorporated villages exist. This is due to the area's close proximity to La Crosse and to the fact that most of the area was not on major travel routes. The townships in the southwestern part of the county were not connected to waterways that lead to Prairie La Crosse but instead, as in the example of Mormon creek, came out five or six miles south in the Mississippi slough. These townships were therefore off the main line of travel.

One of the first groups to actually settle in southern La Crosse County were the Mormons. In 1844, approximately twenty families from Nauvoo, Illinois came to La Crosse. They settled in area which is now referred to as Mormon Coulee and engaged in cutting cord wood. In the spring, they left mysteriously under the lighting of their burning cabins. They abandoned the La Crosse site and moved the colony to Texas.[40]

GERMANS

The Germans were one of the largest European groups that immigrated to Wisconsin. The 1850 census revealed that roughly 12% of the state's population were

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[35]Robert George Wingate. *Settlement Patterns in La Crosse County, Wisconsin 1850-1875.* 1975 p. 56

[36] Robert George Wingate. *Settlement Patterns in La Crosse County, Wisconsin 1850-1875.* 1975 p. 147

[37] Robert George Wingate. *Settlement Patterns in La Crosse County, Wisconsin 1850-1875.* 1975 p. 103

[38] Robert George Wingate. *Settlement Patterns in La Crosse County, Wisconsin 1850-1875.* 1975 p. 116

[39] Benjamin F. Bryant. *Memoirs of La Crosse County. p.* 50?

[40] Robert George Wingate. *Settlement Patterns in La Crosse County, Wisconsin 1850-1875.* 1975 p.49

Germans.[41]   They began to settle in La Crosse County in 1850. They purchased land in Mormon Coulee that was abandoned when the Mormons left.[42] The largest number German land purchases came in 1855, when Germans bought 255 forty acre parcels.[43] The majority of this land was on the limestone ridge in the southern part of the county, in Washington and Greenfield Township. Most of these settlers were Catholic Germans from southern Germany.[44] These Germans came from areas in Southern Germany, Austrio-Hungary and Switzerland that had similar limestone soils.[45] William Nicolai and Gregory Boschert were two early settlers in Greenfield Township.[46] William Nicolai came to the United States in 1849, moved to La Crosse County in 1852, and settled in Greenfield the following year. Gregory Boschert moved to Greenfield in 1855 after living in New York and Racine County, Wisconsin.

NORWEGIANS

The Norwegians were the major homesteaders in the county. They mostly settled in the sandstone valleys of the northern part of the county although two settlements are in the limestone regions in the southern part of the county.[47] One of these settlements of Norwegians is around the Bostwick Valley Lutheran Church in Bostwick Valley.   The other southern Norwegian settlement is in Washington Township and is an extension of the Coon Valley settlement in Vernon County. In Bangor, Greenfield, and Washington townships, the population of Norwegians increased from 1,347 in 1860 to 3,381 in 1870.[48] Also, of the 8,602 foreigner born settlers in 1870, 2,646 were Swedish or Norwegian native.[49]

[41] Wyatt, Barbara, ed. *Cultural Resources Management in Wisconsin- Volumes I-III, A Manual for Historic Properties.* (Madison: Historic Preservation Division, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986.)

[42] Wingate, Robert George. *Settlement Patterns in La Crosse County, Wisconsin 1850-1875.* 1975 pg. 103

[43] Wingate, Robert George. *Settlement Patterns in La Crosse County, Wisconsin 1850-1875.* 1975 pg. 116

[44] Wingate, Robert George. *Settlement Patterns in La Crosse County, Wisconsin 1850-1875.* 1975 pg. 116

[45] Wingate, Robert George. *Settlement Patterns in La Crosse County, Wisconsin 1850-1875.* 1975 p. 120

[46] Bryant, Benjamin F. *Memoirs of La Crosse County.* *p.* 222

[47] Wingate, Robert George. *Settlement Patterns in La Crosse County, Wisconsin 1850-1875.* 1975 p.134

[48] Fapso, William J. *Norwegians in Wisconsin*

[49] *History of La Crosse County* p.259

WELSH

The Welsh settled predominately in the town of Bangor and vicinity and in the Fish Creek Valley to the east of Bangor.[50] Some came from the East and others came directly to La Crosse County from Wales. The Town of Bangor was named after Bangor, Wales, where many of the Welsh had originated.[51] The census of 1870 reveals that of the 471 foreigners in Bangor Township, 151 were from Wales.[52]

Welsh Congregation Cemetery (190/02), Bangor Township

SWISS

The Swiss were one of the first ethnic groups to settle in La Crosse County. In 1851, a group of five Swiss led by John Bosshard were the first settlers of Bangor.[53] Some of them settled in the Dutch Creek valley and the others settled in the La Crosse River valley. Between 1853 to 1860, several groups of Swiss settlers came to the southern part of La Crosse County.[54] The reports written by Henry Brosshard, a school teacher from near Zurich who came to the United States and wrote about life

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[50] State Historical Society of Wisconsin. *Wisconsin Domesday Book: Town Studies, Vol. I.* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1924), 25.

[51] State Historical Society of Wisconsin. *Wisconsin Domesday Book: Town Studies, Vol. I.* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1924), 25.

[52] *Ibid.,* p. 25

[53] State Historical Society of Wisconsin. *Wisconsin Domesday Book: Town Studies, Vol. I.* (Madison, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1924), 23.

[54] George Zielke. "The Swiss Settlers of Mormon Coulee," *The La Crosse County Historical Sketches, Series 1.* (LaCrosse, WI: Liesenfeld Press., 1931), 21.

here, were probably influential in bringing Swiss to the county. Brosshard stated the county had low priced land, virgin woods, rich soil, and an excellent supply of water. The Swiss settled in an area called Mormon Coulee, about five miles south of the village of La Crosse. Some of the earliest families were the Hoffmans, Hinderlings, Schweizers, and Sprengers. Although the date of their exact arrival date is uncertain, they all located in the Town of Shelby between 1853 and 1854. The largest influx of Swiss into the area was a group from Brienz, Canton Bern, in 1856. These people were sheep-herders and the economy in Canton Bern at the time was not good. When they arrived they bought land from non-resident owners, probably land speculators. Later Swiss settled farther up Mormon Coulee, in Greenfield Township. Matt Blumer, a Swiss settler who took part in the California gold rush, settled in the area in the 1850s and built Blumer's Mill on Mormon Coulee Creek in 1871.[55]

BOHEMIANS

Although the first settler came between 1854 and 1855, the Bohemians were one of the last groups to settle in the county. Many of them came from the vicinity of Plzen. They settled in an area known as Bohemian Ridge and Bohemian Valley in the southeast corner of the county.[56] A number of factors influenced their moving to this area. First, the limestone soil in the area was similar to the soils of Bohemia. Also, the Bohemian Ridge had a large German population and the Bohemians were accustom to living near Germans since Bohemia was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Finally, they were Catholic and attended the St. Peters Church at Middle Ridge.[57]

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[55] George Zielke. "The Swiss Settlers of Mormon Coulee," *The La Crosse County Historical Sketches, Series 1.* (LaCrosse, WI: Liesenfeld Press., 1931), 21.

[56] Robert George Wingate. *Settlement Patterns in La Crosse County, Wisconsin 1850-1875.* 1975 pg. 72

[57] Robert George Wingate. *Settlement Patterns in La Crosse County, Wisconsin 1850-1875.* 1975 pg. 124

The attention of early settlers was confined to getting food, shelter, and clothing. Therefore, the first pioneers of a country were farmers, fishermen, miners, and trappers, because it is the easiest to make a living from these raw materials, and provide for themselves, and their families. In the early history of Wisconsin this is true[58]. The soils of La Crosse County were rich enough to support cultivation and planting, and many early settlers took advantage of this. This report will focus on the agricultural history of La Crosse County, and will include such topics as crops, crop usage, terrain, and livestock.

Terrain

La Crosse County is located in an area called the "driftless" region. The "driftless" region is an area in west-central Wisconsin that was untouched by the glaciers. It is characterized by steep bluffs, and narrow valleys, known in the area as "coulees". In the high regions, where the surface rock is limestone, the soil is invariably good. Some low areas, however, where limestone has been eroded away, underlying sandstone is the surface rock, which is sandy and unproductive[59]. This is not always the case, though, as some places are filled with alluvial matter which was deposited by streams. This being the case, there are many high elevation fields. Large "bluff-top" fields are not rare. In the low areas, fields are long and narrow, as this is the layout of the terrain from which the fields were cut.

Crops

The same natural conditions that make Wisconsin an agricultural state, determined that its main interest was grain growing in the early years. Wheat is the number one crop of all in La Crosse County.[60] It was easy to plant, and took little or no work to cultivate, and manage. Wheat is very strong, and can withstand colder temperatures, and a shorter growing season as is the case in Wisconsin. Wisconsin was ranked ninth

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[58] W.W Daniels, M.S. Prof. of Chemistry and Agriculture At the University of Wisconsin, Early account of the origins of agriculture. pg. 151.

[59] Lawrence Martin, author of Physical Geography of Wisconsin.

[60]Barbara Wyatt, From Cultural Resources Management in Wisconsin-Volumes I-III, A Manual for Historic Properties.

in wheat production in 1850.[61] In 1860, this rank was raised to third[62], only Illinois and Indiana raising more.

Wheat was the first early cash crop of Wisconsin, but there were disadvantages to wheat. It left the land with barely any of nutrients it needed to continue production, and people in early agriculture did not realize that wheat would deplete the soil of nutrients, or have the land capital for crop rotation. No attention was paid to soil fertility. The only aim was to secure the largest crop for the smallest outlay of capital. This lead to experimentation with other crops, and ultimately crop diversification.

Corn was raised to a large extent, but this area, along with the rest of Wisconsin has never ranked high in corn production.[63] Corn was normally grown in the southwestern part of the state, and mainly followed the population route. However, corn became very important with the age of the dairy industry, and the introduction of the silo in 1880. Corn was the chief silage material and as dairy farming grew corn acreage was expanded for silage purposes. The use of corn silage made it possible to grow the crop farther north and thus the acreage in the northern dairy counties grew. Another development which has tended to extend corn acreage in La Crosse County had been the introduction of hybrids and earlier maturing varieties of seed.[64]

Next to wheat, more bushels of oats were raised than any other cereal. In 1860, Wisconsin was fifth in rank among oat growing states, and sixth in 1870[65]. This ranking had changed since the induction of the states in the "bread basket" area. In 1947 Wisconsin was ranked third with nearly 3 million acres of oats annually harvested.[66]

Tobacco was introduced to this state in 1860, and has greatly increased since then. Northern tobacco is inferior to southern leaf, and is rarely used for smoking or chewing. cigar wrapping tobacco does very well in this climate[67]. In 1945 tobacco was only grown on slightly more than 20,000 acres in the state.[68]

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[61] W.W. Daniels, pg. 152.

[62] W.W. Daniels, pg. 152

[63] W.W. Daniels, pg. 155

[64] W. H. Ebling, pg. 26

[65] W.W. Daniels, pg. 156

[66] W.H. Ebling, pg. 26

[67] W.W. Daniels, pg. 156, Although some of the tobacco is used for smoking, and chewing, it is never used alone, always in a blend.

[68] W.H. Ebling, pg. 29

Crop Usage

All of the above crops were first grown as cash crops, until the introduction of dairy farming in the mid nineteenth century. After dairy farming's introduction, cash crops fell in popularity to milking cows because of the demand for dairy products. Crops were used for feed, and the excess was sold for cash. Wheat, oats, and corn were the main cereal crops cultivated.

Livestock

Dairy Cattle: Before market specialization, most Wisconsin cattle were not bred for dairy or beef specialization. The poor markets for either milk or beef did not convince too many farmers to specialize their cattle to one of these choices. Therefore the cattle were known as "dual-purpose"[69]. This nondescript breeding led to inferior animals however, and the demand for higher quality beef and dairy products around 1870 made farmers take notice.

The earliest attempts to specialize came from Wisconsin's pioneer dairy farmers. In 1870, William Dempster Hoard of Fort Atkinson initiated a long and successful campaign in *Hoards Dairyman* to encourage the development of purebred milking cows[70]. The earliest breeds introduced were Jerseys and Ayrshires. Jerseys were the dominant breed in the state, and were known to be in La Crosse County before 1870. The first Holstein bull was registered in Janesville in 1873, and Holsteins soon became the dominant dairy breed in Wisconsin[71]. Holsteins were excellent milkers, and constituted one half of the state's dairy herd by World War I[72]. Guernseys were introduced in 1881, and became second only to Holsteins in popularity. Guernseys were a major dairy breed throughout Wisconsin's dairy history with especially high concentrations in northern and western counties.

The rise of milking breeds in the 1880s fueled the transition to single purpose dairy herds. With this change in the state, improvements were made to specialize the breeds. Cow census', butterfat tests, and inoculation made huge improvements on the area's dairy herd. Breeding associations sprouted up in every county, and the Holstein-

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[69] Barbara Wyatt, pg. 8-4

[70] Barbara Wyatt, pg. 8-4

[71] Barbara Wyatt, pg. 8-4

[72] Eric Lampard, author of The Rise of the Dairy Industry of Wisconsin.

Friesian Association of Wisconsin (1897) adopted advanced register programs to certify purebred stock[73].

No other single farm animal has had the impact on Wisconsin farming as did the dairy cow.

Farmstead (188/28), Greenfield Township

Beef Cattle: Pioneer cattle were always prized for their meat just as much for their milk[74]. However, steep prices of stock and feed prohibited beef farming from being a major industry in Wisconsin early on. When grain cultivation surged after 1860, farmers had the main element for raising beef cattle. Herefords, Angus, and Shorthorns became the best beef breeds, and produced little milk other than that needed for their offspring.

There were three methods of raising beef cattle at the time, breeding cattle for fattening and sale to slaughterhouses, breeding without fattening and sell yearlings or two year old cattle to other farmers for fattening, and buying yearlings, known as feeders for fattening and slaughter[75]. After fattening, the farmer had many choices for what he could do with his animals. He could sell to independent cattle buyers, he could sell through a co-operative, he could sell at local buying auctions, he could sell at the large terminal markets at Milwaukee, Chicago, or St. Paul, or he could sell directly

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[73] Barbara Wyatt, pg 8-5

[74] Barbara Wyatt, pg 8-6

[75] Barbara Wyatt, pg 8-7

to packing plant companies[76]. The cattle had to be transported to any and all of these locations, and because of this hundreds of livestock shipping cooperatives were formed by Wisconsin farmers. Beef has never been as big as dairy, with the ratio of beef to dairy animals being forty to sixty. However it was the second major form of livestock production.

Hogs: Hogs have never been a large part of the economy of La Crosse county. However they were a part of farm life, and deserve a mention. Hogs were interesting to farmers because they matured quickly, and were basically able to feed themselves. They had to be penned, because of their desire to roam, and root about. The reason that hogs never became popular in this county is because of the grain that mostly grown here. Hogs are not partial to wheat, or oats, and are served better in the grain belt counties of southern Wisconsin, where corn, peas, and barley are grown to a larger extent. Hog farming was popular early on, but after 1900 declined drastically because of the rise in interest to dairy farming[77].

Farm Layouts: Farm layouts in La Crosse County are typical of that in any county which is high in dairy production. The farm is characterized by the farm house, which on the older farms is often a two story cube in this area. The barn is the most prominent out building. It is normally a huge structure, in which there is a central concrete floor with long aisles of stantions and gutters from which the cow is positioned when milked. Wide doors, aisles, and other entrances are made especially for the tall, wide frame of the dairy cow itself. Above the milking platform is the hay loft, where hay can be dropped down a shoot as it is needed to give to the cows while they are being milked. It is also thrown down into feeder wagons from a large front opening on the front of the second floor for feeding in the barn yard. A large amount of hay is stored in this loft, and is usually enough to keep most of the herd fed throughout part of the winter. Attached to the barn, is the milk house. This is where the bulk tank (milk cans before refrigeration) is kept. Along with the milk, the pumps, hoses, and milk are kept in the milk house. It is the most sanitary place in the barn. Corn cribs, granaries, silos, sheds for the farm machinery, and pens for other livestock found on the farm will also be there, but almost every one of them is of different style and form. The only building that should be mentioned is the tobacco shed. The tobacco shed is end gabled, and has a peaked roof. It has slats on the side with hinges for opening up. The interior of the shed is composed of horiziontal poles for hanging the bundles of tobacco This is so the tobacco can dry. It is a distinct feature of some farms in La Crosse County. There is no really distinct feature of a Wisconsin farm

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[76] Barbara Wyatt, pg 8-7

[77] W.W. Daniels, pg 158, This may sound confusing, as hog raising has never been huge, but this is what Mr. Daniels quoted in his research paper.

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except that the house is usually in front of the rest of the buildings, and most noticeable as you drive into the farm area[78].

Size of Farms in LaCrosse County

The size of farms on LaCrosse County probably fluctuated somewhat as more land was cleared for agricultural purposes and as smaller farms consolidated into larger farms. Therefore, the number of farms rose, as well as the total acreage in farmland, between 1870 and 1945.

Year	Number of Farms in County	Acreage of land in Farms
1870	1,394	189,161
1890	1,642	253,515
1910	1,811	276,861
1930	1,733	273,294
1945	1,640	261,528

As indicated above, there were 1,640 farms in LaCrosse County in 1945. The average size of these LaCrosse County farms in that year was 159.4 acres.

Value of Farms in LaCrosse County

19Year	Value (in $) of farm land and buildings	Regional Average[79]
1870	$3,537,085	$2,229,381
1890	$4,668,618	$4,428,701
1910	$11,273,956	$14,198,976
1930	17,994,318	$22,544,788
1945	14,852,880	$16,073,651

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[78] Most of this data is from the authors notes. He worked on many farms during his child hood, and this is essentially the average layout of all of them.

[79] Regional counties included ten in the western portion of the state, including Buffalo, Dunn, Eau Claire, Jackson, LaCrosse, Monroe, Pepin, St. Croix and Trempealeau counties. Ebling, et.al. *A Century of Wisconsin Agriculture, 1848 - 1948* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, 1948), 88.

The average per farm value in LaCrosse County in 1945 was $9,057, considerably higher than the ten county regional average of $6,760. The average per acre value in LaCrosse County in 1945 was $56.79, again, somewhat higher than the ten county regional average per acre of $43.37. However, it should be noted that in 1945, farm tenancy in LaCrosse County was 31.3%, while the ten county regional average was only 23.6%. Therefore, it may be summarized that even though, and perhaps because, land and building values were high in LaCrosse County in 1945, that farm tenancy was more common. LaCrosse County was presumably a desirable location to live, and young farmers may have been more willing to rent or lease their land in order to live in that vicinity.

Buildings

The primary buildings on a farmstead site in LaCrosse County would generally include a house, barn, and other ancillary outbuildings such as chicken coop, hog house, granary, storage shed, machine shed, silo, and tobacco barns. The house generally would have a stone foundation if constructed pre-1900, and often have a concrete foundation with a full basement after 1900. Early LaCrosse County houses were constructed of hewn log, and balloon frame clapboard, however several examples of local, red brick houses still remain in the county.

The barns which date pre 1900 generally had a stone foundation, but post 1900 barns, particularly if used for dairy production, generally had a concrete foundation with troughs for manure and manure removal equipment. The barns were hewn log construction, with earlier (pre 1900) versions exhibiting gabled roofs, while the 1900 - 1940 barns often had gambrel roofs. After 1940, many barns were constructed with gothic arched roofs. Hay and straw was generally stored in the loft.

Barn (188/23), Greenfield Township

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Silos were not widely used in Wisconsin prior to 1880, and the earliest versions were vertical board held together with bands of metal, much like a barrel, with a roof cap. Closer to the twentieth century, as dairy production became more important in western Wisconsin, new silo materials were used, including concrete stave, hollow clay tile, and poured concrete. Later, mid-20th century silos were usually constructed of concrete block and steel.

Smaller outbuildings, including chicken coops, hog houses, animal barns and other similar buildings were usually of frame construction with no foundations or floors. Granaries were often built of wood frame as well, but usually were constructed off the ground, with a wood foundation, and wood floor, to protect the stored grain from ground moisture.

Amenities

Location (1945)	Electricity %	Running Water %	Radio %	Telephone %
LaCrosse County	76.9%	54.6%	89.1%	64.1%
Region Average	63.9%	39.4%	86.4%	56.3%
State Average	70.0%	31.0%	88.0%	48.1%

Ebling et.al. 86.

Statistics are not available, other than in 1945, indicating the percentage of amenities such as electricity, running water, radio and telephone, however, the above statistics allow the researcher to surmise that LaCrosse County was a more prosperous county than many areas of Wisconsin. LaCrosse County consistently exhibits a higher percentage of amenities not only regionally, but within the state average. Coupled with the concept that farm land and buildings in the county were also higher than in many places, it may be expected that better quality material culture could be found at many LaCrosse County historic archaeological sites.

Crops

Crops	1870	1890	1910	1930	1945
Corn (bushels)	5,816	19,558	19,810	25,399	33,103
Oats (bushels)	7,610	24,040	28,504	22,591	20,818
Barley (bushels)	902	2,414	11,329	3,614	383

Rye (bushels)	1,602	5,419	5,944	3,260	988
Wheat (bushels)	46,150	11,194	1,994	964	302
Potatoes (bushels)	574	1,947	1,790	1,092	754
Tobacco (tons)	–	3	92	462	334
Hay (tons)	10,477	28,900	30,465	35,100	38,277

Crops which were grown in LaCrosse County's fertile soils shifted considerably in the past 125 years. In 1870, it was apparent that hay, wheat and oats were important crops. However, by 1890, wheat was already becoming unpopular. As wheat production diminished, hay continued to grow, as well as oats. By the time the early twentieth century set in, corn became increasingly dominant. This was undoubtedly in part due to the new hybrid varieties of corn which could withstand the shorter growing seasons of LaCrosse County, compared to the cornbelt regions to the south, including Iowa, Illinois and Indiana. Barley became briefly popular by 1910, however lost its acceptance just as quickly as it came in. By 1945, the highest crop production was coming from hay and corn, two crops very popular for feeding livestock.

Religion

The development of religion in southern La Crosse County is a result of the immigration patterns of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Those who settled in the county brought with them a rich religious tradition. Nearly every major denomination was represented in the county by the late 1800s by French, German, Norwegian, British, Irish, and other Scandinavian immigrants.

The first recorded religious meeting held in La Crosse was in July 1851, led by a Methodist minister George Chester. In 1854, Rev. Spencer Carr organized eight hundred residents, based on their past religious background, into fifteen denominations. Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans, Catholics, Presbyterians, and Universalists were most widely represented. This was the beginning of the development of religion in La Crosse.[80]

Church of Latter Day Saints

The first evidence of religion in La Crosse County was The Church of Latter Day Saints. Led by George Miller, and Lyman Wight a group of 160 men, women, and children settled in what is presently the Mormon Coulee area in September of 1843. Opposition against Mormon theology prompted bitter feelings from other residents. In 1845, Wight abruptly organize the group to leave for Texas, thus ending their brief stay in La Crosse.[81] There are no extant buildings associated with the Church of Latter Day Saints from the historic period of LaCrosse.

Catholic

On May 29, 1853 the first Catholic service was held in La Crosse County. Father Tappert conducted Mass in farm homes until 1866. The creation of the La Crosse diocese in 1868 brought organization to the Catholic churches in the county.[82] The growth of St. Joseph's Ridge in the town of Greenfield and St. Peter's Ridge in the town of Washington at the same time as the Catholic churches in the city of La Crosse show the impact of this denomination on the history of the county.

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[80] Benjamin F. Bryant, ed, *Memoirs of La Crosse County* (Madison: Western Historical Association, 1907), 135-136.

[81] Ibid, 135-136.

[82] Ibid, 142-143.

On the eastern end of the county, the parish of St. Joseph's Ridge built its first church (not extant) in 1866. The forty acre property was a government grant, as thirty two acres would later be sold to the Franciscan Sisters to build their villa. The remaining acres are the location of St. Joseph's cemetery (189/6). In 1869, a second church (not extant) of brick veneer replaced the first. The location of both of these buildings was on the north side of U.S. Highway 33. A schoolhouse was added in 1872 for the cost of $4,500. The following year a $2,500 parsonage was built. The third and present church (188/31) of brick Gothic is located on the south side of the highway and was dedicated in 1901.[83] The parish has consistently had one hundred families as members.[84]

Villa St. Joseph (189/15), Greenfield Township

In 1874, a two story building serving as school and convent was built in connection with St. Joseph's Ridge church. In 1895, two hundred acres of land was purchased for $5000. An additional forty acres was bought two years later in which to build a convent. In 1898 a three story $6400 convent was built. This building still stands and is part of the Villa St. Joseph (189/15). The land was used to grow crops and keep livestock, such as cattle and chickens. An orchard, berry shrubs, and grapevines were planted in the late 1800s. The sisters participated in milking, hoeing and husking corn, planting and digging potatoes, tending the gardens, caring for the animals, and harvesting grapes.[85]

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[83] Fr. Gerald Schuh, "This Is Your Parish, St. Joseph's Ridge: St. Joseph's Parish." *La Crosse Register*. (December 10, 1954), 8.

[84] Robert George Wingate, *Settlement Patterns of La Crosse County, Wisconsin 1850-1875* (University of Minnesota, 1975), 118.

[85] Sister Norene Bollch, The Villa St. Joseph Story (La Crosse: Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, 1995), 1-6.

The first addition to the convent was a new chapel and apartments that would be made out of the same stone as the original building. The $12,000 addition provided needed living space and steam heating in 1910. In 1938, the need for another addition was evident. The plan was to build a structure on the west side of the convent that would include a kitchen, a sisters' dining room, men's dining room, a root cellar, a community room, and a library all on the first floor. Thirty eight rooms and bathrooms were part of the third and forth floors. A new chapel was also part of the addition in which one hundred people could be seated. The Georgian style of architecture is evident in the interior as well as the facade. A statue of St. Joseph, which was donated by the work crew, stand on the facade of the chapel. The official dedication of the building took place on June 13, 1940. Considerations for a West Wing addition began in 1955, but it was not until 1962 that work started on the new building. The addition was designed to be a house facility. Construction was slowed by unexpected costs, but on December 12, 1963 the first patient slept in the new addition.[86]

A grotto (189/31) was erected on the grounds of the Villa after Sister Adriana Enz passed away. The sister's family provided the funding to build such a structure. Father Doberstein designed and Frank Donskey built a stone cave made out of lava rock that was completed in 1930. The grotto is decorated with stalactites, stalagmites, calcite, chalcedony, rose quartz, and amethysts interspersed on the structure. Above the entrance to the cave stands statues of the Holy Family and a cross.[87]

Grotto, Villa St. Joseph (189/15), Greenfield Township

In 1869, a mission in connection to St. Joseph's on the Ridge was established in the town of Washington. The first church (not extant), which would be known as St.

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[86] Ibid, 7-16, 25-33.

[87] Ibid, 19-20.

Peter's on the Ridge, was built in 1870. In 1899, St. Peter's received its first resident pastor and became an independent parish. The first resident pastor, Father John Rech, built a parsonage (not extant) in the same year. A new and present parsonage (197/10) of brick veneer was completed in 1917. For the 50th anniversary, the parish decided to build a new church. In 1921, the building (197/10) was completed and stands in the same location as the old church. A new roof, porch, garage, and heating system were added in 1951.[88] This parish throughout its history has had about ninety families as members.[89]

Church of Christ

The German Lutheran and German Reformed groups were together until 1864 when they separated into two denominations. The German Reformed Church known as St. John's Reformed United Church of Christ was built that same year. Rev. Kurzman was the first pastor of the Swiss church.[90] Trinity was built as a country church (historic church not extant), and it was a sister congregation to St. John's. It served the reformed community in the Mormon Coulee area.[91]

Cemeteries

There are seventeen cemeteries in southern La Crosse County. Some of these are part of a church, and the others are community cemeteries. North Ridge and Urbanek are community cemeteries in the town of Washington. North Ridge is a predominantly late 1800s cemetery, while only two families are buried in Urbanek with the earliest date of 1905. The village of Middle Ridge has a cemetery that is connected with St. Peter's Catholic Church (197/10). It is a large cemetery with the earliest stone from 1857. The five community cemeteries and their earliest date from the town of Shelby are: Chipmunk Coulee 1861, Old Settler's Mormon Coulee 1856, Gabel-Jacobs most between 1880-1930, Mormon Coulee thirteen families from the late 1800s, and Oehler Family (187/03) with ten families from the 1890s-1950s. Trinity United Church of Christ has a large one in Shelby beginning in the 1890s. The town of Greenfield has a large cemetery next to St. Joseph's Catholic Church (189/06) which originated in 1860. Fish Creek has five families from the late 1800s, and Welsh

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[88] Fr. Aloya Zinthefer, "This Is Your Parish, Middle Ridge: St. Peter's", *La Crosse Register* (January 5, 1956), 8.

[89] Robert George Wingate, Settlement Patterns of La Crosse County, Wisconsin 1850-1975, 118.

[90] A. H. Sanford, ed, *La Crosse County Historical Sketches* (Liesenfeld Press, 1931), 22-23.

[91] *Our First 125 Years: St. John's Reformed United Church of Christ* (La Crosse: CBS Graphics, 1989), 4-10.

community whose last stone is from 1916 and almost all the rest are from the 1800s. Both of these cemeteries are located in the town of Bangor. St. Mary's Catholic Church also has a cemetery in Bangor which began in the 1890s. Barre, Old St. John's, and St. John's Evangelical Lutheran cemeteries are in the town of Barre. Both St. John's cemeteries are very large and began in the mid 1800s.

Cemetery (196-20), Shelby Township

Education

The first community-based educational effort in the state probably occurred in 1817 when nine citizens of Green Bay contracted with Thomas S. Jackson to teach twenty-four local children the "three R's" for a period of nine months.[92] At that time, present-day Wisconsin was part of the Michigan territory, and subject to the acts of the Michigan territorial legislature. In 1833, one such act gave "responsibility for local education to town officials and authorized school districts to use property taxes and other forms of funding to support education and build schools"[93]. In 1836, when Wisconsin was granted its own territorial status, Michigan law was carried over, but because the laws governing education were vaguely worded, and the Wisconsin territory sparsely populated (approximately twelve-thousand at the time), few gains were made in public education.

A mere fifteen years later, there were more than three-hundred-thousand people living within Wisconsin's boundaries. Still, because of the relative sparseness of the population, little progress was made in education. Prior to the Civil War, the quality of Wisconsin's primary schools was generally poor[94]. Patrick Donnelley, a school principal, described an early pioneer schoolhouse in Milwaukee as follows:

"The first schools were essentially primitive. The first teachers were persons who had come West with the tide of emigration, intending to build up their fortunes. The pay of teachers in those days was barely sufficient to purchase the necessaries of life. The schools were maintained by local self-imposed taxation or assessments. A crude log hut thirty feet long by twenty feet wide, with a door in one end, four small windows, two on each side, was the school house of the early days. There was a wooden floor, long benches placed along the side of the walls for smaller children, and two or three small tables with benches for the more advanced pupils. The schoolmaster had a chair, a small pine table, a ruler, a penknife, a few old books, a small bottle of ink, and a quill pen.

Reading, writing, and arithmetic constituted the sum total of the course of study, except in rare instances, when an old map could be found and used for giving some desultory instruction in geography. That the children were taught to read, write, cipher, and spell, under such discouraging circumstances, was alike

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[92] Lloyd Jorgenson, *The Founding of Public Education in Wisconsin* (Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1956), 7-8.

[93] Ibid.

[94] Ibid., 17.

creditable to the schoolmaster's proficiency and to the pupil's scholarly earnestness"[95].

Many religious and ethnic groups formed their own private or parochial schools, which generally fared better financially than their public counterparts, because of the strong religious commitment of their members. Once Wisconsin achieved statehood however, its "government recognized the fact that education was essential to the well-being and progress of the state"[96], and financial, as well as organizational aid was provided.

With financial support through public taxation, and organizational support through state laws, the educational system could now move its focus from merely teaching simple reading, writing, and arithmetic, to providing young men and women with a secondary education. Michael Frank, a Kenosha newspaperman... instigated the first movement for a free public high school system in Wisconsin[97]. Supported by other local educational leaders, Frank's proposal was put to a vote at a special school meeting, and won by a large margin. On July 31, 1849, Kenosha, Wisconsin opened the state's first free public high school[98].

As new waves of settlers and their children pushed westward through the state, the schools followed. The first school in the City of La Crosse was taught during the winter of 1851-1852[99]. In 1852, the official count of children enrolled in public schools was 109[100]. By 1861, a system of county superintendents had been inaugurated for the entire state[101]. Their duties included annual visits to their respective districts, examination of teachers, and general supervision of the schools throughout the year. By 1881, there were about four-hundred primary and secondary schools in Wisconsin[102]. In La Crosse County, the official count of school aged children had grown to 4,601, with 3,042 in actual attendance[103]. The reason for the discrepancy is

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[95] Conrad Patzer, *Public Education in Wisconsin* (Madison, 1924), 6.

[96] Ibid., cit:vii.

[97] Ibid., 81

[98] Ibid.

[99] *History of La Crosse County* (Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1881), 514.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Ibid., 420.

[102] Ibid., 146.

[103] Ibid., 421.

unclear, but it could be due to the need for children to stay at home and help out on the family farm, rather than to attend classes.

Country schools in La Crosse county were formed and grew with the increasing population. Even before schools in the relatively larger community of La Crosse opened their doors, the neighboring Village of Barre, settled in 1850, is reported to have established "common-schools". By 1881, Barre had four schoolhouses, and employed five teachers[104]. The Town of Farmington built its first school in the spring of 1851[105]. The Town of Hamilton's first school term was for the period of three months, during the fall of 1852[106]. The first school in the Town of Bangor was taught in 1853-1854, and had about twenty-five students. By 1881, it was reported to have seven schoolhouses and nine teachers[107]. The first school in the town of Burns was taught in a log cabin in Section 19 of that township, in 1853. At that time, there were seventeen students in attendance. By 1881, the town boasted nine schoolhouses[108].

Fish Creek School (189/30), Bangor Township

The Town of La Crosse reportedly opened its first public school in 1853[109]. The Village of West Salem was officially settled in 1864, and in the fall that year, school was in session[110]. The first school in the township of Holland was built in 1857 on an acre

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[104] Ibid., 709-710.

[105] Ibid., 684.

[106] Ibid., 692.

[107] Ibid., 721.

[108] Ibid., 713.

[109] R. J. Polk & Co., *La Crosse City Directory* (Richmond, R. J. Polk & Co., 1995), 15.

[110] *History of La Crosse County* (Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1881), 696.

of donated land. The first session was taught in the summer of 1857[111]. Because of rapid growth in the area at the time, documentation of the first school in the Town of Onalaska has been difficult, but it is clear that the town had a new schoolhouse built in 1870 to replace the one that burned the year earlier[112]. As of August 31, 1880, the Town of Greenfield had four schoolhouses and four teachers[113].

As the population of the United States continued its growth and westward flow, the trends of educational growth followed. Currently, the School District of La Crosse—which serves the City of La Crosse as well as portions of nine adjacent towns—has an enrollment of more than six-thousand students in nine elementary schools, three middle schools, and two senior high schools[114].

During the first part of the twentieth century, this massive growth pattern rendered the country schoolhouse impractical, and in most communities, obsolete. Larger and more modern facilities were needed. As governmental support of public education increased, funds became available for building of more modern facilities. As a result, many of the original one-room schoolhouses have been razed; while others have been remodeled for use as private residences. It is our hope that those which remain may be documented here, and preserved in some fashion, for generations to come.

See the Intensive Survey chapter of this report for more detailed reports on individual extant school buildings within the project area.

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[111] Ibid., 706.

[112] Ibid., 716.

[113] Ibid., 727.

[114] R. J. Polk & Co., *La Crosse City Directory* (Richmond, R. J. Polk & Co., 1995), 15.

Industry

Prior to the 1850s, there were relatively few settlers in the western part of the territory we now know as the state of Wisconsin. The needs of these settlers were comparatively simple, and most of them, being engaged in some form of husbandry, harvested the necessities of daily life off the land. As the promise of a better life in the new world brought more immigrants to the area, the population grew. Its needs grew as well. By the time Wisconsin had become a state in 1848, the seeds of industry had already begun to sprout in La Crosse and in the surrounding areas.

More and larger buildings were required in which to house, educate, and serve the political and religious needs of the citizens of this new state. Such structures require sawn lumber, nails, roofing materials and foundational stone. Graveled and paved roads were needed in order to more expediently transport people and materials from one place to another. As the settlers moved into the area, they brought with them their animals. Horses, oxen, cattle, all of which required care, and therefore additional material goods. Horseshoes were needed, as were harnesses, wagons, and farming tools. Greater amounts of grain were needed to feed the ever-growing population. Each individual need brought with it the potential for industry.

In the mid-1800s, the mining industry arose because of a need for raw minerals such as copper, iron and lead, which were used for making nails, bullets, cooking pots, farming tools, and countless other items necessary to the everyday life of that period. Quarries became important sources for limestone, sandstone, and gravel, important in building and road construction. Grist, flour, and saw mills were essential for providing some of the basic elements to the pioneer household. The most noticeable growth took place in the larger towns—some of which will be mentioned here—but rural industries prospered as well. It is these rural industries, especially those in the southeastern portion of La Crosse County, which will be the main focus of this chapter.

Lumber

The south-central area of the state was rich in natural resources, including timber, and lumber camps were a common site near the banks of the larger rivers in Wisconsin. The timber would be cut by hand, then hauled by mule, oxen, or horse team to the water's edge. The logs would then follow the current downstream to the saw mills in La Crosse. La Crosse's location on the Mississippi River, with its connecting tributaries, insured the growth of many highly successful sawmills.

Although timber was used on a large scale in the larger cities and towns, its use was much more limited in the rural areas. When lumber was needed in the less populated

areas to the south or east of La Crosse, it was usually shipped there from the larger mills of the city.

Flour and Grist Mills

Mills were a necessity of life for most people in southern La Crosse County at the end of the 1800s. Most settlers made their living by farming, and grains were a popular crop. Once mature and harvested, the grain needed to be taken to a mill and ground into flour and grist for use in the home. Most communities, regardless of their size, had at least one mill to perform this service.

The first mill (not extant) in the town of Barre, in southern La Crosse county, was built in 1858 by a Mr. Harker from New York. This was located on Section 29, on Bostwick Valley Creek[115]. Mr. Harker was succeeded in running the mill by Brown & Van Ness, John Craig, Valentine Weirner, and William Ruks. As of 1881, Ruks ran the mill, which reportedly produced a very fine grade of flour. As of 1885, the town had a second mill (not extant) which was operated by Mr. O. S. Barlow[116].

The Town of Sigel, on the banks of Mormon Creek in Section 29 of Greenfield Township, had three flour mills by 1885. They were operated by Mr. M. Blomer, S. & M. Mac Kown, and Frederick Oehler. The first frame building known to have been built in Washington Township, was also the first retail business firm (not extant) in that towhship; the John Vanes and John A. Young water-powered grist mill, which opened in 1862. It was located in Section 22 (not extant, except as an archaeological site), on the bank of Coon Creek.[117] By 1864, the Vanes & Young Mill, as it was called, was taken over by Peter Blomer, who then sold it to a Mr. Nidividek in 1865. The Nidiveks relocated the mill to their land in Section 27, one mile south of the site of the first mill[118].

Newburgs Corners in Washington Township also had a water-power flouring mill (not extant), as did the Town of Bohemia, in the same township. Bohemia's mill was located along Coon Creek, in Section 27[119]. Neither Sigel nor Bohemia can be found on today's maps of the area.

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[115] *History of La Crosse County* (Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1881), 710.

[116] *Wisconsin State Gazetteer and Business Directory Volume IV* (St. Paul: R. L. Polk & Co., and

A. C. Danser, 1884-5), 129.

[117] Paul Anthony Hundt, *The Economic and Political History of the Township of Washington, La Crosse County, Wisconsin, 1853* (Winona, Paul Anthony Hundt, 1964), 68.

[118] Ibid., 71.

[119] Snyder, Van Vechten & Co., *Historical Atlas of Wisconsin, 1878* (Milwaukee: Snyder, Van Vechten & Co., 1878), 583 & 155.

Wagon and Blacksmith Shops

In 1864, Charles Miller opened a wagon shop (not extant) in Section 16, Township of Barre, and continued the wagon manufacturing and repairing business two years, when S. Tierney rented it until 1876. The business changed hands through the years, but was still running as of 1881, when it was owned by Henry Huxshal, who employed three blacksmiths and two wagon makers[120]. In 1885, William Filter is listed as a blacksmith in the same town[121].

The Town of Sigel in Greenfield Township had two blacksmiths; William John and John Markle[122]. Newburgs Corners has Wenzel Sestak and Frank Brown listed in the same profession[123], and the team of Hammes & Kalbach shared the trade in the Town of St. Joseph[124]. Each of these men were employed as blacksmiths during 1884-1885.

Other Businesses

Sigel employed the services of Casper Egler, who was a carpenter in town, Charles Greiger, a lawyer and constable, and Charles Lindsay, who operated the town's steam sugar (sorghum) factory[125].

The Town of St. Joseph benefited from their own carpenter, Frank Mish. John Hammes ran the town's general store and liquor shop, and also served as the postmaster. Gerrard Mish operated the town saloon, and John Schlesser was the local shoemaker[126].

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[120] *History of La Crosse County* (Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1881), 710-711.

[121] *Wisconsin State Gazetteer and Business Directory Volume IV* (St. Paul: R. L. Polk & Co., and A. C. Danser, 1884-5), 129.

[122] Ibid., 718.

[123] Ibid., 583.

[124] Ibid., 699.

[125] Ibid., 718.

[126] Ibid., 583.

The Town of Barre had its own shoemaker as well; George Ritchie. Mr. C. Roornd served as the town tailor, and William Rurge ran the general store[127].

Dr. R. Gmeling was the town physician in Newburgs Corners. In addition to being the local blacksmith, as mentioned earlier, Frank Brown ran the saloon in town. Newburgs Corners had its own hotel, run by Alois Newburg, who also served as Justice of the Peace. Joseph Newburg was the local constable[128].

Government

LaCrosse County was founded on March 1, 1851 through an act of the state legislature. The county was created from Crawford County and it comprised the present counties of LaCrosse, Monroe, Jackson, Trempealeau, Clark, most of Buffalo, and part of Taylor. This same act of legislature divided the county into the towns of LaCrosse, Albion, and Pine Valley.[129]

The first meeting of the county board was held on November 11, 1851 in the city of LaCrosse. LaCrosse was chose as the temporary county seat on the condition that government buildings be provided free of charge to the county. If this condition was not met, and no decision could be reached as to where to put the county seat, the decision was to be left to the board of supervisors. However, by an acto fo legislature on March 29, 1855, the county seat was permanently located at LaCrosse. In 1857, the county of LaCrosse was reduced to its present size. It is about 475 square miles and includes the towns of Bangor, Barre, Campbell, Farmington, Greenfield, Hamilton, Holland, Onalaska, Shelby and Washington.[130]

Slowly, over time, as the population of the county grew and the present towns created, township governments came more into service. The duties of these governments are stated in the State Constitution. The townships mentioned below are found in the southern portion of the county within this project's area and possess the same governmental elements as other townships in the state.

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[127] Ibid., 129.

[128] Ibid., 583.

[129] Benjamin F. Bryant. Memoirs of LaCrosse County. (Madison, WI: Western Historical Association, 1907), 51.

[130] Benjamin F. Bryant. Memoirs of LaCrosse County. (Madison, WI: Western Historical Association, 1907), 52.

Township of Bangor

Bangor is located in the eastern part of the county between Washington, on the southeast corner of the county, and Burns on the north. Bangor was first brought under town government in 1852, as a part of the town of Pierce. The present town of Barre was located in this section, as well as were fifteen sections of Hamilton. All of Burns and Washington were included as well. Bangor Township's independent existence began 1856.[131] The Bangor Town Hall is not located within the boundaries for this project.

Township of Barre

The town of Barre is found southeast of the center of the county. The original town consisted of its present territory and the towns of Washington, Bangor and part of Hamilton, as proposed in 1853. The first town meeting was held in 1853. The original town records of early meetings have been accidentally destroyed. In 1856 when Bangor was created, there was question as to what to do with the rest of the township. In 1867, the town of Barre and Neshonoc united under the name Hamilton, so for a period the town of Barre did not exist. In 1874, twenty-one sections of the original town of Barre were organized into the existing town of Barre by the Board of County Commissioners. On April 7, 1874, the first town meeting was held under this new reorganization.[132] The Barre town hall is not located within the project boundaries for this report.

Township of Greenfield

Greenfield lies in the center of the southern line of towns. Greenfield was first brought under town government as part of the town of LaCrosse. This area also included the town of Shelby and the city of LaCrosse. The township of Greenfield became a separate entity on November 11, 1856, the day it was organized under a separate government.[133] The Greenfield Town Hall (186/28) was constructed in 1894

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[131] Benjamin F. Bryant. Memoirs of LaCrosse County. (Madison, WI: Western Historical Association, 1907), 206-207; *History of LaCrosse County* (Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1881), 725.

[132] Benjamin F. Bryant. Memoirs of LaCrosse County. (Madison, WI: Western Historical Association, 1907), 209-210; *History of LaCrosse County* (Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1881), 711.

[133] Benjamin F. Bryant. Memoirs of LaCrosse County. (Madison, WI: Western Historical Association, 1907), 221; *History of LaCrosse County* (Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1881), 728.

in the southwest corner of the southwest corner of Section 23. It is a one story, front gabled red brick building, with accompanying outhouse.

Township of Shelby

Shelby lies in the southwest corner of the county. The location of Shelby connects it more closely with the early history of the county. The history of Shelby, because of its close proximity to the city of LaCrosse, coincides much of its history with the city. The Shelby Town Hall is located in the city limits of LaCrosse, and is not in the project area.

Township of Washington

Washington is located in the southwest corner of the county. This town was first brought under town government as a part of the town of Pierce and later changed to Barre. As the area became more settled and further subdivision was needed, it was first part of Burns Township, then Bangor Township. In 1857 it established an independent town government and separated into a separate town called Buchannan. Later the town name was changed to Washington. The first meeting was held on April 7, 1857.[134] The Washington Town Hall (184/29) is located on the southern edge of the unincorporated community of Newburg Corners. It is a one story, front gabled, frame clapboard building.

Transportation

The Mississippi River played an important and vital role in the economy of towns and cities. The Mississippi was of utmost importance to the development of the county and city of LaCrosse. The river provided for a relatively easy means of communication with the outside world and greatly aided immigration to this area of western Wisconsin. By connecting with the Black River, an outlet was available for the rich pine forests in the northern sections of the state. The presence of this outlet is the primary factor for the development of the city of LaCrosse, a "lumber town" in its youth. With the creation of the city, came the migration of people. These people would eventually spread out away from the city and LaCrosse County soon developed.

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[134] Benjamin F. Bryant. Memoirs of LaCrosse County. (Madison, WI: Western Historical Association, 1907), 234; *History of LaCrosse County* (Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1881), 729.

Reasons for the development of this area are simple. This site provided enough space for the building of a large city as compared to areas close by. Other areas were too close to the river with high bluffs. There was not enough room for landing river boats, much less a city. Included in the advantages of this site is the fact that all Indian trails from the north ended in this area. These trails provided paths of least resistance and provided for a means by which immigrants could move and create their own communities.

A proper shipyard was needed for suitable river commerce. It was not until 1856 that the city had an adequate wharf needed for this venture. Other wharves had been built in the past, but did not fit the needs of the growing city and its demands. River traffic continued to grow and this rise in traffic was vital to the city's own growth. The number of riverboat arrivals doubled over a one year period. In May of 1853, only twenty-two boats arrived since the opening of the season. In the same period in 1854, forty-four boats had arrived in LaCrosse. In 1856, from May 3 to May 9, fifty-one had arrived. In a four year period, business went from $17,000 to $400,000. The most prosperous days of river traffic were from the end of the Civil War until 1873 when railroads became more popular. After that time, railroads began to take most of the passengers and freight.

Another important form of transportation in LaCrosse County was the wagon road. These various roads followed old Indian trails to areas throughout the state. The area around LaCrosse was the center of this immense system. All of these roads went far beyond the present lines of the county into northern, central, and southern Wisconsin. Some of these early roads became marked "highways" and were kept up the best that could be done by local authorities. As more people settled into the county, local authorities improved the roads as fast as possible. These early roads followed river valleys to find ways through the bluffs. Many times the first roads in the county were just widening of an old Indian trail. Road maintenance was difficult due to marshy and sandy areas in the county.

Even though the river and roads provided ample means of transportation to and from the county, the construction of the railroad was an important addition to transportation options in the county. The LaCrosse and Milwaukee Railroad was developed in 1852. Its goal was to construct a railroad from LaCrosse to Milwaukee. In 1856, the LaCrosse and Milwaukee Railroad Company joined with the Milwaukee, Fond du Lac, and Green Bay Company in efforts to strengthen hopes of pushing the road through with the combined efforts of the two companies. A third company joined the consolidation and the road pushed through to Portage, Wisconsin. Congress granted land to the railroad to construct northwest to the St. Croix River and to the west end of Lake Superior. But, through monetary disputes, the land was granted to the LaCrosse and Milwaukee Company. In 1858, the railroad was

completed to LaCrosse.

The LaCrosse and Milwaukee were soon consolidated with the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railroad Company, with control to the latter. LaCrosse remained the end of the line of the railroad in Wisconsin for some time. Son enough, projects were started to connect into areas of Minnesota, such as Winona as St. Paul, and into areas of southern Minnesota. Construction of a railroad into southern Minnesota began in 1865. This project ended in 1870 after 147 miles of track were laid. Several other projects going on at this time fell into the hands of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul. In 1881, LaCrosse was connected with Dubuque, Iowa, and LaCrescent, Minnesota.

Southern LaCrosse County does not have any sites which are related to river or rail transportation, however there are two sites which are road related. The Schmaltz Road Bridge (186/13) is a stone, arch culvert which lies under Schmaltz Road. This is a LaCrosse County designated historic site. The second site is a pony truss bridge (190/31) in the Town of Washington on Hwy G, spanning Coon Creek. Constructed probably in approximately 1920, this is the only bridge of this type which was surveyed in southern LaCrosse County.

Pony Truss Bridge (190/31), Washington Township

Architecture

The largest number of buildings surveyed in southern LaCrosse County within the context of agriculture were farmsteads, and primarily the houses which are the focus of all farmsteads. Settlement is an ongoing occurrence, which allows a wide span of time periods and thus building types and styles for residences. The earliest, vernacular form stone and log houses of western Wisconsin therefore share this context with later

residential styles such as Queen Anne and Bungalow.

The physical fabric in the rural settings generally ranged from vernacular forms to high style architecture. Vernacular forms, such as front, side, and cross gables, gable ells and Ts, and one and two-story cubes comprise the most popular types of houses in the county. Characterized by simplicity, these buildings usually are identified by their size and roof form. While most of these buildings display frame construction, a small number were built of stone, brick and formed concrete block. Construction periods attached to each vernacular form listed below are based upon dates utilized in the central states of the country.[135]

The front gable form, characterized by a rectangular plan, was mainly constructed between 1850 and 1925. The gable ends of this form define the front and rear elevations of the house.
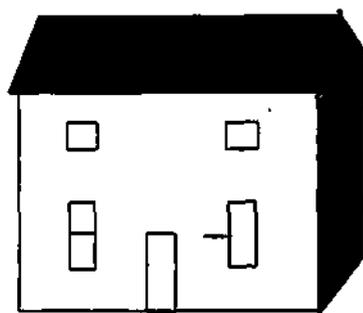
A side gable building, which is also characterized by a rectangular plan, displays gable ends over the side elevations of the house. This form, which has been prominent for nearly one hundred years, dates between 1850 and 1940.

The gable ell form, constructed between approximately 1865 and 1910, often exhibits two gabled sections set perpendicular to one another. This form usually consists of an "L" or "T" plan and displays a variety of stories.

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[135] Barbara Wyatt, *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin* vol. 2 (Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986), 3-1 to 3-10.

While the two-story cube dates from approximately 1860 to 1880, the smaller version known as the one-story cube was constructed from approximately 1870 to 1930. It is important to note that two-story cubes constructed after the turn of the century often display features characteristic of a related style, the American Foursquare. Hipped roofs and boxy massing typify the one and two-story cubes.

The cross gable form is named for two intersecting, identical roof lines. These buildings, which normally stand two-stories high, exhibit square plans. The cross gable form dates from approximately 1890 to 1930.
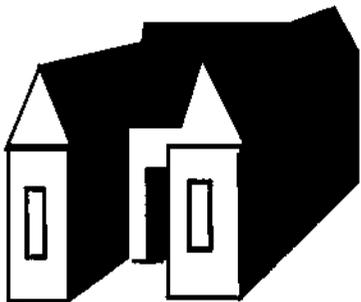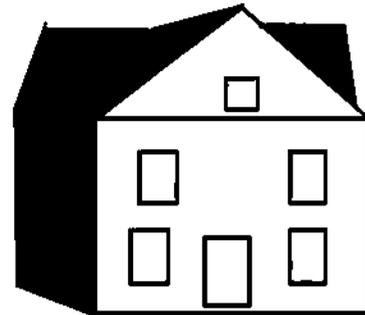
A form, which displays a side gable roof intersected at each end with perpendicular gables is known as gable H. These buildings often stand one-story tall, consist of an irregular plan, and exhibit a porch running between the two end gables. This form often dates from 1860 to 1890.

High style houses were also identified during the reconnaissance survey of LaCrosse County. These buildings are not as prevalent as vernacular forms, however, many of the more simplistic designed houses display details of a variety of architectural styles. High styles exhibited in the county include Queen Anne, Italianate, Neo-Classical Revival, and American Foursquare.[136]

- Erected between 1870 and 1890, **Italianate** style houses primarily stand two stories tall. They display square, rectangular, or L-shaped plans with low-pitched hip or occasionally gable roofs and wide eaves. These houses are

[136] Barbara Wyatt, *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin* vol. 2 (Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986), Architecture: 2-6, 2-15, 2-18, 2-21, 2-25, 2-28, 2-30; Marilyn W. Klein and David P. Fogel, *Clues to American Architecture* (Washington, D.C.: Starrhill Press, 1986), 22-23, 28-29, 46.

often ornamented with heavy brackets, tall narrow windows, front porches, and a cupola.

- **Queen Anne style,** which dates from 1880-1900, is characterized by asymmetrical facades, steeply pitched rooflines, a variety of wall surface textures, prominent towers, tall chimneys, and porches with bargeboard trim.

- Erected between 1895 and 1935, **Neo-Classical Revival** style houses exhibit classical features such as columns, dentils, pediments and symmetrical facades.

- **American Foursquare** style houses, constructed between 1900 and 1930, are generally two-stories tall with low hipped roofs. These buildings are often ornamented with overhanging eaves, central dormers, columns, and balustraded or closed railings on the one-story porches.

- **Eclectic style** houses display a combination of architectural elements from various styles.

Standard plans were likely used in the construction of many LaCrosse County homes. After the 1840s, America's population became increasingly transient. With the influx of immigrants, westward migration across the country, and increased population, architectural promoters played upon the idea that single family dwellings provided stability. Furthermore, home ownership also afforded financial insurance in an unstable economy.[137]

Plan book authors capitalized on the sense of insecurity felt in the growing country. Promoters of standardized architectural plans utilized common architectural terms, mill cut materials, and standard house types to give the middle class an impression that they could move often and experience less of a disruption. The purpose of the standard plan single family dwelling evolved through several stages. In the mid 1800s, plan book authors believed that a house should be viewed as a guarded haven. By the end of the century, they opined that a house should reflect creativity. After the turn of the century, the houses designed for the middle class served as a tools to promote better health.[138]

An advertisement in *The Fairbury (NE) Gazette* dated 20 January 1900 utilized the idea that a house could act as an insurance policy for its owner. It stated:[139]

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[137] Clifford Edward Clark, Jr. *The American Family Home, 1800-1960* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 238-240.

[138] Clifford Edward Clark, Jr. *The American Family Home, 1800-1960* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 238-240.

[139] "A.J. King Land and Insurance Agency Advertisement," *The Fairbury Gazette* 20 January 1900.

PUT YOUR MONEY IN A HOUSE! It's the best savings bank on earth. The cashier will never run off with it. It will never go out of business.' You've got it right under your thumb. No one can take it away from you. There it is, a shelter in the time of storm. You'll have a place to sleep if you don't have anything to eat, and surely that's better than to have no place to sleep and nothing to eat. It is always something on which you can realize ready money. Every young man should start in life with a trim little cottage as ballast and anchor.

One of the most recognized styles to utilize standardized plans was the Bungalow, which was designed to upgrade well-being with an emphasis on nature. From the 1910s to 1940s, the Bungalow served as one of the most popular house styles erected in the United States. It was one of the first architectural trends to spread from the west coast to the east. Due to its practical design and low construction costs, the style was promoted by magazines and plan books, contractors, home economists, and even feminists. This style of house allowed people of moderate incomes to afford their own dwelling.[140]

The Bungalow is characterized by projecting rooflines, large-scale chimneys, large front porches, and millwork ornamentation such as brackets. Often, when second stories were constructed they were downplayed to give the house a horizontal appearance. A variety of original materials clad the exterior of the Bungalow including clapboard, stucco, pebble dash, and stone. Interior features included fully equipped kitchens and bathrooms, and exposed rooms.[141]

In addition to houses and residential architecture, agricultural architecture played the greatest role in southern LaCrosse County. Farmsteads include not just houses for the families to live in, but barns, sheds, and coops for livestock and fowl; sheds, silos and cribs for produce storage; as well as roads, walls, ponds, trees, windbreaks, errosion contours and other landscape features which help define a farm within the historic context of Agriculture. Since LaCrosse County's history is intricately involved with agricultural development, the following discussion attempts to further define the evolution of farmsteads.

Reflecting the variety of LaCrosse County agricultural products, an assortment of outbuildings were constructed on area farmsteads. A majority of the barns in the county display frame construction, either gable or gambrel roofs, and wood cladding.

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[140] Clifford Edward Clark, Jr. *The American Family Home, 1800-1960* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 183-184.

[141] Barbara Wyatt, *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin* vol. 2 (Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986), 2-26.

Chicken coops, animal sheds, storage sheds, machine sheds, and silos were also common outbuildings identified on many of the surveyed farmsteads. Often these buildings were positioned in close proximity to the main house to expedite farm work. By the third decade of the twentieth century, as a result of the increased rural use and ownership of automobiles, many farmsteads housed modern garages. During this period, garages erected on older farmsteads contrasted with the main house due to the use of the wider clapboard and moderately pitched roofs.

The configuration of the site served as the foremost consideration during the farmstead's development. Allen G. Noble and Hubert G.H. Wilhelm, in a work entitled "The Farm Barns of the American Midwest," declare that "topography, weather, convenience or labor efficiency, land survey systems, and tradition" need careful consideration when planning the layout of a farm. Furthermore, to expedite chores, it was common to place a barn near the animal pens and crops. To accommodate the most natural light with its disinfectant value, north-south served as the best position for the barn. In areas that experience harsh winters, barns were often placed in close proximity to the farmhouse, yet downwind. Three standard farmstead layouts were surmised by Noble and Wilhelm to dominate in the Midwest. First, the front elevation of each building were positioned in the same direction. Second, every building in a complex was placed to form a square, with the center left vacant to serve as a courtyard. Third, a farmstead where buildings were positioned to adapt to the terrain was known as the free-form plan.[142]

Increased availability of railroad transportation and improved farming techniques and machinery raised farm production. As a result, in the late 1800s and early 1900s, many small farms were either deserted or merged and the fate of their outbuildings took the same route. To accommodate larger machinery and quantities of produce, barns were improved with side shed additions and lengthened roofs. If barns could not be adapted to the changing needs, entirely new ones were built.[143]

In September of 1895 *The Fairbury (NE) Gazette* printed several articles promoting innovative frame construction methods for barns. As taken from an East Coast publication, interior sketches and construction description were attached to each article.[144] In an effort to convince farmers of the value of the new building, one article stated:[145]

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[142] Allen G. Noble and Hubert G.H. Wilhelm, ed., *Barns of the Midwest* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1995), 9-10, 104.

[143] Allen G. Noble and Hubert G.H. Wilhelm, ed., *Barns of the Midwest* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1995), 16-17, 25, 102.

[144] "Barns Without Beams," *The Fairbury Gazette* 7 September 1895; "Barn Building," *The Fairbury Gazette* 21 September 1895.

[145] "Barn Building," *The Fairbury Gazette* 21 September 1895.

In the planning of a barn many things are to be considered—expenses, strength of the building, etc.—but most of all should be considered convenience and labor saving actual use. A convenient barn will save many dollars a year over an ill arranged one, and the money thus saved will cover the cost of the building long before it is worn out. A barn for the storage of hay and grain and for the thrashing and other purposes should be free from beams and cross timbers from one end to the other, so that a hayfork or other tool may be used with perfect freedom.

While the first barns constructed in the Midwest often displayed gable roofs, many turn of the century barns exhibited gambrel roofs. By the third decade of the century, construction of barns changed with the availability of mill produced rafters. In the effort to accommodate more loft storage, round, Gothic, and rainbow roofs became popular. By the 1950s, farmers often assembled pole buildings with gable roofs to serve as barns.[146]

The tobacco barn is an architectural type which is not unique to but primarily found in west-central Wisconsin, where farmer's have been growing tobacco since the turn of the century as a supplemental cash crop. The tobacco barn is similar to other barn types, often rectangular in form with a gabled roof, however, the major design difference is the use of interior rafters from which to hang drying tobacco, and vertical boards which are hinged to the sides of the building, and opened like long, narrow doors, which allow a high amount of ventilation, without necessarily letting in the elements in the event of rain. The design allowed the delicate tobacco to dry as quickly as possible. More elaborate tobacco barns often even featured gable-top ventilators to encourage air flow inside the building.

Tobacco Barn (192/29), Washington Township

[146] Allen G. Noble and Hubert G.H. Wilhelm, ed., *Barns of the Midwest* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1995), 105.

TOWNSHIP HISTORIES

TOWNSHIP OF BARRE

13,399.54 ACRES

The township of Barre, which lies southeast of the center of LaCrosse County, was originally organized in 1853 as a much larger area of land and was downsized to its present dimensions in 1874. The entire twenty-one sections that make up the township of Barre all lie within Bostwick's Valley which is known for its fertile land. The main creek that flows through the area is known as Bostwick's Creek, however there are also other small tributaries and natural springs that help to drain the township. Both the valley and creek name are derived from the first settler to the area, a Yankee from Vermont. Martin Bostwick and his sons settled within the present limits of the town in May of 1850.[147]

Other immigrants to the area arrived between the years of 1850 and 1856. The earliest of them was an Irish immigrant who located in Bostwick Valley. In the summer of 1852 a German family settled in the area. Of the later immigrants to arrive were the Norwegians who first settled in Bostwick Valley in 1856.[148]

There are two different types of soil in this area. The most abundant of the two is the silty soil of valleys and benches that follow the streams of the area. The second type of soil is the silty soil on lime rock that cover the upland surfaces of the bluffs. It is this limestone soil that the Norwegians and Germans settled on in the area. Most of the land that was settled followed Bostwick's Creek and consisted of the silty soils of the valleys and benches.[149]

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[147]
Bryant, 209-210; Western Historical Company, *History of LaCrosse County, Wisconsin,* 709.

[148] Western Historical Company, *History of LaCrosse County, Wisconsin,* 709; Wingate, 134.

[149] Soil Conservation Service. *Soil Survey, LaCrosse County, Wisconsin.* United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service in cooperation with Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey, Soil Survey Division and the College of Agriculture, University of Wisconsin. 1960, General Soil Map insert, 50-51; Wingate 34, 36, 134; Bryant, 209. Barre exists substantially in the Magnesian Limestone region.

Because this area is well watered the opportunities for water powered mills were apparent to the settlers. Farming in the area was centered around the milling industry that was started on Bostwick's Creek in 1858 by a Yankee from New York. However, there was several mills powered by the creek, as well as a ten-foot dam. In 1880 the main crop was wheat followed by oats, corn and barley. The main crops that were grown in the area in 1906 were oats, corn, barley, and cultivated grasses. Livestock was also kept, such as horses, cattle, sheep, and swine. The cattle may also include milk cows because the township did support a creamery at Barre Mills.[150]

The production of some agricultural goods were recorded in the LaCrosse County Clerk assessment rolls for the year 1906. From these rolls it is evident that oats were the major crop and that wheat became less grown, which was the trend due to the soil being depleted from the continuous growth of wheat. Along with oats, corn and barley were still important, ranking second and third in production. Area production in 1906 is shown by these statistics in the chart below.[151]

Barre Township, LaCrosse County, Wisconsin, Agriculture Statistics, 1906.

Town	Wheat	Corn	Oats	Barley	Rye	Potatoes
Barre	2,600	43,030	76,520	18,450	80	4,163

Town	Apples	Cultivated Grasses (Tons)	Butter (Lbs.)
Barre	582	2,171	12,575

TOWNSHIP OF CAMPBELL /MEDARY

20,787.00 ACRES

The township of Medary was not created until 1954 when it was formed from part of the township of Campbell. All of the information about Medary will be combined with the township of Campbell because of the combined history.[152]

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[150] Bryant, 209-210: Western Historical Company. *History of LaCrosse County, Wisconsin*, 709, 411.

[151] Bryant, 182. Amounts are in bushels unless otherwise stated.

[152] University of Wisconsin Agricultural Extension Services, *Wisconsin Rural Resources, LaCrosse County*. U. S. Department of Agriculture and Agricultural Marketing Service. Madison: Wisconsin State Department of Agriculture. Crop and Livestock Reporting Service, 1957, 20.

The historic township of Campbell was located in the west central part of LaCrosse County and encompassed the City of LaCrosse. The township was organized between 1851, when LaCrosse County was originally organized, and 1868. The primary soil type within the township consisted of sandstone, however, the western part where the Mississippi and Black rivers meet was marsh land that is cut up with sloughs. The town contained all three major rivers of the county, the Black, LaCrosse, and Mississippi. This township was important because the railroads that crossed the county all traversed the township of Campbell and center in the city of LaCrosse. These railroads that converged in the town include the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy, the Green Bay & Western, the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul and the Chicago & Northwestern lines. With all the railroads crossing the town there was only one station within its limits in 1906, known as Winona Junction.[153]

Settlement to the area was slow in the beginning as is shown by the small amount of settlers who came to the area between 1851 and 1853. The first settler of the township was a native of England who arrived in the area in May of 1851. A man of Swiss origin settled in the township in 1852, and later married a native of Prussia. In 1853 another Englishman came to the township of Campbell and set up farming in the area. The population of the township was 955 in 1890 and 1,078 in 1906.[154]

Farms set up by the early pioneers were mainly in the valleys east and northeast of the city of LaCrosse, however, some farms were established near the city limits. Due to the bluffs that follow the Mississippi River the land was not considered to be agriculturally attractive. In 1859 Campbell Township had 1,540 acres in wheat, 809 acres in corn, 1,637 acres in oats, and 179 acres in barely.[155] Of the products grown in the township, corn and oats were ranked first in 1906 followed closely by hay and other cultivated grasses. The town also still contained 1,931 acres of timber. Livestock was also kept within the township, with cattle as the most abundant, followed by swine, horses and sheep.[156]

Campbell Township, LaCrosse County, Wisconsin, Agriculture Statistics, 1906.

Town	Wheat	Corn	Oats	Barley	Rye	Potatoes
Campbell	2,235	27,615	23,960	14,034	8,685	14,001

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153   Bryant, 215-216.

154   Bryant, 216-217.

155   Western Historical Company, *History of LaCrosse County, Wisconsin*, 441.

156   Bryant, 182. For comparative purposes there was no information available for earlier or later, so the statistics are from 1906 only. Amounts are in bushels unless otherwise stated.

Town	Apples	Strawberries	Raspberries	Clover Seed	Cultivated Grasses (Tons)
Campbell	635	790	301	25	1,363

Town	Butter (Lbs.)	Milk—Glass, sold other than to Creameries, Cheese Factories and Milk Condensing Factories
Campbell	21,750	5,300

TOWNSHIP OF GREENFIELD

19,871.40 ACRES

The township of Greenfield was first included as a part of the city of LaCrosse, however, it was organized under its own government in November 1856. Greenfield lies in the center of the southern part of the county. The main waterway within the township is Mormon Creek, which flows in a deep valley that is contrasted by high rough and broken bluffs such as St. Joseph Ridge. This land, consisting of silty limestone soil, can be cultivated to produce high yields only with constant attention and care. The township is well watered and contains natural springs. Due to the fact that Mormon Creek does not empty directly into the Mississippi River but into a back water slough, this part of the county was settled later than any other.[157]

The first permanent settlement of the township came in 1853 when five men arrived and became attracted to the fertile valley and the curious scenery of the area. However, the following year a large population of Germans, mostly from southern areas of Germany, and Austrians moved to the area and settled mainly along Mormon Creek and on the high ridges of the area. Of this colony many of the people where Catholic.[158]

The German groups who settled in this area were familiar with the limestone soil, which was similar to the soils of their native country. The limestone land that was settled by the Germans was mostly preempted (see footnote), because they arrived before the Homestead Act was passed. The extent of the settlement on this limestone ridge was the first of its kind. Most of the settlers stayed in the valleys, while the ridge tops were left for farming or not improved at all.[159]

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[157] Bryant, 221; Western Historical Company. *History of LaCrosse County, Wisconsin*, 727.

[158] Bryant, 221; Western Historical Company, *History of LaCrosse County, Wisconsin*, 727.

[159] Wingate, 116. 120, 100. The preemption law of 1841 made government land available for $1.25 an acre. When land was preempted by an individual they had five years to pay for it. During this period no other person could

In 1880 wheat was the principal crop grown followed by oats, corn and barley. The livestock in Greenfield Township included horses, cattle, milk cows, sheep, and hogs. However, farming in the area in 1906 centered around the livestock that was kept, evident by the crops that were planted. The crops of principal concern were oats, hay, corn and barley. The number of milk cows in the area and the fact that there was one cheese factory in operation showed that the dairying industry was an important economic influence in 1906, and could be demonstrated by the amount of butter produced that year.[160]

Greenfield Township, LaCrosse County, Wisconsin, Agriculture Statistics, 1906.

Town	Wheat	Corn	Oats	Barley	Rye	Potatoes
Greenfield	7,470	27,700	77,603	18,045	540	8,279

Town	Apples	Clover Seed	Clover Seed-harvested acres	Tobacco (Lbs.)	Cultivated Grasses (Tons)	Butter (Lbs.)
Greenfield	943	50	19	12,120	3,485	88,330

TOWNSHIP OF SHELBY

19,950.04 ACRES

The township of Shelby, the southwestern most town of LaCrosse County, lies adjacent to the Mississippi River. The township was originally part of the city of LaCrosse, however, when Greenfield Township was separated from LaCrosse on 11 November 1856, so was Shelby. The town varies in landscape because of the bluffs that run north and south, and also the coulees that intersect the bluffs. Mormon Creek also flows through this township and provided waterpower for several mills which were once in the area.[161]

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lay claim to the preempted property. If the land was not free and clear by the fifth year it was open to purchase by another party. This preemption law helped to stimulate emigration to LaCrosse County.

[160] Bryant, 221, 182; Western Historical Company, *History of LaCrosse County, Wisconsin*, 441. Amounts are in bushels unless otherwise stated.

[161] Bryant, 221, 231, 232. A coulee is the characteristic landform of LaCrosse County, which is also known as the Coulee Region. A coulee is a deep ravine or steep-walled valley, carved out by glacial melt waters. The term is French and was given to the area by the French Fur traders who came to the area.

The first settlers to this area were the Mormons for whom the creek and coulee were both named. A group of about thirty Mormon families arrived in the fall of 1840. However they did not stay in the area long, and the next year burnt their houses and returned to Nauvoo, Illinois. The reasoning for the burning of their houses is unknown, however, they returned to Nauvoo to complete their Mormon church.[162]

The first permanent settlers to the township arrived late in 1844. Two brothers took land between present-day Mormon and State Road coulees. It took several years however for the tide of immigration to come to Shelby. The area of Mormon Coulee was the first place that was settled in the township.[163] The Swiss arrived from Brienz, Canton Bern, Switzerland in Mormon Coulee in the year 1856. The Germans also settled in this area. Most of the land that the later groups settled was the land that had been abandoned by the Mormons.[164]

The soil of the area is mainly of limestone, however there is silty soil that follows Mormon Creek and the coulees through the township. The narrow strip of silty soil which lays at the foot of the bluffs along the coulee can be cultivated and agriculturally productive.[165]

Farming in the township consisted mainly of livestock and fruit production. In 1880 Shelby Township farmers grew wheat, oats, corn and barley. The crops grown within the township in 1906 were primarily hay, oats and corn. Livestock that was kept consisted of cattle, horses, swine, and sheep. Fruit crops are also grown within the township, and Shelby grew the most apples in the entire county of LaCrosse. The dairy industry was also an important industry in the township due to the quantity of production. The amount of butter produced in 1906 equaled 70,425 pounds in the township, second only to Greenfield Township which produced 88,330 pounds that same year. The production of cheese in Shelby Township also ranked second with five hundred pounds to Washington Township's nine hundred pounds in 1906. Shelby Township ranked first in the production of milk that was not sold to creameries or other factories with 156,525 pounds sold. The next highest was Campbell Township with 5,300 pounds produced and sold in 1906.[166]

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[162]   Bryant, 232. There is some controversy as to the actual date of arrival and departure of the Mormons however, their means of leaving is consistent.

[163]   Bryant, 232. 233.

[164]   Wingate, 103, 120.

[165]   Bryant, 233. 231. The western part of the township has the Potsdam sandstone formation upon the surface, although he northeast part falls into the Lower Magnesian Limestone area.

[166]   Bryant, 233, 182. Amounts are in bushels unless otherwise stated. Western Historical Company, 441.

Shelby Township, LaCrosse County, Wisconsin, Agriculture Statistics, 1906.

Town	Wheat	Corn	Oats	Barley	Rye	Potatoes	Root Crops
Shelby	6,060	36.110	46,845	9,385	1,600	17,700	3,000

Town	Apples	Strawberries	Raspberries	Blackberries	Currents	Grapes
Shelby	3,945	1,713	130	190	42	647

Town	Clover Seed	Clover Seed-harvested acres	Tobacco (Lbs.)	Cultivated Grasses (Tons)
Shelby	43	34	3,000	3.367

Town	Butter (Lbs.)	Cheese (Lbs.)	Milk—Glass. sold other than to Creameries, Cheese Factories and Milk Condensing Factories
Shelby	70.425	500	156,525

Another aspect of the agriculture in the township of Shelby was the City Poor Farm. The site, located in section 15 Town of Shelby, for the farm was selected in 1857. The city of LaCrosse bought 120 acres of land located two to three miles southeast of the city of LaCrosse in 1857. Suitable outbuildings were erected that were of primary concern to the farm. This poor farm is no longer in existence.[167]

TOWNSHIP OF WASHINGTON

23,125.97 ACRES

The township of Washington is in the southeastern most corner of LaCrosse County. Washington, like Shelby Township, consists of rough land that is broken between bluffs and valleys that contain the lowlands. The township is well watered and drained by a number of creeks that flow through the valleys. The soil in the valleys is fertile because of the amount of alluvial sediment that it is exposed too annually.[168]

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[167] Western Historical Company, *History of LaCrosse County, Wisconsin*, 440; Bryant, 93.

[168] Bryant, 234.

When first established Washington Township was under the town government of Pierce, however, after several changes in governing bodies, it was finally organized by itself in 1857. When first organized, however, the name of the township was Buchanan and later changed to Washington.[169]

Because of the uneven terrain of the area, Washington Township was one of the last places in the county to be settled. When the area was finally settled, after 1854, it was done so by mainly foreign-born, Germans and Bohemians. The Bohemians were one of the later groups to arrive in the county and acquired land that was still available. They settled in the area now known as Bohemian Ridge and Bohemian Valley. The Germans tended to settle on Middle Ridge. Both the Germans and Bohemians attended Catholic Church at the village of Middle Ridge. The two groups were able to cohabitate because in their native lands they had lived amongst each other.[170] Other ethnic groups that settled in the area were Polish, Irish and Norwegian.[171]

The soil in Washington Township is limestone. Both the Germans and Bohemians were accustomed to making a living on the limestone soil of their native land. Also, the Germans had a tendency to settle on the upland limestone ridges in the other parts of LaCrosse County, despite the fact that land is generally not as fertile on the upland surfaces as it is in the valley along the creeks. Creeks that water the area are Dutch, Bostwick's and Mormon along with Coon Creek.[172]

Due to the soil type and the topography of the area, crop farming was not as important as dairying and livestock production. In 1880 the crops grown were wheat, oats, barley and corn. In the year 1906 the township of Washington lead all other townships in the county in cheese production, with three cheese factories within its limits. Most of the land was given to pasture, most likely for dairy cows. The crops that were grown in 1906 were mainly oats and cultivated grasses, as well as barley, corn and wheat. Most of the crops were used as feed for the dairy herds. One should note that almost one-third of the township's entire acreage was still in timber in 1906.[173]

Washington Township, LaCrosse County, Wisconsin, Agriculture Statistics, 1906.

[169] Western Historical Company, *History of LaCrosse County, Wisconsin*, 730.

[170] Bryant, 235: Wingate 72. 124.

[171] Western Historical Company, *History of LaCrosse County, Wisconsin*, 729.

[172] Wingate. 123, 124: Bryant, 234. The township lies completely in the Lower Magnesian Limestone area.

[173] Bryant, 235, 182. Amounts are in bushels unless otherwise stated: Western Historical Company. 441.

Town	Wheat	Corn	Oats	Barley	Rye	Potatoes	Apples
Washington	6,840	18,735	104,360	27,700	475	5,170	1,860

Town	Clover Seed	Timothy Seed	Clover Seed-harvested acres	Timothy Seed-harvested acres	Tobacco (Lbs.)	Cultivated Grasses (Tons)
Washington	148	58	158	13	42,500	3,280

Town	Butter (Lbs.)	Cheese (Lbs.)
Washington	1,000	900

OVERALL ETHNIC SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

Each ethnic group had their own settlement pattern. The British, Irish, Welsh, and Yankees usually settled on land along the LaCrosse River. They preferred the alluvial land that could be found in such areas. Outside the LaCrosse River valley this group also settled in places such as Brice Prairie, Lewis Valley and along Fleming Creek. The alluvial soil was the first choice, however, they also settled on sand terraces and limestone and sandstone soils.[174] Many of the Irish who came to LaCrosse County arrived with the construction of the railroad as many of them helped lay tracks. [175]

The Germans who came to LaCrosse settled throughout the area, though the majority of their population rested in the southern part of the county. The Germans settled predominately on limestone soil that covered the ridge tops. Some of the limestone soil that was taken up by this group was in the Mormon Coulee area. However, one group did settle in the northeastern part of the county known as "Sand Vista" on sandstone soil.[176]

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[174] Wingate. 65, 74, 108, 141.

[175] Wingate. 67.

[176] Wingate, 74, 113, 120, 68. "The reports show that Germans came from many parts of the culture area including Bavaria, Wuerttemberg, Baden. Darmstadt. Hesse, Rhenish, Prussia, Hanover, Brandenburgh, Saxony. Westphalia, Austria, Luxembourg, and Switzerland."

Norwegians mostly settled in the northern portion of the county, utilizing the village of Holmen as their trade center. However, some settled in Coon Valley of Vernon County just south of LaCrosse County. Within this ethnic group was included a small amount of Danish and Swedish immigrants who settled among the Norwegians. In the southern portion of the county Norwegians settled along the LaCrosse River, Bostwick's Creek, and also in the village Bangor. The soil that this group settled on was mostly sandstone in the northern part of the county, the last acreage in the county to be claimed.[177]

The Bohemians were one of the last groups to arrive in the county. They took up land in the southeast corner of the county that consisted of limestone soils. The Bohemians tended to settled in the vicinity of Germans, as they shared old world customs.[178]

The French and Dutch also settled in LaCrosse County. The French settled along the Mississippi River on the bottom lands and sand terraces, in the area known today as French Island. The Dutch also settled on bottom lands and sand terraces, however, they settled along the Black River and the joining lands of the Mississippi and Black rivers. The area that the Dutch settled is known today as New Amsterdam.[179]

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[177] Wingate, 70, 74, 134 141.

[178] Wingate, 70, 74, 124.

[179] Wingate, 74, 123, 141, 134.

INTENSIVE SURVEY OF SOUTHERN LACROSSE COUNTY

The following properties are either already listed on the National Register of Historic Places, or they are potentially eligible for the National Register.

Cleveland School
T15N, R5W, Section 8
(192/24)

The Cleveland School was located on Highway 33, two miles east of St. Joseph Ridge. It was built of red rock for $393.34 on loan from the state on five years credit. It is a wood frame building with the exterior walls being made of brick. Of interesting note is that it was voted on to be built in 1871, but not built until 1877. The bricks for the building only cost sixty dollars[180].

Cleveland School (192/24),

When the school was first built, the school year voted on by the board would only be seven months; five months in the winter, and two months in the summer. This was so the children could help with the planting in the spring, and with the harvest in the fall. The school had many teachers over it's ninety year career, but it never had more

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[180] Estella Bryhn, *Early Schools of La Crosse County.* 1985, pg 116

than twenty five students[181]. It was closed in 1960 due to compliance with the state for small schools to relocate to a high school district. The land reverted back to the owner, then Clarence Hundt who used it to store grain[182].

Fish Creek School
T16, R5W, Section 12
(189/29)

The Fish Creek School has a very long history in Bangor Township. The first school was a log cabin built circa 1894 on the Everson Farmstead two miles south of the village of Rockland on County Highway J[183]. The cabin had only one window and one door for light and ventilation. Some of the pupils had to walk seven miles to get to the school even having to cut through fields to do so. The cabin housed as many as fifteen students at once in its cramped confines. The people of the area decided to build a new school circa 1900 closer to where the residents of the township lived. The new frame building was built circa 1903 on the ridge (Fish Creek) closer to Rockland on County Highway J, and its new location shortened the length of the children's walk considerably. The frame building was used for many years, but in 1922 the brick building that stands today was built[184]. The frame building was taken to the Repky farm and used as an outbuilding for many years but was torn down. The Fish Creek School was used until the late 1950's when students were sent to Bangor for elementary education[185].

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[181] Esella Bryhn, pg 116

[182] Estella Bryhn, pg 117

[183] Estella Bryhn, *Early Schools of La Crosse County.* 1985, pg 16

[184] Estella Bryhn, pg. 16

[185] Estella Bryhn, pg. 16

Fish Creek School (189/29), Bangor Township

The Fish Creek School was a typical one room school of the early 1900's. Students desks were arranged in rows, and class sizes rarely got to be over twenty-five students. The students sat in fold-top desks with holes in them for ink bottles. The standard curriculum was reading, writing and arithmetic. These schools normally survived until the 1950s when many townships consolidated to form larger, more well-funded public schools.

Hylandale Academy
T16N, R5W, Section 24
(190/12)

The Hylandale Academy is located five miles south of Rockland on County Highway J. The Hylandale Academy is a self supporting Seventh Day Adventist School that was first started in 1916 by Professors Arthur Hallock and Paul Sheppler[186]. It was started when Warren Griffith, a friend of Mr. Hallock's wrote to him that a "large farm is for sale in the prettiest spot in La Crosse County." Professors Hallock and Sheppler, and Dr. Fred Thornton, a La Crosse physician, visited the site and purchased it. The next spring, Mrs. Hallock and her three children arrived by train. Their home for the next year would be a log cabin. The apple trees were in full bloom in what the Hallocks called the "Dale," and when Mrs. Hallock saw the high bluffs surrounding it she said it should be called "Hylandale."[187] The name stuck.

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[186] Estella Bryhn, *Early Schools of La Crosse County.* 1985, pg. 170

[187] Estella Bryhn, pg. 170

The school was administrated by the Hallocks, and decisions were made by the founders and faculty. The buildings were built by the Hallocks, Shepplers, Thortons, and many other members of the church and school.

Hylandale Academy, dormitory (190/12), Bangor Township

When school was out in the spring, Professor Hallock brought with him Miss Rosma Whalen, a teacher, and soon the Shepplers came bringing with them a herd of jersey cattle. Many things needed to be done. A girls dormitory was the first project, with the crops being planted by moonlight. In order to provide a church school by the fall, hog shelter was torn down, and a log building was erected. Mrs. Hallock loved her little log shelter, but there was not enough room for all of the students she wanted to take in. Later a large frame building was built that one day become a nursing home.

As many as fifty to sixty students found a home at the academy at any given year. Tuition, room, and board was $12 dollars a month if they could pay, and if the students could not pay, the Hallocks were always willing to take livestock or crop payment. Hylandale was known for its apple orchards, and vineyards. Customers came from miles around to buy the grapes and apples.

As quickly as possible other buildings such as a boys dormitory, a main school, and administration building, and chapel were built. Classes were held for both elementary and high school students. School work was done from seven to twelve, with the afternoon spent doing vocational work. This mainly entailed farm work, grounds maintenance, and various other chores.

Of all the buildings that were erected, only the two dormitories, and a new block school house remain. Fires claimed the Main school in 1961, the first girls dormitory, and the chapel in 1930[188]. The last time that high school classes were offered was in the

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[188] Estella Bryhn, pg. 171

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late 1980's. Elementary classes are still offered, and many students still attend. The dormitories are old and have been condemned, so now the school no longer offers room and board. The large dormitories still stand. The buildings and property are now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Harold Hallock[189].

Victory School
T15N, R5W, Section 20
(190/25)

The Victory School was built in 1887 out of large cut stones in Washington township on Highway 162 three miles south of Highway 33. It was the first school in the area and since it was made of the large stones it has always been called the "Stone School House." The land for the school was donated by a Mr. Frank Schaper. The tax roles read, "1/2 acre donated for school lot[190]"

Victory School (190/25), Washington Township

From records of the school we can find that the school changed teachers many times, sometimes yearly. Jacob Schumacher was paid $1.75 in 1888 for a trip to West Salem to hire a teacher and whitewash the school house. Later, John C. Johnson was hired to teach and was paid $90 for a three month period. A bell tower and bell were added to the school in 1921.

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[189] Bangor Township, La Crosse County Wisconsin, Tax Roles, 1995, owner, Harold Hallock, SE 1/4 of SE 1/4, T16N, R5W

[190] Washington Township, La Crosse County, Wisconsin, Tax Rolls, 1905, owner Frank Schaper SE 1/4 of SW 1/4, T15N, R5W

In 1952 the Victory school was closed and its students moved to Cashton. This was the fate of many of the small schools in the area for that period of time. The cost of up keep, and expansion forced many of the school boards to close down their institutions. The Victory School district paid the Cashton School $1,140 for tuition and $400 for transportation. The Victory School closed it's doors to students, and was converted into a house[191].

Ole and Mary Tollefson Farmstead

T16N, R6W, Section 33

(198/02)

Barre Township in southern La Crosse County, Wisconsin, was primarily agricultural in its beginnings. The area eventually became known as Barre Mills, a small farming community nestled in the rolling coulees approximately six miles east of the city of La Crosse. Throughout the 1840s and 1850s settlers were setting up farmsteads in the area.

Records begin on 14 May 1851 for a farmstead located in T16N, R6W, Sec. 33, of the NE ¼ of the NE ¼, when Charles Smith was assigned a deed to the property[192]. On 17 November 1852, Paul and Rachel Tollefson sold the property to their relatives, Ole and Mary Tollefson[193]. This property and the farm immediately to the north remained in the hands of the Tollefson family for many years, soon becoming known as the Tollefson family farmsteads.

However on the same day, 17 November 1852, Paul and Rachel Tollefson bought yet another piece of the same property from Holren and Sarah Halverson, amounting to 160 acres[194]. Holren Halverson bought the 160 acres from George Woodman on 3 October 1851 for $190.00.[195]

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[191] Estella Bryhn, *Early Schools of La Crosse County*, 1985, pg. 113

[192] La Crosse County, Wisconsin Register of Deeds, "Deed Record, Vol. I, Page 459, between George Goodman and Charles Smith," 14 May 1851.

[193] La Crosse County, Wisconsin Register of Deeds, "Deed Record, Vol. II, Page 201, between Paul and Rachel Tollefson and Ole and Mary Tollefson," 17 November 1852.

[194] La Crosse County, Wisconsin Register of Deeds, "Deed Record, Vol. II, Page 202, between Holren and Sarah Halverson and Paul and Rachel Tollefson," 17 November 1852.

[195] La Crosse County, Wisconsin Register of Deeds, "Deed Record, Vol. III, Page 210, between George Woodman and Holren Halverson," 3 October 1851.

The farm remained the same until 8 May 1876 when Earnest and Mary Jenks sold a small parcel of the property to Wesley Whitbeck for $160.00.[196]

In 1880 Paul Tollefson owned forty acres which was worth $1,000 for which he paid $11.64 in taxes that year.[197]

The two-story farmhouse was built circa 1891 and is still in use today, and the barn shortly before in the late 1880s, which is also still in use today. In 1900 the value of the property jumped a thousand dollars to $2,100.00, probably as a result of the new house and barn.[198]

On 9 December 1903, the widow of Ole Tollefson, Mary Tollefson, and Emma Tweet and Mary Straud, sold the piece of property they owned to Tollef O. Tollefson for $4,000.00.[199]

A deed record could not be found, but William Hemker is listed in the Barre Township tax roll records as the owner of thirty-seven and a half acres of the Tollefson property in 1905. The property was valued at $3,500.[200]

The property continued to switch owners when Tollef and Lisette Tollefson sold their part of the property to Ferdinand Laging on 17 March 1913 for $14,250.[201] Laging would remain owner of the property until 1928 when he and his wife Caroline would sell to August and Lena Nehls for one dollar and "other valuable considerations."[202] In 1930, two years after August and Lena Nehls purchased their two and a half acres, it was worth $220, and the amount of tax paid in 1930 was $3.77.[203] August and Lena Nehls owned their two and a half acres for twelve years

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[196] La Crosse County, Wisconsin Register of Deeds, "Deed Record, Vol. XXXXVIII, Page 63, between Earnest and Mary Jenks and Wesley Whitbeck," 8 May 1876.

[197] Barre Township, La Crosse County, Wisconsin, Tax Rolls, 1880, owner Paul Tollefson, T16N, R6W, Sec. 33, NE ¼ of NE ¼.

[198] Barre Township, La Crosse County, Wisconsin, Tax Rolls, 1900, owner Paul Tollefson, NE ¼ of NE ¼, T16N, Sec. 33, R6W.

[199] La Crosse County, Wisconsin Register of Deeds, "Deed Record, Vol. 104, Page 623, between Mary Tollefson and Tollef O. Tollefson, 9 December 1903.

[200] Barre Township, La Crosse County, Wisconsin, Tax Rolls, 1905, owner William Hemker, T16N, R6W, Sec. 33, NE ¼ of NE ¼.

[201] La Crosse County, Wisconsin Register of Deeds, "Deed Record, Vol. 122, Page 203, between Tollef and Lisette Tollefson and Ferdinand Laging," 17 March 1913.

[202] La Crosse County, Wisconsin Register of Deeds, "Deed Record, Vol. 158, Page 423, between Ferdinand and Caroline Laging and August and Lena Nehls," 20 April 1928.

[203] Barre Township, La Crosse County, Wisconsin, Tax Rolls, 1930, owner August and Lena Nehls, T16N, R6W, Sec. 33, NE ¼ of the NE ¼.

before they sold it to Bernard and Rosella Nehls for one dollar and "other valuable considerations" in 1940.[204] At this time the deed records indicate an $8,450 mortgage.

The current owners of the farm property, John and Violet Stelloh, bought the property from William and Dora Hemker in 1947 for an undisclosed amount of money.[205] The "Tollefson property" still remains a family operated farm in Barre Mills, Wisconsin, today.

Henry and Rachel Sander Farmstead

T16N, R6W

(198/05)

The "Tollefson family farm" was split into smaller parcels in the late 1870s, which created new properties. Such a new property was a farm located adjacent to the Tollefson property in Barre Township. This new farm was located in T16N, R6W, Sec. 34, the SW ¼ of the NE ¼. The first deed recorded for the property shows Hermann Sander buying the property from Fredrick and Maria Diefenthaler in 1878.[206] The record shows that Sander paid $450 for the piece of land.

This particular piece of farmland for the most part remained intact throughout the years; it was not broken apart into smaller parcels as much as the other surrounding properties. In 1880 John Betz owned the entire forty acres which was worth $400.[207] Hermann Sander added a few more acres to his existing property in 1885 when he bought additional property from Carl and Augusta Betz.[208] The additional property cost Sander $450.[209]

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[204] La Crosse County, Wisconsin Register of Deeds, "Deed Record, Vol. 191, Page 28, between August and Lena Nehls and Bernard and Rosella Nehls," 12 July 1940.

[205] La Crosse County, Wisconsin Register of Deeds, "Deed Record, Vol. 212, Page 436, between William and Dora Hemker and John and Violet Stelloh," 24 February 1947.

[206] La Crosse County, Wisconsin Register of Deeds, "Deed Record, Vol. 50, Page 268, between Fredrick and Maria Diefenthaler and Hermann Sander," 23 March 1878.

[207] Barre Township, La Crosse County, Wisconsin, Tax Rolls, 1880, owner John Betz, T16N, R6W, Sec. 34, SW ¼ of the NE ¼.

[208] La Crosse County, Wisconsin Register of Deeds, "Deed Record, Vol. 64, Page 564, between Carl and Augusta Betz and Hermann Sander," 18 December 1885.

[209] La Crosse County, Wisconsin Register of Deeds, "Deed Record, Vol. 64, Page 564, between Carl and Augusta Betz and Hermann Sander," 18 December 1885.

Sander bought yet additional property five years later, in 1890, from Wilhemina Anderegg, who was the heir of the deceased Fred Betz, former owner of the property.[210] A few days prior to buying the land from Anderegg, Sander bought some additional acreage, increasing yet again the size of his farm, from Fred and Eleanor Voight for $450.[211]

In 1894 a new name appears on the deed documents, Niels Thorstenson, who purchased land in the immediate area from Thorsten and Olive Larson for $600.[212]

In 1902 Henry Sander bought some land in the area from Louis and Mary Sander for $2,000, increasing the size of the farmstead yet again.[213] Just a few years later in 1905, Louis Sander was listed in the tax records as the owner of twenty-six acres valued at $300, for which he paid $2.43 in taxes that year.[214]

In 1906 the land was deeded to John and Dora Meyer, who purchased the land from Henry and Rachel Sander for $14,000.[215] The large jump in valued amount and taxes indicates that the house and improvements were likely added circa 1906 to the farm. In 1912 Carl Wehrenberg bought the property owned by Louis and Mary Sander for $17,000.[216] In 1915 D. C. Miller purchased the land from Carl and Louise Wehrenberg for $19,000. It is interesting to note that the deed records indicate that part of the northeast corner of the property purchased was used as a cemetery.[217] D. C. Miller would own and farm the property for thirteen years until he sold it to Carl W. Miller for $18,000 in 1928.[218]

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[210] La Crosse County, Wisconsin Register of Deeds, "Deed Record, Vol. 75, Page 140, between Wilhemina Anderegg and Hermann Sander," 12 April 1890.

[211] La Crosse County, Wisconsin Register of Deeds, "Deed Record, Vol. 76, Page 586, between Fred and Eleanor Voight and Hermann Sander," 2 April 1890.

[212] La Crosse County, Wisconsin Register of Deeds, "Deed Record, Vol. 88, Page 162, between Thorsten and Olive Larson and Niels Thorstenson," 12 October 1894.

[213] La Crosse County, Wisconsin Register of Deeds, "Deed Record, Vol. 100, Page 152, between Louis and Mary Sander and Henry Sander," 14 March 1902.

[214] Barre Township, La Crosse County, Wisconsin, Tax Rolls, 1905, owner Louis Sander, T16N, R6W, Sec. 34, SW ¼ of the NE ¼.

[215] La Crosse County, Wisconsin Register of Deeds, "Deed Record, Vol. 108, Page 227, between Henry and Rachel Sander and John and Dora Meyer," 2 October 1906.

[216] La Crosse County, Wisconsin Register of Deeds, "Deed Record, Vol. 122, Page 116, between Louis and Mary Sander and Carl Wehrenberg," 1 November 1912.

[217] La Crosse County, Wisconsin Register of Deeds, "Deed Record, Vol. 126, Page 583, between Carl and Louise Wehrenberg and D. C. Miller," 1 November 1915.

[218] La Crosse County, Wisconsin Register of Deeds, "Deed Record, Vol. 157, Page 608, between D. C. Miller and Carl W. Miller," 1 May 1928.

The final deed record for the property shows that Carl and Charlotte Miller bought the property from Dora Meyer in 1929 for one dollar and "other valuable considerations."[219]

Tollef and Bertha Swennes Farmstead

T16N, R6W, Section 28

(198/06)

The third part of the "Tollefson properties" located in Barre Township, T16N, R6W, Sec. 28, the SE ¼ of the NW ¼, is first deeded in 1854. The first owner listed in the deed records is Parker Warren, who bought the 532 acres of land from Servis and Rosetta Schuyler in 1854.[220] Later that same year Warren sold the land to a man named Truman S. Smith for $800.[221] Smith continued to own and farm the property for six years until he sold part of it to David Brown and Malcolm Henderson in 1860 for $100.[222] One year later in 1861, Andrew Graik bought land from John and Lucy Vanness for $3,000.[223]

In 1866 Truman Smith sold the remaining portion of his land to John Francis for $3,500.[224] John and Eleanor Francis sold a portion of their property just one year later, in 1867, to Lars Knudson for $1,000.[225] John Francis then sold the rest of his property

[219] La Crosse County, Wisconsin Register of Deeds, "Deed Record, Vol. 162, Page 285, between Dora Meyer and Carl and Charlotte Miller," 13 December 1929.

[220] La Crosse County, Wisconsin Register of Deeds, "Deed Record, Vol. 4, Page 77, between Servis and Rosetta Schuyler and Parker Warren," 22 March 1854.

[221] La Crosse County, Wisconsin Register of Deeds, "Deed Record, Vol. 5, Page 284, between Parker Warren and Truman S. Smith," 6 December 1854.

[222] La Crosse County, Wisconsin Register of Deeds, "Deed Record, Vol. 20, Page 144, between Truman and Lucretia Smith and David Brown and Malcolm Henderson," 4 December 1860.

[223] La Crosse County, Wisconsin Register of Deeds, "Deed Record, Vol. 20, Page 588, between John and Lucy Vanness and Andrew Graik," 22 October 1861.

[224] La Crosse County, Wisconsin Register of Deeds, "Deed Record, Vol. 29, Page 196, between Truman and Lucretia Smith and John Francis," 2 May 1866.

[225] La Crosse County, Wisconsin Register of Deeds, "Deed Record, Vol. 31, Page 515, between John and Eleanor Francis and Lars Knudson," 20 December 1867.

in 1871 to Evan Roberts for $4,000.[226] Roberts would own the land for only two years before he sold it to Tollef O. Swennes in 1873 for $3,650.[227]

The Barre Township tax roll records indicated that in 1880 the thirty acres owned by Swennes was worth $400, for which he paid $4.66 in taxes that year.[228]

In 1897 Tollef and Bertha Swennes sold to Henry Plenge for $4,600.[229] Therefore, it can be surmised that the improvements were added to the property during the time that Tollef and Bertha Swennes owned the property. Henry and his wife farmed the land for the next eleven years until they sold to Willie Plenge in 1908, for one dollar and "other valuable considerations."[230] In 1934 William Plenge's wife's name, Lilly, was added to the deed to the property. In this same deed transaction the document mentions a school house lot and a mill pond nearby, neither of which are mentioned in any other document or property nearby. The Plenge's continued to farm the land until they sold it in 1945 for $23,000, to the Nuttelman's.[231] The farms still remain in use today in Barre Mills, Wisconsin, and continue to be family owned and operated businesses.

Gottfried Oehler Farmstead and Mill

T15N, R7W, Section 26

(187/05 - farmstead, 187/08 - mill)

The first record of an owner in the northeast corner of the northwest quarter of Section 26 of the Town of Shelby was in 1855. In that year James Conlan sold that 40 acres and the 40 acres in the southwest portion of the southwest section to Valentine Oehler for $1,400. The Oehler family owned the land until 1922. The first land

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[226] La Crosse County, Wisconsin Register of Deeds, "Deed Record, Vol. 40, Page 286, between John and Eleanor Francis and Evan Roberts," 17 November 1871.

[227] La Crosse County, Wisconsin Register of Deeds, "Deed Record, Vol. 42, Page 292, between Evan and Elizabeth Roberts and Tollef O. Swennes," 28 March 1873.

[228] Barre Township, La Crosse County, Wisconsin, Tax Rolls, 1880, owner Tollef O. Swennes, T16N, R6W, Sec. 28, the SE ¼ of the NW ¼.

[229] La Crosse County, Wisconsin Register of Deeds, "Deed Record, Vol. 92, Page 230, between Tollef O. and Bertha Swennes and Henry Plenge," 1 May 1897.

[230] La Crosse County, Wisconsin Register of Deeds, "Deed Record, Vol. 113, Page 460, between Henry and Mary Plenge and Willie Plenge," 23 October 1908.

[231] La Crosse County, Wisconsin Register of Deeds, "Deed Record, Vol. 208, Page 552, between William and Lilly Plenge and Emma, Norbert, and Harvey Nuttelman," 1 November 1945.

assessment gave the property a value of $4,250 in 1867. Gottfried Oehler purchased 28.5 acres in 1879 from Valentine, and then another half acre in 1873. He also acquired parts of the northwest corner of the northwest quarter section and the southeast quarter of the southwest quarter of Section 23. It was at this point in time that the land was divided into two properties of 29.75 acres and 10.25 acres. This description pertains to the 29.5 acres in which the farmstead sits just to the north of the farmstead on 10.25 acres. This larger piece of land includes the Oehler Mill. At the same time he purchased 29 acres in the southwest corner of the northeast quarter of section 26 and the southwest corner of the northeast quarter of section 26 from Gustave, John and Fred Oehler. In 1936, Wenzel Herlitzka's land was sold to his son-in-law Norbert Betz for $526. In 1950, Robert Swing paid Norbert's wife Anna $1 and other considerations for the land.[232]

Gottfried Oehler House (187/05), Shelby Township

The Oehler Mill was built in the mid 1850s by Valentine Oehler. Tax assessments in 1867 of $4250 show the property to be worth much more when the Oehlers owned the land than when Wenzel Herlitzka owned the property in 1930 for $1950. The location was excellent for a mil as the dam could raise the water level up to forty feet higher.

This property sits along county road MM on the west side of the road. The mill is a two story stone building in good condition south of the house and near Mormon Creek. The mill probably served the farms of Mormon Coulee, a fairly large valley tributary of the Mississippi River. The two story brick cube house and an old barn are

[232] Shelby Township, LaCrosse County, Wisconsin, Tax Rolls, 1867, owner Valentine Oehler, NE ¼ of NW ¼, T15N, R7W; "Mortgage Record, Vol. 29, pg. 559, between Margaretha Oehler and Gottfried Oehler," 3 April 1866; ; "Mortgage Record, Vol. 37, pg. 557, between Valentino Oehler and Gottfried Oehler," 6 October 1870; ; "Mortgage Record, Vol. 48, pg. 314, between Margaretha Oehler and Gottfried Oehler," 6 March 1873; ; "Mortgage Record, Vol. 178, pg. 46, between John C. Franzini, General Guardian and Norbert Betz," 15 May 1936; "Mortgage Record, Vol. 230, pg. 324, between Anna Betz and Robert Swing,"22 March 1950.

very close to the road. Previous research done by Robert Swing and Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center dates the house to 1882. Across County Road MM sits the Oehler Cemetery (187/03) that was used by family members who owned both the present day Swing farmstead and the present day Jahnel Farmstead. Also in the area lies a mill dam and cave commonly known as Oehler's Cave. These two attractions are located east of the farmstead on Mormon Creek. Just to the north of the cave is an area of land that was used as a park. The Oehler famly built a pavilion, tourist park, dam, grist mill, and spring water piped into the park so that visitors could enjoy the beauty of the cave and the rock formations.[233]

Oehler Mill (187/08), Shelby Township

Valentine Oehler Farmstead

T T15N, R7W, Section 26

(187/13)

The first record of an owner in the northeast corner of the northwest quarter of section 26 of the Town of Shelby is 1855. In that year James Conlan sold 40 acres and the 40 acres in the southwest portion of the southwest section to Valentine Oehler for $1400. The Oehler family owned the land until 1922. The first land assessment gave the property a value of $4250 in 1867. Gottfried Oehler purchased 28.5 acres in 1870 from Valentine, and then another half acre in 1873. He also acquired parts of the northwest corner of the northwest quarter section and the southeast quarter of the

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[233] "Oehler's Cave." Main Streets of America. July 1930, pg. 8.

southwest quarter section of Section 23. It was at this point that the land was divided into to properties of 29.75 acres and 10.25 acres.[234]

Valentine Oehler House (187/13), Shelby Township

After 1873, when Gottfried Oehler acquired 29.75 acres of land in the northeast corner of the northwest quarter of section 26, Valentine Oehler retained 10.25 acres. In 1892, Louis and Frederick Oehler paid $2000 for the 10.25 acres, 29 acres in the southwest corner of the northeast quarter of section 26, and land in the southeast corner of the northwest quarter of section 26. Gustave, John, and Fred Oehler paid $1600 to Louis and Fredrick in 1908 for the three parcels of land. In 1922, the farmstead and the 10.25 acres of land left the Oehler family as Joseph Jahnel bought it and five acres in the southeast corner of the northwest quarter of section 26. The property to this day remains in the Jahnel family. The present owner is Lillian Jahnel, daughter of Joseph, and acquired the land in 1972.[235]

The farmstead is along the county road MM and sits just north of the property that includes the Oehler Mill. On the west side of the road sits a two story brick cube house that is very close to the road. On the east side of the road, a large barn and and a cellar are also very close to the road. The house immediately to the north that was also owned at one time by the Oehler family was built in 1882. Both houses were built out of the same local red brick which is evidence that the Valentine Oehler House was probably built close to 1880. A cellar constructed in the stone side of the hill across

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[234] LaCrosse County, Wisconsin Register of Deeds, "Mortgage Record, Vol. 8, Page 278, between James Conlan and Valentine Oehler,", 4 March 1855.

[235] " Mortgage Record, Vol. 79, page 273, between Mary Oehler and Louis and Frederick Oehler," 30 March 1892; "Mortgage Record, Vol. 113, page 318, between Frederick and Louis Oehler,, and Gustave , John, and Fred Oehler," 13 July 1908. "Mortgage Record. Vol. 144, page 266, between Fred and John Oehler and Joseph F. Jahnel," 5 January 1922; "Mortgage Record, Vol. 532, Page 324, between Elmer and Lester Jahnel," 15 December 1972.

the road from the house is peculiar, being quite large, and probably was used as a root cellar. On the inside of the cellar is a date of construction in July 1876. Most of the interior of the cellar was hand carved into the sandstone, and brick supports were added at one time. When Joseph Jahnel bought the property he added electricity to the cellar.[236]
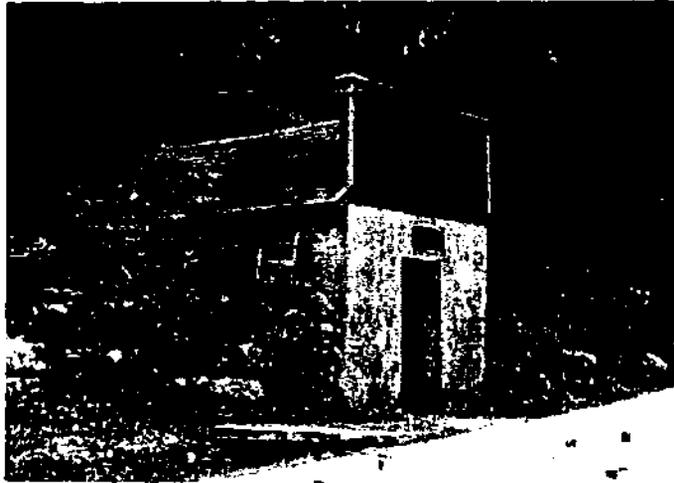
Valentine Oehler Property, Root Cellar (187/13), Shelby Township

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[236] Lillian Jahnel, interview with Barbara Kooiman and Dan Freudenburg, 24 April 1998.

RECOMMENDATIONS

General Observations

The Southern LaCrosse Rural Architectural/Historical Survey Project was conducted in 1997-98 for the purposes of obtaining reconnaissance and intensive level information about the properties located within the six townships in the project area. From the commitment given to this project both by the LaCrosse County Historic Site Preservation Commission and the LaCrosse County Board, it is obvious that historic preservation is considered to be an important topic in this county. Historic preservation should be not only be seen as a way of maintaining a legacy within the county, but should also be seen as an economic alternative to new construction, for bringing grant and loan money into the region, and for a way to improve the general tax base of the county's rural communities and farmsteads. The benefits of historic preservation are summarized below.

Social and Economic Benefits of Historic Preservation

Social Benefits

The preservation of LaCrosse County's historic resources is important for a number of reasons which may not be immediately apparent to many people. It is common for people to live in a community all their life and not recognize the historic gems which surround them. Historic resources can provide a community with a strong sense of their unique history, based on the commercial, industrial, social, residential and educational resources which surround them daily. Older structures provide residents with a feeling of stability and continuity which is difficult, if not impossible to replace. Additionally, these older structures also can instill an appreciation for an era of high standards of aesthetics and craftsmanship which exits today in a very different version.

LaCrosse County's history is reflected through agricultural trends from wheat to dairy, transportation corridors, industries, commerce, and into the twentieth century, increased tourism. Agriculture has remained a strong component in the county, with family farms persisting, and agriculture related industries and commercial establishments in the small communities and inside the city of LaCrosse, itself.

Therefore, it is important socially for the residents of LaCrosse County to preserve their most important historic resources, to aid future residents in understanding an important past. In addition to this understanding, however, the people of LaCrosse

County may reap possible economic benefits through their historic resources.

Economic Benefits

- Thousands of historic rehabilitation projects have been undertaken in the past few decades. Rehabilitation became a major national industry in the 1980s. As a result, information is becoming increasingly available which indicate that rehabilitation of older buildings is more cost effective than new construction.

- Rehabilitation projects usually cost about one-half to one-third less than similar new construction.

- Initial construction costs are lower because demolition costs are minimal as a result and there is little expense for foundation and/or structural work. As a result, rehabilitation projects are usually faster to complete.

- Rehabilitation projects often provide central and convenient site location, sound and durable quality construction, unique aesthetic and design value, and the public relations of positive image and greater publicity opportunities.

- Rehabilitation projects create more jobs and have a greater impact on the local economy and unemployment rate than comparable new construction projects. Rehabilitation projects tend to utilize 25% more labor than new construction projects. Fewer materials are used than in new construction, which makes more project money available for labor. As a result, more of the money spent on the project will be re-circulated back into the local economy.

- Preservation stimulates economic revitalization and private investment which in turn increases the local tax base.

- Preservation has a strong impact on the tourism industry, which is currently one of the largest industries in Wisconsin. In 1990, tourism generated approximately $6.3 billion in spending revenue. Sightseeing is one of the most popular summer vacation activities, and historic sites are an important feature in sightseeing activities.

[The above economic benefits discussion was excerpted, in part, from a pamphlet entitled "Economic Benefits of Historic Preservation in Wisconsin," published by the Historic Preservation Division of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin in 1990.]

In addition to the general social and economic benefits, there are programs which have been established by state and federal governments which encourage historic preservation.

Tax Incentives for Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings

Owners of income-producing National Register properties can claim a 20% federal investment tax credit and an additional 5% state investment tax credit for rehabilitation expenses. Work must be sympathetic with the historic character of the building, follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, and be approved by the National Park Service and the Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

Protection from Federal Projects

Properties that are listed on the National Register or State Register of Historic Places, or that may be eligible to be listed, receive limited protection from federally licenses or funded projects. Any agency or organization seeking federal assistance or permits should contact the Chief of Compliance in the Historic Preservation Division of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin at 608/264-6509, to ensure that its project comply with federal regulations.

It should be noted, however, that while listing on the National Register of Historic Places gives some protection from federally funded project, it provides no protection from privately funded development. Only local Historic Preservation Ordinance (which LaCrosse County has) authorized by state statute, may allow the community to regulate new construction, exterior alterations, and demolitions which may adversely affect historic properties.

Wisconsin Historic Building Code

The Wisconsin Historic Building Code is available for use by owners of buildings which are listed on the State and National Register of Historic Places owners of historic buildings which have been designated under a local historic preservation ordinance which has been certified by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin (LaCrosse is a certified local government, so all local historic properties meet these criteria). This code, administered by the Department of Industry, Labor and Human Relations (DILHR) is designed to facilitate the preservation restoration of the designated historic buildings through the provision of alternative building standards.

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Owners of qualified historic buildings are permitted to be subject to the Historic Building Code in lieu of any state or municipal building codes. For more information contact DILHR at 608/266-3151.

Recommendations for Future Action on Preservation

♦ List any and all properties designated under the Intensive Survey chapter of this report on the local historic sites list;

♦ List any and all properties highlighted under the Intensive Survey chapter of this report on the National Register of Historic Places list;

♦ Continue education programs through public meetings, brochures, ongoing research;

♦ Establish contact with community historic preservation leaders and organizations to continue cooperation in the historic survey project

♦ Continue to collect site-specific information on individual properties;

♦ Continue rural historic properties survey phased project.... Next conduct survey of the northern townships in LaCrosse County;

♦ Prepare a Historic Preservation Plan for LaCrosse County.

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Northern La Crosse County, Wisconsin Historic Building Survey

Circa 1845 to 1950

Submitted December 2002

To the LaCrosse County Historic Sites Preservation Commission
And the
Wisconsin Historical Society
By

Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center
At University of Wisconsin-La Crosse

Barbara M. Kooiman, Principal Investigator

R.O.I. #495

AKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

LaCrosse County, which is situated in west central Wisconsin along the eastern banks of the Mississippi River, was among the earliest regions of Wisconsin to be settled. The rich soil and wide range of topography brought people from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds to the region. This document explores the historic context and themes of the rural townships in the seven townships which lie north of the LaCrosse River Valley, which bisects the county east to west.

The architectural history of the county is an important part of its history. The farmsteads, rural schools, townhalls, and religious complexes which make up the environment help tell the history of this region. This report attempts to record and disseminate information about the county using its buildings as a vehicle to express that history.

LaCrosse County encompasses 481 square miles, equaling 307,840 acres. It is bounded by Trempealeau County to the northwest, Jackson County to the north, Monroe County to the east, Vernon County to the south, and the Mississippi River along its west border. For this study, the townships of Burns, Campbell/Medary, Farmington, Hamilton, Holland, and Onalaska were surveyed. One-hundred thirty-five (135) properties were surveyed at the reconnaissance level within the project area. Eleven (11) properties were identified as being National Register eligible.

METHODOLOGY

In September 2001 the LaCrosse County Historic Sites Preservation Commission hired Barbara Kooiman of Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center at the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse as Principal Investigator for the Northern LaCrosse County, Wisconsin Historic/Architectural Survey. Kooiman, in conjunction with the Public History program at University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse, under the supervision of Dr. Charles Lee, conducted field work during the fall of 2001 and spring of 2002.

The research team of Kooiman and the UW-L students held a public meeting on May 1, 2002 at the Holmen City Hall in Holmen. The meeting was held in conjunction with a Holmen Historical Society monthly meeting, and approximately forty people were in attendance, including interested parties in the community, and Mr. Joe DeRose, Survey Coordinator, Wisconsin Historical Society.

Field work commenced almost immediately upon selection of MVAC to prepare the report. Kooiman organized the Public History students, comprised in the fall of 2001 of Bruce Perkins, Dawn Whaley and Cortney Cain. Whaley and Cain continued assisting with field work well into 2002. Kooiman and Professor Lee met with the students periodically throughout both semesters, and Kooiman assigned readings in LaCrosse County history, writing assignments of thematic chapters for the reports, and once field work was commenced, research on particular properties within the project area which appeared to meet the criteria for National Register of Historic Places eligibility.

Field work continued from September 2001 through May 2002. Kooiman took one student at a time to conduct field work. Kooiman drove, and the took all photographs, while the students filled out field survey forms and plotted the properties on field maps, which was information that was later transferred to clean USGS maps. Virtually all public roads within the project area were driven.

Field survey criteria was as follows:

The properties were each located inside the project area, including all of the townships of Campbell, Farmington, and Holland, and the northern portions only of Burns, Hamilton, and Onalaska.

- A LaCrosse County highway map was used as a road map in the survey, as well as multiple 7.5' USGS maps.
- Surveyed properties were at least 50 years old, and the main building had sufficient integrity to project a sense of its history. If the property was

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severely modified with additions, replacement siding, or non-historic windows or doors, it was not surveyed. Exceptions to these criteria were occasionally made for properties which were unusual or particularly old.

• Abandoned properties were surveyed if they had sufficient integrity, and dated from the nineteenth century.

• All schools, town halls, and other less common property types were recorded despite integrity.

• Not only buildings and complexes of buildings (such as farmsteads) were recorded, but structures, such as bridges, and sites, such as cemeteries were recorded as well.

• All properties were located on USGS maps using the SHSW survey map codes. One original copy of maps will be part of the deliverables for the SHSW for this project, and a second, photocopied set of maps will be submitted to the LaCrosse·County Historic Sites Preservation Commission archives.

• All photos were taken with black & white 35mm film, produced on contact sheets, and prints, which were adhered to survey cards, which are submitted to the SHWS as final deliverables.

• Data entry of the field survey was made in the HistoriBase database program utilized by the SHSW Historic Preservation Division. The LaCrosse County survey was copied onto disk for the SHSW and submitted as part of the final deliverables for this project.

• Survey cards and forms were photocopied and presented a part of the deliverables for the LaCrosse County Historic Sites Preservation Commission.

The UW-L public history students did all the data entry on to forms and Barbara Kooiman made all entries into the HistoriBase program. The students plotted all properties on maps, and as described above, wrote general LaCrosse County history, township histories, thematic chapters, and site-specific histories. Each student was given an independent study credit and grade through the UW-L Public History program under Professor Lee.

SUMMARY of RESULTS

The Northern LaCrosse County, Wisconsin Historic/Architectural Survey began in September 2001 and was completed in summer 2002 under the direction of Barbara Kooiman, Principal Investigator, at Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center for the LaCrosse County Historic Sites Preservation Commission.

The results of the survey were:

- Preparation and creation of the survey report
- Survey of 135 properties in northern LaCrosse County
- Preparation of field survey maps
- Database entry in HistoriBase database of all surveyed properties
- Identification of eleven (11) National Register of Historic Places eligible properties.

LaCrosse County Historic/Archtectural Survey
2001-02
Survey Results

Property Types

Township /City	Farms tead	House	School	Reli- gious	Ceme- tery	Govt.	Comm- ercial	Bridge	Other	Total
Burns	1	3	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	7
Campbell	0	7	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	11
Farming-ton	17	8	4	1	6	0	2	1	1	40
Hamil-ton	6	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Holland	8	3	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	15
Onalaska	12	8	2	1	3	0	2	1	0	29
Holmen	0	21	1	0	0	0	3	1	0	26
TOTAL	42	49	13	2	13	0	7	4	2	135

* **Bold** townships were only partially surveyed, as southern portions of these townships were initially surveyed in 1995.

Styles (houses only)

Township/City	2 story cube	Queen Anne	Italian-ate	Front Gable	Side Gable	Gabled Ell	Cross Gable	Bunga-low	Other
Burns				1		2		1	
Campbell				2	2	1		1	1
Farmington	5		1	3	3	12		2	1
Hamilton	2				2	1	1		
Holland	5				2	2	1	1	
Onalaska	2			1	7	5		2	3
Holmen		2		5		1	1	10	2
Total	14	2	1	12	16	24	3	17	7

Other = one-story cube, Quonset, gabled-T, Dutch Colonial.   2 of the above houses are also partially log.

OVERVIEW HISTORY OF LACROSSE COUNTY

LaCrosse County was formed in 1851, with its final boundaries determined by 1857, however, first settlement occurred in the vicinity of the present-day city of LaCrosse as early as 1844. Up to the present, agriculture has remained an important part of LaCrosse County's economy. However, during the past one hundred fifty years there have been shifts in the types of preferred agricultural products. For example, in the late 1800s wheat production was very important to LaCrosse County, however, by the early 1900s the shift was made to dairy production, with corn and hay being important crops, while wheat became relatively rare as a LaCrosse County crop. The types of farm layout and outbuildings utilized would have also changed during this shift from a grain-based economy to a livestock-based economy. The relative wealth of farmers also shifted, and preferred house styles assist in reflecting those changes.

Wisconsin became a state in the year 1848, but prior to that time it had been a part of several different territories. The Treaty of Paris, signed in 1873, ceded all land east of the Mississippi River to the United States. However, it was not until the Jay Treaty of 1794 that the Federal Government retained complete control over the territory.[1] The first claim for this territory, which included the area of present-day

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[1] Bryant, Benjamin F. (Ed). *Memoirs of LaCrosse County*. (Madison: Western Historical Association, 1907), 28

Wisconsin, was claimed by the Virginia colonial government. Shortly after the Jay Treaty, Virginia relinquished this land to the United States Government.

In 1785 and 1787 two different Northwest Ordinances were passed by the United States. These ordinances were set up as a form of government for the Northwest Territory, which included present day Wisconsin. The first act provided the guidelines for the rectangular land survey that established the townships and the section sizes throughout much of the United States. When the ordinance first went into effect the smallest size parcel a person could buy was an entire section, or 360 acres. However, the size of the parcel was reduced to forty acres prior to the first settlement of the area. It was this forty-acre parcel of land that most settlers initially bought, and became the American farm standard size. The second act provided that there would not be slavery in the Northwest Territory.[2]

By July of 1800 the area including present-day Wisconsin was part of the territory of Indiana, however, the area of Wisconsin was ceded to the territory of Illinois in 1809. When Illinois gained its statehood in 1818, the area of present-day Wisconsin became a part of Michigan's territory. The Wisconsin territory belonged to the Winnebago tribes until the November 1837 treaty, which required the Winnebago to yield their land that lay east of the Mississippi to the United States.[3] The territory of Wisconsin was established in 1836 and was granted its statehood in 1848.

LaCrosse County was not created until after the State of Wisconsin was itself formed in 1848. When Wisconsin was established the area of present day LaCrosse County was included in Crawford County which consisted of much of the western portion of the state. In February of 1851 the state legislature passed a bill creating LaCrosse County, and on 19 May 1851 the county was fully organized. Several boundary changes occurred over the years before the present boundaries of LaCrosse County were established. The present boundaries of LaCrosse County, consisting of 475 square miles, were designated and approved on 3 March 1857, six years after the county itself was created.[4]

The name "La Crosse," a word of French origin, was given to the area as early as 1805, when it was known as Prairie de la Crosse. The name "La Crosse" originally came from the name the French gave the ball game that the Indians played at this

[2] Conlin, Joseph R. *The American Pat: a Survey of American History.* San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanonich Publisher, 1984. 143, 146; Bryant, 28.

[3] Bryant, 29, 23.

[4] *History of LaCrosse County, Wisconsin.* Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1881, 315, 328; *Historical Atlas and Chronology of County Boundaries, 1788-1980.* Vol. 3 Michigan, Wisconsin. John H. Long, ed. Compiled by Hugo P. Leaming (WI), John H. Long (MI). Boston: G.K. Hall and Co., 1984. 204-205; Bryant, 47.

time, which utilized a stick which reminded the French of a priest's cross or staff. Nathan Myrick, the area's first permanent settler, shortened the name to La Crosse.[5]

Nathan Myrick arrived November 1841 on a flatboat from Prairie du Chien. Myrick came to the area from New York to trade with the native tribes. Originally he had set up camp on Barron's Island, which is present-day Pettibone Island. However, in 1842 he moved his trading post from the island directly across the main channel of the Mississippi River to the present site of the city of La Crosse.[6]

In 1844 the first Euro-American farmers moved to the area. John and Charles Nagel placed their farm at the foot of the bluffs between present day State Road and Mormon Coulee.[7] Between 1851 and 1855 settlers started to take outlying land for farms, while people were still settling in the village of LaCrosse.[8] In the fall of 1858 there were still some six hundred thousand vacant acres of land available in the county for settlement and farming. However, little speculation of the land was done, because most of the settlers made their claims for their forty acre parcels in person at the land office, which became easier once the land office was moved to LaCrosse from Mineral Point in 1853.[9]

The following table gives the number of land parcels and percentage deeded by month in the year of 1853. The smallest percentage of land registered was in the month of February, probably due to the severely cold weather that the area experiences during this month. The month of November indicates the largest number of land registered, probably because winter would soon set in and shelters needed to be built. The month of June represents the second largest amount of land registered, probably because there was still time to plant a crop and construct sufficient shelters.[10]

Month (of 1853)	Parcels Registered	Percentage
January	573	7.5
February	399	4.4

[5] History of LaCrosse County, Wisconsin, 329-330, 581.

[6] Bryant, 23, 32. Myrick's Post was located near the present day intersection of Front and State Streets.

[7] History of LaCrosse County, Wisconsin, 332.

[8] Bryant, 34.

[9] Bryant, 50; Wingate, Robert George. Settlement Patterns of LaCrosse County, Wisconsin 1850-1875. Thesis, University of Minnesota, August 1975, 98.

[10] Wingate, 99.

March	390	5.1
April	657	8.6
May	641	8.4
June	870	11.4
July	683	8.9
August	436	5.7
September	504	6.6
October	654	8.5
November	906	11.8
December	612	8.0
Vacant land or Owned by Railroad	391	5.1
Total	7,716	100

Of these pioneers who came to the area between 1848 and 1862, the majority of them hailed from the eastern seaboard, such as New York and New England. European immigrants also arrived in the area. The two major nationalities that represented these early settlers were German and Norwegian. They tended to work primarily in lumbering or farming.[11]

The population of the county in 1855 was nearly 4,000 and by 1860 it was 12,186. The large jump in population was due to the railroad being established in LaCrosse in 1858. The population of the area slowed down during the Civil War, however once the war was over many people from the southern United States moved north. The population grew steadily for the next ten years to 20,297 in 1870. The growth slowed from 1870 to 1880 when the population was 27,073. Through the next two decades the population continued to rise, 38,801 in 1890 and 42,997 at the turn of the century.[12]

Many different nationalities were represented in the turn-of-the-century population of LaCrosse County. The foreign born population totaled 10,902 in 1900. Forty percent were Germans who settled primarily in the southwestern portion of the county. Norwegians, including Swedes, who settled mostly in the northwestern portion of the county, equaled thirty-two percent. Bohemians, who tended to settle in the southeast, equaled five percent. English equaled three

[11] Bryant, 48. By 1862 over eighty-five percent of the county was settled, Wingate, 101.

[12] Gregory, John G. West Central Wisconsin: A History. Indianapolis: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., Inc., 1933, 599; Bryant, 181.

percent, and Canadians (which included French, via Canada) equaled two percent of the population. The Yankees, English and Welsh all settled primarily along the LaCrosse River Valley and its tributaries.[13] One sixth of the population of Wisconsin in 1860 were from Germany, however, the English, American and Welsh settlers were among the earliest nationalities in the LaCrosse area.[14] By the year 1905 LaCrosse County was almost entirely settled, and contained twenty-one different nationalities, of which the Germans and Norwegians were the predominate ethnic groups. The only land remaining unsettled in 1905 was 760 acres of sandstone soil that was held by the railroads.[15]

Foreigners generally learned of Wisconsin through the state's Bureau of Immigration. This governmental office was used to help recruit new settlers to the state. Along with the bureau, in 1852 state legislation provided for an immigration commissioner to be located in New York City to provide information about Wisconsin to the newly arrived immigrants. Another way that immigrants learned of the United States was through letters that were sent back to the old country from those who traversed their way to the new lands. These letters gave first hand knowledge of the voyage, land, and settlement opportunities in certain areas. All ethnic groups used this system as a major source of information which helped many in the decision to emigrate or to stay behind.[16]

The routes that the immigrants first followed to the LaCrosse area were of two kinds before 1858. The immigrants could follow one of the numerous water highways such as the Mississippi River from the south or from the north via the Great Lakes. The other choice was along the rough Indian trails that could be traversed by foot, ox cart, horse or stagecoach. A big change in area transportation took place on 23 August 1858 when the LaCrosse & Milwaukee Railroad became the first railroad to extend to LaCrosse. The railroad travelers followed the LaCrosse River Valley through the Driftless area to LaCrosse and the Mississippi River. This point was the only access that could be made between the Wisconsin and St. Croix rivers. The railroad followed one of the early transportation routes to connect LaCrosse to eastern Wisconsin.[17]

The first railroad in proximity to LaCrosse was located in Prairie du Chien and ran from Milwaukee. This railroad line was established in 1857. The Milwaukee

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[13] Bryant, 181.

[14] Raney, 218; Bryant, 181.

[15] Wingate, 63, 65.

[16] Wingate, 63, 65.

[17] Gregory, 508; Wingate 52, 53, 59. The Driftless area is the area of land that was not covered by the glacial ice during the last ice age 1.6 to ten thousand years ago.

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and LaCrosse Railroad paralleled that of the Prairie du Chien and Milwaukee line. This line was important to LaCrosse because with it the city was connected to Chicago not only by river but also by rail, and created a southwestern node for Wisconsin and Minnesota.[18]

The Milwaukee & LaCrosse was not the only railroad in LaCrosse. In 1867 the city of LaCrosse was linked up with the Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad. A merger between the St. Paul & Chicago and the Milwaukee & St. Paul in 1874 created the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad. Before Minnesota goods could be transported to LaCrosse and Wisconsin, a bridge was needed across the Mississippi River. In 1870 a winter bridge was built to connect LaCrosse to Barron's Island, then across the Mississippi River to Minnesota. During the seasons when the Mississippi River was navigable between the years 1870 and 1879, goods and passengers were transferred across the river to the awaiting railroad in Minnesota. The railroad bridge was constructed across the river in 1876. This bridge connected the Milwaukee & LaCrosse Line on the Wisconsin side to the Southern Minnesota Railroad on the Minnesota side.[19] By 1893 three major railroad lines were running through the LaCrosse River Valley, influencing the establishment and permanence of the villages of Rockland, Bangor and West Salem. The railroads enabled the transport of raw materials, manufactured goods, and people from the LaCrosse River Valley to commerce centers such as Milwaukee, Chicago, and St. Paul.[20]

LaCrosse County's early history is marked by prosperity, but by the turn of the century, the county's economy seemed to be less stable, with the loss of the lumber industries, and the waning of wheat growing in western Wisconsin. The county's residents diversified however, and one area where they developed was in the dairy industry. The introduction of the dairy cows to LaCrosse County was vital to the continued economic growth of the county. Dairying provided a stable economy for the county's residents. The soils throughout the county are well suited to the cultivation of crops such as corn and hay which was needed to feed the dairy herds. Milk production led to the creation of local cooperatives that specialized in butter and cheese production.

The ability of the people of LaCrosse County to direct their efforts towards dairying and other agricultural products has allowed for the continued economic and population growth of the county. Following 1900, dairying has developed into one of the leading industries of the State of Wisconsin, as well as LaCrosse County. Agriculture in general has remained a strong stabilizing factor in the county's

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[18] Gregory, 492; Wingate, 53.

[19] Barbara Kooiman, "Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway Depot," LaCrosse, WI, National Register of Historic Places Nomination, section 8 page 2.

[20] Robert C. Nesbit, The History of Wisconsin, Vol. III. (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1985),

economy, with the size of the county's farms fluctuating relatively little through out the historic period. In 1890 the average county farm was 154.4 acres, and in 1950 the average farm was 168.0 acres.[21]

This economic stability has brought rural LaCrosse County to its present state. The people, land, buildings and soils of the county have combined to make it an agriculturally rich area, with a strong sense of beauty, tradition, and hard labor. The following thematic chapters will illustrate how certain aspects of the county's history have influenced the built environment of LaCrosse County.

LaCrosse County, contoured fields

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[21] University of Wisconsin Agricultural Extension Services, Wisconsin Rural Resources, LaCrosse, County. (Madison, WI: Wisconsin State Department of Agriculture, Crop and Livestock Reporting Service, 1957), 18.

HISTORIC CONTEXT THEMES OF NORTHERN LACROSSE COUNTY

Settlement

Wisconsin was a prime spot for settlement after the population increases in the east. It was heavily forested at the time of European expansion into the area. The natural resources were abundant and the climate was harsh. The land was occupied by American Indians before the disruption of the Europeans. The earliest Europeans into the area were French trappers. With the exception of a few military forts and a few other settlements, permanent settlement of Wisconsin first began in the lead region of the southwestern portion of the state around 1826.[22] The population moved in from the direction of the Mississippi River because the later commercial centers on the Great Lakes were not yet developed. The first influx of settlers generally occupied the southern counties of the state[23], mainly due to the lead mines that were located in the area. The Black Hawk War of 1832 opened the southeastern portion of the state for expansion and the demand for cheap land brought about a rapid population growth. Once the expansion began, it progressed rapidly. The state's population grew from only 11,000 in 1836 when the territory was formed to 776,000 in 1860.[24] A high proportion of this population was made up of foreigner born immigrants and Americans of New England background.[25]

The major reason for the expansion was the land. Wisconsin had abundant cheap land that was available to the early settlers. Although land was also available in the West, many enthusiasts believed that no where was good farmland so plentiful.[26] There was also a major push by the state to bring in settlers. Legislation by the state of Wisconsin in 1852-3 provided a commissioner of emigration with an

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[22] H.A. Tenney and David Atwood. *Fathers of Wisconsin.* (Madison: WI: David Atwood, publisher, 1985), 14.

[23] Wyatt, Barbara, ed. *Cultural Resources Management in Wisconsin- Volumes I-III, A Manual for Historic Properties.* (Madison: Historic Preservation Division, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986.)

[24] Robert C. Nesbit. *Wisconsin: A History.* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1973), 57.

[25] Robert C. Nesbit. *Wisconsin: A History.* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1973), 57.

[26] Richard N. Current. *The History of Wisconsin: Volume II The Civil War Era, 1848-1873.* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1976), 47.

office in New York and a travel agent to entice immigrants to come to the state. The first commissioner of immigration was Gysbert Van Steenwyk from La Crosse.[27] The job of the travel agent was "to see that correct representations be made in eastern newspapers of our Wisconsin's great natural resources, advantages, and privileges, and brilliant prospects for the future..." They annually distributed about thirty thousand copies of pamphlets in German, Norwegian, and Dutch language version.[28]

Not only did this attract foreigners, but it also drew a large number of native New Yorkers and New Englanders. Land had become a scare commodity in the East as populations increased there. In 1860, almost half of the Wisconsin residents born in other states were from New York.[29]

Another prominent reason for the influx of foreigners was the opening of the Great Lakes with the construction of the Erie Canal. Opened in 1825, it provided a water path to the interior of the United States. This began a common mode of transportation for those who came to Wisconsin. The city of Milwaukee grew tremendously due to the trend towards water travel. In 1840, Milwaukee had 1,712 residents but by 1860, the city had grown to 45,246.[30]

La Crosse County lies in the unglaciated area, or "driftless area," of Wisconsin. The area is also known as the western uplands, referring to the highland region that is bordered on the west by the Mississippi River valley.[31] The topography is characterized by deep ravines of steep-walled valleys called "coulees," carved out by glacial ice waters.[32] The land along the Mississippi was prairie land.

The initial attraction of La Crosse County was for fur trade. French and British fur traders had been in the area trading with Native Americans. Later, the forests north of La Crosse provided a base for the lumber industry. The convenience of transportation to the area helped in the settlement. The end of the Black Hawk War in 1832 opened the area up for European expansion. The war took away much of the perceived threat Native Americans had presented in the area. La Crosse was

[27] Robert C. Nesbit. *Wisconsin: A History.* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1973), 57.

[28] *Ibid.,* p.45-6

[29] *Ibid.,* p. 78

[30] Robert C. Nesbit. *Wisconsin: A History.* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1973), 150.

[31] Robert George Wingate. *Settlement Patterns in La Crosse County, Wisconsin 1850-1875.* 1975, 16.

[32] *Ibid.,* p. 17

easily accessible via the Mississippi River and that helped with early settlement in the county.[33]

In 1847, a year before Wisconsin gained statehood, a survey was done by Henry Bliss of La Crosse County.[34] The land in present day La Crosse County was put up for sale and a land office was opened in Mineral Point for the auctioning of this new land. With land prices of $1.25 an acre, a settler could purchase eighty acres of land for one hundred dollars.[35]

Initial settlement of La Crosse County took place between 1850 and 1875.[36] Although the Welsh were the initial settlers in the county, in the following years the Germans and Norwegians would settle in larger numbers. The Germans and Norwegians first purchased land in the county in 1850[37] and settled in large numbers both in 1853 and 1855.[38] Of these early settlers, the Germans settled in the Mormon Coulee and the Norwegians settled in the La Crosse Valley.

Much of the southern part of La Crosse County was settled later than the northern and western portions.[39] Travel was difficult to these areas and isolation was the norm. The townships of Shelby, Greenfield and Washington were some of the last townships in the county to be populated. No villages existed in the southern part of the county and only a few unincorporated villages exist. This is due to the area's close proximity to La Crosse and to the fact that most of the area was not on major travel routes. The townships in the southwestern part of the county were not connected to waterways that lead to Prairie La Crosse but instead, as in the example of Mormon Creek, came out five or six miles south in the Mississippi slough. These townships were therefore off the main line of travel.

One of the first groups to actually settle in southern La Crosse County were the Mormons. In 1844, approximately twenty families from Nauvoo, Illinois came to La Crosse. They settled in an area which is now referred to as Mormon Coulee and engaged in cutting cord wood. In the spring, they left mysteriously under the light

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[33] Robert George Wingate. *Settlement Patterns in La Crosse County, Wisconsin 1850-1875.* 1975, .56.

[34] Wingate, 50.

[35] Wingate, 56.

[36] Wingate, 147.

[37] Wingate, 103.

[38] Wingate, 116.

[39] Benjamin F. Bryant. *Memoirs of La Crosse County,* 50.

of their burning cabins. They abandoned the La Crosse site and moved the colony to Texas.[40]

GERMANS

The Germans were one of the largest European groups that immigrated to Wisconsin. The 1850 census revealed that roughly 12% of the state's population were Germans.[41]   They began to settle in La Crosse County in 1850.   They purchased land in Mormon Coulee that was abandoned when the Mormons left.[42] The largest number German land purchases came in 1855, when Germans bought 255 forty acre parcels.[43] The majority of this land was on the limestone ridge in the southern part of the county, in Washington and Greenfield Township. Most of these settlers were Catholic Germans from southern Germany.[44] These Germans came from areas in Southern Germany, Austrio-Hungary and Switzerland that had similar limestone soils.[45] William Nicolai and Gregory Boschert were two early settlers in Greenfield Township.[46] William Nicolai came to the United States in 1849, moved to La Crosse County in 1852, and settled in Greenfield the following year. Gregory Boschert moved to Greenfield in 1855 after living in New York and Racine County, Wisconsin.

NORWEGIANS

The Norwegians were the major homesteaders in the county. They mostly settled in the sandstone valleys of the northern part of the county although two settlements are in the limestone regions in the southern part of the county.[47]   One of these settlements of Norwegians is around the Bostwick Valley Lutheran Church in Bostwick Valley. The other southern Norwegian settlement is in Washington Township and is an extension of the Coon Valley settlement in Vernon County.   In Bangor, Greenfield, and Washington townships,

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[40] Robert George Wingate. *Settlement Patterns in La Crosse County, Wisconsin 1850-1875.* 1975 p.49

[41] Wyatt, Barbara, ed.   *Cultural Resources Management in Wisconsin- Volumes I-III, A Manual for Historic Properties.* (Madison: Historic Preservation Division, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986.)

[42] Wingate, 103.

[43] Wingate, 116.

[44] Wingate, 116.

[45] Wingate, 120.

[46] Bryant, Benjamin F. *Memoirs of La Crosse County,* 222.

[47] Wingate, 134.

the population of Norwegians increased from 1,347 in 1860 to 3,381 in 1870.[48] Also, of the 8,602 foreigner born settlers in 1870, 2,646 were Swedish or Norwegian native.[49]

SWISS

The Swiss were one of the first ethnic groups to settle in La Crosse County. In 1851, a group of five Swiss led by John Brosshard were the first settlers of Bangor.[50] Some of them settled in the Dutch Creek valley and the others settled in the La Crosse River valley. Between 1853 to 1860, several groups of Swiss settlers came to the southern part of La Crosse County.[51] The reports written by Henry Brosshard, a school teacher from near Zurich who came to the United States and wrote about life here, were probably influential in bringing Swiss to the county. Brosshard stated the county had low priced land, virgin woods, rich soil, and an excellent supply of water. The Swiss settled in an area called Mormon Coulee, about five miles south of the village of La Crosse. Some of the earliest families were the Hoffmans, Hinderlings, Schweizers, and Sprengers. Although the date of their exact arrival date is uncertain, they all located in the Town of Shelby between 1853 and 1854. The largest influx of Swiss into the area was a group from Brienz, Canton Bern, in 1856. These people were sheep-herders and the economy in Canton Bern at the time was not good. When they arrived they bought land from non-resident owners, probably land speculators. Later Swiss settled farther up Mormon Coulee, in Greenfield Township. Matt Blumer, a Swiss settler who took part in the California gold rush, settled in the area in the 1850s and built Blumer's Mill on Mormon Coulee Creek in 1871.[52]

BOHEMIANS

Although the first settler came between 1854 and 1855, the Bohemians were one of the last groups to settle in the county. Many of them came from the vicinity of Plzen. They settled in an area known as Bohemian Ridge and Bohemian Valley

[48] Fapso, William J. *Norwegians in Wisconsin*

[49] *History of La Crosse County,* 259

[50] State Historical Society of Wisconsin. *Wisconsin Domesday Book: Town Studies, Vol.* I. (Madison, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1924), 23.

[51] George Zielke. "The Swiss Settlers of Mormon Coulee," *The La Crosse County Historical Sketches, Series 1.* (LaCrosse, WI: Liesenfeld Press., 1931), 21.

[52] Zielke., 21.

in the southeast corner of the county.[53]   A number of factors influenced their moving to this area. First, the limestone soil in the area was similar to the soils of Bohemia. Also, the Bohemian Ridge had a large German population and the Bohemians were accustom to living near Germans since Bohemia was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Finally, they were Catholic and attended the St. Peters Church at Middle Ridge.[54]

DUTCH

The Dutch in LaCrosse County settled in the northwestern portion of the county in what came to be known as Holland Township. The township was originally settled by a group of Dutch immigrants who arrived in 1853 after having been shipwrecked in the West Indies. They arrived in LaCrosse County via New Orleans. The low, sandy bottom lands along the Black and Mississippi rivers appealed to them, and they founded the village of New Amsterdam, where there are still descendents of these original families today. [55]

FRENCH

The French who settled in the LaCrosse area came originally from French Canada near Montreal. They settled the area north of LaCrosse which was called French Island, now the Town of Campbell. In the twentieth century, the residents of this area became known for their truck farming, and several of these French Canadian descendents operated these truck farms.[56]

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[53] Robert George Wingate. *Settlement Patterns in La Crosse County, Wisconsin 1850-1875.* 1975, 72

[54] Wingate, 124

[55] Wingate, 72.

[56] Wingate, 72.

AGRICULTURE

The attention of early settlers was confined to getting food, shelter, and clothing. Therefore, the first pioneers of a country were farmers, fishermen, miners, and trappers, because it is the easiest to make a living from these raw materials, and provide for themselves, and their families. In the early history of Wisconsin this is true[57]. The soils of La Crosse County were rich enough to support cultivation and planting, and many early settlers took advantage of this. This report will focus on the agricultural history of La Crosse County, and will include such topics as crops, crop usage, terrain, and livestock.

Terrain

La Crosse County is located in an area called the "driftless" region. The "driftless" region is an area in west-central Wisconsin that was untouched by the glaciers. It is characterized by steep bluffs, and narrow valleys, known in the area as "coulees". In the high regions, where the surface rock is limestone, the soil is invariably good. Some low areas, however, where limestone has been eroded away, underlying sandstone is the surface rock, which is sandy and agriculturally unproductive[58]. This is not always the case, though, as some places are filled with alluvial matter which was deposited by streams. This being the case, there are many high elevation fields. Large "bluff-top" fields are not rare. In the low areas, fields are long and narrow, as this is the layout of the terrain from which the fields were cut.

Crops

The same natural conditions that make Wisconsin an agricultural state, determined that its main interest was grain growing in the early years. Wheat is the number one crop of all in La Crosse County.[59] It was easy to plant, and took little or no work to cultivate, and manage. Wheat is very strong, and can withstand colder

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[57] W.W Daniels, M.S. Prof. of Chemistry and Agriculture At the University of Wisconsin, Early account of the origins of agriculture, 151.

[58] Lawrence Martin, Physical Geography of Wisconsin,

[59]Barbara Wyatt, From Cultural Resources Management in Wisconsin-Volumes I-III, A Manual for Historic Properties.

temperatures, and a shorter growing season as is the case in Wisconsin. Wisconsin was ranked ninth in wheat production in 1850.[60] In 1860, this rank was raised to third[61], only Illinois and Indiana raising more.

Wheat was the first early cash crop of Wisconsin, but there were disadvantages to it as a crop. It left the land with few of the nutrients it needed to continue annual production, and people in early agriculture did not realize that wheat would deplete the soil of nutrients, nor did they have the land capital for crop rotation. No attention was paid to soil fertility. The only aim was to secure the largest crop for the smallest outlay of capital. This lead to experimentation with other crops, and ultimately crop diversification.

Corn was raised to a large extent, but this area, along with the rest of Wisconsin has never ranked high in corn production.[62] Corn was normally grown in the southwestern part of the state, and mainly followed the population route. However, corn became very important with the age of the dairy industry, and the introduction of the silo in 1880. Corn was the chief silage material and as dairy farming grew corn acreage was expanded for silage purposes. The use of corn silage made it possible to grow the crop farther north and thus the acreage in the northern dairy counties grew. Another development which has tended to extend corn acreage in La Crosse County had been the introduction of hybrids and earlier maturing varieties of seed.[63]

Next to wheat, more bushels of oats were raised than any other cereal. In 1860, Wisconsin was fifth in rank among oat growing states, and sixth in 1870[64]. This ranking had changed since the induction of the states in the "bread basket" area. In 1947 Wisconsin was ranked third with nearly 3 million acres of oats annually harvested.[65]

Tobacco was introduced to this state in 1860, and has greatly increased since then. Northern tobacco is inferior to southern leaf, and is rarely used for smoking

[60] W.W. Daniels, 152.

[61] W.W. Daniels, 152

[62] W.W. Daniels, 155

[63] W. H. Ebling, 26

[64] W.W. Daniels, 156

[65] W.H. Ebling, 26

or chewing. Cigar wrapping tobacco does very well in this climate[66]. In 1945 tobacco was only grown on slightly more than 20,000 acres in the state.[67]

Crop Usage

All of the above crops were first grown as cash crops, until the introduction of dairy farming in the mid nineteenth century. After dairy farming's introduction, cash crops fell in popularity to milking cows because of the demand for dairy products. Crops were used for feed, and the excess was sold for cash. Wheat, oats, and corn were the main cereal crops cultivated.

Livestock

Dairy Cattle: Before market specialization, most Wisconsin cattle were not bred for dairy or beef specialization. The poor markets for either milk or beef did not convince too many farmers to specialize their cattle to one of these choices. Therefore the cattle were known as "dual-purpose"[68]. This nondescript breeding led to inferior animals however, and the demand for higher quality beef and dairy products around 1870 made farmers take notice.

The earliest attempts to specialize came from Wisconsin's pioneer dairy farmers. In 1870, William Dempster Hoard of Fort Atkinson initiated a long and successful campaign in *Hoards Dairyman* to encourage the development of purebred milking cows[69]. The earliest breeds introduced were Jerseys and Ayrshires. Jerseys were the dominant breed in the state, and were known to be in La Crosse County before 1870. The first Holstein bull was registered in Janesville in 1873, and Holsteins soon became the dominant dairy breed in Wisconsin[70]. Holsteins were excellent milkers, and constituted one half of the state's dairy herd by World War I[71]. Guernseys were introduced in 1881, and became second only to Holsteins in

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[66] W.W. Daniels, 156, Although some of the tobacco is used for smoking, and chewing, it is never used alone, always in a blend.

[67] W.H. Ebling, 29

[68] Barbara Wyatt, 8-4

[69] Barbara Wyatt, 8-4

[70] Barbara Wyatt, 8-4

[71] Eric Lampard, The Rise of the Dairy Industry of Wisconsin.

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popularity. Guernseys were a major dairy breed throughout Wisconsin's dairy history with especially high concentrations in northern and western counties.

The rise of milking breeds in the 1880s fueled the transition to single purpose dairy herds. With this change in the state, improvements were made to specialize the breeds. Cow census', butterfat tests, and inoculation made huge improvements on the area's dairy herd. Breeding associations sprouted up in every county, and the Holstein-Friesian Association of Wisconsin (1897) adopted advanced register programs to certify purebred stock[72].

No other single farm animal has had the impact on Wisconsin farming as did the dairy cow.

Beef Cattle: Pioneer cattle were always prized for their meat just as much for their milk[73]. However, steep prices of stock and feed prohibited beef farming from being a major industry in Wisconsin early on. When grain cultivation surged after 1860, farmers had the main element for raising beef cattle. Herefords, Angus, and Shorthorns became the best beef breeds, and produced little milk other than that needed for their offspring.

There were three methods of raising beef cattle at the time, breeding cattle for fattening and sale to slaughterhouses, breeding without fattening and sell yearlings or two year old cattle to other farmers for fattening, and buying yearlings, known as feeders for fattening and slaughter[74]. After fattening, the farmer had many choices for what he could do with his animals. He could sell to independent cattle buyers, he could sell through a co-operative, he could sell at local buying auctions, he could sell at the large terminal markets at Milwaukee, Chicago, or St. Paul, or he could sell directly to packing plant companies[75]. The cattle had to be transported to any and all of these locations, and because of this hundreds of livestock shipping cooperatives were formed by Wisconsin farmers. Beef has never been as big as dairy, with the ratio of beef to dairy animals being forty to sixty. However it was the second major form of livestock production.

Hogs: Hogs have never been a large part of the economy of La Crosse county. However they were a part of farm life, and deserve a mention. Hogs were interesting to farmers because they matured quickly, and were basically able to feed themselves. They had to be penned, because of their desire to roam, and root about. The reason that hogs never became popular in this county is because of the

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[72] Wyatt, 8-5.

[73] Wyatt, 8-6.

[74] Wyatt, 8-7.

[75] Wyatt, 8-7.

grain that mostly grown here. Hogs are not partial to wheat, or oats, and are served better in the grain belt counties of southern Wisconsin, where corn, peas, and barley are grown to a larger extent. Hog farming was popular early on, but after 1900 declined drastically because of the rise in interest to dairy farming[76].

Farm Layouts: Farm layouts in La Crosse County are typical of that in any county which is high in dairy production. The farm is characterized by the farm house, which on the older farms is often a two story cube in this area. The barn is ·the most prominent out building. It is normally a huge structure, in which there is a central concrete floor with long aisles of stantions and gutters from which the cow is positioned when milked. Wide doors, aisles, and other entrances are made especially for the tall, wide frame of the dairy cow itself.

Above the milking platform is the hay loft, where hay can be dropped down a shoot as it is needed to give to the cows while they are being milked. It is also thrown down into feeder wagons from a large front opening on the front of the second floor for feeding in the barn yard. A large amount of hay is stored in this loft, and is usually enough to keep most of the herd fed .throughout part of the winter.

Attached to the barn, is the milk house. This is where the bulk tank (milk cans before refrigeration) is kept. Along with the milk, the pumps, hoses, and milk are kept in the milk house. It is the most sanitary place in the barn.

Corn cribs, granaries, silos, sheds for the farm machinery, and pens for other livestock found on the farm will also be there, but almost every one of them is of different style and form. The only building that should be mentioned is the tobacco shed. The tobacco shed is end gabled, and has a peaked roof. It has slats on the side with hinges for opening up. The interior of the shed is composed of horiziontal poles for hanging the bundles of tobacco, designed to allow the tobacco to dry without harming the leaves. It is a distinct feature of some farms in La Crosse County. There is no really distinct feature of a Wisconsin farm except that the house is usually in front of the rest of the buildings, and most noticeable as you drive into the farm area[77].

Size of Farms in LaCrosse County

The size of farms on LaCrosse County probably fluctuated somewhat· as more land was cleared for agricultural purposes and as smaller farms consolidated into

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[76] W.W. Daniels, 158, This may sound confusing, as hog raising has never been huge, but this is what Mr. Daniels quoted in his research paper.

[77] Most of this data is from the author's notes. He worked on many farms during his· child hood, and this is essentially the average layout of all of them.

larger farms. Therefore, the number of farms rose, as well as the total acreage in farmland, between 1870 and 1945.

Year	Number of Farms in County	Acreage of land in Farms
1870	1,394	189,161
1890	1,642	253,515
1910	1,811	276,861
1930	1,733	273,294
1945	1,640	261,528

As indicated above, there were 1,640 farms in LaCrosse County in 1945. The average size of these LaCrosse County farms in that year was 159.4 acres. By 1950, there were 1,519 farms in the county, averaging 168 acres per farm.

Value of Farms in LaCrosse County

Year	Value (in $) of farm land and buildings	Regional Average[78]
1870	$3,537,085	$2,229,381
1890	$4,668,618	$4,428,701
1910	$11,273,956	$14,198,976
1930	17,994,318	$22,544,788
1945	14,852,880	$16,073,651

The average per farm value in LaCrosse County in 1945 was $9,057, considerably higher than the ten county regional average of $6,760. The average per acre value in LaCrosse County in 1945 was $56.79, again, somewhat higher than the ten county regional average per acre of $43.37. However, it should be noted that in 1945, farm tenancy in LaCrosse County was 31.3%, while the ten county regional average was only 23.6%. Therefore, it may be summarized that even though, and perhaps because, land and building values were high in LaCrosse County in 1945, that farm tenancy was more common. LaCrosse County was

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[78] Regional counties included ten in the western portion of the state, including Buffalo, Dunn, Eau Claire, Jackson, LaCrosse, Monroe, Pepin, St. Croix and Trempealeau counties. Ebling, et.al. *A Century of Wisconsin Agriculture, 1848 - 1948* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, 1948), 88.

presumably a desirable location to live, and young farmers may have been more willing to rent or lease their land in order to live in that vicinity.

Buildings

The primary buildings on a farmstead site in LaCrosse County would generally include a house, barn, and other ancillary outbuildings such as chicken coop, hog house, granary, storage shed, machine shed, silo, corn crib and tobacco barns. The house generally would have a stone foundation if constructed pre-1900, and often have a concrete foundation with a full basement after 1900. Early LaCrosse County houses were constructed of hewn log, and balloon frame clapboard, however several examples of local, red brick houses still remain in the county.

The barns which date pre 1900 generally had a stone foundation, but post 1900 barns, particularly if used for dairy production, generally had a concrete foundation with troughs for manure and manure removal equipment. The barns were hewn log construction, with earlier (pre 1900) versions exhibiting gabled roofs, while the 1900 - 1940 barns often were wood frame construction with gambrel roofs. After 1940, many barns were constructed with gothic arched roofs. Hay and straw were generally stored in the loft.

Silos were not widely used in Wisconsin prior to 1880, and the earliest versions were vertical board held together with bands of metal, much like a barrel, with a roof cap. Closer to the twentieth century, as dairy production became more important in western Wisconsin, new silo materials were used, including concrete stave, hollow clay tile, and poured concrete. Later, mid-20th century silos were usually constructed of concrete block and steel.

Smaller outbuildings, including chicken coops, hog houses, animal barns and other similar buildings were usually of frame construction with no foundations or floors. Granaries were often built of wood frame as well, but usually were constructed off the ground, with a wood foundation, and wood floor, to protect the stored grain from ground moisture.

Amenities

Location (1945)	Electricity %	Running Water %	Radio %	Telephone %
LaCrosse County	76.9%	54.6%	89.1%	64.1%
Region Average	63.9%	39.4%	86.4%	56.3%
State Average	70.0%	31.0%	88.0%	48.1%

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Statistics are not available, other than in 1945, indicating the percentage of amenities such as electricity, running water, radio and telephone, however, the above statistics allow the researcher to surmise that LaCrosse County was a more prosperous county than many areas of Wisconsin. LaCrosse County consistently exhibits a higher percentage of amenities not only regionally, but within the state average. Coupled with the concept that farm land and buildings in the county were also higher than in many places, it may be expected that better quality material culture could be found at many LaCrosse County historic archaeological sites.

Crops

Crops	1870	1890	1910	1930	1945
Corn (bushels)	5,816	19,558	19,810	25,399	33,103
Oats (bushels)	7,610	24,040	28,504	22,591	20,818
Barley (bushels)	902	2,414	11,329	3,614	383
Rye (bushels)	1,602	5,419	5,944	3,260	988
Wheat (bushels)	46,150	11,194	1,994	964	302
Potatoes (bushels)	574	1,947	1,790	1,092	754
Tobacco (tons)	--	3	92	462	334
Hay (tons)	10,477	28,900	30,465	35,100	38,277

Crops which were grown in LaCrosse County's fertile soils shifted considerably in the past 125 years. In 1870, it was apparent that hay, wheat and oats were important crops. However, by 1890, wheat was already becoming unpopular. As wheat production diminished, hay continued to grow, as well as oats. By the time the early twentieth century set in, corn became increasingly dominant. This was undoubtedly in part due to the new hybrid varieties of corn which could withstand the shorter growing seasons of LaCrosse County, compared to the cornbelt regions to the south, including Iowa, Illinois and Indiana. Barley became briefly popular by 1910, however lost its acceptance just as quickly as it came in. By 1945, the highest crop production was coming from hay and corn, two crops very popular for feeding livestock.

Religion

The development of religion in southern La Crosse County is a result of the immigration patterns of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Those who settled in the county brought with them a rich religious tradition. Nearly every major denomination was represented in the county by the late 1800s by French, German, Norwegian, British, Irish, and other Scandinavian immigrants.

The first recorded religious meeting held in La Crosse was in July 1851, led by a Methodist minister George Chester. In 1854, Rev. Spencer Carr organized eight hundred residents, based on their past religious background, into fifteen denominations. Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans, Catholics, Presbyterians, and Universalists were most widely represented. This was the beginning of the development of religion in La Crosse.[79]

Church of Latter Day Saints

The first evidence of religion in La Crosse County was The Church of Latter Day Saints. Led by George Miller, and Lyman Wight a group of 160 men, women, and children settled in what is presently the Mormon Coulee area in September of 1843. Opposition against Mormon theology prompted bitter feelings from other residents. In 1845, Wight abruptly organize the group to leave for Texas, thus ending their brief stay in La Crosse.[80] There are no extant buildings associated with the Church of Latter Day Saints from the historic period of LaCrosse.

Catholic

On May 29, 1853 the first Catholic service was held in La Crosse County. Father Tappert conducted Mass in farm homes until 1866. The creation of the La Crosse diocese in 1868 brought organization to the Catholic churches in the county.[81] The growth of St. Joseph's Ridge in the town of Greenfield and St. Peter's Ridge in the town of Washington at the same time as the Catholic churches in the city of La Crosse show the impact of this denomination on the history of the county.

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[79] Benjamin F. Bryant, ed, *Memoirs of La Crosse County* (Madison: Western Historical Association, 1907), 135-136.

[80] Ibid, 135-136.

[81] Ibid, 142-143.

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There were no extant historic Catholic churches which were surveyed in northern LaCrosse County. The majority remaining are either in the central portion of the county or in the city of LaCrosse.

Church of Christ

The German Lutheran and German Reformed groups were together until 1864 when they separated into two denominations. The German Reformed Church known as St. John's Reformed United Church of Christ was built that same year. Rev. Kurzman was the first pastor of the Swiss church.[82] Trinity was built as a country church (historic church not extant), and it was a sister congregation to St. John's. It served the reformed community in the Mormon Coulee area.[83] There were no Church of Christ churches located in northern LaCrosse County.

Lutheran
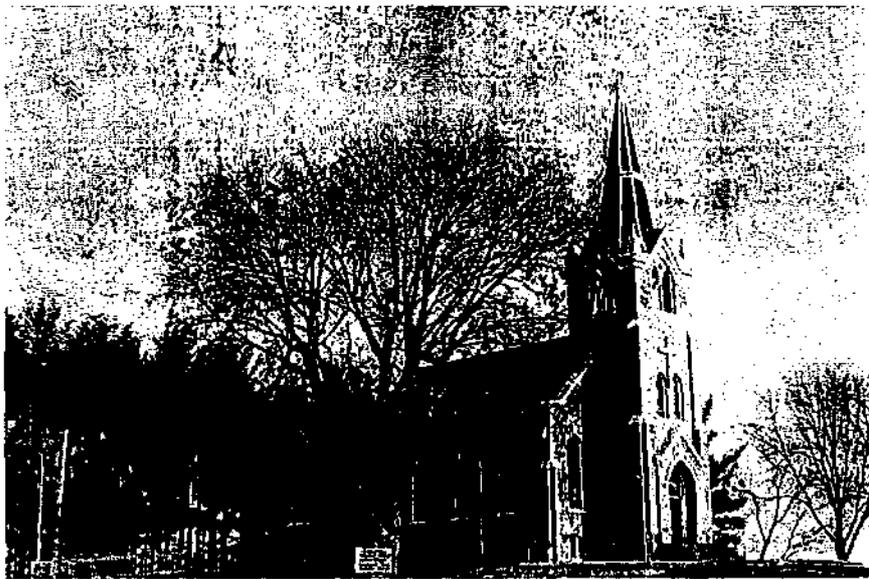
Halfway Creek Lutheran Church, Onalaska Twp, LC 211/29

The Lutheran church has its beginning in LaCrosse County with the first Norwegian settlers to the county. Though the Norwegians settled all over the

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[82] A. H. Sanford, ed, La Crosse County Historical Scetches (Liesenfeld Press, 1931), 22-23.

[83] Our First 125 Years: St. John's Reformed United Church of Christ (La Crosse: CBS Graphics, 1989), 4-10.

county, there were significant pockets of Norwegian settlements in the northern section of the county.

Halfway Creek Lutheran Church (LC 211/29), located in Onalaska Township, was built 1913 of concrete bricks in an English Gothic style. Halfway Creek Lutheran Church was originally built in 1868, but burned to the ground in 1912, thus this church was built one year later. The cemetery, approximately one-half mile to the north, is the location of the original church.

Burr Oak Evangelical Lutheran Church (LC 216/35), is located in Farmington Township. The parsonage, school, church and cemetery are all in Section 12, near the crossroads of CTH C and CTH A. The school was built in 1902. The church was probably built around the same time as the school, however, the congregation had started as early as 1855. The church is English Gothic style, frame with vinyl siding. The congregation was first started by Germans who settled in the area.

Cemeteries

There are thirteen cemeteries in northern La Crosse County. Some of these are part of church properties, and the others are community cemeteries.

*Asbury Cemetery, Brice Prairie, Onalaska Township, 1.3 acres (LC 207/07)

*Green Mound Cemetery, Holland Township, primarily Dutch names, 4.3 acres (LC 207/21)

*French Island Cemetery, Campbell Township, 1.8 acres, though originally a community cemetery, it is currently maintained by the Catholic Cemtery in LaCrosse (LC 210/08).

*Lewis Valley Lutheran Cemetery, Farmington Township, primarily Norwegian surnames, 3.5 acres, associated with modern Lewis Valley Lutheran Church.

*Halfway Creek Cemetery, Onalaska Township, 2.3 acres, about ½ mile from Halfway Creek Lutheran Church, primarily Norwegian names, indicative of high Norwegian population in the area (LC 211/30).

*Johnson Coulee Cemetery, Onalaska Township, mostly Norwegian names, approximately 1 acre (LC 211/32).

*Farmington Cemetery, Farmington Township, circa 1862, started by Lewis family, now largest in township, maintained by township. (LC 215/26)

*Black Oak Cemetery, Farmington Township, 1874, 1.5 acres (LC 215/29)

*Wet Coulee Cemetery, Farmington Township, 1880, mostly Norwegian names Final resting place of Stanley R. Christianson, LaCrosse County's only Congressional Medal of Honor winner, honored for his bravery and loss of his life in Korea in 1951 (LC 216/16).

*Burr Oak Cemetery, Farmington Township, many German names, originally had Methodist affiliation, associated with Salzer Memorial Methodist Church in LaCrosse, it was started in 1865 (LC 216/28).

*Sand Creek Cemetery, Burns Township, approx. 1 acre, (LC 218/11)

*Long Coulee Cemetery, Holland Township, 1 acre, 218/15, originally associated with Lutheran Society of Halfway Creek (LC 218/15).

Farmington Cemetery, Farmington Twp., LC 215/16

Education

The first community-based educational effort in the state probably occurred in 1817 when nine citizens of Green Bay contracted with Thomas S. Jackson to teach twenty-four local children the "three R's" for a period of nine months.[84] At that time, present-day Wisconsin was part of the Michigan territory, and subject to the acts of the Michigan territorial legislature. In 1833, one such act gave "responsibility for local education to town officials and authorized school districts to use property taxes and other forms of funding to support education and build schools"[85]. In 1836, when Wisconsin was granted its own territorial status, Michigan law was carried over, but because the laws governing education were vaguely worded, and the Wisconsin territory sparsely populated (approximately twelve-thousand at the time), few gains were made in public education.

A mere fifteen years later, there were more than 300,000 people living within Wisconsin's boundaries. Still, because of the relative sparseness of the population, little progress was made in education. Prior to the Civil War, the quality of Wisconsin's primary schools was generally poor[86]. Patrick Donnelley, a school principal, described an early pioneer schoolhouse in Milwaukee as follows:

"The first schools were essentially primitive. The first teachers were persons who had come West with the tide of emigration, intending to build up their fortunes. The pay of teachers in those days was barely sufficient to purchase the necessaries of life. The schools were maintained by local self-imposed taxation or assessments. A crude log hut thirty feet long by twenty feet wide, with a door in one end, four small windows, two on each side, was the school house of the early days. There was a wooden floor, long benches placed along the side of the walls for smaller children, and two or three small tables with benches for the more advanced pupils. The schoolmaster had a chair, a small pine table, a ruler, a penknife, a few old books, a small bottle of ink, and a quill pen.

Reading, writing, and arithmetic constituted the sum total of the course of study, except in rare instances, when an old map could be found and used for giving some desultory instruction in geography. That the children were taught to read, write, cipher, and spell, under such discouraging circumstances, was

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[84] Lloyd Jorgenson, *The Founding of Public Education in Wisconsin* (Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1956), 7-8.

[85] Ibid.

[86] Ibid., 17.

alike creditable to the schoolmaster's proficiency and to the pupil's scholarly earnestness"[87].

Many religious and ethnic groups formed their own private or parochial schools, which generally fared better financially than their public counterparts, because of the strong religious commitment of their members.   Once Wisconsin achieved statehood however, its "government recognized the fact that education was essential to the well-being and progress of the state"[88], and financial, as well as organizational aid was provided.

With financial support through public taxation, and organizational support through state laws, the educational system could now move its focus from merely teaching simple reading, writing, and arithmetic, to providing young men and women with a secondary education.   Michael Frank, a Kenosha newspaperman... instigated the first movement for a free public high school system in Wisconsin[89]. Supported by other local educational leaders, Frank's proposal was put to a vote at a special school meeting, and won by a large margin.   On July 31, 1849, Kenosha, Wisconsin opened the state's first free public high school[90].

As new waves of settlers and their children pushed westward through the state, the schools followed.   The first school in the City of La Crosse was taught during the winter of 1851-1852[91].   In 1852, the official count of children enrolled in public schools was 109[92].   By 1861, a system of county superintendents had been inaugurated for the entire state[93].   Their duties included annual visits to their respective districts, examination of teachers, and general supervision of the schools throughout the year.   By 1881, there were about four-hundred primary and secondary schools in Wisconsin[94].   In La Crosse County, the official count of school aged children had grown to 4,601, with 3,042 in actual attendance[95].   The reason

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[87] Conrad Patzer, *Public Education in Wisconsin* (Madison, 1924), 6.

[88] Ibid., cit:vii.

[89] Ibid., 81

[90] Ibid.

[91] *History of La Crosse County* (Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1881), 514.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Ibid., 420.

[94] Ibid., 146.

[95] Ibid., 421.

for the discrepancy is unclear, but it could be due to the need for children to stay at home and help out on the family farm, rather than to attend classes.

Vacant School, circa 1890, Burns Twp., LC 218/12

Country schools in La Crosse County were formed and grew with the increasing population. Even before schools in the relatively larger community of La Crosse opened their doors, the neighboring Village of Barre, settled in 1850, is reported to have established "common-schools". By 1881, Barre had four schoolhouses, and employed five teachers[96]. The Town of Farmington built its first school in the spring of 1851[97]. The Town of Hamilton's first school term was for the period of three months, during the fall of 1852[98]. The first school in the Town of Bangor was taught in 1853-1854, and had about twenty-five students. By 1881, it was reported to have seven schoolhouses and nine teachers[99]. The first school in the town of Burns was taught in a log cabin in Section 19 of that township, in 1853. At that time, there were seventeen students in attendance. By 1881, the town boasted nine schoolhouses[100].

The Town of La Crosse reportedly opened its first public school in 1853[101]. The Village of West Salem was officially settled in 1864, and in the fall that year, school

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[96] Ibid., 709-710.

[97] Ibid., 684.

[98] Ibid., 692.

[99] Ibid., 721.

[100] Ibid., 713.

[101] R. J. Polk & Co., *La Crosse City Directory* (Richmond, R. J. Polk & Co., 1995), 15.

was in session[102]. The first school in the township of Holland was built in 1857 on an acre of donated land. The first session was taught in the summer of 1857[103]. Because of rapid growth in the area at the time, documentation of the first school in the Town of Onalaska has been difficult, but it is clear that the town had a new schoolhouse built in 1870 to replace the one that burned the year earlier[104]. As of August 31, 1880, the Town of Greenfield had four schoolhouses and four teachers[105].

As the population of the United States continued its growth and westward flow, the trends of educational growth followed. Currently, the School District of La Crosse—whichserves the City of La Crosse as well as portions of nine adjacent towns—hasan enrollment of more than six-thousand students in nine elementary schools, three middle schools, and two senior high schools[106].

During the first part of the twentieth century, this massive growth pattern rendered the country schoolhouse impractical, and in most communities, obsolete. Larger and more modern facilities were needed. As governmental support of public education increased, funds became available for building of more modern facilities. As a result, many of the original one-room schoolhouses have been razed; while others have been remodeled for use as private residences. It is our hope that those which remain may be documented here, and preserved in some fashion, for. generations to come.

The following is a list of schools inventoried for this project.

Holmen Free School, Holmen, now used as part of Holmen Middle School, originally was high school (LC 209/17).

Midway School, Brice Prairie, Onalaska Township, 1927, now private residence (LC 209/22).

Upper French Island School, Campbell Township, 1925, now used as Campbell Community Center (LC 210/05).

School, near Mindoro Cut, Hamilton Township, circa 1910, now house. (LC 215/14)

School, Farmington Township, circa 1920 (LC 215/28)

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[102] *History of La Crosse County* (Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1881), 696.

[103] Ibid., 706.

[104] Ibid., 716.

[105] Ibid., 727.

[106] R. J. Polk & Co., *La Crosse City Directory* (Richmond, R. J. Polk & Co., 1995), 15.

Bell Coulee School, Farmington Township, circa 1920, (LC 217/08)

Brown's Valley School, Farmington Township, circa 1900, (LC 217/10)

Sand Creek School, Farmington Township, circa 1900, now used by Sand Creek Homemakers. (LC 218/10)

School, vacant, circa 1890, Burns Township, (LC 218/12)

Long Coulee School, Holland Township, built 1917, brick, Dist. #4, soon to be sold to private individuals, but still owned by Holmen school district. (LC 218/18)

Industry

Prior to the 1850s, there were relatively few settlers in the western part of the territory we now know as the state of Wisconsin. The needs of these settlers were comparatively simple, and most of them, being engaged in some form of husbandry, harvested the necessities of daily life off the land. As the promise of a better life in the new world brought more immigrants to the area, the population grew. Its needs grew as well. By the time Wisconsin had become a state in 1848, the seeds of industry had already begun to sprout in La Crosse and in the surrounding areas.

More and larger buildings were required in which to house, educate, and serve the political and religious needs of the citizens of this new state. Such structures require sawn lumber, nails, roofing materials and foundational stone. Graveled and paved roads were needed in order to more expediently transport people and materials from one place to another. As the settlers moved into the area, they brought with them their animals. Horses, oxen, cattle, all of which required care, and therefore additional material goods. Horseshoes were needed, as were harnesses, wagons, and farming tools. Greater amounts of grain were needed to feed the ever-growing population. Each individual need brought with it the potential for industry.

Holmen Co-op Creamery, LC 209/10

In the mid-1800s, the mining industry arose because of a need for raw minerals such as copper, iron and lead, which were used for making nails, bullets, cooking pots, farming tools, and countless other items necessary to the everyday life of that period. Quarries became important sources for limestone, sandstone, and gravel,

important in building and road construction. Grist, flour, and sawmills were essential for providing some of the basic elements to the pioneer household. The most noticeable growth took place in the larger towns—someof which will be mentioned here—butrural industries prospered as well. It is these rural industries, especially those in the southeastern portion of La Crosse County, which will be the main focus of this chapter.

The only industry building surveyed for this project was the Holmen Co-op Creamery (LC 209/09) in Holmen. This two story brick building was constructed in 1922 to house the cooperative creamery for the city. Creameries of this sort were very common in the early twentieth century, when local dairy farmers needed nearby creameries to purchase their milk. The creamery building was often constructed of sturdy, hygienic materials such as brick and concrete, which could be easily cleaned. As more and more creameries consolidated by mid-century, and as long-term refrigeration became more commonplace, small town creameries became less necessary. This particular building is now used as a meat locker.

Government

LaCrosse County was founded on March 1, 1851 through an act of the state legislature. The county was created from Crawford County and it comprised the present counties of LaCrosse, Monroe, Jackson, Trempealeau, Clark, most of Buffalo, and part of Taylor. This same act of legislature divided the county into the towns of LaCrosse, Albion, and Pine Valley.[107]

The first meeting of the county board was held on November 11, 1851 in the city of LaCrosse. LaCrosse was chose as the temporary county seat on the condition that government buildings be provided free of charge to the county. If this condition was not met, and no decision could be reached as to where to put the county seat, the decision was to be left to the board of supervisors. However, by an acto fo legislature on March 29, 1855, the county seat was permanently located at LaCrosse. In 1857, the county of LaCrosse was reduced to its present size. It is about 475 square miles and includes the towns of Bangor, Barre, Campbell, Farmington, Greenfield, Hamilton, Holland, Onalaska, Shelby and Washington.[108]

Slowly, over time, as the population of the county grew and the present towns created, township governments came more into service. The duties of these governments are stated in the State Constitution. The townships mentioned below are found in the southern portion of the county within this project's area and possess the same governmental elements as other townships in the state.

Though there are a number of townships in this study of northern LaCrosse County, there are no extant historic town halls remaining, thus no government properties were inventoried for this report.

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[107] Benjamin F. Bryant. Memoirs of LaCrosse County. (Madison, WI: Western Historical Association, 1907), 51.

[108] Benjamin F. Bryant. Memoirs of LaCrosse County. (Madison, WI: Western Historical Association, 1907), 52.

Transportation

The Mississippi River played an important and vital role in the economy of towns and cities. The Mississippi was of utmost importance to the development of the county and city of LaCrosse. The river provided for a relatively easy means of communication with the outside world and greatly aided immigration to this area of western Wisconsin. By connecting with the Black River, an outlet was available for the rich pine forests in the northern sections of the state. The presence of this outlet is the primary factor for the development of the city of LaCrosse, a "lumber town" in its youth. With the creation of the city, came the migration of people. These people would eventually spread out away from the city and LaCrosse County soon developed.

Reasons for the development of this area are simple. This site provided enough space for the building of a large city as compared to areas close by. Other areas were too close to the river with high bluffs. There was not enough room for landing river boats, much less a city. Included in the advantages of this site is the fact that all Indian trails from the north ended in this area. These trails provided paths of least resistance and provided for a means by which immigrants could move and create their own communities.

A proper shipyard was needed for suitable river commerce. It was not until 1856 that the city had an adequate wharf needed for this venture. Other wharves had been built in the past, but did not fit the needs of the growing city and its demands. River traffic continued to grow and this rise in traffic was vital to the city's own growth. The number of riverboat arrivals doubled over a one year period. In May of 1853, only twenty-two boats arrived since the opening of the season. In the same period in 1854, forty-four boats had arrived in LaCrosse. In 1856, from May 3 to May 9, fifty-one had arrived. In a four year period, business went from $17,000 to $400,000. The most prosperous days of river traffic were from the end of the Civil War until 1873 when railroads became more popular. After that time, railroads began to take most of the passengers and freight.

Another important form of transportation in LaCrosse County was the wagon road. These various roads followed old Indian trails to areas throughout the state. The area around LaCrosse was the center of this immense system. All of these roads went far beyond the present lines of the county into northern, central, and southern Wisconsin. Some of these early roads became marked "highways" and were kept up the best that could be done by local authorities. As more people settled into the county, local authorities improved the roads as fast as possible. These early roads followed river valleys to find ways through the bluffs. Many times the first roads in

the county were just widening of an old Indian trail. Road maintenance was difficult due to marshy and sandy areas in the county.

Chicago & Northwestern Railroad Bridge, Onalaska Twp., LC 207/12

Even though the river and roads provided ample means of transportation to and from the county, the construction of the railroad was an important addition to transportation options in the county. The LaCrosse and Milwaukee Railroad was developed in 1852. Its goal was to construct a railroad from LaCrosse to Milwaukee. In 1856, the LaCrosse and Milwaukee Railroad Company joined with the Milwaukee, Fond du Lac, and Green Bay Company in efforts to strengthen hopes of pushing the road through with the combined efforts of the two companies. A third company joined the consolidation and the road pushed through to Portage, Wisconsin. Congress granted land to the railroad to construct northwest to the St. Croix River and to the west end of Lake Superior. But, through monetary disputes, the land was granted to the LaCrosse and Milwaukee Company. In 1858, the railroad was completed to LaCrosse.

The LaCrosse and Milwaukee were soon consolidated with the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railroad Company, with control to the latter. LaCrosse remained the end of the line of the railroad in Wisconsin for some time. Son enough, projects were started to connect into areas of Minnesota, such as Winona as St. Paul, and into areas of southern Minnesota. Construction of a railroad into southern Minnesota began in 1865. This project ended in 1870 after 147 miles of track were laid. Several other projects going on at this time fell into the hands of

the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul. In 1881, LaCrosse was connected with Dubuque, Iowa, and LaCrescent, Minnesota.

The following properties are the transportation-related sites which were inventoried for this project:

Railroad bridge, Chicago and Northwestern over Black River, overhead truss, Onalaska Township, (LC 207/11).

Railroad Bridge, Canadian Pacific, swing bridge, over Black River, 1902, Campbell Township, (LC 207/14)

Street Bridge, Main Street at CTH V in Holmen, over Halfway Creek, circa 1930, (LC 209/13)

LaCrosse Municipal Airport, Campbell Township, (LC 210/01)

Road Bridge, CTH M at CTH T, steel pony truss over Fleming Creek, (LC 214/10)

Mindoro Cut, STH 108 at McClintock Road, Farmington Township,, road cut through peak of hill, (LC 215/11) (currently being listed on NRHP)

Mindoro Cut, Farmington Twp., LC 215/11

Architecture

The largest number of buildings surveyed in northern LaCrosse County within the context of agriculture were farmsteads, and primarily the houses which are the focus of all farmsteads. Settlement is an ongoing occurrence, which allows a wide span of time periods and thus building types and styles for residences. The earliest, vernacular form stone and log houses of western Wisconsin therefore share this context with later residential styles such as Queen Anne and Bungalow.

The physical fabric in the rural settings generally ranged from vernacular forms to high style architecture. Vernacular forms, such as front, side, and cross gables, gable ells and Ts, and one and two-story cubes comprise the most popular types of houses in the county. Characterized by simplicity, these buildings usually are identified by their size and roof form. While most of these buildings display frame construction, a small number were built of stone, brick and formed concrete block. Construction periods attached to each vernacular form listed below are based upon dates utilized in the central states of the country.[109]

The **front gable** form, characterized by a rectangular plan, was mainly constructed between 1850 and 1925. The gable ends of this form define the front and rear elevations of the house.

LC 215/23, Front Gable

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[109] Barbara Wyatt, *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin* vol. 2 (Madison: The State Historical Society of W isconsin, 1986), 3-1 to 3-10.

A side gable building, which is also characterized by a rectangular plan, displays gable ends over the side elevations of the house. This form, which has been prominent for nearly one hundred years, dates between 1850 and 1940.

LC 213/22, Side Gable

The **gable ell** form, constructed between approximately 1865 and 1910, often exhibits two gabled sections set perpendicular to one another. This form usually consists of an "L" or "T" plan and displays a variety of stories.

LC 216/22, Gabled Ell

While the **two-story cube** dates from approximately 1860 to 1880, the smaller version known as the **one-story cube** was constructed from approximately 1870 to 1930. It is important to note that two-story cubes constructed after the turn of the century often display features characteristic of a related style, the American Foursquare. Hipped roofs and boxy massing typify the one and two-story cubes.

LC 218/19, Two Story Cube

The **cross gable** form is named for two intersecting, identical roof lines. These buildings, which normally stand two-stories high, exhibit square plans. The cross gable form dates from approximately 1890 to 1930.

LC 215/25, Cross Gable

High style houses were also identified during the reconnaissance survey of LaCrosse County. These buildings are not as prevalent as vernacular forms, however, many of the more simplistic designed houses display details of a variety of architectural styles. High styles exhibited in the county include Queen Anne, Italianate, Neo-Classical Revival, and American Foursquare.[110]

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[110] Barbara Wyatt, *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin* vol. 2 (Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986), Architecture: 2-6, 2-15, 2-18, 2-21, 2-25, 2-28, 2-30; Marilyn W. Klein and David P. Fogel, *Clues to American Architecture* (Washington, D.C.: Starrhill Press, 1986), 22-23, 28-29, 46.

- Erected between 1870 and 1890, **Italianate style** houses primarily stand two stories tall. They display square, rectangular, or L-shaped plans with low-pitched hip or occasionally gable roofs and wide eaves. These houses are often ornamented with heavy brackets, tall narrow windows, front porches, and a cupola.
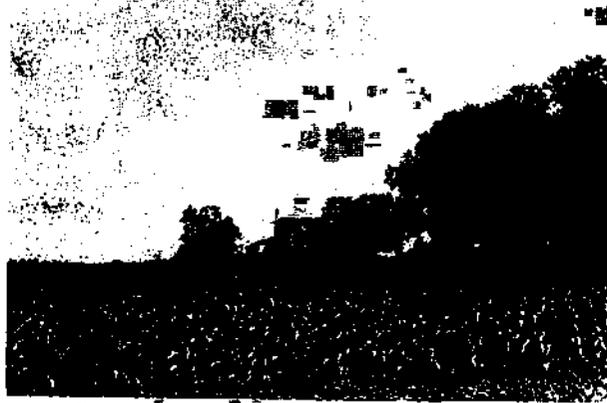
LC 217/05, Italianate Style

- **Queen Anne style**, which dates from 1880-1900, is characterized by asymmetrical facades, steeply pitched rooflines, a variety of wall surface textures, prominent towers, tall chimneys, and porches with bargeboard trim.

LC 209/01, Queen Anne Style

- **Bungalow Style**, which dates from the 1920s through the 1940s, is a common style made of wood, concrete and brick. It is typically a one and one-half story side gabled building, with wide, overhanging eaves, exposed purlins, sash windows with three pane uppers, and often has open floor plans, hardwood floors, fireplaces and built in shelves and benches. Several excellent examples can be found in Holmen.

LC 216/02, Bungalow Style

Standard plans were likely used in the construction of many LaCrosse County homes. After the 1840s, America=s population became increasingly transient. With the influx of immigrants, westward migration across the country, and increased population, architectural promoters played upon the idea that single family dwellings provided stability. Furthermore, home ownership also afforded financial insurance in an unstable economy.[111]

Plan book authors capitalized on the sense of insecurity felt in the growing country. Promoters of standardized architectural plans utilized common architectural terms, mill cut materials, and standard house types to give the middle class an impression that they could move often and experience less of a disruption. The purpose of the standard plan single family dwelling evolved through several stages. In the mid 1800s, plan book authors believed that a house should be viewed as a guarded haven. By the end of the century, they opined that a house should reflect creativity. After the turn of the century, the houses designed for the middle class served as a tools to promote better health.[112]

An advertisement in *The Fairbury (NE) Gazette* dated 20 January 1900 utilized the idea that a house could act as an insurance policy for its owner. It stated:[113]

> *PUT YOUR MONEY IN A HOUSE! It=s the best savings bank on earth. The cashier will never run off with it. It will never go out of business. You've got it right under your thumb. No one can take it*

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[111] Clifford Edward Clark, Jr. *The American Family Home, 1800-1960* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 238-240.

[112] Clifford Edward Clark, Jr. *The American Family Home, 1800-1960* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 238-240.

[113] AA.J. King Land and Insurance Agency Advertisement,@ *The Fairbury Gazette* 20 January 1900.

away from you. There it is, a shelter in the time of storm. You'll have a place to sleep if you don't have anything to eat, and surely that's better than to have no place to sleep and nothing to eat. It is always something on which you can realize ready money. Every young man should start in life with a trim little cottage as ballast and anchor.

One of the most recognized styles to utilize standardized plans was the bungalow, which was designed to upgrade well-being with an emphasis on nature. From the 1910s to 1940s, the Bungalow served as one of the most popular house styles erected in the United States. It was one of the first architectural trends to spread from the west coast to the east. Due to its practical design and low construction costs, the style was promoted by magazines and plan books, contractors, home economists, and even feminists. This style of house allowed people of moderate incomes to afford their own dwelling.[114]

The Bungalow is characterized by projecting rooflines, large-scale chimneys, large front porches, and millwork ornamentation such as brackets. Often, when second stories were constructed they were downplayed to give the house a horizontal appearance. A variety of original materials clad the exterior of the Bungalow including clapboard, stucco, pebble dash, and stone. Interior features included fully equipped kitchens and bathrooms, and exposed rooms.[115]

In addition to houses and residential architecture, agricultural architecture played the greatest role in southern LaCrosse County. Farmsteads include not just houses for the families to live in, but barns, sheds, and coops for livestock and fowl; sheds, silos and cribs for produce storage; as well as roads, walls, ponds, trees, windbreaks, errosion contours and other landscape features which help define a farm within the historic context of Agriculture. Since LaCrosse County's history is intricately involved with agricultural development, the following discussion attempts to further define the evolution of farmsteads.

Reflecting the variety of LaCrosse County agricultural products, an assortment of outbuildings were constructed on area farmsteads. A majority of the barns in the county display frame construction, either gable or gambrel roofs, and wood cladding. Chicken coops, animal sheds, storage sheds, machine sheds, and silos were also common outbuildings identified on many of the surveyed farmsteads. Often these buildings were positioned in close proximity to the main house to

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[114] Clifford Edward Clark, Jr. *The American Family Home, 1800-1960* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 183-184.

[115] Barbara Wyatt, *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin* vol. 2 (Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986), 2-26.

expedite farm work. By the third decade of the twentieth century, as a result of the increased rural use and ownership of automobiles, many farmsteads housed modern garages. During this period, garages erected on older farmsteads contrasted with the main house due to the use of the wider clapboard and moderately pitched roofs.

The configuration of the site served as the foremost consideration during the farmstead's development. Allen G. Noble and Hubert G.H. Wilhelm, in a work entitled "The Farm Barns of the American Midwest," declare that "topography, weather, convenience or labor efficiency, land survey systems, and tradition" need careful consideration when planning the layout of a farm. Furthermore, to expedite chores, it was common to place a barn near the animal pens and crops. To accommodate the most natural light with its disinfectant value, north-south served as the best position for the barn. In areas that experience harsh winters, barns were often placed in close proximity to the farmhouse, yet downwind. Three standard farmstead layouts were surmised by Noble and Wilhelm to dominate in the Midwest. First, the front elevation of each building were positioned in the same direction. Second, every building in a complex was placed to form a square, with the center left vacant to serve as a courtyard. Third, a farmstead where buildings were positioned to adapt to the terrain was known as the free-form plan.[116]

Increased availability of railroad transportation and improved farming techniques and machinery raised farm production. As a result, in the late 1800s and early 1900s, many small farms were either deserted or merged and the fate of their outbuildings took the same route. To accommodate larger machinery and quantities of produce, barns were improved with side shed additions and lengthened roofs. If barns could not be adapted to the changing needs, entirely new ones were built.[117]

In September of 1895 *The Fairbury (NE) Gazette* printed several articles promoting innovative frame construction methods for barns. As taken from an East Coast publication, interior sketches and construction description were attached to each article.[118] In an effort to convince farmers of the value of the new building, one article stated:[119]

In the planning of a barn many things are to be considered--expenses,

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[116] Allen G. Noble and Hubert G.H. Wilhelm, ed., *Barns of the Midwest* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1995), 9-10, 104.

[117] Allen G. Noble and Hubert G.H. Wilhelm, ed., *Barns of the Midwest* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1995), 16-17, 25, 102.

[118] "Barns Without Beams," *The Fairbury Gazette* 7 September 1895; ABarn Building,@ *The Fairbury Gazette* 21 September 1895.

[119] "Barn Building," *The Fairbury Gazette* 21 September 1895.

strength of the building, etc.–but most of all should be considered convenience and labor saving actual use. A convenient barn will save many dollars a year over an ill arranged one, and the money thus saved will cover the cost of the building long before it is worn out. A barn for the storage of hay and grain and for the thrashing and other purposes should be free from beams and cross timbers from one end to the other, so that a hayfork or other tool may be used with perfect freedom.

While the first barns constructed in the Midwest often displayed gable roofs, many turn of the century barns exhibited gambrel roofs. By the third decade of the century, construction of barns changed with the availability of mill produced rafters. In the effort to accommodate more loft storage, round, Gothic, and rainbow roofs became popular. By the 1950s, farmers often assembled pole buildings with gable roofs to serve as barns.[120]

The tobacco barn is an architectural type which is not unique to but primarily found in west-central Wisconsin, where farmer's have been growing tobacco since the turn of the century as a supplemental cash crop. The tobacco barn is similar to other barn types, often rectangular in form with a gabled roof, however, the major design difference is the use of interior rafters from which to hang drying tobacco, and vertical boards which are hinged to the sides of the building, and opened like long, narrow doors, which allow a high amount of ventilation, without necessarily letting in the elements in the event of rain. The design allowed the delicate tobacco to dry as quickly as possible. More elaborate tobacco barns often even featured gable-top ventilators to encourage air flow inside the building.

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[120] Allen G. Noble and Hubert G.H. Wilhelm, ed., *Barns of the Midwest* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1995), 105.

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TOWNSHIP HISTORIES

TOWNSHIP OF BURNS

The township of Burns is located on the eastern edge of La Crosse County. The first settlement was made in 1851 and the organization was effected in 1854.[121] Initially Burns was a part of Neshonoc. In 1854, thirty-six sections of the eastern part of Neshonoc were set off, organized into a town and named after La Crosse County's distinguished Lieutenant Governor, Timothy Burns.[122] The town is generally divided into three valleys: Adams, Burnham, and Big Creek. These valleys are fertile and productive, being well watered by numerous springs, creeks, and small tributaries.[123] B. F. Colburn was the first settler in the area. Colburn came west from Massachusetts, and settled in La Crosse County on April 23, 1851, in what would later become the town of Burns. That same year other families would settle in the area. The first settlers all established themselves in the southwestern part of the town, on Adams and Burns creeks, and were almost without exception Americans.[124] Later in the nineteenth century German and a small number of Bohemian and Norwegian Immigrants would settle in the area. The town of Burns was named after Timothy Burns, of La Crosse, who had been the lieutenant governor.

The first arrivals made claims to land, until 1853. With the advent of 1853, land speculators swarmed the country and entered nearly all the vacant land in the La Crosse Valley, including that of the town of Burns, and as a consequence the settlers coming in the following years were obliged to purchase their claims at an increased price.[125] The same situation was occurring throughout America. People purchased large tracts of land to either sell, or in the hopes of creating a town that would flourish over time and provide them with wealth.

In the fall of 1851 L. A. Viets and his family settled in the area. Mr. Viets would be important in the early history of the area, and so would his wife Mary. Mary Viets would be the first to teach the children of the area. The first school in

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[121] Bryant, Benjamin F. Ed. *Memoirs of La Crosse County*. Madison, WI. Western Historical Association, 1907. Pg 212.

[122] *History of La Crosse County, Wisconsin*. Western Historical Company, Chicago, IL. 1881. Pg. 714.

[123] Ibid, pg 712.

[124] Bryant, pg 212.

[125] *History of La Crosse County, Wisconsin*, pg 712.

the present town of Burns was taught in a deserted log cabin on section 19, in 1853.[126] Viets brought his family from Dodge County in south central Wisconsin. Mr. Viets would be the first Postmaster appointed in 1854 with the creation of the first post office. He would hold the position for three years. The post office moved around the town until in1875 it was settled in Rockland. Mr. Viets would be a part of the town's government for several years.

Ministers from the city of La Crosse conducted the first church services in Burns. Early services were held in the log schoolhouses in the area. In 1858 the first church was built and a Methodist society organized by the presiding elder of the district, Rev. Mr. Wood.[127]

The first mill in the town was built on Big Creek, in 1855, by Enos Phillips.[128] The mill would serve as a sawmill, then later as a flouring mill. In 1874, a Mr. Hanton established in Burnham Valley what has since been known as the Burnham Valley Cheese Factory.[129] The town of Burns even had the railroad passing through Rockland. Even though the population was small there was a good deal of economic activity in the area, and the railroad would serve as a way for the people to move their goods to market. The following are the crop statistics for the year of 1906:[130]

WHEAT	CORN	OATS	BARLEY	RYE	POTATOES
2,360	48,635	72,350	36,010	150	4,176

The town of Burns would be one of the main agricultural areas of La Crosse County, and as a result the value of the land tended to be greater than elsewhere in the county. In 1870 Burns had a population of 1,001, and today its population is 979.[131] It may look as thought he town has lost population, but actually villages have grown to the point where they are separate municipalities, causing the population decrease. Bangor, and Rockland are now both villages, and are no longer a part of the town of Burns municipality.

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[126] Ibid, pg 713.

[127] Bryant, pg 213.

[128] Ibid, pg 714.

[129] Ibid, pg 714.

[130] Bryant, pg 213. The figures are provided by Bryant and are from the year 1907.

[131] 1870 Population figure is from Wingate, Robert George. *Settlement Patterns of La Crosse County, Wisconsin, 1850-1875*. Thesis, University of Minnesota, 1975. Pg 253. The 2000 population figure is from the La Crosse County web page. http://www.co.la-crosse.wi.us/ctypubs.htm

The township of Medary was not created until 1954 when it was formed from part of the township of Campbell. All of the information about Medary will be combined with the township of Campbell because of the combined history.[132]

The historic township of Campbell was located in the west central part of LaCrosse County and encompassed the City of LaCrosse. The township was organized between 1851, when LaCrosse County was originally organized, and 1868. The primary soil type within the township consisted of sandstone, however, the western part where the Mississippi and Black rivers meet was marsh land that is cut up with sloughs. The town contained all three major rivers of the county, the Black, LaCrosse, and Mississippi. This township was important because the railroads that crossed the county all traversed the township of Campbell and center in the city of LaCrosse. These railroads that converged in the town include the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy, the Green Bay & Western, the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul and the Chicago & Northwestern lines. With all the railroads crossing the town there was only one station within its limits in 1906, known as Winona Junction.[133]

Settlement to the area was slow in the beginning as is shown by the small amount of settlers who came to the area between 1851 and 1853. The first settler of the township was a native of England who arrived in the area in May of 1851. A man of Swiss origin settled in the township in 1852, and later married a native of Prussia. In 1853 another Englishman came to the township of Campbell and set up farming in the area. The population of the township was 955 in 1890 and 1,078 in 1906.[134]

Farms set up by the early pioneers were mainly in the valleys east and northeast of the city of LaCrosse, however, some farms were established near the city limits. Due to the bluffs that follow the Mississippi River the land was not considered to be agriculturally attractive. In 1859 Campbell Township had 1,540 acres in wheat, 809 acres in corn, 1,637 acres in oats, and 179 acres in barely.[135] Of the products grown in the township, corn and oats were ranked first in 1906 followed closely by hay and other cultivated grasses. The town also still contained 1,931 acres of

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[132] University of Wisconsin Agricultural Extension Services, *Wisconsin Rural Resources, LaCrosse County.* U. S. Department of Agriculture and Agricultural Marketing Service. Madison: Wisconsin State Department of Agriculture, Crop and Livestock Reporting Service, 1957, 20.

[133] Bryant, 215-216.

[134] Bryant, 216-217.

[135] Western Historical Company, *History of LaCrosse County, Wisconsin,* 441..

timber. Livestock was also kept within the township, with cattle as the most abundant, followed by swine, horses and sheep.[136]

Campbell Township, LaCrosse County, Wisconsin, Agriculture Statistics, 1906.

Town	Wheat	Corn	Oats	Barley	Rye	Potatoes
Campbell	2,235	27,615	23,960	14,034	8,685	14,001

TOWNSHIP OF FARMINGTON

The township of Farmington is located in the northeastern portion of La Crosse County. Its area covers approximately seventy-five square miles, or more than two townships. The Town of Farmington is the largest of the eleven townships in La Crosse County, and has some of the best farming land in the area. Farmington lies mostly within the sandstone region of the county and is drained by a number of small creeks that run through the valley and drain into the Black River.[137]

Farmington began its official existence on April 4, 1854. When first established, the Town of Farmington included a large area of land. In 1868, the Town of Jackson split from Farmington, taking with it several eastern tiers of that section making the town of Farmington smaller.[138]

Lorenzo Lewis and his three brothers made the first settlement in the Town of Farmington in 1846. They selected a location now called "Lewis Valley" in Section 19, Range 6.[139] In the 1850s Farmington attracted a large number of immigrant populations. The Germans were the predominant ethnic group to settle in the area. Evidence of a concentrated German heritage in the Town of Farmington can still be seen today, as an area near Burr Oak is called German Settlement.

The soil in northern La Crosse County is sandstone, however portions of the Town of Farmington have some limestone outcrops mixed with sandstone. Traditionally, in LaCrosse County, Germans settled predominantly in limestone areas, while Norwegians tended to settle in sandstone areas.[140] The Germans that

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[136]   Bryant, 182. For comparative purposes there was no information available for earlier or later, so the statistics are from 1906 only. Amounts are in bushels unless otherwise stated.

[137]   Bryant: 217.

[138]   Bryant, 218.

[139]   Bryant, 217.

[140]   Wingagie, 4.

settled in Farmington were an exception to this rule. According to Wingate, this group of Germans settled in the Town of Farmington because it was consistent with the soils found in the area of Germany where they had come from.

Farmington Township, although sandy near the vicinity of the Black River, is extremely fertile in the smaller valleys and served as an excellent area to grow crops. In 1906 Farmington of all towns had the largest acreage of all principal crops except barley. Principal crops grown included grasses, oats, corn, wheat, rye and barley. In addition, it also had the largest area of growing timber. Farmington also raised more swine and stood second in the number of horses, cattle and sheep in the county in 1906.[141]

In 1950, there were 240 farms in Farmington Township, averaging 180 acres each.

Farmington Township, LaCrosse County, Wisconsin, Agriculture Statistics, 1906.

Town	Wheat	Corn	Oats	Barley	Rye	Potatoes
Farmington	10,063	100,875	161,202	32,063	12,779	11,177

TOWNSHIP OF HAMILTON

The township of Hamilton in central LaCrosse County, was originally laid out into fifty-five and a half sections, mostly in the best land of the LaCrosse River Valley. The northern portion of the township is hilly with many bluffs and ravines, however, the southern two-thirds of it lay in the river valley, and is relatively flat and tillable.

The first settlement in the present limits of Hamilton Township was made by a Norwegian named Emfin Emfinson during the summer of 1850. He erected a small log cabin on a claim in Sections 28 and 29. Shortly thereafter, Thomas Leonard, who later became the founder of West Salem, and Julius Segar settled in the valley.

The township of Hamilton eventually was populated by the villages of Neshonoc, West Salem.[142]

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[141] Bryant, 218.

[142] Western Historical Company, *History of LaCrosse County*, 690-705.

Hamilton Township, LaCrosse County, Wisconsin, Agriculture Statistics, 1906.

Town	Wheat	Corn	Oats	Barley	Rye	Potatoes
Hamilton	7,678	110,085	115,570	52,090	690	13,410

TOWNSHIP OF HOLLAND

The present town of Holland was organized on November 13, 1857. It is bound by the Black River to the north, the Mississippi River to the West, the town of Onalaska to the south, and the town of Hamilton to the east. It lies in the sandstone areas, and the southwestern part is intersected by bayous connecting the Black and Mississippi Rivers.[143] The first settler to the area was a Mr. Gordon. In 1850, one Gordon and family emigrated from the state of Maine into La Crosse County, and purchased about 100 acres of land in the northern part of what is now the town of Holland, on or near the banks of the Black River.[144] Like most settlers Mr. Gordon built his family a log cabin and planted a few acres of crops for subsistence. He also spent time logging, as many did in the area. Mr. Gordon even laid out a village site on his land named Orno, but like many other planned towns it never amounted to anything. Over the next couple of years other settlers would arrive to the area.

The town of Holland would see large numbers of Norwegian, and Dutch immigrants over the years. This is apparent through village names like New Amsterdam, and the town of Holland itself. In February of 1853 a Norwegian immigrant named Oepke Bonnema would travel up the Mississippi River from New Orleans to settle in the town of Holland. Oepke would play an important role in the history of the town of Holland. Oepke laid out the town of New Amsterdam, on the land he had purchased shortly after arriving to La Crosse County. Subsequently, Mr. Bonnema built the first store in what is now the town of Holland and, for a number of years, supplied the subsequent pioneers with their necessary groceries.[145] In 1855 a post office was set up in the town of Holland, and Oepke was chosen as Postmaster. Oepke did a great deal to help the development of the community and in 1856 he donated an acre of his land for the building of the first schoolhouse in

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[143] Bryant, Benjamin F. Ed. *Memoirs of La Crosse County.* Madison, WI. Western Historical Association, 1907. Pg 227.

[144] *History of La Crosse County, Wisconsin.* Western Historical Company, Chicago, IL. 1881. Pg 706.

[145] Ibid, Pg 706

the town of Holland. In 1857 Oepke built a sawmill on the bank of a branch of the Black River. The sawmill could handle about 10,000 feet of lumber per day. He operated the mill for eleven years until it was shut down.

In1873 construction was begun on a church for the town of Holland. The church was completed six years later in 1879. Before the church was completed services were held in the schoolhouse by clergymen from La Crosse.

The topography of the town of Holland is not very accommodating to agricultural practices. The western section of the town consists of mainly low-lying marshland, which is suitable for raising grasses. As we recede from the river, we come upon an open, sandy prairie, some three miles in width, which as a farming country, has proven unreliable.[146] Moving east of the sandy prairie we find bluffs running north to south. The bluffs were unsuitable for agricultural practices, but made for wonderful pasturelands. Within the bluffs lie fertile valleys, which are well suited for agriculture. Reports from 1906 show the principle crops, in acreage, as follows[147]:

The town of Holland also includes the village of Holmen, which in time would become the most important town in Holland. Holmen had a population of only 150 people in 1906, and since then has grown tremendously. Holmen will be discussed further in its own section.

In 1870 the town of Holland had a total population of approximately 863.[148] Today the town of Holland has a population of 3,042.[149] The population figure from 1870 includes Holmen, by the current population does not. Holmen became a separate municipality on May 7th, 1946.

In 1950, there were 130 farms in Holland Township, averaging 164 acres each.

Holland Township, LaCrosse County, Wisconsin, Agriculture Statistics, 1906.

Township	Wheat	Corn	Oats	Barley	Rye	Potatoes
Holland	5,113	69,608	69,382	7,143	7,902	10,200

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[146] Ibid, Pg 707.

[147] Bryant, Pg 227.

[148] History of La Crosse County, Wisconsin. Pg 253

[149] La Crosse County Population Statistics. La Crosse County web page. http://www.co.la-crosse.wi.us/ctypubs.htm

VILLAGE OF HOLMEN

Holmen remained a part of the township   of Holland until 1946 when it became its own municipality. In the early years of its development Holmen did not see large numbers of settlers. One of the earliest settlers to the area was Barney McHugh, in 1858. In 1862 Fredrick Anderson settled in Holmen. Business in Holmen was initiated by the building of a Blacksmith shop in 1867 by Fredrick Anderson.[150] Fredrick, along with his wife and two daughters, lived in the rear of the shop. In 1870 Peter Sjolander purchased the blacksmith shop from Anderson. Peter's son C.A. Sjolander bought some land nearby and set up a store of his own. C.A. Sjolander became Holmen's first postmaster in 1875 when a post office was set up at his store.

1875 also saw Holmen get its official name of Holmen. Before then it had been known as both Fredrickstown, and Cricken.[151] In 1860 Chris Christianson Caseberg and family settled in the Holmen area. Caseberg would be an important individual in establishing business in Holmen. In 1873 he erected the first hotel in the area. In 1876 Caseberg bought a mill from Mr. William Phenning. Caseberg operated the mill, which became known as the Caseberg Mill Company. In 1885 Caseberg built a rafting pin company, the pins were sent to Onalaska and La Crosse and were used by logging companies on the rivers. One of these pins was accepted by the Wisconsin Historical Museum as an authentic relic of pioneer lumbering days in this area.[152]

In 1884 C.A. Sjolander built a creamery, the building still stands today, which helped to start an ice harvesting business in Holmen. Ice harvesting was big business in Holmen during the winter months. People would come from the surrounding areas to harvest the ice to make a little money. In the 1880s the first school was constructed. In 1883 Holmen saw the arrival of its first doctor, Dr. J.H. Pflueger.

In 1904 Alden O. Caseberg built the first lumberyard in Holmen. Six years later A.O. Caseberg built a block factory, where concrete blocks for building were made. Some of these blocks were used to build local houses, and some of those houses still exist today.

A few families played a very important role in the establishment of Holmen into a community. Without the Casebergs, or the Sjolanders to start all the businesses in

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[150] *Holmen Area Centennial.* Compilation by Holmen Area Residents, 1962. Pg 25.

[151] Ibid, pg 25.

[152] Ibid, pg 29.

the area, Holmen may have never grown at all. The first settlement occurred in the area in the late 1850s, but Holmen would not be large enough until 1946 to become a village.

Since Holmen has become a village it has seen rapid growth and development, especially starting in the 1980s. Holmen is now one of the area's fastest growing communities. Part of the village spans into what was historically part of Onalaska Township as well.

TOWNSHIP OF ONALASKA

The Town of Onalaska is located in the northwestern portion of LaCrosse County, with the Mississippi River for part of its western boundary. The township, although containing thirty-six square miles of territory, is the most irregular in shape of all the towns in the county. The western part of the township lies in a marshy region cut up by numerous bayous connecting the Black and Mississippi rivers. In addition, one branch of Halfway Creek flows through the town from the northeast and flows west and then south, emptying into the Black River.[153]

Prior to the settlement of the Town of Onalaska, many loggers and timber men frequented the area, often building small shacks to live in. The first permanent settlers did not arrive in the area until 1851. Many of these settlers came from Canada and the state of Maine and brought their lumbering experience with them. Later settlers in this area included Norwegians and Germans.[154]

The Town of Onalaska was organized in 1854, the same year the Village of Onalaska had its first official government meeting. The Township of Onalaska, exclusive of the city was comprised of 30, 268 acres and had a population of 1,041 in the year 1900. Much of the history of the Town of Onalaska is linked to the village in its early years.[155]

The soil in northwestern La Crosse County is sandstone. The topography of the Town of Onalaska is cut by the sloughs between the Black and Mississippi rivers and the surface is broken by the rugged line of bluffs crossing the township from north to south, so a smaller proportion of land is available for farming purposes than in some of the other townships. Therefore, much of the land in the Town of

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[153] Bryant, 228.

[154] Tolvstad, 3.

[155] Dolbier, 157.

Onalaska is available for pasture. According to Bryant, the town ranked fourth in the number of cattle owned in 1906. In any case, some agricultural crops were grown in the town in 1906, including hay, oats, corn and barley. [156]

The Town of Onalaska also had a few smaller settlements that sprang up. Midway, located at the center of the township, which is still recognized today, as an unincorporated village, was a station on the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad. It had a population of 100 in 1906. Lytle, which was located in the northwestern part of the township, was a post village on the Black River and at the junctions of several railroads. [157]

In 1950, there were 137 farms in Onalaska Township, averaging 162 acres each.

Onalaska Township, LaCrosse County, Wisconsin, Agriculture Statistics, 1906.

Township	Wheat	Corn	Oats	Barley	Rye	Potatoes
Onalaska	4,540	74,310	76,240	14,235	6,945	11,555

OVERALL ETHNIC SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

Each ethnic group had their own settlement pattern. The British, Irish, Welsh, and Yankees usually settled on land along the LaCrosse River. They preferred the alluvial land that could be found in such areas. Outside the LaCrosse River valley this group also settled in places such as Brice Prairie, Lewis Valley and along Fleming Creek. The alluvial soil was the first choice, however, they also settled on sand terraces and limestone and sandstone soils. [158] Many of the Irish who came to LaCrosse County arrived with the construction of the railroad as many of them helped lay tracks. [159]

The Germans who came to LaCrosse settled throughout the area, though the majority of their population rested in the southern part of the county. The Germans settled predominately on limestone soil that covered the ridge tops. Some of the limestone soil that was taken up by this group was in the Mormon Coulee area.

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[156] Bryant, 228.

[157] Bryant, 228.

[158] Wingate, 65, 74, 108, 141.

[159] Wingate, 67.

However, one group did settle in the northeastern part of the county known as "Sand Vista" on sandstone soil.[160]

Norwegians mostly settled in the northern portion of the county, utilizing the village of Holmen as their trade center. However, some settled in Coon Valley of Vernon County just south of LaCrosse County. Within this ethnic group was included a small amount of Danish and Swedish immigrants who settled among the Norwegians. In the southern portion of the county Norwegians settled along the LaCrosse River, Bostwick's Creek, and also in the village Bangor. The soil that this group settled on was mostly sandstone in the northern part of the county, the last acreage in the county to be claimed.[161]

The Bohemians were one of the last groups to arrive in the county. They took up land in the southeast corner of the county that consisted of limestone soils. The Bohemians tended to settled in the vicinity of Germans, as they shared old world customs.[162]

The French and Dutch also settled in LaCrosse County. The French settled along the Mississippi River on the bottom lands and sand terraces, in the area known today as French Island. The Dutch also settled on bottom lands and sand terraces, however, they settled along the Black River and the joining lands of the Mississippi and Black rivers. The area that the Dutch settled is known today as New Amsterdam.[163]

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[160] Wingate, 74, 113, 120, 68. "The reports show that Germans came from many parts of the culture area including Bavaria, Wuerttemberg, Baden, Darmstadt, Hesse, Rhenish, Prussia, Hanover, Brandenburgh, Saxony, Westphalia, Austria, Luxembourg, and Switzerland."

[161] Wingate, 70, 74, 134 141.

[162] Wingate, 70, 74, 124.

[163] Wingate, 74, 123, 141, 134.

INTENSIVE SURVEY OF

NORTHERN LACROSSE COUNTY

The following properties are a list of already listed National Register of Historic Places, or they are potentially eligible for the National Register.

Map Code	Name	Location	Date
LC 208/01	Farmstead	N 7910 Bluff View Ct., Holland Twp.	1918
LC 211/24	Farmstead	W6429 CTH D, Onalaska Twp.	Ca. 1870s
LC 211/26	Farmstead	CTH D, Onalaska Twp.,	Ca. 1900
LC 211/29	Halfway Creek Lutheran Church	W6016 CTH W, Onalaska Twp.	1913
LC 213/29	Farmstead	W5306 CTH W Onalaska Twp.	Ca. 1915
LC 215/11	Mindoro Cut	STH 108 at McKlintock Rd.	1907-08
LC 216/18	House (with log portion)	N7621 CTH C, Farmington Twp.	Ca. 1870
LC/216/32	Burr Oak Ev. Lutheran School	N9117 CTH C, Farmington Twp.	1902
LC/217/05	Farmstead	N8756 CTH C, Farmington Twp.	Ca. 1875
LC 218/10	Sand Creek School	W 407 CTH A, Burns Twp.	Ca. 1900
LC 218/16	Farmstead	N7905 CTH V, Holland Twp.	Ca. 1890

RECOMMENDATIONS

General Observations

The Northern LaCrosse Rural Architectural/Historical Survey Project was conducted in 2001-02 for the purposes of obtaining reconnaissance and intensive level information about the properties located within the six townships in the project area. From the commitment given to this project both by the LaCrosse County Historic Site Preservation Commission and the LaCrosse County Board, it is obvious that historic preservation is considered to be an important topic in this county. Historic preservation should be not only be seen as a way of maintaining a legacy within the county, but should also be seen as an economic alternative to new construction, for bringing grant and loan money into the region, and for a way to improve the general tax base of the county's rural communities and farmsteads. The benefits of historic preservation are summarized below.

Social and Economic Benefits of Historic Preservation

Social Benefits

The preservation of LaCrosse County's historic resources is important for a number of reasons which may not be immediately apparent to many people. It is common for people to live in a community all their life and not recognize the historic gems which surround them. Historic resources can provide a community with a strong sense of their unique history, based on the commercial, industrial, social, residential and educational resources which surround them daily. Older structures provide residents with a feeling of stability and continuity which is difficult, if not impossible to replace. Additionally, these older structures also can instill an appreciation for an era of high standards of aesthetics and craftsmanship which exits today in a very different version.

LaCrosse County's history is reflected through agricultural trends from wheat to dairy, transportation corridors, industries, commerce, and into the twentieth century, increased tourism. Agriculture has remained a strong component in the county, with family farms persisting, and agriculture related industries and commercial establishments in the small communities and inside the city of LaCrosse, itself.

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Therefore, it is important socially for the residents of LaCrosse County to preserve their most important historic resources, to aid future residents in understanding an important past. In addition to this understanding, however, the people of LaCrosse County may reap possible economic benefits through their historic resources.

Economic Benefits

♦ Thousands of historic rehabilitation projects have been undertaken in the past few decades. Rehabilitation became a major national industry in the 1980s. As a result, information is becoming increasingly available which indicate that rehabilitation of older buildings is more cost effective than new construction.

♦ Rehabilitation projects usually cost about one-half to one-third less than similar new construction.

♦ Initial construction costs are lower because demolition costs are minimal as a result and there is little expense for foundation and/or structural work. As a result, rehabilitation projects are usually faster to complete.

♦ Rehabilitation projects often provide central and convenient site location, sound and durable quality construction, unique aesthetic and design value, and the public relations of positive image and greater publicity opportunities.

♦ Rehabilitation projects create more jobs and have a greater impact on the local economy and unemployment rate than comparable new construction projects. Rehabilitation projects tend to utilize 25% more labor than new construction projects. Fewer materials are used than in new construction, which makes more project money available for labor. As a result, more of the money spent on the project will be re-circulated back into the local economy.

♦ Preservation stimulates economic revitalization and private investment which in turn increases the local tax base.

♦ Preservation has a strong impact on the tourism industry, which is currently one of the largest industries in Wisconsin. In 1990, tourism generated approximately $6.3 billion in spending revenue. Sightseeing is one of the most popular summer vacation activities, and historic sites are an important feature in sightseeing activities.

[The above economic benefits discussion was excerpted, in part, from a pamphlet entitled "Economic Benefits of Historic Preservation in Wisconsin," published by the Historic Preservation Division of the State Historical Society of

Wisconsin in 1990.]

In addition to the general social and economic benefits, there are programs which have been established by state and federal governments which encourage historic preservation.

Tax Incentives for Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings

Owners of income-producing National Register properties can claim a 20% federal investment tax credit and an additional 5% state investment tax credit for rehabilitation expenses. Work must be sympathetic with the historic character of the building, follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, and be approved by the National Park Service and the Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

Protection from Federal Projects

Properties that are listed on the National Register or State Register of Historic Places, or that may be eligible to be listed, receive limited protection from federally licenses or funded projects. Any agency or organization seeking federal assistance or permits should contact the Chief of Compliance in the Historic Preservation Division of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin at 608/264-6509, to ensure that its project comply with federal regulations.

It should be noted, however, that while listing on the National Register of Historic Places gives some protection from federally funded project, it provides no protection from privately funded development. Only local Historic Preservation Ordinance (which LaCrosse County has) authorized by state statute, may allow the community to regulate new construction, exterior alterations, and demolitions which may adversely affect historic properties.

Wisconsin Historic Building Code

The Wisconsin Historic Building Code is available for use by owners of buildings which are listed on the State and National Register of Historic Places owners of historic buildings which have been designated under a local historic preservation ordinance which has been certified by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin (LaCrosse is a certified local government, so all local historic properties meet these criteria). This code, administered by the Department of Industry, Labor

and Human Relations (DILHR) is designed to facilitate the preservation restoration of the designated historic buildings through the provision of alternative building standards. Owners of qualified historic buildings are permitted to be subject to the Historic Building Code in lieu of any state or municipal building codes. For more information contact DILHR at 608/266-3151.

Recommendations for Future Action on Preservation

♦ List any and all properties designated under the Intensive Survey chapter of this report (and previous reports) on the local historic sites list;

♦ List any and all properties highlighted under the Intensive Survey chapter of this report (and previous reports) on the National Register of Historic Places list;

♦ Continue education programs through public meetings, brochures, ongoing research;

♦ Establish contact with community historic preservation leaders and organizations to continue cooperation in the historic survey project

♦ Continue to collect site-specific information on individual properties;

♦ Consolidate the two previous LaCrosse County surveys with this survey into one concise document, with a single general history;

♦ Prepare a Historic Preservation Plan for LaCrosse County.

♦ Establish design guidelines for rehabilitation of sites that have been designated historic by the Historic Preservation Commission.

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