

to the railroad and other improvements which were completed in those years, and attracted a generous immigration, principally from Maine and New York, who located in villages where they became merchants and professionals—in the lumber district and on farms.

To-day, the population of the county is not far from 12,000, and while there is a large number of towns without permanent residents, there is no portion of the county available for agricultural purposes, but what is utilized therefor. The facilities for getting to and from the outside world are excellent, by turnpike roads and railway lines. The latter include the Central Wisconsin, in the northeast portion of the county, the West Wisconsin, passing the southwest corner, the Green Bay & Minnesota, and more recently the Chicago, Saint Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha, which operate a branch of their main line, from Merrillon to Neillsville, furnish every advantage for the transportation of passengers and commodities.

The religious element is largely represented, and in an educational point of view, the county is fully up to the times, there being school-houses in every nook and corner where there are pupils to avail themselves of such advantages.

Clark County possesses an immense wealth in the large pineries to be found within its territory, as also an exhaustless soil for farming purposes after the timber has been appropriated. With the advantages of good roads and with railway lines at every accessible point, it must be admitted that it stands a fair chance of ranking with the most desirable counties in Wisconsin, at no distant day.

The first court-house was of frame, two stories high, 40x50 in dimensions, and erected by J. & T. Furlong, on land donated for that purpose, in the center of village of Neillsville, by James O'Neill. Its cost was \$1,800. The building served its purpose until 1875, when it was removed, and is now occupied as a hardware store, opposite the Reddan House. In the latter year, the present handsome structure was erected. It is of brick, two stories high, the roof being surmounted with a cupola on which stands a statue of Justice. It was completed in the Spring of 1876, under contract with C. B. Bradshaw, and was built at a cost of \$35,000.

The county jail was built in the Summer of 1881, by James Hewett, C. Blakeslee, James O'Neill, Sr., and James Sturdevant, who, as security on the bonds of County Treasurer, Allen, were compelled to make good a deficiency discovered in the funds that official held in trust. Part of this obligation was paid, and the balance liquidated by the erection of the jail and Sheriff's house. The former is of brick, compactly built of brick, perfectly secure, well ventilated and lighted, and possessing sufficient accommodations for the times. The residence of the Sheriff is of frame. The total cost of the premises is stated at \$7,000.

The county poor-house is located in the town of York, where it was erected in 1880, by Chauncey Blakeslee, in payment of a claim held by the county against Mr. Blakeslee, who was also security on the bonds of County Treasurer, Allen. The building is of frame, with accommodations for twenty-five paupers, and cost \$7,000. Attached to the poor-house proper is a farm of 160 acres, upon which is raised crops, by the

sale of which revenue is derived for the support of the institution. The house is now under the care of R. C. Evans, and shelters four inmates.

THE PRESS.

Early in the Spring of 1857, through the efforts of Beriah Brown, at that time, and previous, Chairman of the Democratic State Central Committee, William C. Tompkins was persuaded to locate in Neillsville and establish the pioneer journal of the county. The paper, which was of limited dimensions, was first issued on the 7th of March of the year in which its editor was persuaded to change his base from Weyauwega to Neillsville, under the name of the *Clark County Advocate*, with a future that was regarded as promising. Political changes the year of its establishment, included the editor of the *Advocate* among those who experienced a change of heart so to speak, and upon his entrance into the Republican fold, a spirit of opposition to the paper he controlled began to manifest itself very sensibly. In a brief period after his political apostasy, Tompkins sold the *Advocate* to J. S. Dore and S. W. Dickinson. This change of ownership was accomplished through the efforts of B. F. French and was regarded as a piece of strategy of unprecedented merit. The purchase was consummated, but upon demanding a transfer of the good-will and portables included in the bill of sale, a tart refusal was returned by A. J. Manley, employed in the office, when Dore & Dickinson departed whence they came, by another way, and reflected upon the situation of affairs amid surroundings the reverse of cheerful.

Not to be defeated, however, the material of the Trempealeau *Times*, which had, in the meantime, had been utilized to the publication of the Trempealeau *Pioneer*, was purchased from the Utters of the latter place, and removed to Neillsville, where on the 14th of October, 1861, the *Union and Flag*, a new creation of Dore & Dickinson, was flung to the breeze and attracted considerable notice. In the Spring of 1863, Tompkins laid down the paste-brush and scissors to take his subscribers by the hand for a farewell shake, and left the county. The *Advocate*, though owned by A. J. Manley, being still continued by C. W. Carpenter who remained in charge until 1865. In February, 1864, the *Flag* was furled, metaphorically speaking, and the county was with but one paper until Jan. 31, 1867, when J. S. Dore began the publication of the *Clark County Journal* with himself and E. E. Merritt as editors.

At this time there was considerable rivalry between the *Journal* and the *Advocate* which was decided in favor of the former, and Manley discontinuing the publication of the latter removed to Minnesota, Merritt at the same time dissolving his connection with the *Journal* and locating in St. Louis. The *Journal* thenceforward until Oct. 25, 1867, enjoyed the field *solus* with all the profits, privileges, and appurtenances thereunto belonging, when Merritt returned from St. Louis, and issued the first number of the *Clark County Republican*, being associated in its editorial management with H. H. Hand who retired after six weeks toil, and remained afar from Neillsville journalism until 1870.

The election of 1868 was a triumph of the Republican party, and the new paper began to dwell in the green pastures that had previously been occupied by its rival, though the editorial control of the latter was held by Joseph Benedict a brilliant writer who died in 1870. The *Journal* labored hard to sustain itself; Hand returned to the editorship of the *Republican* and the two papers were soon involved in a quarrel which was only abandoned when Hand resigned at the suggestion of the *Republican's* friends a short time prior to election. The result of that event precipitated the suspension of the *Journal*, and the *Republican* grew fat in the sunshine of official favor and local patronage, (becoming the property of C. J. Cooper, with D. T. Lindley editor, in March, 1873,) until June, 1873, when the Clark County *Press* was started by H. J. Hoffman in the cause of Reform. These two papers continued to dwell together unawed by each other until April, 1876, when Hoffman purchased the *Republican* and began the publication of the *Republican Press* which he still conducts, his brother, E. L. Hoffman, officiating as associate editor.

About the same time the *Enterprise* was located at Colby in Colby Township, but succumbed in time, and the interior of the county remained without a paper until 1879, when the Colby *Phonograph* was established at that place by Shafer Brothers with Samuel Shafer as editor. On July 7, of the same year, L. B. Ring started the *True Republican* at Neillsville, and on Oct. 8, 1880, N. Schultz began the publication of the *German American* also at the latter place, the only journal in the county published in German.

All these papers are doing a paying business, are well conducted, and conclusive evidences of the type of enterprise the inhabitants of Clark County illustrate.

The Clark County Agricultural Society was organized on the 15th of March, 1873, with a large membership and the following officers: John S. Dore, president; L. J. Glass, secretary, and W. T. Hutchinson treasurer, the vice-presidents, being selected, one from each township. The same year the association purchased forty acres of ground in Section 23, paying therefor \$1,200; and completed improvements at a cost of \$2,500, whereon exhibitions have been annually given with profitable results. The present officers are: J. F. Canon, president; F. J. Vine, secretary; Charles Stuntzky, assistant secretary; H. Schuster, treasurer, and I. B. Philpot, marshal.

PINERIES AND LOGGING.

The pineries of this portion of Wisconsin, speaking comprehensively, commence on Black River and extend to Iron Mountain, within twenty miles of Lake Superior, a large portion of the way alternating with hard woods. The first pine down the river is gray pine, and jack pine, with scattering trees of red, white and Norway pine. Proceeding up the river, gray pine diminishes and where a change of the sandy soil to a loam clay and in wet places to hard pan occurs, the red pine disappears and lofty groves of white pine alternate with splendid tracts of hard wood timber, composed of sugar-maples, ash, oak, etc. It is estimated that white pine covers fully one-fourth of the soil of Clark County, being located in Hixon, Thorp, Warner

and Mentor towns, the "cut" from which is taken to the Mississippi River by way of Eau Claire River and Beef Slough, and in Colby, Mayville, Beaver, Weston, Loyal and Unity towns, whence the logs are run through Black River to La Crosse. The pine is taken off by cutting trees near to Black and Eau Claire rivers and their tributaries, in the season which commences about the 1st of November and continues through the Winter, hauling the same to the streams, and "driving" them down to the mills at high water. The "drive" is accomplished by starting the logs into the stream and following them up to prevent jams or break them up when the logs lodge, which they at times do in such quantities that they dam up the river, and so remain until the increased volume of water sweeps it away with a terrible crash. The logs are run down untethered until they reach the mouths of the rivers, where they are caught in "booms" or harbors provided by the consignees, the balance being rafted and run below. The losses entailed by logs drifting into sloughs, becoming stranded on the banks, and being stolen by river thieves, were much larger in an earlier day than now.

Title to these lands is perfected by purchase and transfer, though in some cases lumber dealers contract for the lumber as it stands, and after a careful estimate is paid for at so much per 1,000 feet, the purchaser procuring its felling and delivery at the mouth of the river. The principal lumbermen operating in Clark County are: N. H. Withee, Bright & Withee, D. J. Spaulding, E. Sawyer, C. C. Washburn, the Eau Claire Lumber Company, Giles & Helloway, James Hewett, C. L. Coleman, A. & P. Colburn, Robert Schofield, Cullen Ayers and others who are engaged on the Black and Eau Claire rivers.

It is estimated that 2,500 men are employed in the pineries on Black River, and 800 in those tributary to Eau Claire River. In early days, lumbering was not so extensively carried on. During the war, the price of lumber appreciated and an increased force became necessary to supply the demand. This of course brought a large immigration of laborers into Clark County, few of whom, if any, remaining, however, and by 1868, every point at which logs were accessible was peopled with the logger and his bands. The supply has gradually grown in dimensions, varying to some extent, some years being greater than others, but the average each year since 1868 is estimated at about 200,000,000 feet from the Black River, and 80,000,000 feet from the Eau Claire River district. All logs cut are described by a mark, the original of which has been duly claimed and the claim attested and recorded, as also with the owners' initials stamped upon either end of the log. The business is the mainstay of this portion of Wisconsin, and has been instrumental in the settlement and building up of villages and hamlets in Clark County.

NEILLSVILLE.

The village of Neillsville, and county seat of Clark County, situated near the junction of O'Neills Creek with Black River, is usually conceded to be one of the best built villages in the State. It has mostly been built up within the past ten years, and the builders have indicated, in all that they have done, that they were intent alike in

tasteful and permanent work. Until very recently, the village has been cut off, so to speak, from the outside world, with which communication was had only by means of a stage which connected with distant railroad stations, and the passenger, when he first visited Neillsville, was surprised at the appearance of a New England village in these northern woods. It stands near where Black River tears itself from confinement among the hills, to make a graceful curve through rich valleys to the village site. The village itself, hemmed in on nearly every side by hills, limiting the prospect to groves that climb gentle declivities, while to the rear O'Neill's Creek rushes complainingly and fretfully onward, until its waters are mingled with those of Black River.

In the center of this secluded spot, at once lovely and romantic, stands the quiet, unpretentious, yet thriving village, and as the visitor walks lazily over its limits, listening to the murmurs of the rippling waters of the creek and the rush and sometimes roar of the river, or watches the mist, as it hangs in twilight curtains about the hills, it requires no poetic imagination to trace in his mind's eye a long cavalcade of romance, chivalry and heroism proceeding from this spot in the days of barbaric domination, in its march over the world. And he, too, will muse upon the genius that once haunted the neighboring forests, may be, which has departed forever, and a gloom not unlike superstitious dread will only be dissipated when the past vanishes and the present rises before him in all its beauty and magnificence.

As already related, the village was laid out and platted in 1855, by James O'Neill, and named in his honor. The year before, as will be remembered, the county seat was located here, after a lively contest, and to this fact is largely due its present prosperity.

At that time, O'Neill's residence and mill, with Samuel Ferguson's bachelor's hall and his blacksmith shop, which stood on the lot where a brickyard has of late years been carried on, were the only buildings to be seen on the four acres appropriated to village purposes. Immediately the news of Mr. O'Neill's action had been promulgated, settlers began to come in, purchase lots and make improvements. The first of these was Robert Roix, who erected a tavern where the Rossman House now stands, and this was followed by the construction of two frame buildings for store and residence purposes. They were put up by James O'Neill, and stood, one opposite the Rossman House, the other further north, near the creek. The same Spring, N. M. Clapp settled in the village and built a house on the site of O'Neill's brick building, wherein the Neillsville bank is now located, and Dr. L. M. Baxter put up a residence on the present site of Gates's meat-market. The same year Frank Cawley came in, also W. K. Dickey, who built a wagon shop and residence where Dewhurst's office now is, and that Fall, Clinton & Quaile brought hither a stock of goods from Black River Falls, and became the first merchants in the village, being domiciled and doing business in the building built by O'Neill opposite the Rossman House. These were the arrivals and improvements of 1855.

On the 26th of February, 1856, the first murder to take place in the village of Neillsville happened. It seems that, some time in the year 1854, Moses Clark and William Paulley became involved in a quarrel at Black River Falls, in which the latter was brutally treated. On the date above indicated, Clark met B. F. French in the store of Clinton & Quaile, and a demand was made on him for a receipt for moneys advanced by French. Some argument followed, and during its progress Paulley interpolated an opinion of Clark, which was far from complimentary, adding that he owed him money, and when asked for it, Clark beat him like a dog.

"Yes, and I'll do it again," replied Clark.

"You will, will you?" shouted Paulley. Upon which Clark advanced towards him. He had nearly reached his victim when Paulley drew a revolver and fired two shots into Clark's body, from the effects of which he never recovered. He was taken to Plattville, in Grant County, where he lodged at the residence of Gideon Hawley, lingering till June 30 following, when he died.

Paulley was indicted for manslaughter, tried, convicted and sentenced. After serving out his term at Waupun, he removed to Black River Falls, where he died.

The arrivals of 1856 included R. Dewhurst and G. W. King, who were the first lawyers to settle in Neillsville; James Hewitt, who began operations by working on the first bridge erected across Black River; W. W. Lemon, who settled in the town of Levis; Daniel Gates, first locating at the mouth of Wedge Creek, but moving to Neillsville in 1861; etc., etc.; also Robert Douglass, who built a blacksmith shop where Meinhold & Curn's store now is; Miles Murry, who erected a residence on the site of Dudley's harness shop, and a blacksmith shop adjoining on the east. A Mr. McCaleb came in this year, and put up a little frame, still standing, directly north of Dudley's, and Phillip Reissman opened the first furniture store, on the present site of Boardman's house. In May, James and Edmund Furlong, the former with a family, and James Lynch and family were accessions to the place. The Furlongs built where now stands the Reddan House, and Lynchs on the lot they have since occupied, adjoining their residence of to-day. Anson Green purchased Roix's Hotel; Gustavus Sterns settled at Molin's Rapids this year; Daniel Gates at Wedge's Creek, but have since become residents of the village, as did Orson Gates the same year.

The panic of 1857, it is believed, worked material injury to the progress of the village, as also to that of the county. Few came in from this year until after the close of the war. Financial stringency produced a practical suspension of the lumber interests, and consequent stagnation of business. There was comparatively no farming of consequence, and less trade. The value of farm products depreciated, and prices of commodities increased correspondingly. The effect of these anomalous conditions were perceptibly visible, not alone in Neillsville and Clark County, but also throughout this portion of the lumber district. Impoverishment, if not ruin, stared many in the face, and escape therefrom was only accomplished after trials no pen can adequately describe. To the close of the war, both increase in population and the number of improvements was nominal. As one who is familiar with the facts asserts, there was not to exceed forty heads of families, who came into the county during the period between 1857 and 1865, who remained permanently. Others visited the vicinity, but, having canvassed the probabilities of the future, decided against remaining, and went elsewhere. In the three years preceding the war, among those who settled at Neillsville was Chauncey Blakeslee; B. F. Chase, who studied law with Dewhurst & King; S. N. Dickenson; John Dore; William Liverman; W. B. Berry; a man named McDonald, who opened a furniture store where the Neillsville Mills now are, and probably others whose names and adventures have not been preserved. George Lord, at first located about twenty miles north of Neillsville, and Leonard R. Stafford, but both of them subsequently became residents of the village. At the same time, the improvements comprehended the frame building now occupied by Gates & Co., which was put up by Chauncey Blakeslee; the O'Neill House was erected by James O'Neill as a private residence; a building south of the Rossman House, occupied at present by F. Klopff, was built by Anson Green for commercial pur-

poses, and was for a brief period the office of the *Union Flag*; W. B. Berry erected a residence west of the court-house, where Mr. Youmans still resides; King & Dewhurst built residences on the present site of the latter's home; Orson Bacon, a residence still standing, the court-house, and some few other buildings.

In 1860, the population of the village did not exceed 250, besides containing a weekly paper, half a dozen stores, and lawyers and physicians sufficiently numerous to sell or donate unlimited quantities of physic and counsel. The appearance of the place is represented to have not been nearly so attractive as now, and its improvement in the last fifteen years speaks eloquently of the enterprise and substantial character of the men and women who promoted its subsequent growth, wealth of resources.

From this period, up to the close of the war, say old residents, there was no immigration or business to speak of. The same can be said of improvements in the village

trenches. From Pittsburgh Landing, it is said, when mortality among Clark County volunteers was particularly severe, until the surrender, this was the rule. As stated, very few of those who went out among those first called, returned, and those who came back did so bearing the marks of strifes through which they passed. Twenty years have passed since this epoch in the history of American civilization came to pass. Years have passed since many of the leading actors in this drama were borne to the silent halls of death. Voices that were attuned to mourning at their departure, or welcome at their return, are silent, and hands that once scattered flowers upon the graves of heroes, have lost their cunning.

Along in 1862-3, the demand for supplies for the army made times easier throughout the country. Financial stringency which had dwarfed enterprise since 1857, released its grip, and capitalist, farmer, mechanic and laborer took a new hold and renewed their several struggles for supremacy.



NEILLSVILLE.

and adjoining. They were comparatively few in number, and made to serve unambitious uses. The vast lumber region was not then overrun, as now, with labor and enterprise. The farm and the school were not as universal as they are to-day. Hard times stared all classes in the face with the dawn of day, and only retired when troubled sleep shook off the specter for a brief season. This condition of affairs continued for quite two years before any change began to be manifest, but, since that day, the clouds have been dispelled, and the light of fortune restored throughout the country to places where its visitation only was needed to make them flourish and grow in strength and influence. During all this period, there was little to encourage, less to inspire residents, and Neillsville, like its neighbors, experienced embargoes. No public buildings were erected; schools were barely sustained, and religious organizations met for services, either at private residences or in the old court-house.

In 1861, came the war, and Neillsville was not behind in her donations of money and offer of recruits. Meetings were held in the court-house, at which James O'Neill, B. F. French, Chauncey Blakeslee and others delivered speeches, urging the proffers of aid to enable the general government to accomplish the suppression of war. Among the soldiers who went out from Clark County, Neillsville contributed nearly one company, which was attached to the western army, and, serving through the war, left the largest proportion of those who went from the village lifeless in the

The price of lumber appreciated, and the demand for laborers was constant. These favorable combinations produced a train of events which culminated within the ensuing three years in turning the tide against which the country, the States, Wisconsin, Clark County and Neillsville, had been beating. The wide expanse stretching from either bank of the Father of Waters soon gave abundant evidences of material prosperity. They received the swift running light of the morning and basked in its sunshine until the Rocky Mountains intercepted its brilliance and darkness gathered over the scene. Upon their undulating surfaces oceans poured through clouds and wind their fertilizing moisture, and broad fields, teeming with the fatness of a fecund soil, satisfied the desire for bread of all the hungry children of men.

During this period, B. F. French became a resident of the village, removing hither from his farm. Caleb Hubbard adventured into Neillsville, and purchased the hotel now known as the Rossman House, up to that time owned and maintained by Anson Green. Andrew Burlingham, with his father and sister, Mrs. Morrill, identified themselves with the place. Horace Stiles came in also. A Mr. Barton, who, after running the gauntlet of a checkered experience, returned to Pennsylvania, whence he came. George Adams settled here about this time, and opened the first drug store in the village, while his brother, who accompanied him, established a dry goods store in the building now occupied by John Klopff.

Very few returned from the war, nor were accessions to its population made in the years immediately succeeding that epoch in the nation's history. As with the population, so with improvements, they were limited in number as also in value; but since that day Paul has planted, Apollos has watered the fertile expanse, and God has given the increase.

From 1865 to 1870, affairs remained unchanged, to a great extent, though now and then a settler would arrive, and, having investigated the natural resources of Neillsville, as the base of supplies for a large section of the lumber region, would decide to remain. And here it might be remarked that no more law-abiding community was to be found in the Northwest than the residents of Clark County and Neillsville. Upon one occasion two detectives from Chicago accompanied the Sheriff of an adjoining county to Neillsville to secure the arrest of a fugitive from justice who had been indicted for murder. He was located in one of the lumbering camps, and when this was communicated to the Chicago thief-takers they were loth to continue the pursuit, apprehensive lest the "lumber shovers," as they termed those engaged in logging, should unite and prevent an arrest. A couple of citizens, to whom the facts were communicated, endeavored to convince them of their error of judgment, and failing, prepared to undertake the capture themselves. When it became apparent that they were about to lose the reward for which they labored, these exaggerated editions of Bob Acres screwed their courage up to the sticking point, and renewed their hazardous pursuit. All hands reached the lumber camp as day was dawning. The loggers were aroused from their sleep, and, upon being informed of the object of this early visit, not only abstained from attempts at rescue, but aided the authorities in securing their man. The latter confessed his identity, and was delivered to the detectives, who departed with their prisoner with an opinion of the character of those residing "in the woods" radically differing from that with which they were so recently impressed. Indeed, no fear was felt of lawlessness, as no lawlessness existed in the village or country, and this condition of affairs has continued to exist almost without interruption.

During this period, a daily mail was established between Neillsville and Hatfield, and some improvements of a substantial character. These included the brewery, the school-house opposite Firemen's Hall, Hewett & Wood's planing-mill, the handsome residence of Robert Ross, and others of a similar character. They were far inferior to the buildings which have since obtained as commodious and elaborate, but they served the purpose for which they were erected, and were regarded as signal examples of enterprise on the part of those who contracted for their building. Among the arrivals were: A. K. Stafford, Emery Bonley, Joel Head, James Delane, John La Shapalle, H. D. Early, Thomas Robinson, James Robinson, Samuel Callo-way, P. S. Dudley, S. F. Joseph, Ira and J. B. Johnson, Fred. Klopff, T. D. Lindsay, Jacob Rossman, F. E. Darling, A. Halverson, Charles Neberman and a few others, nearly all of whom remained, and, engaging in business, made such improvements as were demanded.

In 1870, the buildings and improvements exceeded those of any previous year, the sound of the plane, the hammer and the saw were constantly heard, and buildings were in various stages of completion on nearly every corner. James O'Neill, Charles Neverman, Andrew Peterson, A. D. Ballou and others put up residences, the Methodist Church was commenced, the court-house was regarded as unfit for occupation and the subject of building a new temple of justice first began to be agitated. The homestead act had its influence to attract settlers to Neillsville and the adjacent

country. The following years were also replete with encouraging signs, and the day when the village should be more than a local habitation and name was confidently anticipated in the near future. The new comers for the ensuing five years included George Delane, Edwin Allen, E. Peterson, T. Johnson, E. Tyler, R. Bart, O. P. Wells, C. Crocker, J. Thayer, Mr. Schuster, William Campbell, R. Campbell, A. Brown, Peter Roberts, Mr. Crandall, Charles Detz, William Burgess, George Miller, Carlton & Dixon, George Pruger, J. Brule, James O'Neill, Jr., Thomas Kerns, J. Rineke, the Hoffman brothers, etc., etc.

In 1872, the first brick building erected in the village was that of Hewett & Woods, still standing, which was put up in 1872. This was followed by others, including the Lloyd building, and to-day some of the most prominent and architecturally handsome of Neillsville structures are of brick, as, for example, the court-house and school-house, which were built in 1874-5 at a total cost of \$50,000; the Presbyterian Church, Catholic Church, in addition to private residences. In 1874, the residence of James Hewett, said to be the finest on Black River, was nearly completed and ready for occupation when it was destroyed by fire, entailing a loss of \$12,000. The premises were immediately rebuilt, however, and can now be seen for miles around, and are a landmark to guide the traveler on his journey hither.

The past few years has seemed to intensify the admiration of residents for Neillsville, as also to attract accessions to her citizens. The beauty of its location, the enterprise and liberality of her founders and builders not more than their educational and social prominence; the superiority of its schools and the high state of morals to be found in the village combine to render it a point at which merit will receive encouragement and assistance in identifying itself with the town. A railroad has recently connected the village with points at a distance, and will contribute in years to come, to its advancement, its wealth and its population. It is the largest village in the county, and the county seat. Around it are gathered abundant evidences of material prosperity. The glory of fields, the bounty of dairies, the fruit of trees and vines, and the sweets of blossoms pay tribute to the beautiful village, and on every side the altars of the fruitful Pau and the bountiful Ceres are redolent with incense most pleasing to the husbandmen, who frequent her markets or make Neillsville a shipping point for their products.

EDUCATIONAL.

The first school to be opened in the vicinity of Neillsville was commenced about 1856, about eighty rods south of Gates's corners. Here were the children of the village and surrounding country taught the rudiments of learning by John S. Dore, the present County Superintendent of Schools, and others, for several years. When a new school house was built on a lot immediately south of Firemen's Hall. This did good service until the increase in attendance required an increase of quarters, when the present structure was erected on a lot purchased of James O'Neill. It is of brick, two stories high, handsomely finished and cost \$15,000. It is graded, containing six departments, employing a competent force of teachers, and its course of study embraces the branches and subjects taught in the best schools of like grade. The high school department was organized under the State Free High School law in 1878, though previously operated in its present capacity. The course provides for instruction in the branches adapted to the highest grade, and upon graduation the student is presented as a candidate for that consideration due one practically educated. The average daily attendance during the scholastic year of 1880-81 was 200, and the amount ex-