

Williams Bay: A History from The Williams Bay Observer-March 12, 1896-May 7, 1896

In the early part of the nineteenth century when Geneva Lake, then called Big Foot Lake was known only to the denizens of the forest, and a few wandering hunters, traders and explorers, here dwelt on its shores a band of Potawatomi Indians under the rule of the great Chief Bigfoot.

Where the Village of Williams Bay now stands, was then a cluster of Indian wigwams. There was another village at the head of the lake, now Fontana. Chief Bigfoot seems to have spent a portion of his time at each of his villages. The field which was just above the post office (Bay Center) at Williams Bay was then an Indian garden where no doubt large quantities of corn were grown by the industrious squaws. A little to the north lay another garden. Between the two gardens and on the west side of the present town line road was their burying ground where scores, perhaps hundreds, of good Indians lay waiting the final resurrection. If there should be any supernatural manifestations in this vicinity, we could easily believe it to be some Indian spook lamenting the desecration of the place where his bones were laid to rest.

Before any white men settled upon the shores of the lake Bigfoot's son passed to the "Happy Hunting Ground." His remains were not buried, but placed in a coffin made of a log, split in half, hollowed out and then fastened together again with the body of the boy inside. This was hoisted some twenty feet from the ground into the top of an oak tree, which stood on the bank of the lake at what is now Fontana Park. A hole was made in the east, so the Chief's son could survey his fishing grounds. A bow and arrow, a knife, and a piece of tobacco were placed inside, for the comfort and solace of the dead boy.

Bigfoot's two wives were buried at Williams Bay. The mound may still be seen near the residence of Eric Anderson on Elm Street. A rude shelter was constructed over this grave, made of the sides of canoes which had been split in two for the purpose.

The Potawatomi of Big Foot's tribe was removed to lands beyond the Mississippi in 1836 in accordance to a treaty signed by Big Foot in 1833. Afterwards members of the tribe would return to see the tide of civilization sweeping over their former homes and hunting grounds.

There was also distinct evidence of the earlier inhabitants of this continent, the mound builders. Little is known about these mysterious people. Mounds in the area of Delavan Lake, Como Lake, and Geneva Lake represented animals and some early settlers claimed one looked like a bow and arrow.

In the year 1836, while the Indians still enjoyed possession of the beautiful lake, two sturdy young men of the genuine New England stock, with file and axe on their shoulders, pushed their way through the woods to Bigfoot Lake of whose attractions they had heard. They were Moses and Israel Williams Jr. the two eldest sons of Captain Israel Williams. These young men were seeking locations for homes. Their wives were in Michigan in the care of their father. Near the present site of Kaye's Park (???) they stopped and built up a log house. A little farther west another was built for Moses, the first having been for Israel. Leaving these as evidence of their claims they went back for their wives. They gave good reports of the country to their father, who returned to his home in Ashfield, Franklin Co. Massachusetts to

prepare for the trip to the Wisconsin Territory the following year.

Captain Williams had nine children; Moses and Israel, who were already staying for their new home; Royal and Austin, aged 18 and 16 years respectively, joined their brothers in August of 1836. They made the latter part of the trip from Milwaukee down on foot and alone, quite an undertaking for couple of boys.

Son Francis was attending college and remained in Massachusetts. Fordyce and Festus, the two younger sons, and Hannah and Lavinia, the two daughters, accompanied their parents on the trip. Another member of the family was Mrs. Hannah Joy, Mrs. Williams' mother

Festus was then about five years old. He is the only surviving member of the family and is a resident of Williams Bay, and to him we are indebted for most of the facts in this narrative.

After a long and tedious journey, (they came up the Great Lakes in a sailing vessel, steamboat accommodations being too expensive), Captain Williams and his family arrived at their destination on July 4th 1837. They remained six weeks in the log cabin which Israel Jr. had built the year before. The family then moved to the cabin of Moses, his claim being known Nine Oaks, now the summer residence of E.E. Ayer.

About this same time, Marcus and Robert Russell, two young men who had recently left Ohio settled on near Geneva Lake

About this time a man by the name of Cole made a claim where the Village of Williams Bay now stands. By the unwritten law of the early settlers, when a man located a claim, he was to hew off the bark from a tree and write his name thereon with red

chalk. He was then allowed thirty days to begin improvements; at the end of that time if nothing had been done toward building a house, his claim was forfeited.

For some reason or other Mr. Cole neglected to commence improvements in the requisite time and Capt. Williams seeing the desirability of the location, decided to "jump" the claim. Taking his five oldest sons and Robert Russell, and leaving the women to hold the claims on the south side of the Lake, Captain Williams went onto Cole's claim, and commenced to build a log house. Mr. Cole evidently heard of the intrusion and promptly resented it, for he appeared on the scene with three companions all well armed and ordered the Williams party to leave.

Captain Williams however knew his rights and intended to stand by them. He promptly called the attention of Mr. Cole to the six young men, who had each laid down his axe and picked up his rifle, and intimated that seven to four was rather dangerous odds and if the Cole party valued their health they had better retire, which advice they promptly acted upon.

Afterwards, Captain Williams who scorned to take an unfair advantage of anyone, gave Mr. Cole a cow for what might be termed his moral right to the place, knowing full well that Cole had forfeited all legal right.

The only other settlements in the vicinity at the time were as follows: - One James Van Slyke had built a log house on the lake shore where the pier at Glenwood Springs now stands. There were two or three log shanties in Geneva. The Phoenix brothers had settled on the shores of Delavan Lake where Lake Lawn is now located. Deacon Reader and Cyrus Church had settled on

Bigfoot Prairie, and a little later Alan McBride located on the state line south of the lake.

In the spring of 1838 Captain Williams moved his family to Williams Bay, and planted his first crops in the old Indian gardens. The nearest post office at this time was Racine, where most of the supplies were brought.

Walworth County had its beginning at this time. Captain Williams bought several cows in 1838-39, and established a dairy. In the summer of 1838, Mrs. Williams made the first cheese ever made in Walworth County. In 1839, she made some 800 lbs. which was taken to Geneva by canoe and sold to Andrew Ferguson for a shilling a pound or thereabouts.

Captain Williams had his eye open to enlarging his property holdings, and as soon as the land was open for sale in 1838, began purchasing in large tracts both from the Government and from claim holders who wanted to dispose of the holdings, and selling again as soon as he could obtain a reasonable advance. Much of the land whose acreage value is now computed by the thousands of dollars, was bought and sold by him at less than five dollars per acre. At one time he owned all of the shore from Kaye's Park to Harvard Camp, and all the land about Williams Bay except Cedar Point.

In the spring of 1838, Robert Russell and Hanna Williams were married. The ceremony was performed by Israel Williams Jr. at his home on the south shore. He had been appointed Justice of the Peace in Linn Township and this was his first official act. The couple settled at the head of the lake, later Fontana Park. They afterwards moved farther west and

Mrs. Russell died at St. Anthony's Falls, Minnesota, 1850.

Mark Russell located a claim on the north shore and built a house where Forest Glen Park was afterward situated, and where Geo. A. Weiss' magnificent residence now stands. He lived single for some time but eventually married the daughter of one of his "near neighbors" a Miss Potter of Spring Prairie.

In the early fall of 1838, Mrs. Williams' mother, Mrs. Joy died and the settlers came from miles around to attend the first funeral. The coffin was of basswood logs. Squire Bell, of Big Foot Prairie, made a prayer and the remains were interred near those of Bigfoot's departed wives, where they remained until 1892, when Festus Williams had them moved to the East Delavan cemetery.

In 1939 three brothers, Charles, Henry, and Parsons Bailey, settled between Williams Bay and Delavan Lake. Charles Bailey bought the place now belonging to James Virgil, and Henry Bailey adjoining him on the south. The brothers afterwards quarreled about some land and Henry Bailey sold out to a cousin Kiah Bailey, and went farther west, the place is still occupied by Kiah Bailey's widow. Kiah Bailey was one of the most noted characters in the vicinity of Williams Bay.

About this time large numbers of the Potawatomi tribe returned from their reservation in the west to frequent their former home. They and Captain Williams were always on the best of terms. One with a significant gesture, pointed to the undisturbed graves of his forefathers at Williams Bay and said: "Good white man! No dig!" then with an impression of mingled sorrow and anger motioned to the head of the lake where it seems the Indian

bones had been exhumed to gratify the morbid curiosity of relic hunters, and said: - "Bad white man! Dig?"

Those who sneer at Williams Bay for being a swampy place now should have known it then. Over 100 acres were under water the year around and mostly covered with a rank growth of coarse marsh grass. A large part of this is now owned by Festus Williams and has been transformed by his labors to the most productive of farming lands.

In 1838 one Charles Ross settled near the place where John M. Smythe's summer home is now in process of construction. However he was discovered to have rather ambiguous ideas regarding proprietary rights in personal property, and was requested by the other settlers to vacate. The request being made in an emphatic manner he promptly complied.

The same year two Englishmen who were bachelors, and answered to the names of Smith and Derby, settled on the shores of Duck Lake, not far from where J.P. Smith's ice house now stands. They brought with them a drove of hogs, the first introduced into this section. They, the Englishmen, could not endure the climate and the lonely location and soon abandoned their claim and their hogs. Unlike their owners, the hogs prospered. They thrived and multiplied until the woods were full of hogs. And a great blessing it was to many of the later settlers whose empty larder was often replenished by a hog brought down in the woods by a fortunate rifle shot. It was much easier to shoot a hog than a deer.

The first school in the neighborhood was taught by Mrs. Moses Williams, in 1839 at Nine Oaks. Her pupils were Festus Williams, three of James Van Slyke's

children, two from Squire Bell's, two from Dr. Wood's, and two from Mr. Clarke's, the latter two families having been recent settlers on the south side of the lake. The two Clarke boys have since become noted. One will be remembered as Col. Geo. Clark, the founder of the famous Pacific Garden Mission of Chicago. His brother Frank was the foreman of the jury in the Cronin murder case. The next year, 1840, Mrs. Williams conducted her school at James Van Slyke's residence, and following that taught for two terms at Robert Russell's home at the head of the lake.

In the winter of 1839-40 Captain Williams, assisted by Mark Russell, hewed the timber for the first frame building in the vicinity. In the spring of 1840 he built a house and barn. The neighbors all came for miles to attend the raising which was a grand affair.

Captain Williams then opened a hotel in his new building. A magnificent pair of antlers served as a sign and his house was known all over the country as the Buck-horn Hotel. It was the headquarters for land seekers. Captain Williams being one of the earliest settlers, and thoroughly familiar with all the surrounding country, could direct or guide any stranger to his desired location.

A stage line from Southport (now Kenosha) to Beloit was soon established and passed the Buckhorn Hotel. In 1844 he secured the appointment as postmaster, and with characteristic modesty named his office, not Williams Bay, but Geneva Bay. He held the position of postmaster until his death when the office was discontinued.

Between 1842-6 the country was rapidly settled. Among the early arrivals were Levi

Carey, Stephen Brown, and Fred Brownell, in 1843. In 1844, D.P. Handy set up the first blacksmith shop. This was at Delap's Corner, one and one half miles north of Williams Bay. He afterwards sold to Anthony Delap who still owns the place. Mr. Bromaghim was another settler in 1844, and in 1845 Jarvis Vincent located on the place where his widow and son Oscar still live. Noah Joh came in the same year, also Moses P. Hadley who bought the land on which the Yerkes Observatory now stands.

There was a great deal of sickness amongst the settlers. At the time it was believed to be caused by so much new land being turned over leaving the vegetable mold exposed to the air which bred malarial and typhoid fever. In 1845 Moses and Austin Williams were taken ill with typhoid fever and died within three days of each other. The following year Captain Williams himself succumbed to the same malady.

The family was now well scattered. Israel Williams Jr. had moved to Broom Prairie some time previous to this and now Mrs. Williams and Festus went there also. Royal had returned to Mass., in 1845. Lavinia was married to John Fowle of Oak Creek, now South Milwaukee.

In 1848 Mrs Williams and Festus returned to hold home at Williams Bay where they lived until Mrs. Williams' death in 1852. At this Royal returned from the east, and having been appointed administrator took up his residence in the old homestead in 1855, living there until his death in 1886, his widow and son George still occupying the place.

In 1849 Kiah Bailey secured the appointment as postmaster with the office at his home, three quarters of a mile west

of the Bay. He named the office Bay Hill, and served until 1861 or 1862 when he got into trouble over some matters, which do not need be repeated, and quietly stole away. After a couple of years when the troubles had blown over he returned. On his departure Zina Cotton who lived where Geo. Van Velzer now resides, secured the post office. It was afterwards removed to East Delavan, and the Bay Hill post office went out of existence.

The twenty years following 1850 were very uneventful in Williams Bay and the surrounding district. The country slowly developed; the forest gave way to broad productive fields. Old settlers died or moved away, and new ones took their places. Boys grew into men and tilled the fields their fathers had rescued from the wilderness. Geneva Lake, nestling among the hills of Walworth County was gradually becoming known as the most brilliant jewel of all that magnificent collection of lakes and streams in Southern Wisconsin and Northern Illinois.

At the foot of the lake a beautiful and thriving village had developed from the three log huts of 1837. At its head a cluster of houses surrounded Douglass' Mills, which supplied flour and ground feed to the farmers for miles around. At Williams Bay the old farm house still stood alone and no indications of a village were seen.

Robert Russell was again in the vicinity, living upon the land now devoted to the Yerkes Observatory. Between him and the Williams farm lived Joseph Stam, a recent settler, but one who came to stay, as he still holds his place, despite the efforts of Chicago capitalists to buy him out.

On the hillside north of the Bay, Jonas G. Southwick, who had settled there in 1852, was rearing a family of children, some of

whom are now among our most respected citizens.

In 1870 Festus Williams returned from Virginia, where he had been superintending a large plantain near historic Jamestown, and took up his residence in Beloit, from whence he came again in 1874 to the farm where he now resides, and commenced reclaiming the marsh lands extending towards the bay, how well he succeeded, his productive fields show for themselves.

In 1874 there came to this section a man who is worthy of more than a passing notice, Major E.B. Meatyard of English birth, but a veteran of the Civil War. He purchased the place now owned by H.A. Beidler, and built a house thereon. For nearly twenty years he was one of the most prominent personages about Geneva Lake. A man of strong character and unquestionable integrity, he wielded a large influence, and always on the side of public improvement and benefit. He possessed a marked genius in many directions, but as a financier he was a failure. By his mother's death in 1882 he came into possession of a considerable fortune, a large part of which he invested in land about Williams Bay. He owned at one time over 600 acres in one body in the towns of Linn and Geneva, and 240 acres in the town of Walworth. He also had large interests in Southern Illinois, at the village of Shipman, which was built for the most part upon his property. The Williams Bay tract extended from the Lake shore east of Cedar Point over the ridge and embracing all the flat land at the head of Lake Como. He sank a large amount of money trying to reclaim this swampland, but his efforts did not avail much. He was an enthusiast over Lake Geneva and made himself thoroughly familiar with the topography of all the

surrounding country. His house, built near the lake shore, cost several thousand dollars, and showed a decided English style. He spent a great deal of time and money perfecting various inventions, but realized little out of them aside from expensive lawsuits. His heaviest loss was by a coal mine in Southern Illinois, which could not be made to pay the expense of opening it and working it.

So one way and another his fortune dwindled away until nearly everything was lost. His Walworth county property was sold under mortgage in 1889 and passed into the hands of J. Johnston, Jr., who owns the largest part of it at present. The blow was a sever one. Trouble and anxiety brought on a serious illness. He was at a hospital in Chicago for a time, but was removed to Shipman, where his family was then living, where he soon afterwards died. A considerable portion of his property at Shipman was saved from the wreck, and there his family still live.

Mr. Meatyard was largely instrumental in securing the railroad to his place. He gave them the right of way across his land and a considerable tract at the terminus. The company received 17 acres of land from Major Meatyard, Fetus A. Williams gave 6 acres comprising 80 rods of shore extending east from where the depot now stands, and Mrs. Lucretia Williams, widow of Royal Williams, gave 12 acres including the shore west from the depot to the creek. The railroad was built between Lake Geneva and Williams Bay in 1887 and 1888. Grading was commenced in the fall of 1887 and by the summer of 1888 the cars were funning. The city of Lake Geneva having refused the right of way to the lake shore, the railroad company selected Williams Bay as the most convenient place to gain access to the

water. Accordingly the road was built. Ten acres more north of the track were purchased of Messrs. Lee and Nohelty. This gives the railroad company a tract of 45 acres of land, and a lake frontage of about 120 rods.

In 1890 another project was put underway that ended disastrously. E.L. Baker, a surveyor and civil engineer whose home was in Lake Geneva, had long had in his mind a plan which at first thought appears wild and impossible, and as it failed we may say it was a hare-brained scheme. Had it succeeded it would have been a grand triumph of genius. It was as follows: first, to buy up all the land about Lake Como at as low a price as possible, second to dam up the outlet of Lake Como, and raise that body of water to a level with Lake Geneva. (It is now about 14 feet lower.) Third to dig a channel that was large enough for any boat in Geneva Lake to travel from Williams Bay to Lake Como. This would make the Como shores about as valuable as Geneva shores, and in this way prove a highly profitable investment.

At about the time Major Meatyard lost his place and Mr. Baker had thought he had secured sufficient financial backing to carry out his enterprise. Accordingly he sent agents to buy up the property. Options were secured on the farms, each farmer being paid \$500 down. Some of the land owner however got wind of the plan and refused to sell for anything but exorbitant figures. This caused some delay. One of the first places purchased was the Meatyard tract, excepting the Geneva Lake shore which had already been bought by H. A. Beidler. The south end of this, Mr. Baker had laid out into lots. He also built the house there, known as the "Bungalow" from its style of architecture.

But the capitalists who had agreed to back his enterprise deserted him. He strove energetically to carry out his plans but it was of no use. The whole thing burst like a bubble. Mr. Baker left the scene of his vanished vision, despairing and crushed, a ruined man. Another feature added to his trouble. He had been entrusted with the care of a considerable amount of money belonging to the set of his brother Robert Baker. A portion of this he had used in his efforts to save himself. His trouble preyed upon his mind, and drove him to his last desperate act. He was no doubt mentally unbalanced at the time and could see but one way to pay his obligations to his brother's estate. His life was insured for enough to cover the deficiency, so one day he locked himself in a room in a hotel in Racine, and blew out his brains. Thus saving his honor, at the expense of his life.

It may be said to the credit of some of the farmers about Lake Como that when Mr. Baker's estate was being settled they returned the \$500 options money which had been paid on their farms.

In the meantime a flourishing settlement was springing up on the west side of the bay about the old farm house built by Captain Israel Williams. In 1883 J. W. Loft bought a five-acre tract south of the Williams farm, and built a residence. The Williams homestead was now owned and occupied by Lucretia, widow of Royal Williams, her youngest son, Harley, having principal business management.

In 1889 a sub-division, including the best residence portions of the place, was laid out by Surveyor Tubbs, of Elkhorn. W. G. DeGroff was the first purchaser, having bought, in fact, before the survey was made; and the same summer his residence was built. The next purchasers were A.H. Arneson and Peter Stenstrom,

who bought and built on the hill above the farm house. In the spring of 1889, John Hansen bought five acres from the south side of the farm, and built a house. He has since sold to M. Johnson. During the next two years developments were slow. The town line road was laid out from Jonas Southwick's place south to the bay, and other minor improvements were made. In 1892 A.H. Arneson, Eric Anderson and G.L. Jensen incorporated the Scandinavian Free Lutheran church, bought a lot and proceeded to erect a church building.

The following winter Henry McBride and Frank Harville, of Chicago, purchased from Harley Williams a piece of land on the east side of the town line road, for an Ice house. They organized the Lake Geneva Ice Company, and built one of the biggest ice houses in Wisconsin. It has a capacity of 40,000 tons, gives employment to 125 men for about six weeks during the winter, in filling it, and from five to fifteen men during the shipping season.

In February 1892, Marie R. Williams, wife of Edward F. Williams, (Royal Williams' second son) secured appointment as postmistress, and the post office of Williams Bay was established. For the first two years the mail was brought from Lake Geneva by team; at first only bi-weekly, but the business steadily increase, and during 1893 it was brought daily. In the fall of 1894, through the efforts of the postmistress and her husband who is her deputy, the mail route was transferred to the railroad, and in the fall of 1895 a through mail to and from Chicago, was established, to be carried on the express train, thus giving two mails per day.

In 1892 Mrs. J. Pemberton erected her boarding house, and some five or six other houses were built. The lots in the original

sub division were now practically all sold and in the fall of 1892 and addition was platted. In the spring of 1893, C. M. Williams came from Lyons and purchased the corner store of W. G. DeGroff and erected the Lake Vista House a building which would be a credit to any town, and opened up a hotel and general store business, which has steadily increased in volume ever since. In the same year Harley Williams opened a coal, lime and brick business. Beginning in a small way he has gradually worked up an extensive and lucrative business.

In 1895 there was a demand for more lots, and another addition was laid out on the hill above the original sub-division. Meanwhile several houses had been built, all of them a credit to the growing village. Among the most important are those built by Eric Anderson, a. Blix, Harley Williams, Henry Francis, U. Lockwood, W. G. DeGroff, and C. Slocomb.

In January 1895, L.E. Francis commenced the erection of a store building and on its completion, opened up a stock of groceries and general merchandise. He did a good business during the following year, and recently sold out to J. Rouse, who is enlarging the store and business.

C. M. Williams also made a change in 1895. His business having become too extensive for one to conveniently handle, he rented his building to Jos. Eat from Elkhart - who is carrying on the hotel business, and Mr. Williams built an addition on the west for store and residence, and in partnership with G. S. Holmes, is now doing an extensive business. Mr. Keat has proven a successful landlord, and has made the Lake Vista House a popular place.

The settlement on the Williams homestead is steadily growing. On its three subdivisions alone there are now one hotel, two stores, post-office, blacksmith shop, barber shop, and some thirty buildings which are used for residence purposes. The upcoming summer will witness the erection of several more.

In 1894 W.A. Lackey secured complete control of the "bus line from Williams Bay to Delavan Lake, and a lease of land from the railroad company for a barn. He established a livery business in connection, and as soon as the latest addition is completed, will have a large and well-ordered stable and rigs and conveyances for all his customers.

During the winter of 1892-1893, Dr. M.E. LeClerque, of Chicago, put in operation a scheme of magnificent proportions which, however, has been very unfortunate. If it could have been carried through successfully it would have been a great thing for the Village of Williams Bay. He purchased sixty acres of the flat land north of the depot, organized the Williams Bay Land Co., laid out his purchase into blocks and lots and commenced improvements. Lewis H. Falley, of Chicago, was engaged as general manager, and contracts for the erection of several houses were let to James C. Hedrick, also of Chicago. Harley Williams took the contract for ditching and tiling. The land had formerly been partially under water, but, as it was from ten to twenty-five feet above the level of the lake, drainage was a comparatively easy problem. Mr. Hedrick employed a large force of carpenters and commenced the erection of four houses and a store building. Several lots were sold at a high price. It was just previous to opening of the World's Fair and Chicago. Times were good, wages high and everything was

flourishing. It looked as if the village on the bay was going to "boom", and no doubt it would have done so but for the financial crash that struck the death blow to prosperity that summer. One of the first sales made proved a curse to the growing village. Thos. Quinn and M. Cleary, of Lake Geneva, bought two lots, put up a building, and opened a liquor saloon. Dr. LeClerque was directly responsible for allowing this venture, but it was under representations that the place should be conducted in a respectable manner, and in accord with the regulations of law and decency. How well these promises have been kept the residents of Williams Bay know only too well.

Improvements on the Williams Bay Land Co.'s subdivision went steadily forward. True, money did not seem to be forthcoming as readily as might be expected, but nobody felt alarmed, as it was reported that the company was worth millions. But when the crash came in July the Williams Bay Land Co. was upset at once. Dr. LeClerque lost heavily in one or two bank failures in Chicago. He became discouraged, and perhaps foresaw the extended period of hard times, therefore resolved to abandon the undertaking. To do this he induced Mr. Falley to take it off his hands. He with the confidence and pluck of a young man undertook to carry the enterprise through. But none except a heavy capitalist could have prevented the disaster which followed. Contractor Hedrick, foreseeing the inevitable consequence, took what money he could get on the contract, which was not a very great amount, and left for Texas, or some other distant clime. Very little money had been paid to the laborers, and under the strained financial conditions Mr. Falley found it impossible to raise the necessary means to pay them off. Work was stopped,

and the laborers, finding that their money was not forthcoming, filed liens on the property. Through drunken carelessness or spite the store building was burned. The houses still stand though both entirely finished.

During the next year, Mr. Falley made Herculean efforts to clear up the difficulties, but they were of no avail, and when deferred payments on the purchase price fell due he was unable to meet them, and recently foreclosure proceedings have been started but owing to the condition of affairs they have necessarily been slow. Mr. Falley still holds title to the property and hopes to be able to redeem it, before it is too late. John B. Simmons, attorney for the mortgage, and the lien holders, has been very lenient and has given Mr. Falley every reasonable opportunity to straighten matters out.

Left alone by themselves on the subdivision, Quinn & Cleary carried things with a high hand in the saloon, having no regard for law, order or decency. Sunday has always been their best day for trade. Mr. Quinn is now sole owner of the establishment, having bought Mr. Cleary's share some time ago. We are confident, however, that he has but little longer to run. We are assured that when his license expires, there will be no renewal, and if the town board of Linn, want to shroud their names in everlasting opprobrium they cannot do so any easier than by continuing to license this disgraceful institution.

Mr. Falley also tried his hand on the Meatyard property. Not expecting to be called upon to furnish any money for the subdivision, he purchased of Mr. Johnston the unsold part of that property, including the house which Mr. Baker erected. It was too much of a load however during the hard times, and are still in hopes that something

will be done with the Williams Bay Land Co's subdivision. Although slightly forbidding in its aspect it is capable of being made very desirable property, and the obligations against it would be insignificant compared to its ultimate value if properly managed.

This spring F.A. Williams will lay out a subdivision along the town line road which will comprise some very desirable residence lots. Several of them have already been spoken for. So not withstanding the set-backs our place has received, it continues to grow, as it has done through all the recent hard times.

The Yerkes Observatory has had as much influence upon the growth of Williams Bay as anything. It is not only bringing a great deal of labor and money to the place, but what is of more importance, it has given the town a reputation that is almost world-wide in its extent. The development and progress of this institution have been slow from its start.

It is hardly worthwhile to enter into a discussion of the motives which actuated Mr. Yerkes when he made this magnificent gift to the University of Chicago, but as we understand the history of the affair, it runs somewhat as follows: During the infancy of the University, founded by the lavish gifts of Mr. Rockefeller and others, Mr. Yerkes authorized the trustees to order the largest telescope in the world to be constructed at his expense. Warner & Swasey of Cleveland, Ohio, who had already made the lick Telescope and several other monster sky-searchers, received the order. The 40-inch lens was constructed by Alvin Clarke & Sons of Connecticut.

But the telescope would prove of no use to the University without a suitable building. So Mr. Yerkes directed the trustees to erect

building, not to cost above a certain specified sum, and he would foot the bill. The next thing to consider was a location. It was evident that if the telescope were located on the University's grounds in Chicago, its value would be greatly decreased by the noise and smoke of the great city; and it would be very inconvenient to have it placed at any great distance away. Two or three places of convenient access to Chicago and which boast of fresh air and quiet scenes, tried to secure the Observatory, but the locations offered were hardly suitable. To who may be credited the honor of first suggesting the location of the telescope at Geneva Lake, is a matter of doubt, Charles Rogers, late of Lake Geneva city, claims it with characteristic assurance. However that may be, it soon became evident that our beautiful lake was the place par excellence. With its clear atmosphere, elevation, quiet and lovely surrounding, it was ideal for the purpose. But where on Geneva Lake? Several locations were considered. The people of Lake Geneva naturally wanted it close to their city. But more room and greater elevation were needed than could be obtained there. An effort was made to locate it on the south shore. R.T. Crane's and S.W. Allergen's places were mentioned. The matter was practically settled, however, when John Johnston, Jr., offered a site on the plateau west of Williams Bay. But it was not until the spring of 1894 that the offer was formally and officially accepted. In the meantime the monster telescope, minus the lens, had been on exhibition during the World's Fair in the Manufactures' building where it excited the wonder and admiration of thousands.

Williams Bay had already felt the impetus which the location of such an institution would naturally give, and excepting the

failure of the Williams Bay Land Co. to carry out its plans, the growth of the town was but little impeded by the financial panic of '93 and the succeeding hard times. Of course around saying that the whole affair was a "fake" trumped up for the purpose of selling property; that the Observatory would never be built at William Bay etc., etc.

Early in 1894 a deed was executed by Mr. Johnston conveying to the university of Chicago, 53 acres of land including some 500 feet of lake shore. Soon after, the heavy castings for the supporting column of the telescope were transported to the Bay, and moved to the grounds by Jas. Whyte of Lake Geneva. Nothing further, however, was done during the year of 1894. Mr. Yerkes was in the East, and there seemed to be some difficulty in getting the plans drawn to suit all parties concerned, and it was not until the year 1895 that it was announced that the contract for building was let to Angus & Gindele of Chicago.

Work was commenced the fore part of May. H.B. Prudent was general Superintendent. A.J. Shaker had the contract for the team work. W.E. Walker was the architect's representative. The architect, it may be stated, is Henry Ives Cobb, who has drafted the plans for all the university buildings. The work was pushed with more or less vigor during the summer and fall, and until steady cold weather set in, which prevented further operations.

Nothing has been done since, but we understand work is to commence again pushed to completion. Plans for the power house have been decided upon, which Angus & Gindele will also build. This will be a comparatively plain structure, costing in the neighborhood of ten thousand dollars. A seven thousand dollar residence

for Prof. Hale, the director of the Observatory, will also be built during the summer. Prof. Barnard will build his house outside the observatory grounds. The time set for the dedication of the Observatory is Oct. 15th, which will be observed by suitable and impressive ceremonies.

This in brief is the history of the great telescope and its location at Williams Bay. What its influence upon the growth of the place in the future will be is a matter that only time will settle. A large town has sprung up near the Lick Observatory. There is no reason why the same result should not be effected here, and with the attractions of our beautiful lake in the bargain, and the productive farming country, it is not improbable that Williams Bay should, in the near future, become one of the most flourishing and important towns in southern Wisconsin.

Thus we bring our history of Williams Bay to a close for the present and leave the rest for the hand of time to write. We believe that these records have been interesting to the majority of our readers. During the summer season while the place will be alive with visitors and summer residents, we think it will hardly be advisable to connive the publication of historical matter. During the following fall and winter there are several lines of history and pioneer adventures which we intend to work up and publish, while these are less of other matters going on to attract our attention. One feature of the history of our locality which we intend to give to our readers in the more immediate future is the development of the upper portion of the lake, the camps and residences on its shores. We cannot promise it for next week, but will prepare it as soon as we can secure the necessary data.

