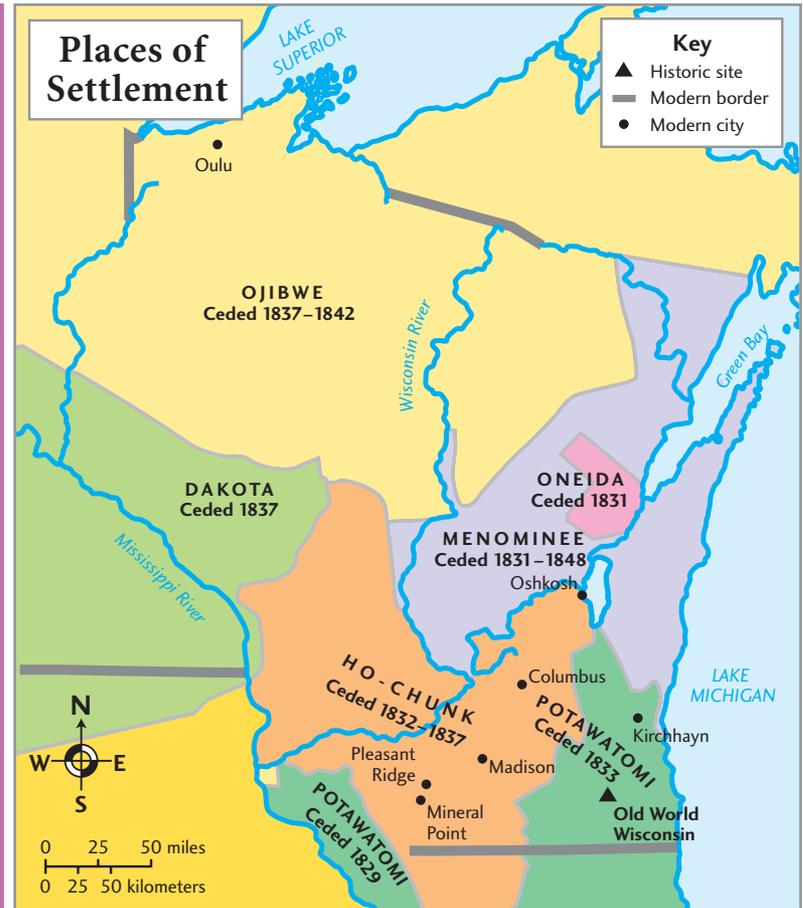


Coming to Wisconsin: Immigration and Settlement

- Immigration and Migration: Then and Now
- Making the Journey
- A Stonemason from Cornwall, England, Comes to Mineral Point
- Free at Last
- A German Farmstead in Washington County
- From Finland to Bayfield County
- Lucky to Be in America
- Bringing Texas North to Wisconsin
- Mai Ya's Long Journey from Thailand to Wisconsin
- Looking Back at Immigration and Settlement in Wisconsin



Treaties with Wisconsin Indians

1825

1850

1875

1900

▲ 1832 Black Hawk War



Richard Thomas

▲ 1842 Richard Thomas leaves Cornwall and arrives in Mineral Point

▲ 1857 Koepsell family leaves Pomerania and arrives in Washington County



Pomeranian basket, 1850s

▲ 1863 Greene family escapes slavery in Missouri

▲ 1864 Greene family settles in Pleasant Ridge, Grant County

▲ 1893 Ketola family leaves Finland and arrives in Oulu, Bayfield County

Key Words

- immigration
- migration
- refugees
- ethnic
- heritage
- invention
- emigrate
- apprentice
- slavery
- integrated
- religious freedom
- homestead
- equipment
- invaded
- ghetto
- concentration camps
- migrant workers
- veterinarian
- refugee camp
- sponsor
- factors

Thinking Like a Historian



In what ways did events that were happening where people were living push them to leave or move away? In what ways did opportunities in Wisconsin pull newcomers to the state?



How did newcomers keep traditions they brought with them? How did newcomers adapt to their new homes and environments?



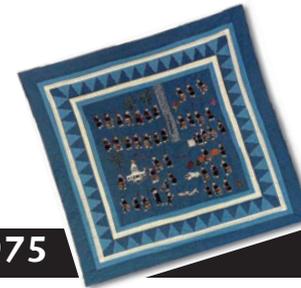
What were the turning points in the lives of the people you read about in this chapter?



How are the experiences of those who moved to Wisconsin long ago similar to those of people who moved here more recently? How are they different?



How did the strengths that people brought with them help them adapt to and survive in Wisconsin?



Typical Hmong storycloth

1925



1950

▲ 1945 Rosa Goldberg is rescued from Germany

▲ 1953 Katz family settles in Oshkosh

▲ 1957 Cris Plata lives in Wisconsin for the first time

1975

▲ 1980 Cris and Ann Plata return to Columbia County permanently

1980 Mai Ya Xiong is born in Thailand



2000

▲ 2004 Mai Ya Xiong graduates from the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee

Immigration and Migration: Then and Now

In this chapter, you'll find out more about people who were not born in Wisconsin but chose to make their homes here. You'll learn why they left their homeland, how they traveled here, and what their lives were like after they arrived. Some people came in the early 1800s. Others came more than 100 years later.

What is immigration?

Have you lived in Wisconsin all of your life? Or did you move from somewhere else? If you came from another country, then you are an **immigrant**. Moving from one country to settle and live in another country is called **immigration**. If you moved here from a different state in the United States, then you are a **migrant**. Moving from one region to another in the United States is called **migration**.

Maybe you have lived in Wisconsin all of your life, but your parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents moved here from another country.

They are the immigrants in your family. In Chapter 3 you learned that the ancestors of the Ho-Chunk and Menominee Nations have lived in Wisconsin for thousands of years. Anyone else who lives here now or whose parents or ancestors arrived here in the past 400 years either immigrated or migrated to Wisconsin.

Why do people leave their homeland and settle in another country? Not every immigrant or migrant chooses to leave home. Sometimes events *push* or force people to leave their homes. People who leave to escape harm are **refugees** as well as immigrants. Sometimes people cannot find work to help their families survive. They must move to find good jobs. Some people choose to leave to be closer to family or friends who have already moved.

Others leave to take better-paying jobs. Some want to buy land that they couldn't buy in their homeland. Opportunities for a better life tend to *pull* people from their home country. In this chapter, you'll read about immigrants, migrants, and refugees who settled in Wisconsin.

immigrant (im uh gruhnt) A person from one country who moves to settle permanently in another

immigration (im uh gray shuhn) Moving from one country to settle and live in another country

migrant (mi gruhnt) A person who moves from one state or region of a country to another

migration (my gray shuhn) The process of moving from one region to another within the same country

refugees (ref yoo jeez) People forced to leave home to escape harm after disaster or war

What is it like to be an immigrant?

You'll discover in this chapter the real stories of seven people who came to Wisconsin. Some came alone. Others came with their families. They each came from different parts of the world. They came at different times in history. And they settled in different parts of the state. Often immigrants settled in areas where people with the same **ethnic heritage** had already settled. Some were *pushed* from their homes. Others were *pulled* to Wisconsin.

However, they all left familiar places. They all traveled through new, unknown places. They all made new lives in a new land. For some, this meant learning English. For others, it meant learning new skills. Some felt sad because they had to leave family members behind. Others felt happy because they had escaped from very difficult

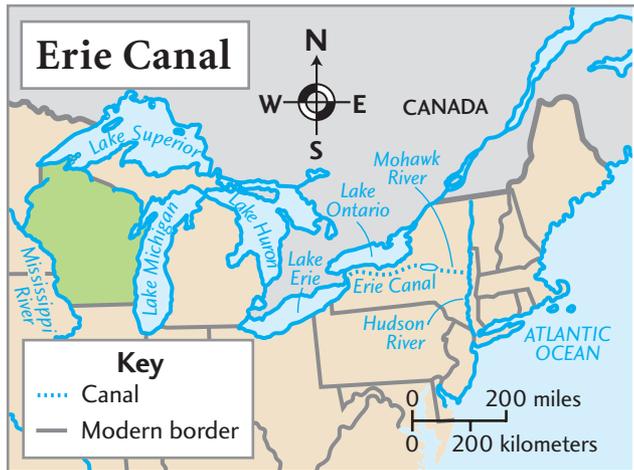
and dangerous situations. If you are an immigrant, you may recognize some of these experiences. If your ancestors were the immigrants in your family, this chapter may help you understand more about *their* immigration experiences.

Immigration, migration, and settlement in Wisconsin have been going on for thousands of years. Remember reading in Chapter 3 about when the different Indian groups began arriving here to live? Many different groups of people have been arriving here ever since. More people continue to arrive. Immigration and settlement are a big part of Wisconsin's past, present, and future.

These children are celebrating Ethnic Pride Day at Our Savior Lutheran Church in Milwaukee. Laotian, African, Hmong, Indian, Hispanic, and American Indian cultures are all celebrated here. Have you ever been to a celebration like this? Are there special things you do with your family to celebrate your heritage?

ethnic Having to do with a group of people sharing the same home country or culture
heritage (hair uh tij) Valuable, important traditions handed down from generation to generation





Large numbers of people did not begin to settle in Wisconsin until after the Erie Canal was completed in 1825. Many early settlers came from New York State. These settlers included the European immigrants who landed in the port of New York City. People could travel up the Hudson River, go through the Erie Canal, reach Lake Erie, and sail to a Wisconsin port without having to travel over land.

Making the Journey

How has travel changed over time for people moving to Wisconsin?

It might not seem like it, but people only recently started flying across the oceans. For hundreds of years, people crossed the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans by boat. People didn't start flying from Europe or Asia to the United States until the 1940s. The **invention** of the airplane was an important turning point in overseas travel.

Changes happened in overland travel, too. The building of railroads in the mid-1800s was one turning point. The invention of the automobile in the early 1900s was another important turning point. Reliable roads made interstate travel faster and safer. Travel by stagecoach became a thing of the past.

Early journeys to Wisconsin took a great deal of time and effort. Now people can quickly travel to Wisconsin from anywhere in the world. When did members of your family come to Wisconsin? Where did they **emigrate** from? How did they get here? Where did they settle first?

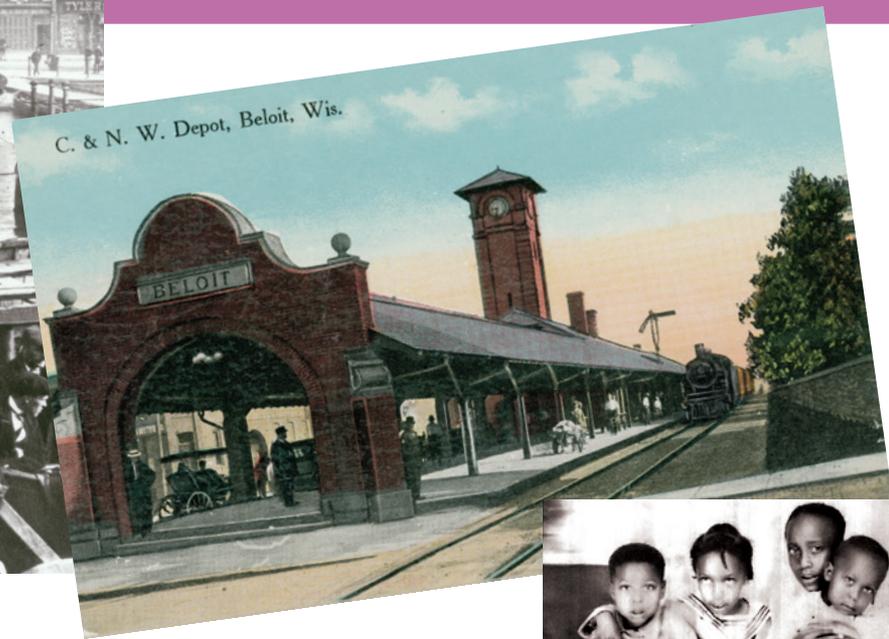


Waterways connected people before there were railroads, automobiles, and planes. People traveling to Wisconsin during most of the 1800s from distant parts of the United States crossed the Great Lakes or came up the Mississippi River. It was the easiest and cheapest way to reach the state.

invention (in ven shun) A new, important thing that someone makes or thinks of
emigrate (em uh grayt) To leave one's country to settle in another



This photo shows a ship of people emigrating from Queenstown, Ireland, and heading to the United States. In the mid-1800s, most people in Ireland were poor farmers who grew potatoes. When a disease ruined potato crops in the mid-1840s, nearly 1 million people died. Another 1 million left Ireland. Those lucky enough to leave emigrated on ships like this one. Many were starving and died on the journey. Some of those who survived traveled to Wisconsin.



The Harrell family, at right, got off the train in Beloit at the Chicago & North Western Depot. The railroad station is shown in this postcard from the early 1900s.



This is a photo of children in the Harrell family in 1942. The Harrell family worked as sharecroppers in Mississippi. Sharecroppers were poor farmers who didn't own the land they worked on. They had to "share" what they raised with the landowner. The family moved to Memphis, Tennessee, where their father, William, got a job making baseball bats. In 1943, the Harrells took the train to Beloit, Wisconsin, where William could make more money working in a foundry, a factory where metal is melted and shaped. Many African American families had similar experiences. They also moved north in the 1900s for better-paying factory jobs. This was called the Great Migration.



In July 2004, members of the Madison-area Hmong (mong) community gathered at the Dane County Regional Airport to welcome Lor family members who were emigrating from Thailand (ti land) to Wisconsin. The Lors were joining other family members already living in Madison.



In 1842, stonemason Richard Thomas emigrated from Cornwall, England, to Mineral Point. This photo of him was taken many years after he arrived.

A Stonemason from Cornwall, England, Comes to Mineral Point



Why did Richard Thomas settle in Wisconsin?

In the spring of 1842, Richard Thomas sailed from Cornwall, England, to New York. He was 25 years old. He grew up in Redruth, a village in the copper and tin mining area of Cornwall. His father was a stonemason. His mother worked in farm fields as well as at home. His parents' greatest wish was to save enough money for their family to emigrate to America. They believed their children would have better chances to find good jobs and own land in the United States. When he was old enough, Richard became an apprentice to a stonemason. He also attended night school.

Richard was the first in his family to emigrate. He traveled from England to New York and finally to Mineral Point, Wisconsin. Many other Cornish immigrants were also settling there to work as lead miners. In late 1842 or early 1843, Richard Thomas and his business partner, James Carbis, built a two-story stone house on Hoard Street in Mineral Point. They built it in the same style as those in the villages of Cornwall. It had two rooms upstairs and two rooms downstairs. Richard and James used locally quarried stone to build their Hoard Street house.

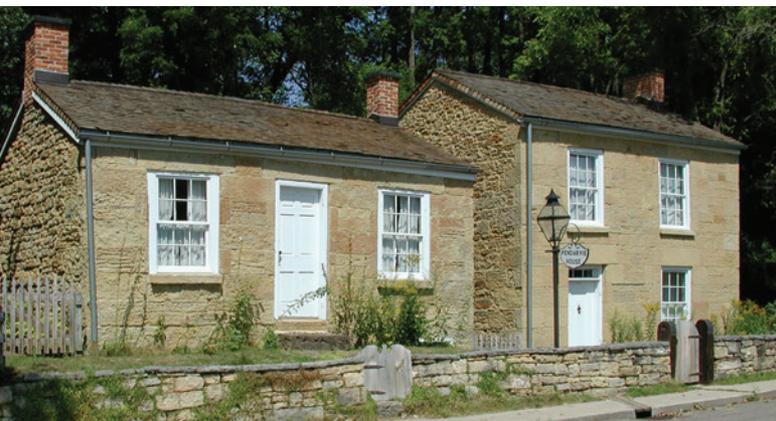


Cornwall is the most southwestern county of England. Cornish people immigrated to southwestern Wisconsin between about 1836 and 1848. Many came to mine lead ore. Others, like Richard Thomas, came to build houses for the growing population.

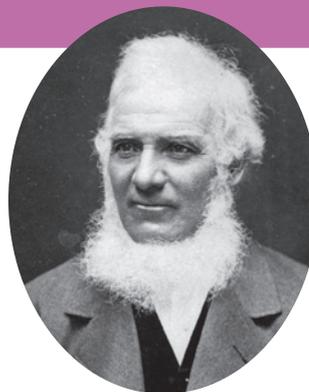
copper A reddish-brown metal that conducts heat and electricity well; a mineral
apprentice (uh pren tuhs) A person learning a trade or art
stonemason A person skilled in building with stone
quarried (kwor eed) Dug out



The two-story house in the photo above is the first house that Richard Thomas and James Carbis built. Two years later, in 1845, they built the single-story house in the photo below. It was a traditional miner's cottage similar to those they had built in Redruth, Cornwall.



Here is a more recent photo of the two houses built by Richard and James. Between 1935 and 1940, Robert Neal and Edgar Hellum restored both buildings. They named the two-story house Trelawny and the single-story house Pendarvis. In the 1960s, the name of Hoard Street was changed to Shake Rag Street to remember the Cornish miners who once worked nearby. Today you can visit the Trelawny and Pendarvis houses between May and October. They are now part of Pendarvis Historic Site, owned by the Wisconsin Historical Society.



This is a photo of James Carbis, a second Cornish stonemason who settled in Mineral Point in 1842. He and his wife, Elizabeth, raised five children: James, Susan, John, Sarah, and Fred. They were all born in Mineral Point.

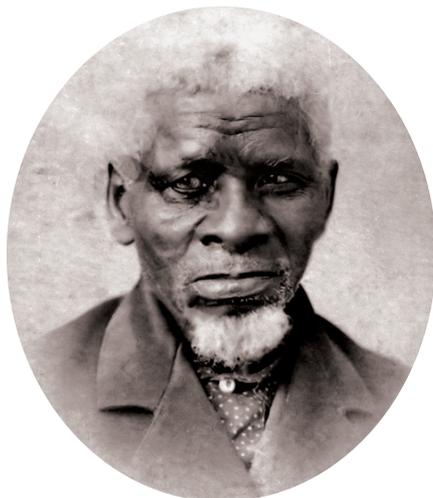
What was life like for Richard Thomas in Mineral Point?

Richard married Elizabeth Johns in 1843. When she died three years later, Richard became a **widower**. He wasn't alone, though. His parents, Sampson and Susanna Thomas, had arrived from Cornwall in 1844. His sister's family came over at the same time. All five of them moved into the house on Hoard Street with Richard. James Carbis's family lived there, too. The house was home to seven adults and two children! By the time Wisconsin became a state in 1848, Richard had been living in Mineral Point for six years.

The neighborhood was full of other Cornish immigrants. Most of the men in the families worked as lead miners. Eventually the Thomases moved out of the neighborhood to a larger wood-frame house. The Carbis family continued to live in the Hoard Street house until 1862.

Richard Thomas and James Carbis worked together until about 1870. Sampson, Richard's father, sometimes helped them work with the local sandstone. But they didn't just build small stone cottages for their neighbors. The two stonemasons once built a large stone **mansion** together. Richard died when he was 69 years old. His **obituary** read, "He was industrious and kind-hearted, and his memory will long be cherished."

widower (wid oh ur) A man whose wife has died **mansion** (man shun) A very large house **obituary** (o bit chu air ee) A printed report of someone's death, often in the newspaper



John Greene and his family became some of the pioneer African American settlers in the Pleasant Ridge community in Grant County in the Western Upland region.

Free at Last

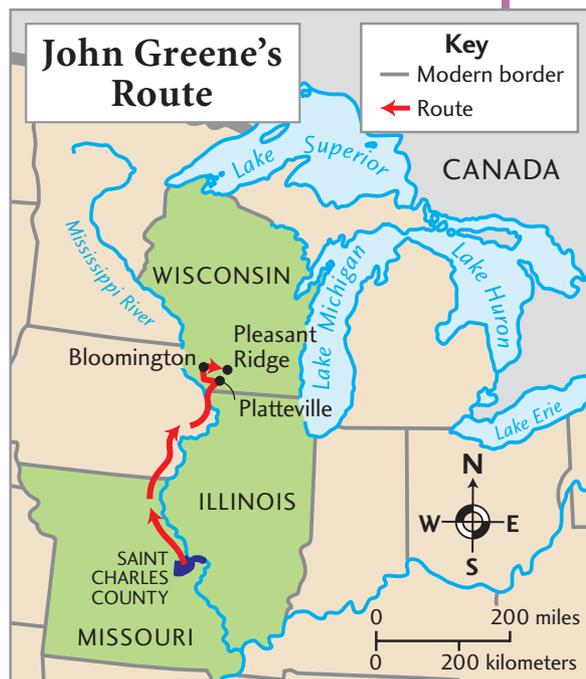
How did John Greene and his family escape slavery to reach Wisconsin?

In 1810, John Greene was born a **slave** in Virginia. As an adult, both he and his wife, Lillie, were slaves owned by the Griffith family. The Griffith family farm was located in Saint Charles County, Missouri. In 1863, during the **Civil War**, John and Lillie Smith Greene escaped. They traveled north to freedom with their children and grandchildren.

Slave families in the southern United States could be broken up at any time. Slaves had no rights. Slave owners could sell anyone in the family at any time.

The Greene family wanted to escape **slavery** to keep the family together. The Greenes had made one other attempt to escape. But they were captured and brought back before they got very far. The second time, the Greenes took the little money that they'd saved. Then they started out when it was already dark. The Greenes used some of their savings to buy train tickets. They made at least part of the journey north by rail.

The Greenes spent their first winter in Bloomington, Wisconsin. Bloomington is in Grant County in the Western Upland region. Then, they moved about 10 miles to Pleasant Ridge. There they became farmers. They probably rented land on which to work or helped other farmers. Five years after being the property of the Griffith family, John Greene and his oldest son, Hardy, were able to buy property of their own. The Greenes bought farmland in Pleasant Ridge.



The Greenes' son, Thomas, remembered that the family traveled this route from slavery in Missouri to freedom in Wisconsin.

slave Someone who is owned by another person **Civil War** The war between the North and South of the United States, which took place between 1861 and 1865; a **civil war** is a war between two groups of people in the same country **slavery** The practice of owning people and making them work



The cemetery of the United Brethren Church in Grant County contains the gravestones of many Greene family members. You can see replicas, or exact copies, of these graves in the church cemetery at Old World Wisconsin. What kinds of things can you learn about a community and the people who have lived there by visiting a cemetery?

In 1874, the European American and African American farm families of Pleasant Ridge built a small log school for all the children of the community. School District Five was one of the earliest integrated districts in the nation.



What was life like for the Greene family and other African Americans at Pleasant Ridge?

Settlers in Pleasant Ridge came looking for new opportunities for their families. Some of them were former slaves. Some were immigrants. Others were European Americans from farther east. Everyone was welcome in the tiny community of Pleasant Ridge.

These farm families worked hard. They needed one another's help to survive. The Greenes did not become wealthy. But they managed to make a living on land of their very own. They were also well-liked by their neighbors.

All the children in Pleasant Ridge attended the one-room school of District Five. This was one of the earliest schools in the nation to be **integrated**. All the families gathered at the schoolhouse for community events. Picnics, sporting events, dances, and more were all celebrated together.

Churches were also important in Pleasant Ridge. German immigrants built a Methodist church where they could listen to services in the German language. English-speaking families built their own United Brethren Church. They had help from the German families as well. Families often met at the church for prayer meetings. They also helped one another take care of the church buildings.

Pleasant Ridge continued to grow in the years between 1860 and 1890. Settlers like the Greenes wanted to make their lives better. Beginning in the late 1880s, though, Pleasant Ridge began to lose many of the people who lived there. As in many farming communities, the children grew up and moved away. Fast-growing cities offered well-paying jobs and a different way of life. By the mid-1930s, the entire community had moved to other places. The community of Pleasant Ridge was no more.

Mildred Greene was the last person living to have grown up at Pleasant Ridge. In the late 1990s, she remembered what she learned there. "We were taught to love each other and so we did. Most everyone was a farmer and so they relied on each other for help." Perhaps her best memory was that living there, "I never paid any attention to skin color. People were just people."

integrated (in tuh gray tuhd) Included people of all races

A German Farmstead in Washington County



This is the Koepsell farmhouse in Washington County. Friedrich Koepsell cut the logs and built the large house himself in 1859. He used a building style that was traditional to his homeland in Pomerania. This type of building is called half-timber.



In the 1850s, the Koepsell family immigrated to Wisconsin from Pomerania. Pomerania is now part of both Germany and Poland. Between 1839 and 1893, many Pomeranian people came to Wisconsin to live.

Why did the Koepsell family move from Pomerania to settle in Wisconsin?

In 1857 Friedrich (**free drik**) and Sophia Koepsell (**kep suhl**) and their three children emigrated from Pomerania (**pom uh ray nee uh**) to Wisconsin. Friedrich was born in a village in Pomerania in north central Europe. He was 38 years old and his wife was 30 years old when they arrived in Quebec, Canada. Then they made their way to Wisconsin. Their two young daughters and son came with them.

Friedrich's brother, Carl, had come to Wisconsin in 1843 with a religious group called the Old Lutherans. They left Pomerania and came to Wisconsin for **religious freedom**. They settled in an area northwest of Milwaukee in Washington County. They called their German-speaking settlement Kirchhayn (**keer kin**), meaning "church in the wildwoods."

Friedrich might have left Canada because he wanted his family to grow up in the Old Lutheran tradition. More people kept coming to Kirchhayn.

That meant Friedrich would have more opportunities to use his carpentry skills there. In 1859 he built his own house on 40 acres of land. That same year Sophia gave birth to their second son. Kirchhayn was now their home.



religious freedom The right to worship as you choose



Friedrich and Sophia Koepsell came to Wisconsin in 1857. Together they raised their seven children and farmed 130 acres.

Here's a photo of the Koepsell family's dining room. Today you can visit the Koepsell farmhouse with your family. It has been moved from Washington County and rebuilt at Old World Wisconsin. Sophia and her daughters cooked and baked for the family. They may have eaten apple kuchen (koo kuhn), traditional German cake baked with apples picked from trees on the farm.



dairy (dair ee) **cows** Cows that make milk

What was life like for the Koepsells in Kirchhayn in Washington County?

Friedrich was both a farmer and a skilled carpenter. He built and developed his own farm. Then he built houses and farm buildings for people in the area. Over time the farm grew from 40 acres to 130 acres. Friedrich farmed some of the land. Perhaps he harvested logs for building from the rest of it. He built barns, a machine shed, and an outhouse for his own family farm. He farmed his land using a team of horses. He grew hay and raised **dairy cows**, beef cows, sheep, and pigs. Friedrich also grew a lot of barley. He may have sold it to local brewers to make beer.

Sophia and Friedrich had three more children. The older Koepsell children had many chores. They helped take care of the apple trees. They tended the large vegetable garden and potato field. The Koepsells didn't sell these crops. They grew these crops to eat. The children worked on the family farm until they married and moved away. In 1886, the Koepsells sold the farm where they had lived for 27 years.



Take a close look at this detail of the half-timber building style. It is called "half-timber" because it is part wood—or timber—and part brick.

From Finland to Bayfield County



Why did the Ketola family choose to come to Northern Wisconsin?

Heikki Ketola (**hay** kee **keh** tuh luh) left his home country of Finland in the spring of 1889. He traveled by steamboat to New York. He was only 26 years old when he immigrated to the United States. Heikki wanted his own land to



farm. He left his wife, Maria, and their five children at home in Finland. It would take him nine years to save enough money to bring his family overseas. From New York, Heikki made his way to Ohio. He worked at two different Lake Erie ports in Ohio for about three and a half years. Then he learned that other Finns were settling in northern Wisconsin. He left Ohio and moved to the Town of Oulu (oo loo). Oulu is located in the northwestern corner of Bayfield County, Wisconsin.

On December 13, 1892, Heikki entered a **homestead** claim to 80 acres of land. The Homestead Act was a national law passed in 1862. It gave people the chance to own land without paying cash for it. In exchange for the **deed** proving ownership, they had to build a house on the land and live in it for five years. Owners also had to clear and farm a certain number of acres.

Between 1893 and 1898, Heikki built and lived in a small log house on the land that he claimed. His house measured only 15 by 17 feet. That's about as large as a one-car garage! He cleared trees, stumps, brush, and stones from about seven acres. He also built a log barn for one horse and six cows.

Finally he saved enough money for Maria and their children to join him. They traveled from Finland to Wisconsin in 1898. He built an addition to the house the same year with logs he had cut. Soon they had three more children! They needed more room, so Heikki built a second addition onto their home.

This is the Heikki and Maria Ketola family outside their log home in Bayfield County. Heikki built the house himself in three sections between 1893 and 1900. The homemade ladders were mounted on the house so Heikki could quickly climb to the roof to put out chimney fires.



Finland is a heavily forested country with small amounts of good farmland. Finnish people immigrated to northern Wisconsin between about 1890 and 1920. Many came to farm. Others worked in the iron mines.

homestead A house with its buildings and grounds; a farm with all its buildings
deed Document that proves ownership of land



Maria knit mittens, socks, and shawls from wool provided by their sheep. She fed and milked the cows and worked in the large vegetable garden and potato field. Neighbors described Maria as very kind but very serious.



Maria and Heikki traveled to their neighbors' farms to attend church services before the church was built. Church records show that Heikki changed his name to Henry Getto. This process is called "Americanizing" immigrant names.



In this photo, you can see a small log barn that Heikki built. On their growing farm, he also built an outhouse, a granary to store grain, and a sauna in which to bathe. Most Finnish farms in northern Wisconsin had a sauna, a type of bath that uses dry heat or steam. Families used the saunas every Wednesday and Saturday. You can visit the Ketola house and the sauna at Old World Wisconsin near Eagle in Waukesha County.

What was life like for the Ketolas in Oulu?

By 1902, Heikki had been in the United States for 13 years. He had provided a home and farm for Maria and their children. He built two hay sheds to store the hay he grew. He also built a large **root cellar** to store **rutabagas** and potatoes. He fed the rutabagas to his cows and the potatoes to his family.

Everyone in the family worked hard, but farming in Bayfield County was difficult. The growing season is short in northern Wisconsin. Enlarging the farm was hard work. It meant clearing trees and pulling stumps. Heikki also worked at a different job off the farm for a few months every year. That way he could earn money for things they couldn't grow or build. Later he began selling telephones, cream separators, and farm **equipment**.

The older children married and moved from the farm. The younger children attended school and learned to speak English. They became "Americanized" like the other children at school. Heikki and Maria celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary in 1951. Maria passed away a few months later at the age of 92. Heikki died in 1954 at the age of 91. Their sons, Oscar and Fred, continued to live in the log house on their parents' farm.



This recent photo is of a baked pancake called **pannu kakkuu** (pah noo kah koo). Maria and her daughters baked **pannu kakkuu**. It tasted good with maple syrup and made good use of the farm's daily supply of milk and eggs.

root cellar A room underground for storing root vegetables **rutabagas** (roo tah bay guhs) Large pale-yellow root vegetables sometimes called "Swedish turnips"
equipment (ee kwip muhnt) Tools and machines needed or used for a particular purpose

Lucky to Be in America

How did Rosa Goldberg Katz survive the Holocaust and come to Wisconsin?



Beginning in 1939, Rosa's life in Hitler-controlled Europe was terrifying. The map shows the locations in Poland and Germany, but not the horrors, that Rosa experienced. You'll learn more about World War II in Chapter 10.

In 1924, Rosa Goldberg was born in Lodz (looj), Poland. She was the youngest of four children in a wealthy Jewish family. Rosa was only 15 years old when Nazi German troops invaded Poland. A few months later, all of the Jews in Lodz were forced to leave their homes. They had to move into a ghetto in the poorest part of the city. The Goldbergs crammed into a tiny apartment with seven other people. This was the beginning of the nightmare that destroyed the world Rosa had known.

Soldiers took Rosa's mother and many Jews away from their families. Their families never saw them again. Finally, the Nazis forced all the Jews in the ghetto onto trains. The trains took them to concentration camps. Rosa and her remaining family were taken to the Auschwitz (oosh vitz) concentration camp. Men and boys were immediately separated from women and girls. Rosa never saw her father or brother again.

Rosa was sure that she, too, would soon be killed. But days later, German soldiers made a mistake that saved her life. They did not realize that she and the 499 other women in a field were due to be murdered. The soldiers mistook them for French prisoners. They pushed them onto another train car and shipped them to the German city of Berlin. The women had to work in a factory assembling bombs.

Rosa was later shipped to another concentration camp at Ravensbrück, Germany. Then the Swedish Red Cross freed the prisoners and helped them get to Sweden to recover.

After Rosa regained her strength, she met and fell in love with another refugee and Holocaust survivor, Bernard Katz. He emigrated to the United States first. In 1948, Bernard returned to marry her. The two made their first home in Statesville, North Carolina. That's where Bernard's relatives had helped him find a job. Five years later, in 1953, Bernard's work brought them to Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

Nazi (not zee) Describing the followers of Adolf Hitler who wanted to rid Europe of Jews and other peoples they considered "impure" **invaded** Entered by force **ghetto** (get toe) A neighborhood in a European city where Jews were forced to live **concentration camps** Prison camps where persons (as prisoners of war, political prisoners, or refugees) are detained **Holocaust** (hol uh kost) The planned murder of the Jews in Europe in the 1940s in which 6 million Jews, and others, were killed



Rosa Goldberg (second from left) was a 10-year-old Jewish girl when this picture was taken. Here she is with her family in 1934. Less than 10 years later, she was the only one in this photograph who had not been killed during the Holocaust. The Holocaust occurred during World War II. That's when the Nazi German government, led by Adolf Hitler, murdered 6 million European Jews and others.



What was life like for Rosa and her family in Oshkosh?

Rosa found that many things helped make the move to Oshkosh successful. The Katzes' closest friends from Statesville also moved to Oshkosh. Oshkosh had a larger Jewish community. The Katzes joined the **synagogue** right away. By the time they moved to Oshkosh, Rosa's English had improved. Both she and Bernard spoke only English at home. They wanted their children to fit in at school and in the neighborhood.

Rosa did not share her Holocaust story with her own children. "I wanted them to be well-adjusted, happy little kids," she later said. Rosa told her story to an **oral historian** who recorded it for the Wisconsin Historical Society in 1980. She had extra copies made for her grown-up children. "God forbid something like this should happen to anybody, especially my own children. It should never happen again."

In 1994, Rosa took part in a video, *We Must Never Forget: The Story of the Holocaust*. Her last lines in the video expressed her deepest feelings: "And I just want to point to all of us how lucky we are to be in a country like America."

In 1979, the Katz family celebrated younger daughter Marilyn's bat mitzvah, a Jewish ceremony for young girls entering adulthood, at their synagogue in Oshkosh. From left to right, you see Ruthie, Rosa, Marilyn, and son Arthur's wife, Sue. Bernard and Arthur are standing behind them. Rosa said, "We are proud to be Jewish. . . . Since I am the only one to survive, I ask, 'Why did I survive?' And then I am blessed with four beautiful children, and I think, that's why I survived . . . I want to pass my religion on."

Bringing Texas North to Wisconsin



The map shows where the family drove from their home near Poteet, Texas, to places where they harvested crops in different parts of the United States at different seasons.

What brought the Plata family to Wisconsin each spring?

Cris Plata (**plah tuh**) is a Mexican American singer-songwriter and musician. He lives with his wife, Ann, on their small farm in Columbia County. Cris spent much of his childhood **migrating** back and forth between Wisconsin and Texas. But he still considered Wisconsin his home.

Cris was born on a ranch near Poteet, Texas, on November 26, 1954. He is the youngest of three sons. His mother was from the nearby city of San Antonio. Cris's family lived in the basement in the same house with his aunt and her family. The two families managed the **livestock** and took care of the ranch for the owners.

Cris's father was a skilled mechanic who was born in Mexico. He gave his children a choice between going to school or helping the family. Cris saw just how hard his parents and older brothers worked in the fields. He decided to go to school. Before he started first grade in West Texas, "My brothers taught me the ABCs, and how to say my name, and the year and month that I was born, and that was all the English I knew." Cris learned English easily. He wanted to speak like the other children in his class. But it was hard changing schools so many times during the year.

For most of Cris's childhood, he and his family were **migrant workers**. Cris's family began migrating to Wisconsin when he was 11. His dad found work driving a pea **combine** in Astico, near Columbus. Every year they arrived in April and left in October. Cris had to switch schools in the middle of every year. He found that he learned more in his Columbus school. When he went back to school in Texas each October, he was much farther ahead than he had been the year before.

migrating Moving from one region of the country to another

livestock Farm animals

migrant workers People who move from place to place to help harvest crops

combine (**kohm bln**) A machine on a farm, driven by a person, to harvest crops



Cris poses for a photograph with his parents.

Why did Cris make Wisconsin home?

Music was always important to the Plata family. Cris's father and brothers all played guitar, mandolin, and accordion. His mother was a singer who taught everyone else to sing. The radio up north had no Spanish stations. Migrant workers would make their own music in the evenings. Making music was like bringing "a little piece of home with you," Cris said.

Cris graduated from high school in 1973. Then he moved to Austin, Texas, to attend college. Austin was a growing center for folk and country music. Cris felt more drawn to photography and the music of Austin than to his studies. He began writing songs and playing music with groups of friends. He wanted his music to capture the same feelings for Texas that he tried to capture in photographs. For the next few years Cris studied photography and developed his skills as a singer-songwriter.

In 1976, Cris returned to Wisconsin. That's where he met his future wife, Ann. Ann grew up on her family's century-old German American farm near Columbus. It was not far from where Cris's family was doing migrant work. They married in 1977. Then they moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota, so Ann could attend **veterinary** school. Cris began to play music full-time. But he got tired of being on the road. It was too much like being a migrant worker.

In 1980, Ann graduated from veterinary school. She began working in Minnesota. Then she found a job with a **veterinarian** she knew in the Madison area. The Platas happily moved back. They bought a small house and an acre and a half of land of her family's farm. They bought horses and grew vegetables. Cris's own songs now included Mexican American stories. He sings them in both English and Spanish.

Cris found work doing parking and security. He now has the time to balance music and the country life he and Ann enjoy. When Cris was a child he had to travel all the time. Now he stays connected to the land. He loves living on the farm and growing his own salsa (**sahl** sah) garden. With his music, Cris enjoys working "to bring Texas to Wisconsin."



Cris and his band performed at Fiesta Hispana (fee es tah ees pah nah) in Madison in the early 1990s.

veterinary (vet ur uh nair ee) Having to do with animal medicine or surgery

veterinarian (vet ur uh nair ee uhn) A doctor who treats animals

Mai Ya is wearing a traditional Hmong dress and turban at a Hmong New Year celebration in Madison, Wisconsin.



Mai Ya's Long Journey from Thailand to Wisconsin

Why did Mai Ya and her family live in a refugee camp in Thailand?

Mai Ya Xiong and her family are **Hmong**. In 1979, her mother and her father escaped from their home in Laos. They made their way to Thailand on foot. Mai Ya was born the following year in a **refugee camp** called Ban Vinai (ban vin i). Most of the people in the refugee camp were also Hmong. They had also escaped from their villages in Laos. Life had become too dangerous to keep living there.

In the 1960s, the United States had entered into a war to help the people of South Vietnam fight North Vietnam. The government trained young Hmong men to form a secret army. Mai Ya's father was part of that army. But the United States was unsuccessful. In 1973, US troops left Vietnam. Two years later, North Vietnam won the war. Then, Hmong families were in

danger from enemy troops. Many of the Hmong families, like Mai Ya's, had to hide in the forests and jungles. They had to move every few days so the soldiers would not catch them. Finally, they crossed the Mekong River to Thailand. They found safety at Ban Vinai.



Like many Hmong people, Mai Ya's parents lived in a quiet mountain village in Laos before the Vietnam War became a turning point in their lives.



Hmong (mong) A language and group of people from Southeast Asia

refugee (ref yoo jee) **camp** A safe place for people forced to leave their homes by war or disaster



When Mai Ya came to Wisconsin, she had two younger brothers and two younger sisters. They were all born in the refugee camp in Thailand.

Mai Ya got this card showing that she had a sponsor when she was four years old. It was three more years before her family was allowed to leave the refugee camp.



What was life like for Mai Ya in Wisconsin?

In 1987, Mai Ya was seven years old. That's when her family finally was allowed to leave the refugee camp. They traveled in a large airplane. They came to live in Madison. To move to the United States, Hmong people needed a **sponsor**. Mai Ya's uncle was her family's sponsor. At first the family of seven shared their uncle's apartment. For the first time, they had their own running water, a stove, and a refrigerator. It was very different from the mountain village in Laos. It was nothing like the crowded space they shared in the refugee camp. The weather in Wisconsin was also different from the weather in Thailand. Mai Ya and her brothers and sisters had never seen snow before!

Mai Ya and her parents didn't know how to read or write English when they arrived. Mai Ya started second grade. She worked hard to learn English to help her understand what her teachers and classmates were saying. By the time she was in seventh grade, she was comfortable speaking in class and with her friends. Yet at home, she and her family spoke only in Hmong. Sometimes it was hard for Mai Ya to go back and forth between the English-speaking and Hmong worlds.

In 1998, Mai Ya graduated from high school. Then in 2004, she graduated from the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee. There she studied business and marketing. But she also taught young Hmong American girls the traditional Hmong dances. She has learned how to build a new life in a new country. She still holds on to her Hmong language and to some of her Hmong customs that she loves. You can read more details about her life and family in *Mai Ya's Long Journey* by Sheila Cohen.



As a university student, Mai Ya said, "I am proud to be Hmong. And what would be lost if we don't preserve some of our traditions? We will eventually lose who we are. That would be a big loss."

sponsor A person, people, or organization that agrees to help refugees who enter the country

Looking Back at Immigration and Settlement in Wisconsin

PUSH FACTORS	PULL FACTORS
Too many people living in one place to make a decent living	Good, affordable farmland to support a family
Not enough jobs or not enough food	Better-paying jobs and plenty of food
Other relatives and friends have already left and found some success elsewhere	Letters from family and friends who have moved
People must follow only certain religious faiths	People can follow any religious faith
Not all people are treated fairly	People are treated equally
War	Peace
Natural disaster	Better place to start over

This chart shows some of the reasons that people feel pushed from their homelands and pulled to new opportunities in another country.



This photo shows Cris Plata's father, Cristobal Sr., as a young man. He is standing next to his mother, Luisa. They are at the entrance to their home made of stones and soil in the mountains of the state of Jalisco (hah lees ko) in central Mexico.

What have you learned about why people immigrated and migrated to Wisconsin?

In this chapter, you have read seven different immigration and migration stories of families who came to live in Wisconsin. They each traveled from different places. They arrived at different times in history. And they each settled in different parts of Wisconsin. Their journey stories span 138 years, between 1842 and 1987. That's a very long time. Many things in Wisconsin and in the world changed during those years. But people's desires to make their lives, and the lives of their families, better have not changed.

Some of the people in these stories journeyed to Wisconsin alone. Some were married. Some brought their entire families. Some arrived as children. They came at different times and for different reasons. They all faced challenges and struggles. In what ways are their stories similar? How are they different? What have you learned about the push and pull **factors** of immigration and migration from these stories? Do you have new questions about your own family's story? Or are you someone who has made the journey to Wisconsin yourself?

factors Any one of the causes that helps bring about a result

How do people make a new life in a new place?

When you go on a trip, do you take something along that reminds you of home? Do you pack one of your favorite books or games? Maybe you pack a stuffed animal to keep you from feeling homesick. Immigrants and migrants pack their favorite things, too. These items help remind them of who they are and where they've come from. They might bring dishes, toys, photographs, tools, or other objects that were special to them.

Newcomers also bring traditions and ideas that can't be packed in a suitcase. They keep their traditions alive as they build new lives in a new land. Friedrich Koepsell built his home the way that houses were built back in Pomerania. He did this to help his family feel at home in a strange place. Their home helped remind them of their homeland. Maybe it helped them feel less homesick, too.

What are some other ways people keep traditions alive? Does your family tell stories to remind you where you came from? What holidays do you celebrate? What traditional foods do you eat? How do you honor your heritage?



These are two of the Stoughton (stoh tuhn) High School Norwegian Dancers. They celebrate their Norwegian American heritage by dancing traditional folk dances and wearing traditional dance clothing.

Some Places to Visit

- Chippewa Valley Museum in Eau Claire
- Jewish Museum Milwaukee
- Neville Public Museum in Green Bay
- Old World Wisconsin Historic Site in Eagle
- Pendarvis Historic Site in Mineral Point
- Wisconsin Black Historical Society in Milwaukee
- Wisconsin Historical Museum in Madison

Some Things to Read

- *Caroline Quarlls and the Underground Railroad* by Julia Pferdehirt
- *Casper Jaggi: Master Swiss Cheese Maker* by Jerry Apps
- *Cris Plata: From Fields to Stage/Del Campo al Escenario* by Maia A. Surdam
- *The Flavor of Wisconsin for Kids: A Feast of History, with Stories and Recipes Celebrating the Land and People of Our State* by Terese Allen and Bobbie Malone, Chapter 6
- *Mai Ya's Long Journey* by Sheila Cohen
- *Native People of Wisconsin* by Patty Loew, Chapters 5–8
- *A Recipe for Success: Lizzie Kander and Her Cookbook* by Bob Kann
- *They Came to Wisconsin* by Julia Pferdehirt