

LANDMARKS

by

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Lettered brass on granite slabs are not the only land-marks, in fact, many things may foot-print history. Twin trees, a wicket gate apart, can mark the locus of a former home. Old foundations, wells, a spring, old time trees and flowers, all can mark the spot where people once lived, worked, conquered the wilderness, and sculptured the pattern of their lives.

Handy garden flowers are often the most persistent landmarks of an old time home. Planted by the hand of a woman who loved her home, and who, in that early pioneer time did her best to beautify a spot, bare and impoverished, they bloom on and on as if perpetuating the victory of a heroic spirit. Such flowers are the briar rose, the scarlet pimpernel, the Lady of the Lake, RoseMary, and the common lilac.

Of all these flowers, the lilac is most successful in preserving the site of a one-time home. A census of the pioneer homes are monumented by its perennial and its ever-spreading growth. On Hy. 59, opposite the new Sol Engle watering place is the old Francis home; nearer Waukesha, the old Gowin home; on Hy. 67 northeast of the old Protestant cemetery, far back from the road is the old J. Brewin, Falter, and Thiele place; farther west on Hy 67 west of the Ward school, is the J. Reeves home; on NN halfway between 59 and 67 the old Shorn home; on Hy S all that remains of the Richard Fairbrother home are a few plaster covered rocks and a bunch of lilacs. Every reader of this article can, undoubtedly, list a score of pioneer homes similarly memorialized.

For years twin trees-- poplar trees, a wicket gate apart, raised their spires on the road from Eagle to Troy Center just south of the Waldo Shearer farm home. Back of these twin trees was a log cabin that sheltered people first by the name of Painter, then Reilly, and later Amann, grandparents of the Andorfers.

Springs and wells are also durable landmarks. In spite of the ever-changing climate of Wisconsin, and the lowering of the water table by farm drainage, some springs

and wells still mark the habitation of the early pioneer. Such a spring is still existent on the west side of Hy NN south of the railroad. It is the spring which made Ahira R. Hinkley decide instantaneously on the choice of his claim in 1836. A quarter of a mile south of that spring, back from the road in a little hollow is a huddle of stones, the sole remains of the cellar and foundation of the log cabin he built in the autumn of 1836.

Old wells are often landmarks of old time happenings. Such a landmark recalled the story of an unhappy love affair of early days. When the writer came to her father's retirement home, a very well defined circle could be seen west of the well then in use. What was it? Looked like a well. Why was it there? Then her father recalled the story of an interrupted love affair of one of the sons of people who had formerly owned the home. Briefly the story was this:

"John was going with a girl that the family couldn't tolerate and the parents, apparently having shown John his folly, had made him break with "Mary". Shortly after the break with Mary all of the members of John's family had been taken deathly sick, in the nature of a poisoning. Especially did the family believe something had been put into the well since they later heard that "Mary" had said "Well, then let 'em let John and I alone". The family then dug a new well near the first one.

The most interesting landmark and one which contributes to pioneer history is that of the Territorial Road preceding Hy 67 southwest of Eagle. Between the Robert Jolliffe farm and the Meredith farms are the remains of the best marked part of the old Territorial Road.

Printed history records the transporting of lead by wagon from southwest Wisconsin, Mineral Point, Shullsburg, Leadmine, New Diggings, etc., to Milwaukee. But in all of these records, no mention of places east of Koshkonong is alone made. The writer thinks that since Koshkonong is directly west of Whitewater, that perhaps Whitewater was an intermediary place. But then where did it go from there? Descendents of early pioneers pick up the trail at Little Prairie, then northeast on what is now Hy 67, this roadway traced by the old taverns and their remains.

At Little Prairie many people now living remember the Adam Ray tavern, a barn in the intersection of Hy 67 and NN (the old Severance tavern and probably called Barnegat House at one time); then farther east on the south side of the road an old well

now filled with stones, the old Howe tavern, the rest and refreshment spots of the drivers the lead wagons.

The Territorial Road did not run directly east and west as Hy 67 now does because in the 1840's when the lead teams were coming through, a pond later owned by Enoch Sherman, was large and the land northwest was a veritable bog when winter snows and spring rains were heavy.

This old road swung north along the glacial ridges found there. Proof of this location may be found in the minutes of the Dist. No. 3 school meeting in the autumn of 1849 when thirty-six qualified voters decided to build a new schoolhouse and to locate it on the "road leading from Eagleville to Barnegat house". The old schoolhouse was north of the new one, thus removing it from its backlot location.

Further tracing of the Territorial Road comes from testimony by the later owner of the Wilford and Boie places, Mrs. Anne Meredith, who used the cut-off of the present road by skirting the hills at the north.

But the final and most convincing evidence is the old roadway itself. North of the Robert Jolliffe residence there is a leveled, sod-covered surface of wagon width. Trees and shrubs refuse to grow on this space so packed by the lead-laden wagons.

The Jolliffe residence is further evidence of that pioneer road__ now a quarter of a mile off the road, but in territorial times very much on the road.

Landmarks then are anchor posts of history, the matrix of memories, often the crucial section of a puzzle that reveals the life of a by-gone day.