

# WAS FIRST IN EAGLE

## Ahira Hinkley Passes Away at Ninety-six.

### WAS PROMINENT PIONEER

First Settler to Come to Eagle and  
Last to go. Took Government  
Claim in 1836.

On Wednesday morning at half past seven o'clock Ahira R. Hinkley departed this life at the family home east of Eagle familiarly known to early settlers as the "Cobolstone." Mr. Hinkley has been in ill health for some time and his death was momentarily expected. He was born in Lebanon, Grafton county, New Hampshire, Oct. 23, 1810, and remained at home until he reached the age of twenty-one years when he spent one year in Massachusetts. In August, 1836, he came to Milwaukee when that town was a little burg and the heart of the city was a marsh where the little Indian boys shot blackbirds with bows and arrows. The same month Mr. Hinkley with his brother, Henry A., Andrew Scofield and Chas. Mayness started out with ox teams towards Waukesha, thence to Mukwonago where Field's race course is situated. Next morning they followed an Indian trail to Eagle Prairie, which they first viewed from a hill on the Thomas farm, and in sight of the present home. Thence they walked onward until they reached the spring on the present farm, where Mr. Hinkley engraved his initials in a tree and thus made the first claim for land from the government in that town. Mr. Scofield, who was with him on his journey, made a claim on lands further south and towards Eagleville. Mr. Hinkley built a log house on his claim soon thereafter, which was the first house in Eagle. For many years the Hinkley log house was a conspicuous landmark, but little of it remains now. Mr. Hinkley returned to Plainfield, N. H., and married Mary Daniels who left her beautiful eastern home for the pioneer home of the west. At the time of his death Mr. Hinkley owned 400 acres of the section of land claimed from the government. He always resided on this farm and although his old friend, William Sherman, now of Lake Geneva, claims a few days of earlier settlement in Eagle, Mr. Hinkley has the record of being the longest continual settler in Eagle and in the state, so far as relates to residing on lands claimed from the government. In 1848 the old log house was supplanted by a large and commodious farm home built of cobblestone. Here Mr. and Mrs. Hinkley reared a family of seven children all of whom are living, Leonard D. and Mrs. M. B. Pitman, Boscobel; Mary Klise, Neenah; Mrs. A. J. Pardee, Eagle; Mrs. John H. Payne, Canada; and Mrs. R. H. Pardee, California. The mother died about eight years ago. Mr. Hinkley was one of the chief promoters of the Milwaukee & Mississippi railroad and was one of its first directors. In politics Mr. Hinkley was a staunch Republican and was chosen to town office. He was a member of Robert Morris Lodge No. 115 of Free Mason, and also of the Methodist church. The funeral took place from the family home Saturday morning at 10:30. Rev. W. W. Perry of Milwaukee officiated. Interment was in the family lot in Oak Ridge cemetery.

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Eagle Quill

Jan. 4, 1907

From the Eagle Quill

PIONEER AT REST

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Ahira R. Hinkley Early Settler in Eagle

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RESPECTED AND LOVED BY ALL

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Lived More than Seventy Years on the Homestead Where the Final Summers Came.

The announcement of the death of Ahira Rockwell Hinkley, whose obituary appeared in our last issue, and the thoughtful and anxious countenances of the people told that something more than usual had occurred. Out of respect to the deceased, the flag on the school house of Dist. No. 1 was placed at half mast. The time of the funeral being generally known, namely Saturday forenoon, there was a large gathering of relatives, friends and citizens at the Hinkley home, to pay their last tribute of respect to the first white settler in Eagle. The casket rested in the parlor in which were seated near relatives and friends. The decorations of the casket consisted of wreaths, and bouquets of flowers, and also a beautiful spray of flowers a tribute from school district No. 1. The funeral ceremonies commenced at about seven o'clock and at this time the Hinkley home was filled to its utmost capacity. Rev. Tuttle, of the M.E. church, offered a prayer after which Rev. Wm. W. Perry of Milwaukee, an early and intimate friend of the deceased, delivered the funeral oration, which was full of ardent friendship and consolation. The M.E. choir assisted in the services. At the conclusion of the funeral oration the remains were conveyed to the Oak Ridge cemetery for the interment. The process was a large and sympathetic one and evidenced the sympathy to the bereaved relatives, and the friendship and esteem in which Mr. Hinkley was held in his home town. The universal expression of sorrow by the people of Eagle for the loss of their first settler by death was plainly visible, and was a source of consolation to his family and friends. The ceremonies at the cemetery consisted of a prayer by Rev. W.W. Perry after which the casket was lowered into the grave. The pall-bearers were: He??y H. Earle, Franklin B. Thomas, Jerry Angill, George McCabe, Morris W. Bovee, Elsworth E. Hill. The funeral arrangements were perfect in detail.

Ahira Rockwell Hinkley was the descendant of Samuel Hinkley, who with his brother, David, came from England and landed at Stonington, Conn., in 1835, and is the eighth generation of this descent in the following order: Samuel John, Samuel, John, John, David, Daniel, Ahira Rockwell. This would leave about seven-sixteenths of one per cent of the cell tissue or so called organism of the original Samuel Hinkley. So far as can be ascertained all the Hinkleys in the United States are descendants of these two brothers, but many of the families use the letter "e" in the spelling of their name.

Ahira Rockwell Hinkley was born in Lebanon, N.H., Oct. 23rd, 1810. His father was a cloth dresser and fuller and had a factory on a stream which emptied near by into the Connecticut, opposite of what is now White River Junction, Vermont. His mother was Ann Elizabeth Cutler, who also came from a long line of descendants in this country and

who had, gained fame as had the Hinkleys in the many Indian wars, the Revolutionary War, and the war of 1812.

As a boy Mr. Hinkley worked in his father's factory, went to school when there was any, and as he grew older worked for his uncles, who were farmers, and also for his father's neighbors. In the summer of 1833 with his brother, Henry, he went to Michigan and worked in a saw mill. In the summer of 1836 he came to Milwaukee on a boat loaded with lumber and butter belonging to Mr. Andrew Schofield. Mr. Hinkley loaned Schofield money to make the trip but was not part owner, as has sometimes been said. On this trip and while the cargo was being sold Mr. Hinkley and Mr. Schofield, who was a Quaker, became fast friends and in the middle of Sept., 1836 started west, a-foot and alone, these two, to locate land and settle on farms. The first day's travel landed them in Mukwonago, a little Indian village with three or four white inhabitants. The next day they journeyed over the hills about where the E.T. Taylor farm is, and a little north of the Skidmore farm, bearing a little north of west until they reached Eagle Prairie, about where Wm. Corey's late farm is. They circled a little more north, struck the oak openings a little south-west of the Hinkley old log house, and kept on a little east of north until they came to what is now the Hinkley spring and to use a modern strong expression, the stuff was all off, out came both their jack knives instantly, and Hinkley having had more experience in cutting, beat the Quaker competitor easily, whence came this famous expression from Mr. Schofield, "Ahira, thou has beaten me."

The result was Mr. Schofield turned back, bought out some homesteaders and took a large tract of land known as Birchard estate, Hennessey farm, etc. There has been some contention who was the first settler in Eagle. Of those who stayed, these two were the first. Later and about the same time, came Wm. Sherman and Ebenezer Thomas, who built houses and settled with their families before Mr. Hinkley married and brought his wife from New Hampshire, which was in the spring of 1838. During the fall and winter of 1837-38, Mr. Hinkley and his brother, Henry, built a log house and kept bachelor hall, until the young New England bride arrived. At that time this country was the newest of the new; inhabited and infested with wolves and wild cats, native wild animals and wild Indians galore. The ten years following were times of typical pioneering, working early and late; living on scanty and frugal fare, and of limited raiment. Mr. Hinkley, as did some of his neighbors cradled wheat all day with nothing on but shirt and shoes. In winter time, four o'clock in the morning found them with a yoke of oxen going to the tamarack swamps miles away, returning late at night with a load of poles for fencing, rafters for roofs, etc. Mr. Hinkley was always active and prominent in public affairs. He was the builder of the first school house-on his own farm, where school house No. 1 now stands. He took part in all singing, spelling and evening schools in general, which features were prominent in early days. Probably the most local notoriety he ever gained in an early day was as a tooth puller. His brother, Henry, gave him a pair of "turn keys," when he went back to New England in 1840. As doctors were scarce, and dentists "non est" Hinkley's fame as a tooth extractor soon became great and greater as he worked willingly and was never known to take pay for any dental favor. He told some great stories about sending a suffering patient from the field, where he was plowing, to the house for his "instruments." sitting on the plow beam, whetting a big jack knife to cut the gum away from the tooth, getting up and searing his victim, going to work with a vi, which usually stopped the tooth ache before

the tooth was out. He made the victim wish he were home. If once a "turn key" was on the tooth the molar never ached again. At all times he went to neighbors near and far and pulled their aching teeth. Before there were undertakers he took charge of nearly all the funerals in the neighborhood and it is safe to say he helped bury hundreds of neighbors. He was pleased to render assistance whether in time he rejoicing or in mourning. Later as the country settled up and modern customs prevailed such volunteer help became unnecessary.

He built the first big barn in the township in 1842, where the Methodist church held their quarterly meetings. He built the first stone-and only cobblestone-house in the country, in 1848. This house so far as lasting is concerned is solid today as when it was built. he helped to build the first railroad in the state and was on the first board of directors of the Milwaukee & Mississippi Railroad, and had charge of the construction work from Milwaukee to Brookfield in 1849-50. He settled the right of way through his farm for a life pass for himself and family. He was active and instrumental in settling the "farm mortgagor's" debts to the eastern creditors, effecting compromises which saved many of their farms. In all public affairs until old age claimed him, he was ever active. In religion he was a strong Methodist; in politics, a radical republican; in habits, a non-user of intoxicants and tobacco; he was a character member of Robert Morris Lodge No. 115 of Free Masons and same of first lodge of Good Templars. As a farmer he raised grain in the early years, later giving more attention to horses and sheep and still later in dairying. His original farm embraced over six hundred acres. As the years went by he sold off the James Griffin, the Jerry Angell, the Albert Hinkley, and the Burmeister farms, and had about an equal amount left. Mr. Hinkley enjoyed fairly good health until the last three months of life. All his faculties were retained, until the last, few days when his memory weakened. His tenacious hold on life was unyielding and while he apparently had no fear of death, he seemed determined never to surrender. He died peacefully quietly and painlessly at sunrise Wednesday, January second, 1907.

He lived and died on the same farm which he continually occupied more than seventy years. Mr. Hinkley is survived by seven children. The children are L. D., who was the first white child born in the township, and F. D. Hinkley, Milwaukee; Mrs. M. E. Pittman, Boscobel; Mrs. S. P. Kline, Negaunee, Mich.; Mrs. A. J. Pardee, Eagle, Wis.; Mrs. John H. Payne, Oil City, Pa.; Mrs. R. H. Pardee, Watsonville, Cal. Mrs. Hinkley died eight years ago. Her maiden name was Mary Daniels.