



## EAGLE

**LOCATION.**—The town of Eagle, organized in 1853, occupies township 9 north, range 1 west of the fourth principal meridian in Richland County. It is bounded north by Dayton, east by Orion, south by Wisconsin River, which makes the boundary between Eagle and Muscoda (in Grant County), and west by Richwood. From 1868 Muscoda village was reached by bridge over the Wisconsin, whereas previously a ferry was maintained at that place. The village of Orion (once called Richmond) flourished for some years hard by the southeast corner of Eagle, on the same side of the river. Richland City (at one time a smart trading point) lay eight miles farther east, and Richland Center about the same distance northeast over the ridge. Port Andrew, in Richwood, a steamboat landing in early days, was another prime trading point. The building in recent times of the Wisconsin River bridge at Blue River has made that town, located nearly opposite the southwest corner of Eagle, the trade center for a good share of the town. Basswood and Eagle Corners are the principal villages located within the town, though Byrd's Creek, just over the line in Richwood, serves the farmers of Eagle also.

**SURFACE AND DRAINAGE.**—The town lies in the Driftless Area. It is crossed from north to south by Eagle Creek, which has two main branches (the easternmost of them usually called Hoosier Creek, and the western Mill Creek) and a number of small affluents of each branch. The longer of these (Mill Creek) enters the town in section 6 and flows out through section 36; Hoosier Creek enters at section 26. (For the lesser streams see the plat.) The Richland Center Quadrangle of the United States Topographical Survey covers only the eastern two-thirds of the town (fig. 7). It shows most of that portion to be low, either valley land or terrace, but between the two streams is a ridge which joins at the north the broad upland terminated on the east by the Pine River valley. The portion of the town which lies south and west of Mill Creek valley is largely upland, with, however, a flat stretch near the Wisconsin River. The part of Mill Creek valley which lies within the town is approximately two miles in breadth of cultivable land, including the alluvial, the terrace, and gentler slopes of the bordering bluffs, thus affording opportunity for many excellent farms. Hoosier valley (called Hoosier Hollow) is much narrower and also much shorter. The terrace along the Wisconsin in the southern part of the town is considerably more than a mile in breadth. There are cultivable areas on the ridges also, though these are much restricted.

**TYPES OF SOIL.**—There is no regular soil survey of Richland County. The government surveyor in 1840, Orson

Lyon, pronounced upon the quality of the land along the official survey lines. He found it first-rate in the valleys, second- and third-rate elsewhere. The reputation of Eagle as a corn producing town suggests that the valley soils must be a very rich Wabash loam or Wabash silt loam, and probably the other soils are analogous to those in Iowa County which the survey described as Knox silt loam on the ridges, and Lintonia silt loam on the terraces and lower hill slopes. Some sand mingled with the soil of the southern part of the town makes it warm and easy to work. Eagle is recognized as one of the best farming towns in the county.

**TIMBER.**—Unlike the towns of Muscoda and Castle Rock south of the river, Eagle was originally heavily timbered. The surveyor noted, among the kinds of timber, elm, oak, lynn, sugar, ironwood, walnut, aspen, cherry, and ash, aside from the undergrowth. Some small tracts on the hills were "lightly timbered," but in general the land bore a heavy growth which had to be removed before cultivation was possible.

**BEGINNINGS OF SETTLEMENT.**—The first land in the town to pass into private hands was the west half of the southwest quarter of section 26, bought by Thomas Jefferson Parish in 1841. This was later the site of Rodolf's Mill. The water power of Eagle Creek, called Mill Creek on account of the mill built there, was the object of the purchase. Parish and Estes built a dam and a sawmill there apparently within a year after entering the land. It was a time when the first impulse of settlement affected the north bank of the Wisconsin in that region. In the beginning it was the timber which attracted settlers. Steamboats plying on the Wisconsin required wood supplies at frequent intervals, and the scarcity of timber on the south side was one reason for establishing wood yards on the north. The lands had recently been surveyed, so that settlers could select claims with reference to the excellence of the land for future cultivation. The removal of the land office to Muscoda in 1842 suggested the development of an important town at that point. Transportation by steamboat was assured, and railway projects, like heaven's lightning, were as liable to strike that region as any other lying so far west. In fact, for several years when the Milwaukee and Mississippi Railway project was in its infancy, the question of route so far as the two banks of the Wisconsin were concerned was left open.

John Coumbe, the first settler of Richland County, established himself near Port Andrew in 1840, having selected his location two years earlier.<sup>1</sup> The Waters family and Edward Coumbe soon joined him. Esau Johnson also settled there

temporarily in 1841, and got out logs to raft down the Mississippi.<sup>2</sup> Thomas Matthews and Captain John Smith settled at Orion, built the mill dam for Parish, and also established the ferry on the Wisconsin between Muscoda and Orion. Thomas Laws established another ferry higher up the river near the later Richland City. Within three years men were working in the pine timber on upper Pine River at Rockbridge, where a sawmill was built, while others—including Esau Johnson—were operating in the pine forests along the Kickapoo. In a word, the region north of the Wisconsin was the "big woods," and the men who sought it were mostly those who were capable of surviving as woodsmen.

The first settler in Eagle—Matthew Alexander, a Kentuckian—took up land in 1840 near the river, where he lumbered and rafted till 1852. Hardin Moore, a bachelor blacksmith, is said to have been the second settler in the town. But these men were "sooners," to use the western phrase. Very few neighbors came in till 1848, 1849, and 1850, when a large number of claims were entered and a smaller number of families actually settled in the town. It was in those years that Hoosier Hollow was occupied by families from Indiana, some of whom were and long remained of the distinctive "Hoosier" type, related to the mountaineers of the Appalachian Highlands. The biographies of early settlers in the town show how generally the families had been inured to frontier conditions before coming to Richland County.<sup>3</sup> Very few were from the Northeast; more were from Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio, Indiana, Missouri, and Illinois. Aside from Hoosier Hollow and the lower valley of Mill Creek, the early settlers spread over the terrace along Wisconsin River. All of the lands in the southern tier of sections except state lands were sold in 1845 to 1850, but not all were occupied in those years. By far the larger number of settlers in the town arrived during the years 1852 to 1857, the railroad building years, though in comparison with Castle Rock, which filled up during the same period, a much larger number of pioneers were on the ground prior to the coming of the railroad. They were engaged in woods work rather than farming.

**CONDITIONS AFFECTING THE PURCHASE OF LAND.**—The first of these was the division of the town between smooth, rich bottom land and rough, steep hill land. In every section the hills remained in the government's hands for a number of years after the bottoms were taken up by settlers or by speculators. The amount of speculator land in the town was not large, though some good tracts were entered by men who soon sold to settlers. The state located in this town school

<sup>2</sup> Narrative of Esau Johnson. MS. in State Historical Library.

<sup>3</sup> *History of Richland County, Wisconsin* (Madison, 1906), chap. xvi.

<sup>1</sup> See sketch in *Wis. Mag. of Hist.*, vi, 435-443 (June, 1923).

and University lands to the extent of four and a quarter sections (aside from the school section). All of these were in the desirable southwestern portion of the town, and most of them were sold at a higher price than the government charged for Congress land. However, the terms of purchase were advantageous, settlers paying 10 per cent down, and interest at the rate of 7 per cent,<sup>4</sup> whereas government land had to be paid for in cash.

**PROGRESS OF FARM MAKING.**—The town of Eagle in 1860 had fewer improved acres in its farms, on the average, than any of the twenty towns compared with it save Newton and Sevastopol. That average was 27 acres, while 82 acres of land remained unimproved in the average farm of 109 acres. No farm in the town had more than 70 acres of improved land, and only one of the 101 farms had that much. In 1870 the number of farms was 158, the total improved area 6288, or an average of 39 acres per farm, and the total unimproved 8883, an average of 56 acres. At that census period 3 farms had over 100 acres improved land, the maximum being 140; and 14 from 61 acres to 100 acres improved. Ten years later the farms numbered 196, the improved acres 9954, unimproved 8927, the average being 50 and 45 acres respectively. This put Eagle ahead of Newton, Sevastopol, and Prairie du Chien in the item of improved land, but behind the other nineteen towns. A generation of effort had not subdued the forest. In 1905, according to the state census, Eagle had 156 farms—14,049 improved acres, and 8218 unimproved, or an average per farm of 90 acres improved and 52 unimproved. This was 1517 more improved acres than the census of 1895 assigned to the town, but inasmuch as that census omitted the schedule for "number of farms," we can only assume they had perhaps ten acres less improved land on the average, unless the number of farms was larger, which is not improbable.

**CLASSIFICATION OF FARMS ACCORDING TO AREA.**—The several classes of farms, considered with respect to area, in 1860 stood as follows: under 20 acres, none; between 20 and 49, 19; from 50 to 99, 39; from 100 to 174, 29; and from 175 to 499, 14. Thus the farms were usually of fair to good size. The maximum was 360 acres. In 1870 one farm contained over 500 acres, and two under 20 acres. There were 49 of 20 to 49 acres each, 55 of 50 to 99, 41 of 100 to 174, and 10 of 175 to 499. The big farm, which was owned by C. G. Rodolf, had 956 acres.<sup>5</sup> Ten years later there were 5 diminutive farms (under 20 acres), 38 small farms (20 to 49 acres), 75 fair-sized farms (50 to 99 acres), and 53 good-sized farms (100 to 174 acres). The large farms of 175 to 499 acres numbered 24, and one overran that limit, reaching 588 acres. The big farm was owned by James Lucas. Thus the tendency was toward the good-sized and large farms.

<sup>4</sup>In case of "500,000-acres" lands, only the interest was paid, the purchase being on a credit of thirty years.

<sup>5</sup>This probably was not a single farm, but several separate tracts.

But again, as in the case of Castle Rock, Bangor, and other Driftless Area towns, it is necessary to take account of land actually cultivable in order to determine the agricultural status of the people. In 1860 there were 88 farms having 40 acres or less of cultivated land; in 1870 there were 117 farms in that class; and in 1880, 96. In the class of 41 to 60 acres of arable there were, at the three periods, 12, 24, and 38; of 61 to 100 acres, 1, 14, and 52; and over 100 acres, 0, 3, and 10. Small farms grew fewer, others more numerous.

**GENERAL PRODUCTIONS.**—The census data inscribed on the plat show that in 1859 William Recob raised on 50 acres of arable land, located in Hoosier Hollow, 200 bushels of wheat; and Samuel B. Gault, in upper Mill Creek valley, raised 200 bushels on a farm having 35 acres of improved land. These were the maximum crops at that time. The 1870 census records, for the whole town, a wheat production of 17,887 bushels, which is 113 bushels per farm on the average. This placed Eagle as a wheat producer number eighteen among the twenty-three towns compared. Ten years later fifteen of the twenty-three towns were below Eagle in that item, due to the gradual opening of new lands and the persistence in wheat growing on the fresh lands. In 1884 Eagle was credited with 1141 acres of wheat yielding 16,602 bushels or 14.5 bushels per acre. The area was 509 acres less than in 1879, and the product less than half as great. The yield per acre was somewhat larger. In 1894 the acreage and the yield were practically the same as in 1884, but in 1904 there was only 58 acres of wheat grown in the town. Thus it appears wheat growing, on a commercial scale, continued in Eagle about a decade longer than in Castle Rock, a circumstance which was probably due to the later clearing of the ridge lands and to the convenient market for wheat at the mill located within the town.<sup>6</sup>

However, Eagle was preëminently a corn growing region rather than a wheat area. Her corn fields have long been famous, and in 1879, as the production chart shows, her crop was not only among the largest in the aggregate, but showed one of the highest yields per acre. In 1859 only three of the towns, all of them in the Driftless Area, exceeded Eagle in amount grown per farm. In 1869 she stood number eight; in 1879 two towns, Sugar Creek and Plymouth, were above Eagle in average production of corn per farm, and only five had a higher farm average of swine. The rearing of cattle under the conditions of open pasturage was carried on, in the heavily forested towns, at a disadvantage as against towns having similar amounts of uncultivated land which was not heavily wooded. In Eagle the number of stock cattle was smaller than in the other Driftless Area towns except Orion. Dairying, also, was slow to acquire momentum, but developed rapidly after the factory system began. As late as 1880 there were only 549 milch cows in the town, and the butter yield, which in 1869 was 15,430 pounds from 317 cows, had grown

<sup>6</sup>Rodolf's mill, in section 26.

to only 39,526 pounds. But the state census records for Eagle in 1894 a cheese product amounting to 268,430 pounds, in addition to 38,810 pounds of butter. Since the farmers of Eagle were growing as much wheat as ever, together with huge crops of both corn and oats, and since the pork yield was nearly twice what it had been in 1879, we have in these figures evidence of genuine agricultural prosperity which has continued unbroken to the present.

**SPECIAL PRODUCTIONS.**—When the process of farm making commenced in Eagle, there was in the town an exceptionally large number of mature sugar-maple trees ready to yield up their toothsome product. That the maple was widely distributed over the town is shown by the fact that in 1859, 46 of the 101 farms made maple sugar. That town was second only to Sevastopol in the average amount per farm which it produced, and the aggregate was more than twice as much as in Sevastopol. In 1869 Eagle stood first in average per farm. Ten years later the total was only 160 pounds. The "sugar bush" was disappearing.

Forest products, it may be inferred, were important for many years. The sawmills took most of the better timber cut by the settlers in their land clearing operations. Some of these mills continued to run as late as 1890, sawing oak and maple flooring, oak dimension stuff, elm sheathing, basswood siding, walnut, basswood, and maple finishing lumber for houses, together with wagon stuff and some furniture stock. In the early days asheries were common and cordwood was sold when possible, but it was usually a drug on the market. One form of forest product which became important after a few years consisted of stave timber and hoop poles. These were sold at the stave and barrel factory established at Muscoda. In 1869 forest products of all kinds were made to the value of more than \$13,000, and as late as 1879 the amount exceeded \$6600. By that time many railroad ties were included in the output, but lumber continued to be a staple.

**VALUE OF PRODUCTIONS.**—In 1869 the value of all farm productions in the town was \$65,639, which is equivalent to \$421 per farm on the average. Ten years later the average per farm was \$400, almost the lowest of the towns compared. At the first period there were 6 incomes of \$1000 or over, the maximum being \$3114 (made out of hops), another \$2016, the rest under \$1201. Thirty were between \$600 and \$999, 31 between \$400 and \$599, and 54 between \$200 and \$399. There were 29 of the extremely inadequate incomes of less than \$200. Eight farms reported no incomes. In 1879 the maximum income was \$1892, made largely from wheat, and there were 12 others of \$1000 or more. There were 34 of the second class (\$600 to \$999), 39 of the third class (\$400 to \$599), and 49 of the fourth class (\$200 to \$399). The incomes falling below \$200 rose to the alarming total of 58, more than one-fourth of the whole. This and the next highest class account for more than one-half of the farms,

which argues a state of severe agricultural depression. Three farms reported no incomes.

According to the census of 1905 the average farm income for Eagle for 1904 had gone up to \$887, and this again had risen by 1919 to an average of \$2526 for that year. Even allowing for the high prices of this last period, there is indication of increased prosperity and a condition very different from the depression shown by the low averages of 1869 and 1879. Only five of the towns studied exceeded Eagle in the average value of dairy products per farm in 1919.

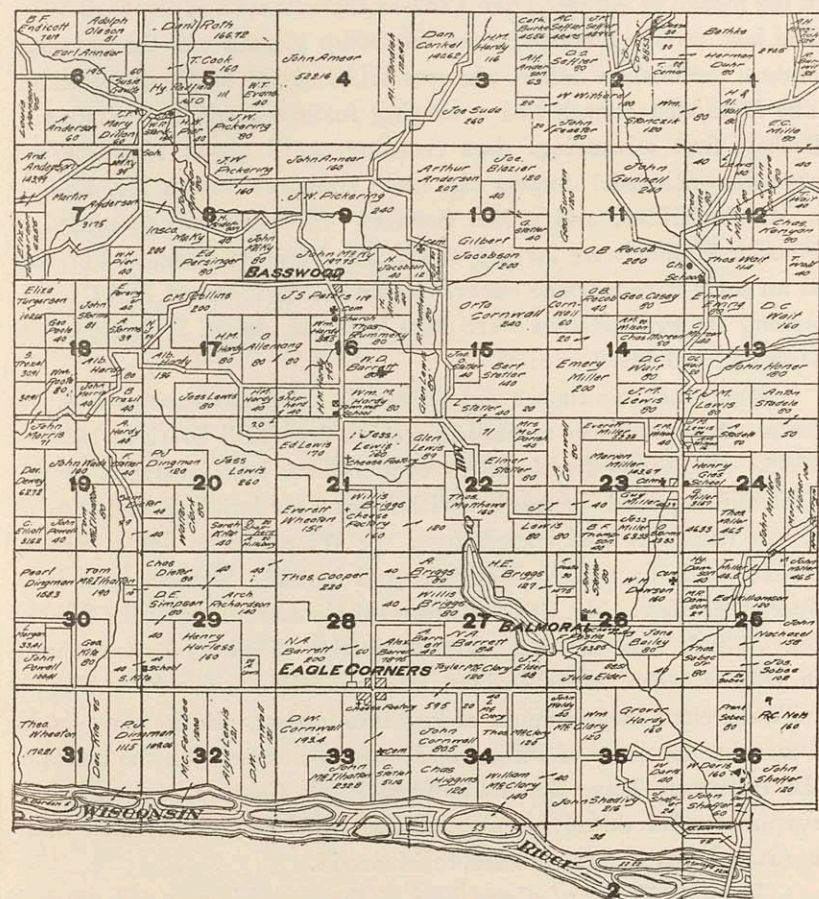


FIG. 9. TOWN OF EAGLE, 1915

After a drawing lent by the W. W. Hixson Company

**MANUFACTURES.**—The Parish sawmill, erected about 1842, was the pioneer of many sawmills, all small, which aided in the disposal of the heavy forest growth as the settlers cleared their lands. The gristmill erected on the site of the first sawmill in 1857 by Charles G. Rodolf, who was succeeded by his son F. G. Rodolf, had a career of considerable distinction nearly to the end of the century, as a plant for the manufacture of flour. A post office, Balmoral, was established at the mill, and a mercantile trade also was usually carried on there. McClintock's steam sawmill on upper Hoosier Creek manufactured lumber well into the eighties—perhaps longer.

**VILLAGES, POST OFFICES, SCHOOLS, AND CHURCHES.**—According to the town plat of 1874, Eagle Corners in sections 33 and 28 had a post office (established in 1870), as had

Basswood (established in 1869) in sections 9 and 16. On the next plat, 1895, Balmoral post office appears. Opposite the southeast corner of the town was the village of Orion, and at the western boundary Byrd's Creek. Basswood and Eagle Corners were the only considerable villages within the town. Educationally Eagle was supplied by eight or nine district schools. There are eight districts at present, and up to date none of the schools has become a graded or high school. Nevertheless, not only in pioneer days but in more recent times, the communities had some notable teachers, among whom may be mentioned Frank Gile, J. M. Ferebee, Charles Cornwall, Charles R. Pickering, Rose Hamilton, and Joseph M. Cubela—most of whom were normal-trained teachers from Platteville. Mr. Ferebee became county superintendent of Richland County. There was a Presbyterian church in section 24, Hoosier Hollow, and a United Brethren church higher up the valley, in section 12. Another United Brethren church, in section 5, served upper Mill Creek valley, while a Union church was located near Basswood, and church and Sunday-school services were also held at Eagle Corners.<sup>7</sup> All churches indicated on the plat represent Protestantism, which emphasizes the striking predominance of the native American stock in this town. Tradition asserts that for many years religious views and conditions were distinctly of the frontier type.

**POPULATION CHANGES.**—The population was American to begin with. In 1860 there were 128 families in the town, of which 108 were American and only 20 foreign. There were 11 unattached Americans. Of the 139 heads of families and single individuals, 31 gave Ohio as their place of birth, 27 Indiana, 12 each Pennsylvania and Virginia, 9 Kentucky, 7 New York, and 4 Illinois. Other states represented by as many as 3 were Missouri and North Carolina, while Massachusetts, New Jersey, Tennessee, and Maryland had 2 each, and several others 1 each. The proportion of foreign families was slightly larger in 1870, but it was smaller in 1885, and in 1920 it became once more about what it was in 1860. There has been emigration from Eagle as from other towns; yet, while we have no comparative statistics to prove it, the evidence of the land ownership plats is that the original population has been unusually persistent.

This town, on the side of social history, shows more of the characteristics of the older frontier in southern Indiana and Ohio, and in Kentucky, than of the communities established in the southeastern portions of Wisconsin or those made up so largely of foreigners, which were planted along the lake shore north of Milwaukee. Some of the characters, both good and bad, in Eggleston's *Hoosier Schoolmaster* and his *Circuit Rider* might have been drawn from Eagle quite as well as from Posey County, Indiana. And, on the other hand, the unmodified "Yankee" was conspicuous on account of his rarity, most men of eastern lineage and birth having derived

<sup>7</sup> See Plat Book of Richland County, Wisconsin (Minneapolis, Minn., 1895).

their training and life habit from some western community rather than from "the land of steady habits."

EAGLE—POPULATION STATISTICS

YEAR	TOTAL	AMERICAN			FOREIGN					FAMILIES			
		Wisconsin	Other States	Total	England	Germany	Ireland	Scandinavia	Other Lands	Total	American	Foreign	Total
1850	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
1860	721	240	433	673	13	4	2	24	5	48	108	20	128
1870	1,085	495	494	989	10	10	7	43	26	96	167	37	204
1885	1,302	.....	.....	1,215	23	17	9	34	4	87	234	36	270
1895	1,109	.....	.....	1,054	7	18	2	16	22	55	records incomplete	.....	.....
1905	955	740	173	913	.....	14	1	18	9	42	189	16	205
1920	929	813	85	898	.....	8	.....	9	14	31	187	17	204

SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN EAGLE<sup>1</sup>

J. W. PICKERING

I was born October 1, 1852, within ten miles of Racine, Wisconsin. My father, John Pickering, having entered 320 acres of land in sections 8 and 9 in 1849, drove by wagon in the late fall of 1852 and built a crude log cabin of one room near the southeast corner of section 9, town of Eagle. I can remember as far back as the summer of 1856, when there was only about twenty acres of cleared land. It was a very slow process clearing a farm and building a home in those primeval forests, especially as very few had any capital when they first settled in the northern part of the township. I recall seeing in my boyhood days practically all the first cabins built in Bethel school district number one. They were built of round logs, the cracks filled with chinks and daubed with mud to keep out the cold, and the roofs covered with clapboards. In some the stove pipe went through the roof; many had log fireplaces with chimneys built of round sticks and daubed inside and out with mud. No cabin had more than two or three small windows. If there was a spring on the land, the log cabin was built near it to save the expense of digging a well. There was a great deal of malaria along the banks of Mill Creek and also rheumatism to afflict the first settlers, who were unable to work much of the time on account of sickness. However, health conditions improved as the clearings were enlarged and most of the crude log cabins were superseded by hewed log houses of larger size, with two or more rooms and in some cases an "upstairs," while a few settlers replaced the log cabins with frame structures. My father built in the summer of 1857 the first frame house in Bethel school district number one.

Most districts built their first schoolhouses to match the log cabins. I taught in one of them built in the fifties, as late as the winter of 1875 and '76. It was in the northeast section of Eagle, at the upper end of Hoosier Hollow. The valley there being very narrow, the farms were small and poor. The schoolhouse was built of round logs daubed with mud. The seats, six in number, were about ten feet long and were made of slabs—that is, the first board sawed from the log. These slabs had two two-inch holes bored in each end, in which were inserted the legs of the benches. The seats had no

<sup>1</sup>The interesting items here presented are contained in a letter written by Mr. Pickering from Pasadena, California, September 21, 1922.

backs. There was no desk in the room, except a small one for the teacher. A board about twelve inches wide was fastened to the wall; by turning around on the seat the elder pupils who sat next to the wall could practice penmanship. My home district was an exception to the rule. The first schoolhouse there was built of hewed oak timber of the best quality, the cracks plastered with lime mortar. There were four large desks with shelves for books for the elder pupils, and good seats with backs to them for the younger scholars. This schoolhouse was destroyed by fire in the summer of 1865.

The first school in Bethel district number one, town of Eagle, was taught by Newton Wells in the winter of 1856-57. The following winter it was taught by a Mr. Baker and in 1858-59 by John Lewis, who made school teaching his life occupation and was known all over Richland County in the early days for his peculiar habit of visiting from house to house. The Bethel school was taught in 1859-60 by DeWitt Daugherty. In after years Mr. Daugherty served for many terms as township assessor for Eagle. The Bethel school was taught in the winter 1860-61 by Amy McMurtry. In 1861 a summer session of school was held for the first time by Miss McMurtry, and from this time forward we had six or seven months of school a year. Miss McMurtry taught one month of the winter term of 1861-62. The patrons of the school became dissatisfied and she was suspended by the county superintendent. During the summer sessions of 1862 and 1863 C. E. Livingston was the teacher. The winter school of 1862-63 was taught by Harry Plowman. Mr. Livingston taught the winter term of 1863 until Christmas. He was an excellent teacher, but his one bad habit, drink, resulted in his being killed in a drunken orgie at Port Andrew at that time. The rest of the winter term 1863-64 was taught by Thomas Rummery, who also taught the following winter. The winter of 1864-65 brought the close of the Civil War, which had very much retarded the clearing of new lands and the erection of new buildings. Bethel school district alone had furnished twelve soldiers, of whom Joshua Johns and T. Standish had died in battle, and a Mr. Smith and George Howe had died of sickness.

During the Civil War the inhabitants of the town of Eagle were almost self-sustaining. Through those trying times there was enough land cleared to produce all the corn, wheat, and hay needed for home use. Pasturage was free; the cattle and hogs ranged through the summer on the uncleared land which was not fenced. Almost every family made its own sugar and molasses from the maple trees; and to help out, sorghum was grown and made into molasses. Nearly every farmer kept a few sheep. The wool was carded at a mill on Ash Creek [town of Orion] and most families spun their carded wool into yarn on the old-fashioned spinning-wheel. Some had their yarn

woven into cloth at the mill on Ash Creek; others had their own looms and wove their own cloth, dyeing it with butternut bark. Parched wheat or rye was substituted for coffee. Hides were tanned at a tannery near Richland Center, and some families made their own boots and shoes. There were no luxuries in those days, many families living on two meals a day in the winter and many children having no noonday lunch at school. Wood choppings and corn huskings were held for the benefit of soldiers' widows and orphans. When all were poor, there developed a kind of camaraderie to help one another in sickness and distress, which is wanting now. While Bethel school district, I think, furnished more than its quota of soldiers for the war, the township as a whole did not. Those of draft age who did not wish to enlist, and who wished to avoid the draft, would call a town meeting and levy a tax on the taxable property of the township. The money thus raised was used to give a bounty to those willing to enlist, so that a general draft was avoided. This was a manifest injustice to the wives and widows of those who had volunteered their services for the Union. The women had no vote, neither did the soldiers in the ranks. How impossible such a scheme would be under our present laws!

One of the social features in early days was the spelling school held in the winter at the schoolhouse. Books were not plentiful, so two or three pupils would read from the same book. Reading and spelling are the only subjects I can remember being taught the first four years. In that time the only book I had was Webster's *Elementary Speller*. Small wonder that I became an adept in spelling at seven years of age. It was lots of fun to match the good spellers of one school district against those of another, and sometimes it was difficult to down some of the best spellers. As I look back I can see the teacher with spelling-book in one hand, a candle in the other (no kerosene lamps or electric lights in those days), hunting for the difficult words. Many of the pioneers had but little education and could neither multiply nor add a column of figures. I recall that Mr. Livingston started a night school to teach adults the rudiments of arithmetic.

When first organized, Bethel school district comprised sections 3, 4, 9, and 10, the west half of section 15, and also sections 16 and 17. This fact perhaps accounts for the large size and good equipment of our first schoolhouse. There was also such an influx of new settlers (many of them with large families) between 1853 and 1858, that I feel sure Bethel school district in 1859 (after sections 16 and 17 had been taken, with other sections, to form a new school district—named Basswood, because the first schoolhouse was built of basswood logs) contained a greater number of families and more children of school age than it has at any subsequent date.

In the early days schoolhouses were almost invariably used for church services as well as for political speeches. Very soon after the erection of Bethel schoolhouse regular church services were instituted by the Methodist church. A Sunday-school was also started, of which Henry Miller was superintendent. He was also the class leader of the church. Mr. Miller was an enthusiastic church member; in coöperation with other Methodists he cleared off the brush and erected a number of log cabins and also a large forum of logs for the speakers' stand, for a camp-meeting ground. This was on high land near a large spring of pure water on section 10. On this spot camp meetings attended by hundreds from far and near were held yearly in the month of August from 1857 to the outbreak of the Civil War. The last service I remember on the camp ground was the patriotic funeral for Joshua Johns, who was killed at the battle of Antietam. The Methodist church had a varying fortune from its beginning in Bethel; first advancing, then receding, until about 1879 services were discontinued. Among the early ministers were a Mr. Knapp, a Mr. McMillan, and a Mr. Sackett. The people who settled in Hoosier Hollow were largely of the Presbyterian faith, and erected at an early date a frame church known as the Pleasant Hill Church. Among its first pastors were Mr. Leonard, Adam Pinkerton, Mr. Murphy, and Mr. Sparrow.

Much valuable timber was burned in the first clearings in Eagle town. A sawmill was erected in section 9 on Mill Creek in 1855 or 1856. This soon burned and a second mill was built by Jacob Troxel. This mill supplied the market with lumber for building, and some of it was hauled to and rafted down the Wisconsin to find a market. Troxel sold the mill to McClure, and in 1861 McClure sold it to Joseph Stanley. Mr. Stanley operated the sawmill until the flood of June, 1890, took the dam out completely. Holiday Peters erected in 1878 a steam sawmill about one-half mile south of the Stanley mill, and cut a large amount of logs into lumber. In the early sixties a man by the name of Pilling built a steam sawmill on the banks of the Wisconsin River due south from Eagle Corners, and rafted his surplus lumber down the river. From 1860 to 1870 or later much cordwood was cut and hauled to Muscoda.

Until 1869 the northern half of the township was without mail facilities. That winter (1868-69) R. W. Peters and his brother-in-law built a small store at what is now known as Basswood, and a post office was established there. For many years Mr. Peters did a large business in railroad ties, the product being rafted down the Wisconsin River to a market. At first (1862) the railroad would buy nothing but number one white or burr oak ties; ten years later they would buy almost anything but basswood or maple. For ten years or more after 1870 hickory hoop poles were cut, and they sold well.