

# TOWN OF NEKIMI

THE TOWN OF NEKIMI, situated on the southern border of the county, was originally forest land and openings; the eastern part being timberland with tracts of natural meadow. The western portion of the town was open land. The surface is slightly undulating in the eastern part and more rolling in the west, the soil varying from a deep black loam to a rich red clay soil on a limestone base and is very generally excellent crop land and highly productive. The town has the natural resources for a prosperous farming community, also good social and educational advantages and its proximity to cities gives additional social and business facilities and near markets.

## Early Settlements

When the first people came to these parts they found the Indians wandering and dwelling on the land. Though they had lost their right to the land, they were slow to leave it, for it was rich in game. Quail, prairie chickens, turkeys, geese, ducks, pigeons, deer and other wild creatures were found in abundance. Also, the clear rivers and Lake Winnebago swarmed with countless fish large and small. Indian women were seen cultivating patches of land to grow sweet corn and other vegetables, raising remarkably plentiful crops. One chief, named Oshkosh, lived at the mouth of the Fox River. The old chief visited the place for many years after he left, and was always given a royal welcome. A man by the name of Nicollet, who followed the Frenchman Champlain, had come through Lakes Michigan and Huron to where Green Bay now stands, and from there up the lower Fox River to Lake Winnebago and to the vicinity of the city of Oshkosh as early as the year 1634. There was a certain amount of fur trading, yet no effort was made to settle in the area for about two hundred years after Nicollet's visit. It was the Black Hawk War of 1832 that occasioned the discovery of the agricultural riches of southern Wisconsin. People that were fleeing the Indian war in Illinois came here to establish permanent homes. After four years, in 1836, the country was organized as a territory by Congress. In 1846 the inhabitants were permitted to form a state, which was consummated May 29, 1848. By that time the town of Nekimi was well on its way to being settled. The first settler, a Mr. William Greenman was of English descent as were the other few settlers in the area at that time. In July of 1847 nine men from various parts of Wales came to the area too from a Welsh settlement. In the fall of 1847 and the spring of 1848 several other Welsh families came to the area to secure claims

and clear the land. The names of the original nine who first came were: David Hughes, Abel Williams, David Evans, Owen Hughes, Peter Jones, John W. Williams, James Lewis, William Williams and Robert Roberts. By the year 1862 people of German descent started to settle in eastern part of Nekimi. Some of the first German settlers in the area were the families of: Ludwig Abraham, August Luebke, August Abraham, August Beduhn, Charles Weber and Friederick Abraham. At this time, three languages, German, English and Welsh were spoken.

The first settler within the present limits of Nekimi was William Greenman, who settled in the western part of the town in the summer of 1846. He continued to reside there until the time of his death. The next settlers were David Chamberlain and A. M. Howard, who came early in the fall of 1846. Robert W. Holmes migrated from the state of New York to Wisconsin in November, 1844, and settled in the present town of Nekimi in the fall of 1846, having the March previous entered the land on which he settled in Section 2. When he entered his land there was not a settler between his place and Rosendale Creek, and not a settler in the present town. the same season William Crossett and Chauncy Foster built a blacksmith shop on Crossett's claim. Stephen W. Bennett was one of the first five settlers. His father, Elisha Bennett, moving into what became the town of Brighton in 1846, although his land became subsequently included in what is now Black Wolf. Stephen helped to haul the logs for the school house which was built near the site of the present Boyd school house in the Winter of 1846-47.