JUMPING CLAIMS IN NEW PORTAGE

POPULAR AMUSEMENT WAY BACK IN THE FIFTIES.

John Eff, Pioneer of "Gougeville,"

Writes to Tell How Nerve and Musket Once Were Supreme.

While the pioneers of Portage are digging up recollections of the '50's to give at the Men's Social Union banquet at the Baptist church Tuesday evening, John Eff, 788 Thirty-Fourth street, Milwaukee, writes The Democrat as follows:

"Learning thru my friend, Mrs. Martin, who is a daughter of the late Charles H. Moore, a pioneer of your city, that there will be a meeting on Tuesday of some of the pioneers of old Fort Winnebago and Portage, Mrs. Martin suggested to me that some of the old timers might appreciate a few lines from me, giving squatters and claim jumpers. The principal amusement then seemed to be drinking whisky, jumping claims, lawing and fighting. Sam Benedect, Tinker O'Neill and several other celebrated wranglers made it lively for the new burg.

"Among the older settlers whom I can now name were Hugh McFarlane, father of Mrs. Perry Williams; Andrew Dunn, father of Dr. N. A. Gray of Milwaukee; Dr. Hottenstein, Henry Carpenter, father of George, my old schoolmate who was the first white boy born at the Portage; and Bill Armstrong.

"Then Portage was called Gougeville (it was no misnomer) for it was all the go to gobble all the land one could and then fight it out in court or with the fists. There was a nick named Corbett who wore one of those..."
green Irish overcoats and it was said that all Corbett had to do was to stake out a lot on any other man's claim, hang his green coat on one of the stakes and with his Queen Anne musket in his hand defy the rest of the crowd to put him off of his jumped claim. I guess that was true, for I saw him one forenoon defend such a transaction on Canal street the night before he had taken down Joel Whitneys's fence on the Canal street front of his 40-acre farm, stake out his lot, pile lumber around the edge of his lot and stand there with his shotgun to defy Whitney or any one else to dispossess him. Those who had money to spend in lawsuits had plenty of opportunity to lighten their purses.

"I do not know just what the program is to be on Tuesday. If I had more time, I could perhaps write more interestingly. I am always glad to hear from the old folks at home."