

## LINWOOD, The Township of

The town of Linwood was first known as Linden, a tree of soft white wood with cordate leaves and cream-colored flowers, more commonly referred to in Portage County as basswood (*Tilia americana* L.)

Part of the township was taken from the town of Stevens Point, namely that part which lay inside the elbow of the Wisconsin River on the right (west) bank and extending to the town line of Town 23, Range 7. The other part was taken from the town of Plover in Range 6 below the river, which H-54 traverses, in addition to all of Town 22, today upper Grant. In other words, Linden was composed of two constitutional townships of 36 sections each, but cut in two by the Wisconsin River with the majority of sections on the left bank which, owing to the bend in the river, actually lay south of the river.

The first town meeting was to be held the second Monday in December 1856 and "the place for holding town meetings and other elections shall be at the house of Rior-din Waikes."<sup>1</sup> The 1858 tax roll fails to include this name which also may be a misspelling. A year later on May 15, 1857, the town of Linden petitioned the County Board to change its name to Linwood which was granted.<sup>2</sup>

As much of modern Linwood is bounded by the Wisconsin River, most of the township was included in the Indian Survey made by Hathaway in 1839-40. What remained to be surveyed was completed in two days by A. G. and Frederick S. Ellis on Sept. 16-17, 1851.

In the Indian Survey of 1839-40, Mill Creek is referred to by Hathaway as "Weepeet Seepee." A few

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, Board of Supervisors, Vol. I, p. 278.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 285.

years later in 1849, in an account written on Indian names, Hathaway changes the spelling to *Wau-pee-ty-seepe*, meaning Tooth River, probably of Chippewa origin.<sup>1</sup> In 1854 Hiram Calkins, writing on *Indian Nomenclature, and the Chippewas*, spells it *Wau-pee-tee-Se-be*,<sup>2</sup> but both agree on the meaning, i.e. Tooth River. Sometime between 1840 and 1842, this became known as Mill Creek.

The other main river in the township is Rocky Run, referred to in early records as "Rock Run," while two lesser streams are Bear Creek in the northwest and Skalling Creek (plat of 1915) in the southwest corner of the township. A small feeder stream which runs into Rocky Run some distance south of the Red Rooster Tavern is known locally as "Clothespin Creek" because it was rumored in the neighborhood that Henry H. Cook was about to establish a clothespin factory near the bridge (Trunk P) but never did.

Linwood became prominent in the early history of Portage County because one of the first saw and/or shingle mills in the county was located on Mill Creek, a creek which might better have been referred to as a river in the Wisconsin sense of the word. The township in pioneer times was covered with timber running all the way north into Carson and, with a navigable stream (defined as capable of floating a log) running directly through this timber, it was natural that it should attract the cruiser's eye. Moreover, the lower river runs through a canyon-like formation where the water passes over rapids created by prominent rock formations. It was apparently a simple matter to build a dam across this pseudo canyon and it was also possible to build "improvement" or "splash" dams, farther upstream to raise the water for floating logs across the more difficult stretches.

The 1876 plat identifies a saw mill of Milo S. Wood in Sec 22, a shingle mill of Brown & Preston in Sec 15, and several miles farther upstream in modern Carson, W. Lester's mill in Sec 21 on the north side of modern

<sup>1</sup> *Collections*, Vol. I, p. 118.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120.

Trunk M, just west of the highway bridge. Little is known about the latter which the 1876 plat refers to as "Lester's." One source states that it sawed 1,000,000 feet of lumber in 1874.<sup>1</sup>

But these mill owners were comparatively late arrivals on Mill Creek. (See *Those Who Came First*.) Milo S. Wood, who eventually acquired the Brawley dam and mill site, was a river driver on Mill Creek in his youth and at one time worked with William Diver. But reference to the Wood mill in the available town proceedings does not appear until 1875 when the town board met to consider the costs of rebuilding two bridges "at Wood's Shingle mill and also across Mill Creek at Meehan's Mill." This indicates that Wood began as a shingle mill and later branched into saw mill operations. In the 1890s the mill passed to son Walter Wood who operated it until past the turn of the century when the machinery was moved to the South Side of Stevens Point.

In the 1870s and early 1880s when both the Meehan and Wood mills were in operation, a series of cribs, connected with a continuous log chain-boom on either side, were erected in the middle of the river some distance above the Wood dam in Sec 22. The logs coming downstream were separated as they approached the head of this crib boom and the ones for the Meehan mill were pushed into the channel on one side and the Wood-owned logs into the other. The logs for the Meehans, of course, were floated to the mouth of Mill Creek and caught in a boom on the Wisconsin River as the Meehan mill was not on Mill Creek.

A blacksmith shop, boarding house and store were operated by the firm of Milo Wood & Sons. Two account books survive the store, the first entry of one dated June 16, 1892 was a carry-over from a previous ledger. In April 1892 the charge accounts include, *inter alia*, these entries:

G. Barden (for piling wood) 10# <i>sugear</i> (sugar)	.50
M. S. Wood & Sons, 10# tea	3.50

<sup>1</sup> *History of Northern Wisconsin*, (Chicago: The Western Historical Company, 1881), p. 744.

W. A. Ferdon, 4# prunes @ 10¢	.40
G. Bean, 5# ev (evaporated) apples	.50
Andrew Pascavis, 1 time book	.10
Adolph Shurrett, 11# pork @ .08	.88
John Durfee, 1 pair overalls	.90
1 jacket	.75
Son (Sun?) Stoddard, smoking (tobacco)	.07
and plug (tobacco)	.10
E. Clendenning, 1 broom	.30
Walter Spencer, 1/2 bbl flour	2.50
Sid Parks, 1# coffee	.25

Later entries made in May 1892 reveal that the store also handled white fish, oil, nails, salt, matches, feed, soap, pepper, lard, peaches, coffee, lantern globes, middlings, saleratus (baking soda), syrup, and wire. Among the most-frequently purchased items: evaporated (dried) apples and plug chewing tobacco.

Another comparatively early saw mill in Linwood was built by the Meehan Brothers, Patrick and James, on the right (north) bank of the Wisconsin River about 40 rods west of the mouth of Mill Creek. (The site is today under water created by the Biron flowage.) The abstract on this forty reveals that the Meehans leased this land (NW-SW, Sec 23) for five years on Aug. 20, 1866 to erect "certain dams on the slough on a portion of said lands of given size and height and erect piers and booms for holding logs etc. . ."

After the Green Bay & Western Railroad came through from Plover to Grand Rapids in the 1870s, a spur was laid north to the bank of the Wisconsin River opposite the Meehan mill. Manufactured lumber was ferried across the river and loaded on cars and shipped out. Up to that time most of the lumber had been rafted to market down the Wisconsin River.

When the railway spur, long since removed, was laid down, a depot was established at the junction of modern H-54 and Trunk F which became identified with the Meehan interests, and when a post office was established here on March 14, 1876, it was called Meehan and Leonard Niles Anson served as postmaster. It was discontinued in 1892, reopened in 1893 with Joseph W.

Pettis as postmaster, and discontinued in 1907.

But the main Meehan community was around the saw mill, north of the river. Mrs. Sara Ferdon, granddaughter of Enos Stoddard (listed in 1863 tax roll) remembers the Meehan store and boarding house which stood on the hillside, as well as the brick oven deeply embedded in the ground where the baking was done for the mill crews. "My father, Merrit Stoddard," she said, "was called 'Sun' after the sun in the sky — by the Indians — and he always went by that name — Sun Stoddard — now what was I going to say? Oh yes, my father always wanted to have a good team of horses — had to look nice you know because we used them to Point — and mother would pack a big tub full of food for us kids and then the whole family would drive down in the wagon to the river and cross over on old Fuller's ferry. And there we'd pick blueberries and gooseberries. My, there were so many gooseberries! Then we'd invite Fuller to come have lunch with us — an old batch — and he enjoyed it. Yes, they was better days. . . . not all the fighting and trouble in the world there is now."

Another Linwoodian who remembers the Meehans is John Pascavic, one-time town chairman, who was born in Sec 22. He recalls his mother telling about the time she carried eggs down to the Meehan store (*ca.* 1885) to barter for groceries. "Pat" Meehan picked up the egg basket and was about to demonstrate how to whirl around in the middle of the floor with the basket of eggs on his head. The demonstration failed and everyone laughed over the fun. "But he paid mother all she had comin'," said Pascavic. "Them Meehans was good people. I remember Pat used to give me a stick of candy when I come to the store. (Pause). Yep, them was great times then. A piece of candy meant a great lot. That store and boarding house, that's where we used to dance. The Kenneys played. Two violins was all, and we'd take up a collection. Didn't do much square dancing any more, mostly waltzes and lot of the time they played *Jeszcze Polska Nie Zginela* (literally, "Yet Poland Not Lost," the Polish national anthem).

Aside from the Wood and Meehan mill sites in lower

Linwood the 1876 plat identifies the shingle mill of Brown & Preston in Sec 22. The mill was in operation under this firm name at least as early as 1868. No legend survives Brown but a headstone in Linwood Union Cemetery reads: "Capt. Frank Preston who was drowned while crossing the Wisconsin River Sept. 20, 1880."

Local legend associates a shingle mill in Sec 15 on Mill Creek operated in the 1870s by one of the Bean family. This was probably D. V. Bean. Local legend also associates the Wood mill site in Sec 22 as the "Brawley dam." Oddly, before the Biron flowage was created, a rapids about three quarters of a mile below the Meehan mill on the Wisconsin River was known as "Brawley Rapids." The association with Brawley is uncertain, although he may have been one of the first to cross the river at this point in the late 1830s.

Several landmarks are referred to in entries of the town proceedings. One was called "Sugar bush Eddie", which refers to an eddy on the Wisconsin River opposite the Yellow Banks where Amasa and George Warner had a sugar bush before the 1900s. They were not the first to tap these trees. In 1839 Hathaway encountered a "sugar camp" in the same area, no doubt worked by the Chippewas.

A prominent alumnus of Linwood in the 1890s was William Goldsmith Brown who was known as a composer of lyric poetry which dramatized the life of the pioneers, the girls of Linwood, the lumberjacks, and is especially remembered for the melodramatic version of the burning of the St. James Hotel at Stevens Point in 1889.

Hosea Fuller, mentioned in the 1863 tax roll, operated a ferry across the Wisconsin River near the mouth of Mill Creek from 1877 into the late 1890s, the longest anyone held this franchise. This was the ferry point originally known as "Alban's ferry," presumably established by James S. Alban. There is reason to believe that Alban's ferry was the first on the Upper Wisconsin, and, if he still owned it after 1850, he was probably allowed to maintain it by right of pre-emption or some

other understanding with the County Board as there is no record that he was ever granted a license for it. It is also doubtful whether Alban actually operated the ferry himself.

The first to be licensed to operate a ferry at this point was Joseph Seamans in 1862, and on Nov. 21, 1865 the County Board approved a petition of E. R. Clussman to operate it. Ferriage charges allowed by the charter were 10¢ for each passenger, 50¢ for a two-horse team and wagon, 37½¢ for a one-horse team and wagon, 25¢ per head of cattle, 6¢ per head of hogs and sheep, and freight was 25¢ per hundred weight. Clussman apparently carried on until Dec. 21, 1868, and on the following day, Jan 1, 1869 "O. E. Bean & Bro" began operating it. Apparently the latter defaulted on their obligations, for on April 8, 1869 Joseph Seamans was again given a license to operate the ferry. The rates of ferriage had also changed. Passengers were charged only 5¢ and hogs 5¢ per head, freight 10¢ per hundred, a two-horse team and wagon, loaded or unloaded, 35¢, and a single horse team and wagon 25¢. While cattle per head were still costing 25¢, there was a discount on two or more at 15¢ per head. One provision was added, namely, that carriages of any description without a team cost 25¢ each.

On Nov. 19, 1873 a charter was approved for Daniel Bean to "keep a rope and boat ferry"<sup>1</sup> for a period of three years. The rates of ferriage were about the same. Bean apparently carried on until Fuller took over early in 1877. The latter had many friends who were anxious to see him get the ferry, as the petition to the County Board was headed by Lloyd Jones, W. H. Packard, Wm. W. Mitchell and 20 others.

The importance of this ferry in the early economy of the county is reflected in the petition which suggests that it was a key link on the road to the Black River country.

Early in 1859 the town of Linwood, by action of the County Board, annexed Secs 19, 30, and 31 from Plover. Later that year the north one half of Sec 7 and Lots

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, Board of Supervisors, Vol. VIII, p. 475.

5 and 6 of Sec 8, Town 23, Range 8, were taken from the town of Plover and added to Linwood.

Effective April 1, 1864 the town of Linwood was reduced to that portion "lying on the north and west side of the Wisconsin River. . ."<sup>1</sup> The board failed to say how far north, but from other evidence it is learned that it ran to the north line of Town 23. In 1889 the township acquired one forty (SE-SE) in Sec 36, Town 24, Range 7, which lies next to the west limits of the city of Stevens Point. The petition to include this forty followed a refusal by the town board of Stevens Point to aid in laying out a road through it to connect with the "state road" running into Linwood.

On April 1, 1899 sections 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, and 36 in Town 24, Range 7, were detached from the town of Stevens Point and attached to the town of Linwood. By this action the County Board abolished the last of the town of Stevens Point. It also built up Linwood almost to a constitutional township of 36 sections, but made difficult by the turning and twisting of the Wisconsin River.

The earliest tax roll of Linwood is dated 1858 and, included under "amt. brot over" — a term which is not clear — it is learned that the following paid taxes in Town 22, Range 7: Stone W. B. Dodge & Geo. Huffman. In Town 23, Range 7: H. W. Mitchell, Wm. Harkness, Ward, M. G. Poatt, A. Franklin, A. Hayden, George Atwood, Oliver James, L (?) Mitchell, Joel S. Beadle, H. H. Young, Hiram Stupan (?), J. G. Webb, Humbert Willett, Chas. Braux, Loui Shepreau, Joseph Sylvester, R. W. Walker, J. S. Alban, Silas Webb, Jos. Wright, John Burr, Nancy Beadle, Thimothy Spencer, Christopher Oulet, Solomon Story, I. Ferris, H. Riker, and the remainder are listed as unknown. On the last page of this apparently incomplete document appears the name William Termy (or Fermy).

In Town 23, lying both above and below the Wisconsin River, these names appear in the tax roll of 1863: John Hogden, Enoch Bailey, Henry Morgan, Blake, Wm. Coleman, Andrew Carroll, Albert Morel, Hosea

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, Board of Supervisors, Vol. II, pp. 420-421.

Fuller, A. Franklin, C. B. Jackson, Ely James, John Robinson, Oliver James, Louis Shepreau, T. F. Batcheler, George Tubbs, Ephraim Lamphere, Peter Grant, Seth Barden, M. Clark, Stephen Coleman, J. H. Ormsby, H. A. Sherill, John Callow, J. R. Lumbert, Hiram Slusser, Washburn, (?) Sylvester, Dennis Hebert, Hosea Tubbs, Charles Pereu (?), Herbert Ouellet, Wm. Calkins, Enos Stoddard, Cornelius Halladay, John R. Halladay, James S. Alban (probably the estate), R. W. Walker, Silas Webb, Shubael Simonds, C. H. Simonds, Wm. Ward, C. H. Stone, Wm. Waterman, Hampson Stevens, Henderson Winans, J. Wood, Joshua Gray, Homer Drake, Joseph Seamans, T. W. Mitcheltree, Wm. Mitcheltree, Luther Hanchett, Geo. Knowles, Richard Gillett, Sherman, Reuel Robins, James Pierce, W. R. Lamberton, B. P. Haugh, F. S. Marshall, Joel S. Beadle, Milo Wells, Alfred Bates, Isaac Ferris (probably the estate), James Scott, and Paul Andrews. Only a handful of the above people paid any personal property tax in 1863 which suggests that the majority were land speculators or brokers for logging companies.

Serving the town of Linwood, with a population of 633, in 1957-58, were Edward R. Zurawski, chairman; Leo Niemczyk and Steve Polum, supervisors; Theodore Pascavis, clerk; Claude Frost, treasurer; Arthur Bartz, assessor; Esther Hansen, constable; and John Swiander, health officer.

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