

nobly. The settlements furnished their full quota of Union soldiers; many fell on battle-fields, while hundreds of them even to this day carry on their persons honorable scars, together with their honorable discharges.

It need not be said that the War of Secession was a setback to these settlements. During those four years, while fathers, husbands, brothers, and sons were fighting the battles of the Republic, wives, daughters, sisters, and sometimes mothers, together with those men who had not been drafted, were working the little farms the best they could, in order to maintain and support themselves and their children. In those days it was an every-day sight among us to see Belgian women driving teams, harvesting or plowing in the fields.

For a period of six years immediately after the war, there came an unusual season of prosperity in the Belgian settlements, the like of which had not before been seen, nor has it been since. The surviving citizen soldiers had returned home. Some were engaged in business, others were employed in the workshops or in the mills, or on the farms; large tracts of primitive forest disappeared before the axes of the settlers, thereby adding thousands of acres of tillable land to their farms. Saw, planing, shingle and grist-mills were built at or near the settlements: Lefebvre's saw and shingle mill, at Walhain; Decker's lumber and shingle mill, at Casco; Lamb's lumber and shingle mill, at La Sucrierie; Daul's lumber and grist mill, at New Franken; Delvaux's lumber and shingle mill, at Delvaux Mill; Cowles's saw and shingle mill, at Bay Settlement; Pirllet's grist mill (afterward Shirland's saw mill), at Aux Premier Belges; Scofield's lumber and shingle mill, near Dyckesville; Anton Klaus's lumber and shingle mill, at La Sucrierie, in the town of Humboldt; and Williamson's mill, near Brussels.

These mills were a source of much revenue to the Belgian settlers. Before the war, in order to make farms, they were compelled to fell valuable pine, oak, cedar, basswood, maple, and beech trees, cut them into logs, and pile them up in heaps twenty or thirty together, then set fire to them,