

From -

Portage Democrat

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HELPED TO NAME CALEDONIA TOWN

**ROBT. WHITELOW, 96, PIONEER,
ENJOYS AUTO TRIP.**

**Hale Old Gentleman Visits His Grand
daughter and Great-grand-
daughter in Baraboo.**

(From Baraboo Democrat)

A very interesting character is Robert Whitelaw, Portage, who rode over to Baraboo from his home town in a car last week Thursday, to spend part of the day with his granddaughter, Mrs. R. J. Osborne (wife of the editor of the Baraboo Democrat), and to make the acquaintance of his newly arrived great-granddaughter. He was born a long way from Portage,

but since landing in Wisconsin he has never gone back to his still beloved Scotland.

Robert Whitelaw was born in Kilmarnock, Ayrshire, Scotland, March 27, 1819, and with his wife and little child came to America in the year 1848. They settled in what is now the town of Caledonia, about seven miles from the city of Portage. That was during the excitement of the Mexican war, and Mr. Whitelaw remembers that when he landed in Boston he saw a large number of soldiers marching the crooked streets of the Hub, and was told that they had but then returned from participation in the war with Mexico.

That year was one of unusual interest in Wisconsin, for it was in 1848 that this territory ceased to be a territory and took on the responsibilities of statehood. Columbia county hardly had its name and boundaries then, and it was several years before the town of Caledonia was formed and the citizens of Scotch birth, of whom Mr. Whitelaw was

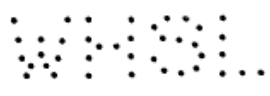
one, got together and bestowed upon the new political division its Scotch name. It is a fact that Mr. Whitelaw was one of those who gave to Caledonia its name.

Although Mr. Whitelaw had attained the age of 29 when he immigrated to America, he continued to live on his Caledonia farm for more than 40 years. He witnessed many changes in his section--about all that were wrought--and reared a large family, of whom eight children are still living. He lived on the farm until 24 years ago, when at the age of 72 he retired. He was many times chairman of the town board of Caledonia.

When Mr. Whitelaw first located in Caledonia this section of the country was "alive" with Indians. The Winnebagoes had not been removed to Neb., or if they had been carried off, the most of them had returned. But Mr. Whitelaw had no trouble with them. At that time Ft. Winnebago was still in operation, and Mr. Whitelaw found it a good market,

when it tasted. But soon after he settled in that vicinity, the fort dwindled in importance and finally gave up the ghost entirely.

From the testimony of his old-time neighbors, it is plain that Robert Whitelaw has lived an unselfish and useful life thru all his 96 years. George Baird, Portage, was his neighbor for many years, as was State Senator George Staudenmayer. He is still hale and hearty, and came thru the bumps of an auto ride from Portage as well as any of the younger passengers in the car. And his intellectual faculties seem to be as keen as many a score of years younger.



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