

## Jonathan Betts Homestead Life

He was born in England, came to America at the age of 18; took a job in York State driving a stagecoach with 6 horse team. He had to find streams at that time no bridges. He worked until he saved enough to buy some land, he started west to Wisconsin Territory as his deed reads he and a boy friend started from York State afoot; they shot a deer and each made three pants and blouse with the skins. The boys each had a little money when they reached what is Chicago; there was a land sale going on. Frank Draper wanted to stake there but Betts wanted wheat land so they started again and each took up a claim which my deed calls for Frank took the one just north of his. Mr. Betts was on his claim from 5 to 8 years before he could get a deed or a contract he at last got his deed from Tyler for his homestead, then he bought the 80 acres which he paid \$1.00 per acre for but he had to pay 25 cents on the dollar that 80 was heavy timber which he hewed for the sills of his house also the timbers of his barn. The lumber to furnish the barn was the first bill of lumber that came over the Milw. St. Paul R.R.; they had to flag the train as there was no place to stop. Mr. Betts was there with his team of oxen to get the lumber. The ox yoke is still here as good as ever. He raised his wheat sowed it by hand and broadcast, cut it with a cradle, flayed it out; cleaned it with two pails in the wind, drew it to Milwaukee with his ox team; sold it for 3 & 6 pence which was 36 cents per bushel. That was his first crop.

He was married to Lucina Ewers, they met in Milwaukee at Solomon Juneau trading post; she was a friend of Mrs. Juneau; had merry times with her and worked in Milwaukee. Was only 7 frame houses there at that time and they were built on stilts as was so damp and muddy. She cooked for 10 men and received 36 cents per week and board. She was married at 18, died at 80, lived in this home all those years. They raised 7 children, the cradle is still here which is 100 years and just as good as ever; their 7 children, grandchildren, great grandchildren slept in it. When I came here 60 years ago, 19 last Feb. they had tallow candles on the kitchen table. I helped Mother Betts make hundreds of them every winter and matches was a luxury. Could only burn once in a while. We used lady lighters to light candles, that was in 1888, now the same barn is lit with electricity, running water, hot & cold; the same old house has electricity, the candlestick is at rest, also the ox yoke as the tractor has taken the place of farming.

by Luella M. Betts, widow of Fremont Betts