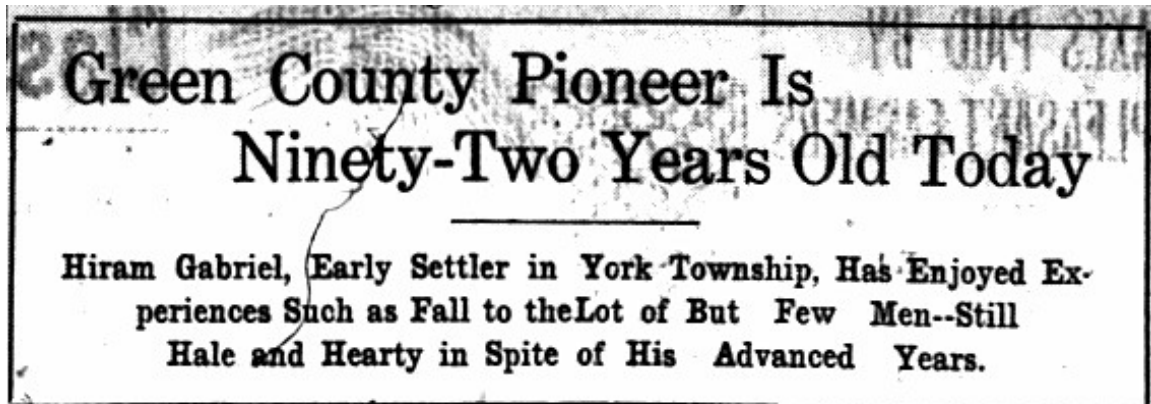


## Hiram Gabriel Migrates to Green County



This is a headline from the February 15, 1917 issue of the Monroe Evening Times. Hiram Gabriel did much walking to and from this area in the 1800s, which might have attributed to him living into his “advanced years.” It took a strong person to survive the lives that those early pioneers lived.

I find it interesting how some of the early Green County settlers arrived here. When I came across a long article about Hiram Gabriel turning 92 in the February 15, 1917 Monroe Evening Times, I knew that I had found a treasure. What those people endured to proceed west is amazing. Many then continued west from here later. At this time, Hiram was living in Madison and gave “promise of reaching the century mark.”

Mr. Gabriel was born on February 15, 1825 in Union County, Ohio. Because he began to suffer from a fever and ague, he decided to leave for York township, Green County where his uncle, John W. Stewart, and cousin, Richard Gabriel, “had taken up homesteads and were enjoying good health.” Stewart, the first white settler in the township, had settled there in 1837. At the age of 19 Hiram Gabriel, with his companion James Dyer, left his home and walked to Milford, Ohio. They then boarded the only railroad line in the state at the time to travel 20 miles to Cincinnati. They then boarded a river boat and took the Ohio River to the Mississippi River, which took them to Galena, which was “in its prime as a lead mining camp.” From there he “decided to continue on foot the journey to York township.”

Fortunately for Gabriel, he was overtaken as he was leaving Galena by a settler who was driving in the same direction and offered him a ride. The settler, while conversing on their journey, asked Gabriel if he would like to find employment. He had the foresight to earn enough money to pay his fare back to Ohio if he didn’t like the Wisconsin frontier. He accepted the job and spent the winter working in a mine about 12 miles east of Galena.

Gabriel again set out to walk across country to the houses of his relatives in the spring of 1845 via Wiota. He spent one night with Adam Gibson, an early settler from Ohio, who lived on the banks of the Pecatonica River where Argyle now sits. The next morning he walked about six more miles to the home of James Biggs, another Ohio settler who was the first homesteader in Adams township. He found Biggs, A. I. Coolidge, George Robinson, Mrs. Biggs brother, and others preparing to enjoy some fishing in the river between Argyle and Blanchardville. He joined the group “which fairly pitched the fish out of the stream with forks, securing all they were able to carry in a couple of hours.”

He made the trip to his uncle’s home the following day, but only visited for two weeks because there was no work for him. So he returned to Galena to work in the mines again, remaining there only until late in the fall when he took a job cutting wood near Mineral Point. His employer told him, “Cut only the wood you can load and haul away during the day.” Gabriel thought this was strange until he discovered that the wood was being cut from land which the employer did not own.

On January 1, 1846, he started to walk to his uncle's home again. In spite of the fact that it was snowing and there were no roads, "he continued boldly on his way." He stopped at the shack of a homesteader about noon where he secured some beans and biscuits. He took those in hand and continued without stopping because he wanted to reach his destination before nightfall. The snow was soon nearly a foot deep and he began to worry that the Pecatonica might not be frozen for him to cross it. Those fears were groundless and he reached his uncle's home at nightfall.

On the advice of his uncle, Gabriel purchased 40 acres for \$120, paying half of it in cash. Soon afterwards he purchased another 20 acres and built a log cabin.

However, he then "became inoculated with the California gold fever and, in company with his uncle and several others," they fitted up a wagon with supplies they had purchased from Arabut Ludlow and started on the trip. They had the usual experiences "being compelled to ford numberless streams and often being in danger of attacks from the Indians."

When they arrived in Salt Lake City, the Mormon town that was only a few years old, they purchased supplies for the rest of their trip. They paid \$25 for 100 pounds of flour and \$2 for a pound of onions. They reached and crossed the Great Divide of the Sierra Nevada Mountains on September 5, 1850. During that month they reached a desirable camp where "Gabriel immediately purchased a mining outfit and started mining at the base of the mountains on the middle fork of the American River, about 75 miles from Sacramento.

"He continued mining until 1852 when, in company with some others who had been fortunate, he started on the return to Wisconsin, took a boat to Panama, thence crossing the isthmus, and boarding a second boat for New York City." From there he went to Philadelphia where he exchanged his gold dust for minted coin. He then left for his boyhood home in Ohio, where he had a short visit. He then headed for his homestead in Green County, taking the Michigan Central Railroad from Detroit to within 30 miles of Chicago. He then took a carriage to Chicago, which was then "only a small town in a swamp." From Chicago he took the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad to Freeport, from where he walked the remaining distance to his home after an absence of about two years.