

admiration of investors abroad. Agents went out with elegant lithographs, on which all these places of interest were located. Lots were sold for cash. Prices varied as the location receded from the public parks and court-house square. The work went rapidly on, sales continued, and the money rolled in. But, alas! the investors came on to take possession of their property. The eastern nabob arrived and looked about him. What a sight! A few dug-outs, with chimneys projecting through the sodded roof, told how awful was the joke, how immense the humbug. They in turn shifted the responsibility on another, and, by hook or crook, eventually Joseph Stringham secured possession of the entire tract, about four hundred acres. The site of Dane City was the present Third ward of the city of Oshkosh. Mr. Stringham has done much toward making that part of the city what it now is, and still holds a large part of the lots. This was the climax of "wild-cat" in Winnebago county.

THE PRESS.

On the ninth of February, 1849, Densmore and Cooley issued the first number of the *Oshkosh True Democrat*, the first paper published in the county. At the end of the first volume, he sold to his partner, and went to Milwaukee. After three months he returned and purchased the entire concern, and continued its publication under the old name till 1852, when George Burnside bought an interest, and the name changed to the *Oshkosh Democrat*. This combination continued till April, 1853, when Jonathan Daugherty bought the establishment. May 9, 1856, Mitchell and Smith became proprietors, and published the paper till August 15, 1856. From this date until January 20, 1857, it was under the control of Markham and Felker. At this date, Finney became Felker's partner. This continued until April 13, 1858, when Finney and Davis became proprietors. They issued it until July 21, 1860, and sold out to George Gary. He, on October 4, 1860, sold to C. R. Nevitt, when the *Democrat* ceased to have a name, and was merged into the *Weekly Northwestern*.

On August 26, 1856, Markham and Felker started a *Daily Democrat*, which was continued through all the changes of the *Weekly*, until December, 1857, when, like the *Courier*, its light was quietly extinguished.

The *Democrat*, after a restless immortality of three years, in March, 1860, again assumed the habiliments of this sublimity sphere, revisited the scenes of its former sojourn, and was molded again into party form by George Gary. It continued "to be" until May of the same year, when in the eyes of the whole multitude it again expired.

D. C. Felton and company issued the first copy of the *Northwestern* in October of 1860. On November 10, 1864, George Gary and company became proprietors. In March, 1866, the firm had entirely changed, and the paper was issued by Finney and Davis. It is still issued, the name being changed to the *Oshkosh Northwestern*, and having undergone numerous changes, it is now owned by Allen and Hicks, being in its eighteenth volume.

The *Winnebago Telegraph* was started in the fall of 1849, by Doctor B. S. Henning, who issued a few numbers, and sold the concern to Morley and Edwards. Edwards succeeding to the sole management, continued its publication for two years, when he removed the materials to Appleton, where it was destroyed by fire before the issue of a single number.

The *Oshkosh Delegate* was established in August, 1850, by George M. Shipper. It was issued but a short time, when J. D. Hyman, with Hiram Morley, took charge, and changed the name to the *Oshkosh Republican*. After a few months, however, it suspended, and the materials were moved to Fond du Lac.

The *Fox River Courier* was first issued June 1, 1852, by J. H. McAvoy. He sold to Jeremiah Crawley shortly after, who continued its publication until August, 1853, when Read and Nevitt bought the establishment. They continued until August, 1857. During their control, they also issued the *Daily Courier*. The first number appeared July 10, 1854, and was the first daily paper in the county. This was discontinued in December, 1857. In August, the firm changed to Read & Strong. These men published the *Courier* till December, 1862, and were succeeded by Morley and Davis. They continued to issue it until August, 1864, when it ceased to be, and the proprietors united with George Gary in the publication of the *Northwestern*.

In March, 1852, the *Anzeiger des Nordwestens* was started by C. Kohlmann and Charles Rose. It was discontinued in August of the year following.

The *Waechter am Winnebago* was established in April, 1858, by C. Kohlmann and Henry Cordier, and continued until October, 1860. In the same year and month that the *Waechter* died, the first number of a monthly magazine, called the *Deutsche Volksblaetter*, was issued by Kohlmann, being edited by Charles Rose. Its existence was of short duration.

In October, 1866, the *Wisconsin Telegraph* (German) was started by C. Kohlmann, with Charles Rose editor. This paper has continued till the present date, and is now under the control of C. Kohlmann and brother. It is a first-class sheet and is in a flourishing condition. In addition to these, a weekly, the *Oshkosh Times*, is published at this point by Fernandez and Glaze. It is now in the eleventh volume, and is a very creditable sheet.

There is also a publication called the *Early Dawn* issued from this place.

WOOD COUNTY.

This county is situated nearly in the geographical center of the state. It embraces twenty-three townships, which lie immediately west of Portage county, between townships twenty-one and twenty-five inclusive, in ranges two to five, and twenty-one to twenty-three in range six. It, therefore, contains nearly 550,000 acres, of which only about 35,000 acres are under cultivation; two-thirds of the balance are capable of being improved. There is but little government land in the county. Most of that, on the odd-number sections, is withdrawn from market for the benefit of the Wisconsin Central railroad. The state owns about 100,000 acres.

PHYSICAL FEATURES AND RESOURCES.

The general slope and drainage of the county is toward the south and southwest—the average incline being about seven feet to the mile. The soil in the central and northern portions is a rich loam, containing an admixture of clay, sand, and vegetable mold. That in the southern and eastern sections is lighter, and contains more sand. In the southwestern portion are extensive marshes and meadows, peculiarly adapted to cranberry culture and hay-growing. Originally, three-fourths of the county was timber land; the greater part being covered with heavy forests of white pine. In addition to this, there is in the northern tier of townships considerable quantities of white and red oak; white and black ash; maple; hemlock, and butternut. It is estimated that about one-half of the pine has been removed. The land, as it is cleared of the timber, is converted either into farms or is allowed to return to the state. The marsh region in the southwest part is decreasing in size yearly. The useless "floating" areas of marsh are rapidly becoming hard meadow land, some being even capable of cultivation. This is the result of ditching, natural drainage, and the decrease in the annual rain-fall.

The region is abundantly supplied with water, and numerous streams afford good drainage for all but the southwest corner. The Wisconsin river, flowing in a southerly direction, crosses the southeast corner. Yellow river, a tributary of the Wisconsin, rises in the northern part and crosses the country from north to south, draining the entire central region. Besides these, there is the east fork of Black river, which rises in the western part of this county. There are also numerous small creeks that ramify in all directions. The streams rising in the north have their origin in springs, while

those in the south originate in marshes; all abound in the common varieties of fish, such as the buffalo, bass, pickerel and catfish. The current is also swift and affords magnificent water-power. The fall in the Wisconsin in its course through Wood county is fully one hundred feet, the distance being about fifteen miles. It is also broken into different channels at several points, affording greater opportunity to utilize the water privileges, and also to multiply their number. On these channels mills can be erected and operated at very little cost for dams and other improvements. At present there are situated on these water-powers six saw-mills, having a sawing capacity of fifty million feet annually; one flouring mill; one foundry and machine shop; one planing mill and several shingle-mills, all driven by water-power, without the digging of canals, cutting of channels or other expensive improvements. It is estimated that a hundred mills could be run by the water-power of this river within Wood county alone. There are also many smaller water-powers in the county situated on Mill creek, Hemlock creek and Yellow river. Lumbering is the leading industry. The admirable water-power and the heavy forests of pine, combined, in an early day, to induce lumbermen to seek this region, and the same circumstances have continued to make this the dominant interest. In later years, many farms have been opened, and the various roots and cereals cultivated. These attempts are generally remunerative. The products of the soil all find a ready and profitable home market among the lumbermen. Cranberry culture is a prominent industry in the county. Large quantities grow wild, and the marsh region is such that their cultivation is attended with little expenditure of money. Thirteen thousand barrels were shipped in 1876.

In early days this region of forest-meadow along the Wisconsin and its tributaries was a rich hunting ground of the Aborigines. The portion near the river was at one time a succession of beaver dams. Deer, bear and other game abounded. Indians and trappers still obtain a livelihood from the sale of furs secured in this region. Scores of deer are annually shipped from this county. Wolves are plenty in the forests in the western townships. Bear are also quite numerous.

Until the year 1872, the county was without railroad connections. In this year the people voted \$150,000 in bonds to the Green Bay and Minnesota road, and, on the eighth of December, of the same year, they celebrated the arrival of the first train of cars at Grand Rapids. Fifty thousand dollars in bonds were also voted to the Wisconsin Valley railroad. The first train on this road came in June, 1873. By this means the county obtained two railroads, but also incurred a debt of \$200,000, all of which is, as yet, unpaid.

MINERAL RESOURCES.

The geological exposures in Wood county divide the area about equally into Potsdam sandstone and rocks of the metamorphic or azoic age; the latter being the great mineral strata of the world. Several quarries have been opened and a superior quality of building material secured. The azoic rocks when polished are quite equal to the Scotch granite, so much used for monuments and ornamental work. They consist of a bright red cleavable felspar, mingled with hyaline or smoky quartz, in such a manner that they are capable of receiving a very high polish. Specimens of red granite from Yellow river, in Wood county, displayed with the Centennial collections, attracted in a very marked manner the attention of experts, as an extraordinary stone. Iron ore is found in this region belonging mainly under the head of bog ore. This exists under the marshes, and shows an excellent quality in abundance. Nothing has been done as yet toward the development of this resource. Copper ore is also found in considerable quantities. On both sides of Yellow river, in the vicinity of Grand Rapids, and westward along the line of junction of the archaic gneissic rocks toward the north, and the Potsdam sandstone toward the south, is an extensive deposit of kaolin. This material, in Wood county, occurs entirely as "kaolinized" rock, and underlies a large area of the county, in a strata from four to twenty feet thick. All that is needed to make this a great source of wealth to the county, is capital.

The population of the county in 1876 was 6,050, comprising 3,943 Americans, 988 Canadians, the balance being Germans, Irish, Norwegians, with a few of other nationalities. There are thirty school houses in the county, the majority of which are buildings of a quite ordinary kind. However, there is a lively interest manifested in education; and, as the county advances in material prosperity, better school-buildings are erected, and a higher grade of teachers employed.

EARLY HISTORY.

In the year 1831, Daniel Whitney, of Green Bay, obtained a permit from the war department to erect a saw-mill and cut timber on the Wisconsin river, it being territory belonging to the Menomonee Indians. In the winter of 1831-2, he began the erection of a saw-mill at the point since known as Whitney's rapids. He manufactured the first lumber in the county, in the spring of 1834. Grignon and Merrill obtained a similar permit, and built a mill at the point since known as Grignon's rapids, in 1836. These two establishments were the pioneers of the lumbering business on the Wisconsin river.

In 1836, by a treaty made with the Menomonee Indians, at Cedar Point, on Fox river, the Indian title was extinguished to a strip of land on the Upper Wisconsin, six miles wide. This tract began at Point Bass, in the present county of Wood, and extended northward forty miles. About ten miles of this strip lay within the present limits of Wood county, and was a great incentive to early pioneers to seek this region. The most eligible mill-sites were quickly claimed and occupied. Bloomer and Strong, also George Cline, secured possession at the present city of Grand Rapids. In 1838, the first two built the first saw-mill at this point. Nelson Strong used the first lumber sawed by the mill in building the first frame house in the county. Strong and wife were the first white family that settled in the region. Mrs. Strong was the first white woman at Grand Rapids. Their daughter, Emily, was the first white child born in the county. This was in 1835. She had a Menomonee nurse, who lashed the babe to a board, and gave the pale-faced infant all the peculiar advantages of papoose culture.

The old chief Oshkosh, with about two hundred followers, remained here several years after the whites came. His camp was on the east bank of the Wisconsin, about ten miles below Grand Rapids, in the present town of Saratoga. Oshkosh was one of the chief men of the Menomonee Indians. He was of medium stature, possessing much bravery and good sense, but a great slave to strong drink. In 1852, the Menomonees were gathered to their reservation, which is now mostly within the limits of Shawano county. Oshkosh resisted, for many years, the attempts at civilizing his tribe, but finally, seeing the superiority of the civilized Indians over the uncivilized, he gave his influence to the undertaking. The earliest pioneer now living in the county is A. B. Sampson, a resident of Grand Rapids. He came in 1834, and helped to raft to market the first lumber sawed by the first mill in the county. In his house, in 1839, occurred the first marriage in the county, whereby George Kline, Jr., and Mrs. Maria Whitney were tied with hymeneal cords, at the official word of Henry Merrill, justice of the peace. In 1842, Rev. J. S. Harlbert, a Methodist missionary, arrived, and exhorted the settlers to "turn from the error of their ways." He had charge of a large circuit, and was a zealous worker for the cause he represented. He opened the first school, in 1843. The building in which it was held was within the limits of the present village of Centralia. By this time, a current of pine-seekers was pouring into the county, and a hotel was a necessity. One was built by Nelson Strong, in 1843. He conducted it for a short time, and sold to A. B. Sampson, who for many years kept the only public house in the county. His wife, who came in 1838, was noted for her energy and bravery in battling against pioneer hardships and Indian insolence. Mrs. Whitney, at Whitney rapids, in 1838, was also noted for

securing the respect and fear of the Indians. Such was her control over them that she did not hesitate to trust herself and two children with two of them in a bark canoe, for a hundred and fifty mile journey, to reach her sick husband. Dr. Bristol, of Stevens Point, was the first "Medicine Man" in the county, but Doctor G. W. Whitney, who came in 1855, was the first resident physician, and is still practicing at Grand Rapids. The first Christian organization in the county was that of a Methodist church at the county seat in 1857. A Congregational society of Grand Rapids erected the first church edifice in the county, in 1864. The raising of the building is memorable for an accident, whereby the pastor and several citizens were seriously injured. The Centralia flour mill, erected in 1860, by George Waller, is still doing good service as the first and only grist mill in Wood county. The veteran blacksmith, J. B. Hasbrouck, located in 1842, and, where the "village smithy stands," his vigorous blows may still be heard. Mr. Kline and Mr. Purly also came about this date. Lemuel Kromer, one of the first merchants, settled in 1846, near his present site at Grand Rapids. Joseph Wood, after whom the county is named, has been a continuous resident since 1848, and has held many offices of honor and trust. In 1853, L. P. Powers hung out his sign as "attorney and counselor-at-law," and for several years he was the only lawyer at the county seat. He has been an active citizen, and has frequently held official positions. C. M. Webb, ex-state senator, has been a leading attorney since his coming in 1858.

ORGANIZATION.

The territory now embraced in Wood county was detached from Portage county by an act of the legislature approved March 29, 1856. The first election of county officers was ordered to be held at the annual November election of the same year, the official term of those elected to begin on the first Monday of January, 1857. There were then duly elected, to serve two years: Joseph Wood, county judge; L. P. Powers, county clerk; L. P. Powers, district attorney; L. Kromer, circuit clerk; L. Kromer, register of deeds; I. L. Mosher, county treasurer; H. A. Temple, county surveyor; Ben. Buck, sheriff; G. W. Cate, circuit judge.

The new county was attached to the seventh judicial circuit. Grand Rapids was fixed as the county seat by the act of organization; and, by an amendment of September 19, 1856, it was located on lots two and three, in block 31, Wood's addition to Grand Rapids, provided these lots would be donated to the county. No action was ever taken on the above amendment, and it was therefore a dead letter. In April, 1866, an act was passed locating the county seat on "fractional lot two of section seventeen, of township twenty-two, range six east, in Grand Rapids," conditioned on the gift of the same to the county, and the approval of a majority of the voters. No record can be found of such a vote having ever been taken, and no deed to the county of the land has ever been registered; yet in 1866 the first court-house in the county, a small wooden building, was erected upon the site above described. It is still used as a court-house, yet the county offices, with one exception, are held elsewhere, nearer the business center of the city. The date of the first warranty deed recorded is October 1, 1856, and was given by Mark A. Wilkes to Mrs. Ann Black, and was entered for record on New Year's day, 1857.

The first meeting of the county board of supervisors was held at Grand Rapids, October 8, 1856; present, supervisors H. W. Jackson and Eusebe La Vigne, with L. P. Powers, clerk by appointment. No business of general interest was transacted by the board until after the autumn election, whereby the list of county officers was made complete. In 1870, it was thought advisable, for certain reasons, to annex a portion of the southwest corner of Wood county to the county of Jackson, but as Wood county contained less than nine hundred square miles, it could not be divided without a popular vote. Therefore, six townships were added to this county from the contiguous territory of Jackson, by an act of the legislature of February 11, 1870, to take effect on the 25th of April of the same year. The county was then of sufficient size to render legislative division allowable; and by another act, passed on the same day, which took effect six days subsequently, or on the 1st of May, 1870, these same six townships, together with the obnoxious corner of Wood county, were attached to Jackson county. Both acts received the governor's signature on the 11th of February, 1870. Just before the building of the Green Bay & Minnesota railroad, the excised territory was restored to Wood county, as noted in an act approved March 9, 1872: the county boundaries thus became the same as before the legislation of 1870, and have remained since unchanged.

CITIES AND TOWNS.

Grand Rapids, the seat of justice and the chief city of Wood county, is the oldest town on the upper Wisconsin river, and has within the city limits a population of fully fifteen hundred. It is situated in township twenty-two, north of range six east, and lies wholly on the east bank of the Wisconsin, which is here interspersed with beautiful islands. The business of the city itself is done upon an island. The river, in passing the city, has a descent of thirty feet over an irregular and rocky bed, thus constituting the rapids which gave name to the city and township. The water-power is immense; five thousand horse-power is still not utilized. Several streams take their names according to their distances from Grand Rapids, as "Four-mile creek," "Five-mile creek," and others. The city has an excellent stone school-house, completed and furnished in 1876, at a cost of thirty thousand dollars. The soil, immediately about the city, is very sandy. The water privileges and the pine lands have given the city its present proportions. Land improves as one leaves the sandy or rocky shores, and the city is now sustained by a large farming trade. It has three churches, two hotels, two newspapers, a bank, a large complement of stores and shops, in addition to the manufacturing establishments elsewhere mentioned. The first bridge across the Wisconsin, in this county, was built in 1866, and connected Grand Rapids and her western sister city of Centralia. The old bridge has been replaced this season by a three-span Howe truss, five hundred and twenty-seven feet in length, with wooden piers and abutments, at a total cost of eight thousand six hundred dollars. It is the only bridge in the county across the Wisconsin.

The only other city in the county is Centralia, on the west bank of the Wisconsin, directly opposite Grand Rapids, and with a population of eight hundred. It is a thriving city, and has an elegant brick school-house, just erected, at a cost of little exceeding ten thousand dollars. These two cities are united by common interests, and their industries and general characteristics are similar. The town of Grand Rapids, outside the city limits, has a farming population of seven hundred; this, with the four hundred of the town of Sigel, is largely German. Saratoga, in the southeast, has a majority of Irish, while in Rudolph, in the northeast, the French are well represented.

There are a few small villages in the county, as Dexterville, Remington, Auburndale, Port Edward, and Hurlleyville. At the latter place, just below Grand Rapids, is a large factory, manufacturing tubs and pails; and the market demands exceed its capacity.

NEWSPAPERS.

The *Wood County Reporter* was founded by J. N. Brundage, in 1857, and was edited and published by him until 1864, when he went into the army. James E. Ingraham having purchased a half interest, continued the publication, with C. M. Webb as editor. In 1860, Ingraham became the sole proprietor, but soon after associated with H. B. Philco as joint partner, who has since had full editorial control. The paper has always been republican in politics.

The *Grand Rapids Tribune* was also founded by J. N. Brundage, as proprietor and local editor, with L. P. Powers as "political editor," on the 8th of February, 1873. In politics it is democratically "independent." Both papers are published in Grand Rapids, and are the only ones in the county.