

Betts  
Vivian<sup>^</sup> Baker  
now lives in Oklahoma

(4)

Well, Irma I finally found the speech I gave at my eighth grade commencement. Really had it tucked away. Hope there is some information you can use.

I'm adding a little that was left out in order to cut the speech down.

Colonel Draper, a son of Francis Draper is now ninety four and a resident of Eagle. He is a Civil War veteran and remembers attending Ward School. He is the one I talked to and gave me much of the history of this area.

The land on which Ward School stands was given by a Mr. Ward and the school was named after him. This was told us in a letter we received from F. A. Ward, a son, who lives in California and is eighty five. His father took up a homestead and built a home where Nicosens live. (Where Mary Lou Nelson lives)

Great grandfather even laid out the crooked dirt road from here to Whitewater through the notch in the bluff.

I gave this speech in May of 1934.

## Ward School History

In the summer of 1837 my great grandfather Betts made a trip into what is now Wisconsin. At that time it was known as the northwest territory. He liked it so well that the following year on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of July 1838, Francis Draper & he came here & made it their permanent home. They traveled on foot as that was the only transportation they had. On the way here they stopped at Fort Dearborn where Chicago now stands.

A land sale was taking place but Mr. Draper wanted to come farther west into what was then wheat land. He didn't think land around Fort Dearborn would be a good investment as it was mostly swamp and marsh. The few houses that were there were built on stilts to keep them out of the mud & water.

They came on here and Mr. Draper took up the 160 acres where Johnson's live. Great grandfather homesteaded the 80 acres of the original farm and bought the 80 acres across the road at \$1 an acre which was a large sum at that time as interest was 25% on a dollar.

At one time he raised 1100 bu. of wheat and sold it for \$1 a bu., but another time he hauled wheat to mil. with oxen and received only 36¢ a bu.

Where Eagle now stands was only a prairie in 1839. Eagle town was a part of Mukwonago and then a part of Kenosha. In 1841 or 1842 the first town meeting was held in the house of Andrew Scofield. The town received its name in a peculiar manner. Thomas Sugden, John Coats, and Mr. Barton went prospecting near <sup>the</sup> Lee's Thomas ~~live~~ <sup>farm</sup>. They saw a very large Eagle. From then on this territory has been known as Eagle.

The first store in the town was built by William Harrison in 1842 at Palestine. Another was built at Eagleville in 1844. The first post office was also started there at about the same time. Mr. Scofield being the first postmaster.

The village of Eagle was started in 1851 or 52 at the time the railroad was built. It was called Eagle Center.

The first land to be broken was where the big curve is beyond Mrs. Meredith's down past where this school now stands.

The first school house stood somewhere back of where Mrs. Meredith's barn now stands. It was an old frame building. A Mrs. Van Derberg and Helen Regan were teachers there. They boarded around and received a few dollars a term as pay.

That school house couldn't have been used more than 8 years as this one was built in 1849 a year after Wisconsin became a state. The first settlers took their homestead titles from Pres. Polk and Tyler as Wis. was part of the N. W. territory and called Milwaukee County.

A Mr. Otis, an uncle of Colonel Drapers, built this foundation and Norm Markley was the carpenter. The lumber was hauled from Mil. which was only a trading post with seven houses on stilts as Mil. was only a marshy swamp. All the neighbors Bigelows, Wards, Betts', Drapers and others drew the lumber with oxen. The round trip took a week.

The school was not divided into grades. There being an A. B. C. class and each child doing the work the teacher thought him capable of doing. The school year was divided into fall, winter, & spring terms. The teachers were hired by the term. Usually a man teacher taught the winter term as many large scholars attended then. All went to school a term or two a year, if possible, until they were over twenty.

Ward School had many spelling matches and many a good time was had. When one knew enough reading & arithmetic they went out from this school & taught other rural schools. A few who attended here also taught here. The wages were 20 to 40 or so until after World War I when prices went up.

## Winter in Wisconsin

Some folks like the sunny South,  
Away from ice and snow.  
Others think the West Coast  
Is the place to go.

But give me old Wisconsin,  
With it's deep, white, beautiful snow,  
That sparkles in the sunshine,  
Like diamonds, nesting in the hair  
Of a sweet, young maiden,  
Or on her hand so fair.

Wintertime is playtime  
For people young and old.  
We don't mind if the weather  
Does get a little cold.

Children making snowmen,  
With rosy cheeks and mittened hands,  
While others are gliding o'er the ice  
On skates with charming grace,  
Or skiing down the hillsides,  
Sometimes sailing into space.

No matter what your age is,  
You enjoy the winter days  
And the long evenings to sit  
In your cozy home and knit  
And recall your childhood days.

So give me old Wisconsin,  
With all its ice and snow,  
Where folks are always friendly  
It's home sweet home you know.

Vivian V. Baker  
Troy Center, Wis

Ralph and Vivian Baker lived in the Eagle area most of their lives. The winter of 1935-36 they lived on Eagle Prairie and moved to the Richard and Ella Baker farm in the Town of Troy in March 1936. They farmed there until after the death of Ralph's mother, Ella, when the farm was sold to settle the estate. They moved to Troy Center in 1946 and lived there until about 1964 when they sold the farm to Wallace Chapman. They then moved to 222 East Street in Eagle and resided there until their deaths. Vivian was always interested in poetry, had great memories of her childhood and expresses her feelings about her favorite time of year in this poem. Vivian died in 1980.