

FRIDAY, APRIL 25, 1935.

Hinkley, Aged Farmer, Writes Of Early Days in Town of Eagle

Article Relates Hardships of Early Settlers in This County

A number of interesting historical articles which were to have appeared in the Waukesha Daily Freeman's Centennial magazine, but had to be omitted because of lack of space, will be run from time to time in the Freeman. The following is the first of the series and is submitted by Edward P. Hinkley, aged 96, town of Eagle. Mr. Hinkley settled on his present farm in 1872 and was married July 4 to Miss Salena Ardiss, Lincolnshire, Eng. They had three children: Hubert A., Percival E. and Myrtle G. Mr. Hinkley attended the Waukesha County Centennial, May 7, 1934 in Waukesha.

I, Edward P. Hinkley, was born in China, St. Clair Co., Mich., on Dec. 20, 1839. My folks landed in the Township of Mukwonago on June 10, 1840. That fall my father built a log house on Section 10, Town of Eagle.

About the first I recollect is seeing father draw wood on the hand sled. The next I recall was the Indians coming to trade with mother. They came several times to trade. The second year father bought a yoke of cattle. I think I was three years old when they bought corn of some folks in Illinois.

The settlers had to look out for fires. I recall once when a neighbor came running over to tell mother that there was a fire on the marsh that was coming as fast as a horse could run. Mother asked if he could help her but he said he had all he could do. My father was away. Mother threw me onto the bed, and then got a rake and raked a path around the house and stacks so that when the fire came she had pails of water ready, but it did not come to us but went on half a mile to where an Englishman lived who had a new board stable that burned. I remember the smoke. The Englishman thought the world was burning up. As it was almost night I said I was hungry and mother said I better be hungry a little while than for a long while.

Cooked on Fireplace

We had a fireplace to cook and warm on. The cooking was done with a large kettle that hung on the fire, a long-handled spider, a bake-kettle to set in front of the fire with three legs about three inches long; a cover to put on top of the bake-kettle with legs around

reflector to bake with, made of tin, to set in front of the fire. While we had a fire-place the potatoes were frequently baked in the ashes. Besides the regular victuals, mother made cookies, fried cakes and pumpkin pies and as there were no apples then we used onions instead. There were peaches one to two years before with seedlings 16c a dozen. Of course, we had rutabagas, melons, tomatoes. We also had the children's diseases.

When I was eight years old father built a barn and frame addition to the log house. We had one neighbor when we came about half a mile away. Others came soon afterwards.

When the log schoolhouse was built I was six years old. School was held only in the winter months.

I remember one time when father came home from Milwaukee and said they were talking of building a railroad but did not expect to see it. The next time he went he said they were going at it. I recollect seeing them survey near our house. I think it was in 1853 when they came near the schoolhouse.

I remember being sent to Eagleville for a letter for my mother from a sister in Vermont, where her people came from. I was ten when she got a letter saying that her mother and two cousins had been burned. Postage was 26c in those days.

Prepares to Build

It was in 1855 that father got ready to build a house. He got some lumber and windows and sills but he died on August 18, leaving mother with 7 children and the house not finished. I was the eldest child and father's death cut off my schooling. My grandfather came to us soon after the death of my father and an uncle the next summer so that I did not get to go to school until the next winter.

We had 7 hogs to kill when grandfather was with us. We got hot water in barrels by heating stones over a good fire made of stumps and put the hot stones in the barrel of water. This would heat quicker than water put on the stove in boiler kettles. We had to kill the hogs at night.

About this time my mother died before the stacking was done and it came on me to do the stacking and as I had a brother some four years younger we managed it. I went to get a neighbor boy to come and help but he could not come so I got him to show me how to stack with a fork. It was only a little

the wind blew that the grain scattered so I sowed with one hand at a time and then it was not streaked.

Dig Cellar

About 1860 we dug cellar for the house and built the cellar the next year. Got stones for the house the next year, burned lime and got the house up to part-way of the lower windows. Then the call came for six hundred thousand men to volunteer and I went to war, and served till August, 1865. When I got home the folks were living in the house.

One warm day I was cradling grain and the next two younger sisters were raking the bundles. Across the road the men were sitting in the shade. One of them came over and wanted to know how we stood the heat so I told him we drank cold water. They drank fire water.

I think it was about two years before the reapers came that a wheel-rake, with two wheels about 15 or 18 inches in diameter to take a swath. It had two handles to push four tines under the grain. When enough was on the bundles were bound.

These are some of my earliest recollections.

Edward P. Hinkley,
Town of Eagle.