

EARLY DAYS IN JEFFERSON COUNTY.

BY ELISHA W. KEYES.

I remember that once, when I was a boy in Vermont, my father procured an old-fashioned atlas with the apparently unsettled Northwest Territory traced upon it; and, calling my elder brothers about him, pointed with his forefinger on the map to that portion of the Territory which began about the southern point of Lake Michigan and extended therefrom in a northwesterly direction. He pointed to the mouth of the Milwaukee river; and said he, "Boys, there's where we want to go; that country offers a splendid inducement for settlers. There," said he, "must be water-powers and timber." At this time I was but seven years of age; still I remember the deep interest I took in the conversation and the impression that it made upon my mind.

Following this discussion about the locality, in the year 1836 my father wended his way hither, coming to Milwaukee and later to Jefferson county, and finally making claims in that portion of the county known as Lake Mills, though the land was not then in the market.¹ Having made up his

¹ Capt. Joseph Keyes was born at Putney, Vermont, Nov. 20, 1795, and followed his father's trade, that of a mill-wright. He first came to Wisconsin on a prospecting tour, in June, 1836. During the autumn of 1836, he spent some time at Menomonee, north of Green Bay; at this place he dressed the lumber for a house, which he took to Milwaukee on a vessel, in December, and erected a dwelling there which was standing in 1874. In the fall of 1837, as related by the author, he became the founder of Lake Mills, where he built and operated a saw-mill. He subsequently erected a grist-mill at Lake Mills and other mills at Cambridge, Dane county. The first school-house in Lake Mills was erected in 1841 by Captain Keyes, who himself employed and paid Miss Rosa Catlin to teach in it. Miss Catlin subsequently became the wife of La Fayette Kellogg, for many years clerk of the state supreme court. A son of the captain, Simon S. Keyes, was elected the first school clerk, Oct. 7, 1843, upon the organization of the Lake Mills