

R-100

History of Early Settlers of Town of Ashford and Auburn T to Z

Information entered on to computer by Brenda K. Siemers, June 2005.

Note:

“*Sic*” indicates that a word was entered as it was written, even though it appears misspelled.

Any other note that follows an entry is in italics.

Index:

Pages indicated are of the original documents.

Legler, Ulrich, Sr, p 10
Legler, Ulrich, Jr, p 9
Theisen, Matthias, p 8
Thelen, Michael p 2
Thompson, J. S., p 6
Tice, Ralph, p 1
Yancy, Christian, p 11-13
Yankow, Arthur, p 7
Yankow, Carl, p 7
Yankow, George, p 7
Yankow, Frederick, p7

Page 1 on original document:

Ralph Tice

Ralph Tice, farmer, Sec. 20; P. O. New Prospect; born in Passaic Co., N. J., March 17, 1825. Married Miss Mary McGee, who was also born and bred in that county, they coming to Auburn in August, 1855, and buying eighty acres, which was as the hand of nature left it.. While Mr. Tice was building a log house, they made their home with Uncle Ben Romain; clearing five acres that year, Mr. Tice sowed fall wheat, and, though the roads were Indian Trails, and Cascade the nearest mill, he prospered, and now owns 105 acres, and has exchanged his pioneer quarters for a pleasant farmhouse, built in 1869; has a large basement barn and all needed stock and implements. Is in politics Democratic. Mr. and Mrs. Tice have ten children- Sarah, John, Nelson, Louisa, Ralph, Lean N., George W., Benjamin, Maria and Francis E.; Sarah is the widow of J. P. Van Blarcom; John married Amelia Bell, of Eldorado, and has a farm near homestead.

Page 2 on original document:

Michael Thelen

Michael Thelen, who resides on section 17, in the town of Ashford, is numbered among the early settlers of this county, dating his residence from May, 1850. He is a native of Prussia, born in 1834, and his parents, Mathias and Helen Thelen, were also natives of that country. By occupation his father was a farmer, and followed that business during the greater part of his life. In 1850, accompanied by his family, he emigrated to America, and on the 1st of May reached Fond du Lac County. He located on the farm where our subject now resides, purchasing fifty acres of land, which was then covered with dense timber. He erected a large log house, 24 x 30 feet, which was one of the best homes in the neighborhood at that time, and having provided shelter for his family, turned his attention to the development of the land. In the midst of the heavy forests he made one of the best farms of the county. After clearing away the trees he plowed the land, planted his crops, and in the course of time gathered abundant harvests. He labored assiduously that he might make a home for his family, bore uncomplainingly the toils and hardships of pioneer life, and worked on with untiring zeal, until at length success crowned his efforts. AT the time of his death, which occurred in 1869, he had secured a competency which left his wife in comfortable circumstances. Mrs. Thelen survived her husband for many years, dying in 1881. They were members of the Catholic Church, and were interred in St. Martin's Cemetery, near the old home. Unto that worthy couple were born five children, the eldest of whom, Frank, is now deceased; Regina is the wife of Jacob Degenhardt, a resident of Campbellsport; Isabella is the wife of the Hon. M. Serwe; Michael, whose name heads this sketch, is the fouth(*sic*) in order of birth; and Henry, the youngest, is now engaged in farming in the town of Lomira, Dodge County.

Page 3 on original document:

Our subject was reared to manhood upon his father's farm, and in his native land received a liberal education. When sixteen years of age the family emigrated to America, and from that time until the present he has been a resident of Fond du Lac County. He

has been the witness of the many changes that have taken place, has participated in the rapid transformation and progress which have been steadily carried forward, and has aided in the growth and development of town and country. In 1852 he was sent by his brother-in-law, with an ox team, to take a load of potash to Milwaukee, and bring back a load of goods. He was but eighteen years of age. A week was generally required to make the trip, as the roads were then new. He started on the journey with only \$1.50, and drove night and day, thus returning so quickly that his brother-in-law could scarcely believe that he had been so far as Milwaukee. Leaving the parental roof, in 1853, Mr. Thelen began life for himself, entering upon his business career as a farm hand, in the employ of John B. Macy, who lived about three miles from Fond du Lac. He at first received but \$8 per month for his services, but his wages were subsequently increased to \$10, later \$12, and afterwards to \$14, which was then considered fair compensation for farm work. At the expiration of seven years spent in that line he had saved from his meager earnings \$600, which he invested in forty acres of land, which formed the nucleus of his present possessions.

In 1859 Mr. Thelen was united in marriage with Miss Francisca Beisler, who was employed on the Macy farm. The following year they removed to the farm on which they yet reside, having made it their home for the long period of twenty-nine years. Their union has been blessed with nine children; Mathias, the eldest, is married, but still resides on the homestead, assisting his father in the management of the farm; Isabella is now the wife of Jacob Straub; Catharine, Frank, Johanna, Bertram and Mary are all at home; Regina is deceased; and Anna completes the family.

Mr. Thelen has followed farming throughout his life, and has been quite successful in his business transactions. Indolence or idleness form no part of his character.

[Page 4 on original document begins here.] He is industrious, energetic and persevering, and when resolved to accomplish any object, no difficulty is too great to deter him from that purpose. As his financial resources increased, he extended his boundaries of his farm until it now comprises 210 acres, all under a high state of cultivation. His improvements are all necessary to a model farm. His barn is commodious and conveniently arranged, and his splendid stone residence, situated on a natural building site, surrounded with shade, ornamental and fruit trees, is one of the most pleasant in the community. He raises a good grade of stock, which he is recognized as one of the leading farmers of the county. Aside from his business Mr. Thelen has found time to devote to his fellow-citizens(*sic*), whom he has served in various official positions. He was a member of the Building Committee which had in charge the erection of the Fond du Lac court-house(*sic*) and Insane Asylum, and under whose supervision \$150,000 was expended. He is at present one of the board of three trustees of the asylum and is a capable and efficient officer. Since attaining his majority he has given his support to the Democratic Party and takes a deep interest in political affairs, doing all in his power to advance the interests of that organization. For one year he held the office of Assistant Supervisor, for three years was Assessor, and for the long period of fourteen years, from 1875 until 1889, was Chairman of the Town Board. The people appreciating his true worth elected him as their Representative to the General Assembly in 1879, during which time the memorable contest for the Senatorship took place between

Matthew Carpenter, Boss Keyes, and Timothy Howe. While a member of the House, Mr. Thelen opposed the exemption of the Wisconsin Central Railroad from taxation, believing such a measure would be in opposition to the best interests of the people. In the various official positions which he has filled he has ever endeavored to do his whole duty and has won the approval of all concerned.

[Page 5 of original document begins here.] He and his family are faithful members of the Catholic Church, and his aid is never sought in vain for any religious, charitable or benevolent purpose. The poor and needy find in him a true friend, and he is a member of the Catholic Knights, an organization formed for the relief of widows and orphans. Both the official and private life of Mr. Thelen are alike spotless; honesty and fair dealing have ever marked his intercourse with his fellow-men(*sic*), and he has won the confidence of all. He is ranked among the best citizens of Fond du Lac County, where he has so long made his home, and none are held in higher regard. It is with pleasure what we record his brief sketch of his life, knowing that he is well worthy of representation in the history of the county's pioneer settlers and honored citizens.

Page 6 of original document:

J. S. Thompson

J. S. Thompson, farm and saw mill- New Cassel; born in the town of Peru, Berkshire Co., Mass, Oct. 3, 1823; was educated in his native country, and at 21, left for Wilmington, Del, where he learned daguerreotyping. In October, 1847, he landed at Milwaukee, Wis. And the next November entered a half section of land on Sect. 14 and 21 using the first Mexican Land warrants in the town of Auburn; during his residence here he taught several terms of school; after four or five years he began and continued for eight years a mercantile business in Kewaskum(*sic*); then building a saw-mill in the village selling this in 1867, he bought his present farm of 160 acres, of which twenty five were cleared, and on which were only Log buildings; has added fifty-five acres to the clearing, and, in 1870, built a tasty and substantial brick residence; has operated the only saw-mill(*sic*) in New Cassel since he built it in 1867. His first wife, Miss Rebecca Smith, whom he married in Washington Co, July 3, 1851, died April 4, 1855, in 1856, he married Miss Lenora F. Williams; they have had eight children- A. Dell, Elma L., Harlan J., Loren D, (deceased)(*sic*), Eudra, Leslie A., Lillie M. And Merrill W. In politics, a stalwart Republican; Mr. T was Town Clerk in the Democratic town of Auburn two years and has served many years as Justice of the Peace. Is an able and influential temperance worker and a man who enjoys the esteem of all.

Page 6, continued

Ralph Tice (*There is a second entry about Ralph Tice, it was identical to the first*)

Page 7 of original document:

Yankow Brothers

Carl, Arthur and George Yankow are numbered among the representative and substantial farmers of Fond du Lac county and their association in the management of their fine tract of land in Ashford township has resulted in distinct success. They are worthy

representatives of agricultural interests in the section in which they reside, working along progressive, modern and systematic lines. Their farm comprises one hundred and eighty acres of excellent land which constituted their father's homestead and which they have brought to a high state of improvement and development.

The family is of German origin, their father, Frederick Yankow, having been born in that country. He came to the United States in the early '50s with his father Frederick Yankow, Sr., who settled in Sheboygan county, Wilson township. Here the grandfather purchased a tract of raw timber land which he cleared and cultivated. He built a log cabin upon his holdings, in which he lived until his death. Frederick Yankow, the father, purchased this farm and improved it for a number of years, later disposing of it in order to move to Port Washington where he operated an extensive fruit orchard, cultivating plums and pears. He enlisted in the Ninth Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry and served for three years and three months during the Civil war. For eighteen years he was a resident of Almira township, removing from the section to Ashford township in 1889. On March 16 of that year he purchased the one hundred and eighty acres which his sons are now operating and upon this property his death occurred in January, 1902, when he was sixty-six years of age. His wife was Miss Amanda Thomas, who was born in Germany, but who came to the United States when she was only three years of age, her parents being among the early settlers in Sheboygan county. After the death of her husband she married Conrad Leibenstein in Sheboygan Falls.

The three Yankow brothers are natives of Dodge county. The eldest, Carl, was born on October 23, 1874; George was born on the 17th of October 1878; and Arthur, the youngest, was born on the 8th of February 1882. The brothers have spent their entire lives up to the present time in agricultural pursuits. They aided their father in the work of the farm when they were mere children and have always been identified with the conduct and management of the same. Subsequently they purchased the land and have since that time been associated in its improvement and development. They are numbered among the substantial and representative citizens of their community and have founded their success upon expert knowledge of the details of their occupation and upon industry, ambition and business integrity.

In 1904 Arthur Yankow was united in marriage to Miss Gertrude Flanagan, a daughter of Edward Flanagan, and a native of Eden township. They are the parents of two children: Anna Edwina, born June 27, 1905; and Eunice Cecilia, born May 11, 1908. The second brother, George, is also married. His wife was Miss Martha Odekirk, who is a daughter of Jonathon Odekirk of Auburn township.

The Yankow brothers(*sic*) are well known in Ashford township as successful agriculturists. They manage their farm in an expert way, supplementing their agricultural skill by business ability of a high order. Their methods being based upon the strict principles of integrity, they well deserve their position as representative citizens of the county where they are accorded universal respect and esteem.

Page 8 of original document:

Matthias E. Theisen, JR.

In 1854 Matthias E. Theisen with his wife and his daughter Mary came from his native country, Germany, across the Atlantic to America, settling in Fond du Lac county, Wisconsin, where he took up timber land. He founded the Theisen family in Wisconsin, where for three generations its representatives have been prominent as general farmers. Matthias E. Theisen Jr., is today cultivating a fine tract of eighty acres of land in the section where his grandfather settled in pioneer times and is adding to the respect and honor in which the family name is held throughout Fond du Lac county. He was born February 5, 1881, and is the son of John and Francesca (Thelen) Theisen. The family was founded in America by the grandfather of our subject, Matthias Theisen, who was born in Germany in 1823. In that country he married Miss Elizabeth Sebanaler and with his wife and oldest daughter settled some time later in Ashford township, Wisconsin, where he took up wild land covered with timber. He cleared the property, built a crude log shanty upon his holdings and in this home all of his other children were born with the exception of the father of our subject, whose birth occurred on the voyage from Germany to America, on June 24, 1854. The Theisen family lived on their original farm in Ashford township for ten years and then moved to Lomira, where the grandfather purchased land and carried on general agricultural pursuits for forty years. He was aided by his sons in the clearing of his one hundred acres and at the time of his retirement was one of the representative and substantial farmers of his district. In 1897 he abandoned active life and with his wife moved to Campbellsport, where they resided until 1905, when the grandmother of our subject passed away at the age of seventy-two. Matthias Theisen has since that time made his home with his children.

John Theisen, the father of our subject, grew upon his father's farm and aided from his early childhood in the work of its cultivation. As a boy he was known as one of the most energetic workers in the county, accomplishing as much as any man from the time he was twelve years of age. He remained upon the home farm until his marriage and then purchased eighty acres in Ashford township and began its clearing and cultivation. He built a fine modern house upon the property, erected barns, granaries and other buildings and in 1902 added eighty adjoining acres to his place, which he has since given to his son Matthias. In 1879 John Theisen was united in marriage to Miss Francesca Thelen, a daughter of Frank and Barbara Thelen, who came to Wisconsin about the year 1850 and were among the earliest settlers in Ashford township. In this section the mother of our subject was born on December 27, 1859. Mr. and Mrs. John Theisen became the parents of five children, Matthias, Michael, George, John, and Isabel. Mr. Theisen belongs to St. Matthew's Catholic church of Campbellsport. He gives his political allegiance to the democratic party but has never sought or desired public office.

Matthias E. Theisen received his education in the district school attending the high school in Fond du Lac. He later spent one year at the Oshkosh State Normal School and for three years following his graduation engaged in teaching. When he was twenty-two years of age he entered his father's employ, working upon the home farm until he was twenty-nine. He then purchased eighty acres of land, constituting a part of the homestead, and has been engaged in general agriculture upon this property since that time. He also is treasurer of the Town Line Cheese Company and is one of the organizers and founders of

that institution. He is ready to give his support to any movement looking toward the further advancement and progress of his county and township, and is in all things public-spirited, energetic and straightforward.

(over)

In 1910 Mr. Theisen was united in marriage to Miss Katherine Schuh, a daughter of Joseph Schuh, of Hartford. They have one son, Leo John, born September 16, 1910. The family belong to St. Matthew's Catholic church of Campbellsport and Mr. Theisen is serving as its trustee. He gives his allegiance to the republican party and is intelligently interested in local affairs, although he never seeks public office. He is recognized as one of the most successful and promising of the younger generation of farmers in Ashford township. The family to which he belongs has been prominent and well known in the district for over half a century and Matthias Theisen upholds the traditions of a highly honored family name and has added to it by a life spent honorably and usefully in a worthy occupation.

Page 9 of original document:

ULRICH LEGLER, SR. and JR.

Ulrich Legler, the well known proprietor of the Ashford Mill, is a representative of one of the pioneer families of Fond du Lac County, He was born in Switzerland, on the 22d of June, 1819, and is a sone(*sic*) of Tiachim and Ursula Legler. His father was a hat maker by trade, and passed his entire life in his native land. After the death of her husband, Mrs. Legler came to America, and made her home in Fond du Lac County, Wis., until called to her final rest. They were the parents of eight children, six of whom became residents of this country.

Ulrich Legler, whose name heads this sketch, received a liberal education in the schools of his native land, and in Switzerland learned the carpenter's trade. In 1848, when twenty-nine years of age, he bade good-bye to home and friends and started for the new world to seek his fortunes in a land of which he had heard such glowing reports. He first located in the town of Polk, Washington County, Wis., where he built a sawmill, and engaged in its operation for nine years. At the expiration of that time, in 1857, he came to Fond du Lac County, settling in the town of Ashford, and erected a sawmill, which still stands as a relic of pioneer days in Ashford village. He also bought 160 acres of land which he has successfully operated in connection with his other business, and for a few years also worked as a millwright. His entire possessions have been acquired since coming to Wisconsin, and success has crowned his efforts as a reward for his perseverance industry and enterprise.

In 1852 Mr. Legler let to the marriage alter Miss Agatha Rohrer, also a native of Switzerland, and their union has been blessed (*sic*) by seven children, of whom four are now living—Mary, widow of Fred Kleineschay; Julia, wife of Fred Reineking; Ulrich, who has charge of the mill, his father having retired from active life; and Agathat, who is still with her parents.

Page 10 of original document begins here.

On subjects of national importance, the views of Mr. Legler are in accordance with those of the Republican party, the candidates of which he supports with his

balloe(*sic*), but in minor offices he votes for the best men and measures regardless of party. He and his family are members of the Reform Church, and are held in the highest regard in the social world. He is honored as a pioneer, respected as a citizen, and is numbered among the leading business men of the community. He has ever borne his part in the advancement of public enterprises, and is liberal(*sic*) in support of all church and charitable works.

Ulrich Legler, Jr., who is now manager of the mill, was born in the town of Ashford on the 14th of September, 1862. He was reared upon his father's farm, and in the school(*sic*) of the neighborhood received his primary education. He completed his studies however, by a year's attendance(*sic*) at the high school in Franklin, Sheboygan County, after which he spent three years in Milwaukee, where he learned the carpenter's trade. Since that time he has carried on the business of his father, who is now living in retirement in his beautiful home in Ashford, and has proved himself a competent and faithful business man. In 1884, he was joined in wedlock with Miss Maggie Rohrer, and an interesting family of three children graces their union—Edward, born Nov. 24, 1885; William, March 14, 1887 and Matilda, March 24, 1889.

Like his father, Mr. Legler is a Republican, but has never sought or desired public offices, preferring to devote his entire attention to the management of the business, and his labors in that direction have been eminently successful. He is a representative young citizen of the county, is energetic and enterprising, and has a bright future before him.

Page 11 of original document:

Christian Yancy

Christian Yancy, a retired farmer residing in Fond du Lac, is numbered among the pioneer settlers of Central Wisconsin. He was born in France, March 16, 1819, but on the paternal side is of German descent. His father, Christian Yancy, was born in Germany, and was a farmer by occupation. He removed to France at an early day, and in that country followed agricultural pursuits until his death, which occurred in 1827. He married Miss Catherine Spender, who was a native of France, and survived her husband some years. After his death she came to America, residing in the Empire State until she too passed away in 1842. Five children were born to that worthy couple, three of whom are yet living—Christian, Peter and Nicholas.

Our subject was only eight years of age when the death of his father occurred, and in his boyhood he accompanied his mother to America, the family locating in New York, where he was engaged in farming at the time of Mrs. Yancy's death, which occurred when her son Christian was twenty-three years of age. Throughout nearly his entire boyhood he was deprived of a father's care and counsel, and just as he had entered upon man's estate he suffered the irreparable loss of a mother's love and watchfulness. Dependant upon his own resources, wisdom and judgment, he has made his way through life, and though he has met with many reverses and difficulties, he has been a prosperous career. After following farming for some years he rented a grist and saw mill, and in connection with its operation carried on a grocery store until the time when the country became engulfed in a financial panic. Like many hundreds of others he became involved in bankruptcy(*sic*). Forced to abandon **[Page 12 of original document begins here.]** his own business he gave his attention to any pursuit whereby he might earn an honest dollar, and at length by perseverance and industry, was enabled to save a small sum.

With this he purchased a yoke of cattle, and the following winter engaged in lumbering. The next spring he spent his time in making sugar, and the profits of that season, combined with the savings of former years, again enabled him to purchase a farm. Two years were spent in the operation of that land, when he sold out, and, in 1848, came to Wisconsin, where he believed he could sooner retrieve his lost fortunes. Not long after his arrival he bought an 80-acre tract of wild land, which, with the exception of a log cabin that had previously been built, was entirely unimproved. It is indeed an arduous task to transform the uncultivated soil into a rich and fertile farm, but he performed that labor and acquired a competency, by which he is now permitted to retire from active life and spend his declining years in the enjoyment of the fruits of his former toil.

Christian Yancy was united in the holy bonds of matrimony with Miss Nancy Helmer, about the year 1843, and the family circle was completed by the birth of nine children, seven of whom are yet living, namely: Catherine, wife of Platt Durand, a resident of New Cassel, Wis.; Susan, wife of Isaac Dyer, who is also living in New Cassel; Carrie, who is yet at home; Emma, wife of George Smith, of Michigan; John L., a citizen of Oshkosh, Wis.; George W., a resident of Seattle, Wash.; and Haskel, who is now operating his father's farm in Taycheedah Township. They have also an adopted daughter, Eva, their little grandchild.

Mr. Yancy is a warm and friend to education, and provided his children with excellent advantages, thereby fitting them for the practical duties of life.

[Page 13 of original document begins here.]

To all other interests which are calculated to benefit the public, he readily gives his support, and he never hesitates to aid in the advancement of worthy enterprises. He has nobly borne his part in the building up of the community, and in the work of transforming the wild land into fertile farms and comfortable homes. He cleared and improved a tract of 200 acres in Ashford Township, until it became one of the best farms in the whole community. The improvements which he placed upon it equaled any in the neighborhood, and the entire surroundings indicated the thrift and industry of the owner. He sold it on removing to Fond du Lac, however, but still owns about thirty acres in that township, a part of which is comprised within the corporation limits of New Cassel, and is laid out in town lots. He built two stores in Campbellsport, which he has sold. He still owns 160 acres of land in Taycheedah Township, which is well equipped and stocked with the best grades of cattle and horses. Politically, Mr. Yancy is a Republican, being one of the most ardent advocates of the party principles, which he has supported since 1856. He and his wife are earnest and faithful Christian people, respected by all who know them, and well deserve the high regard in which they are held.