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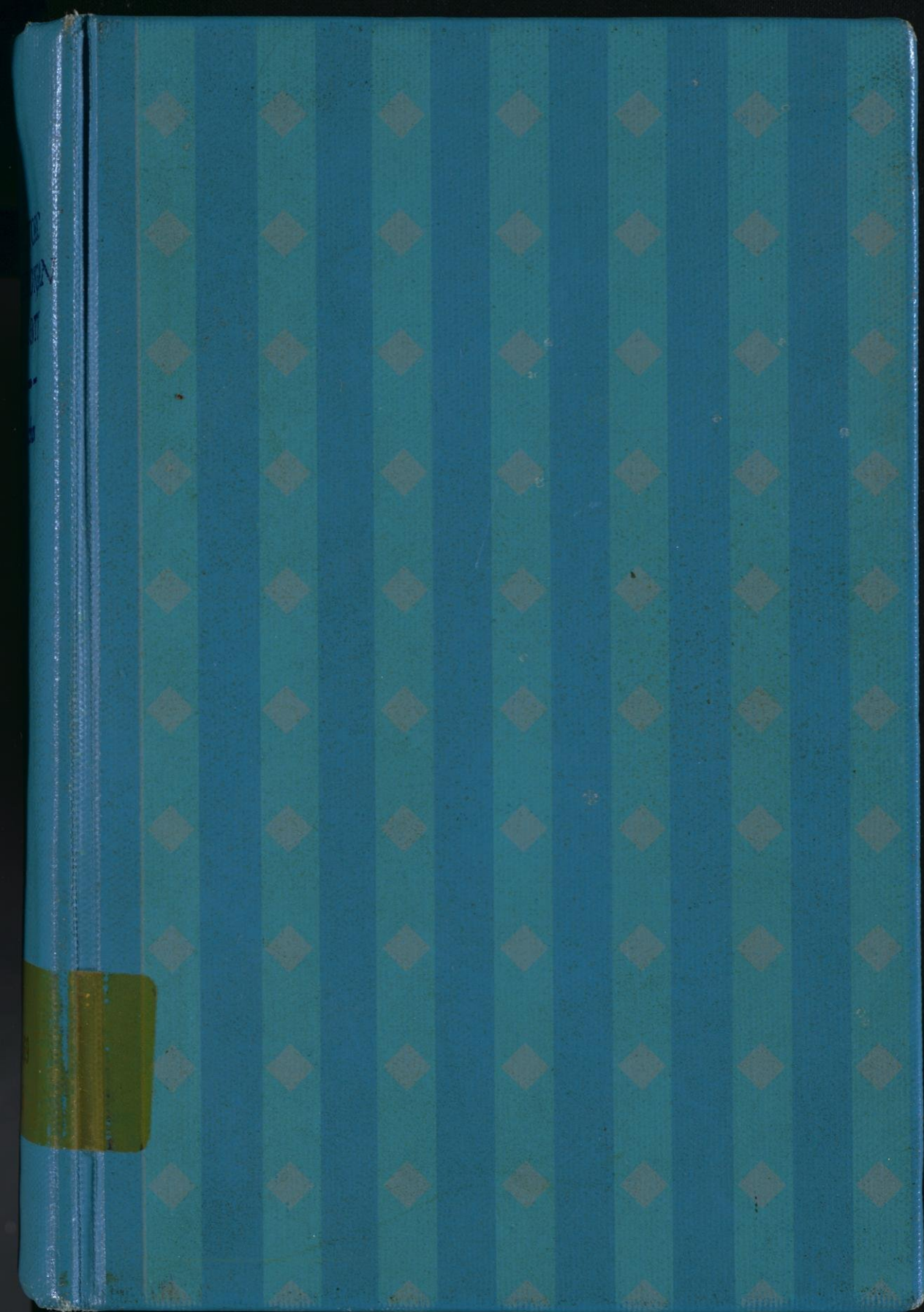
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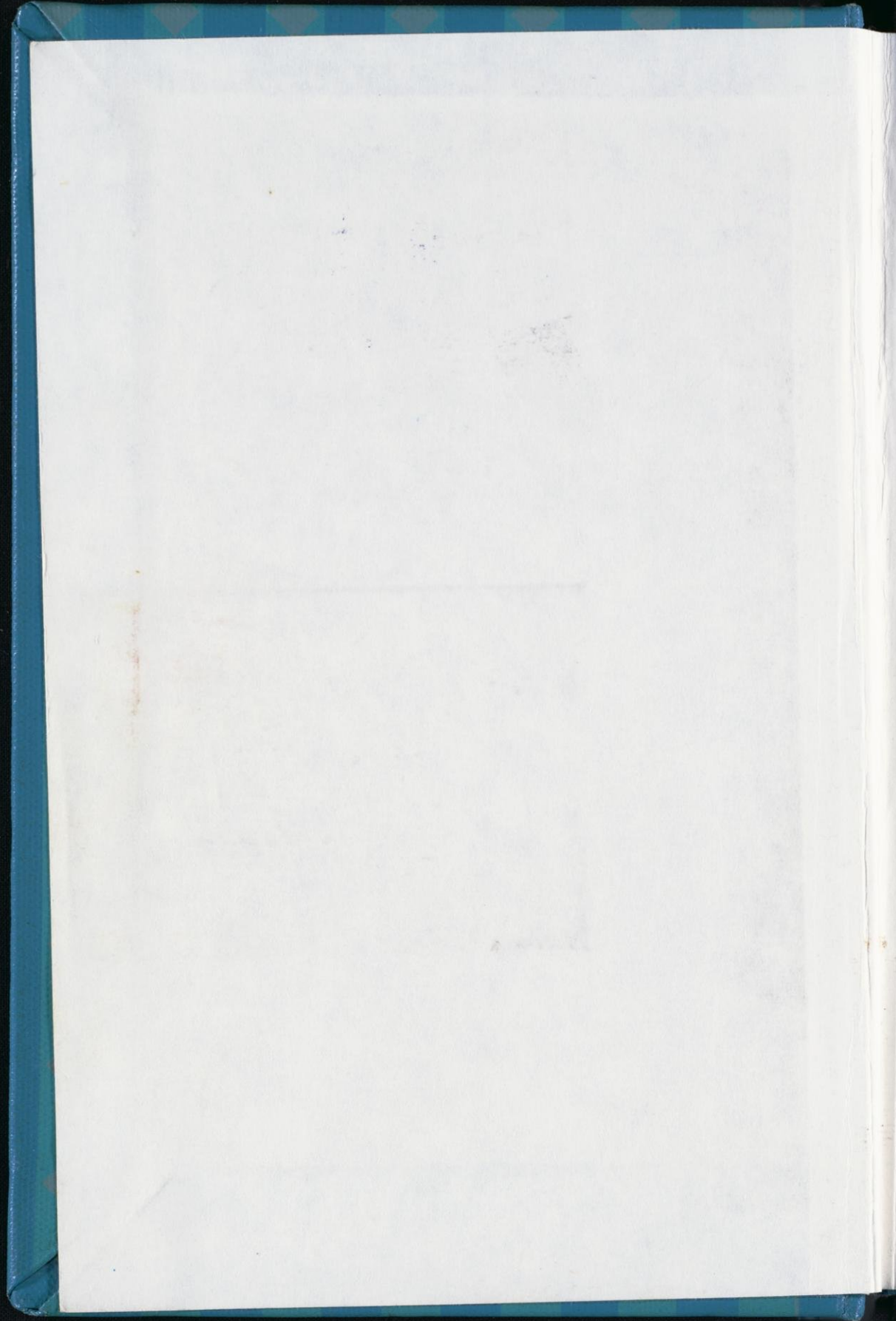
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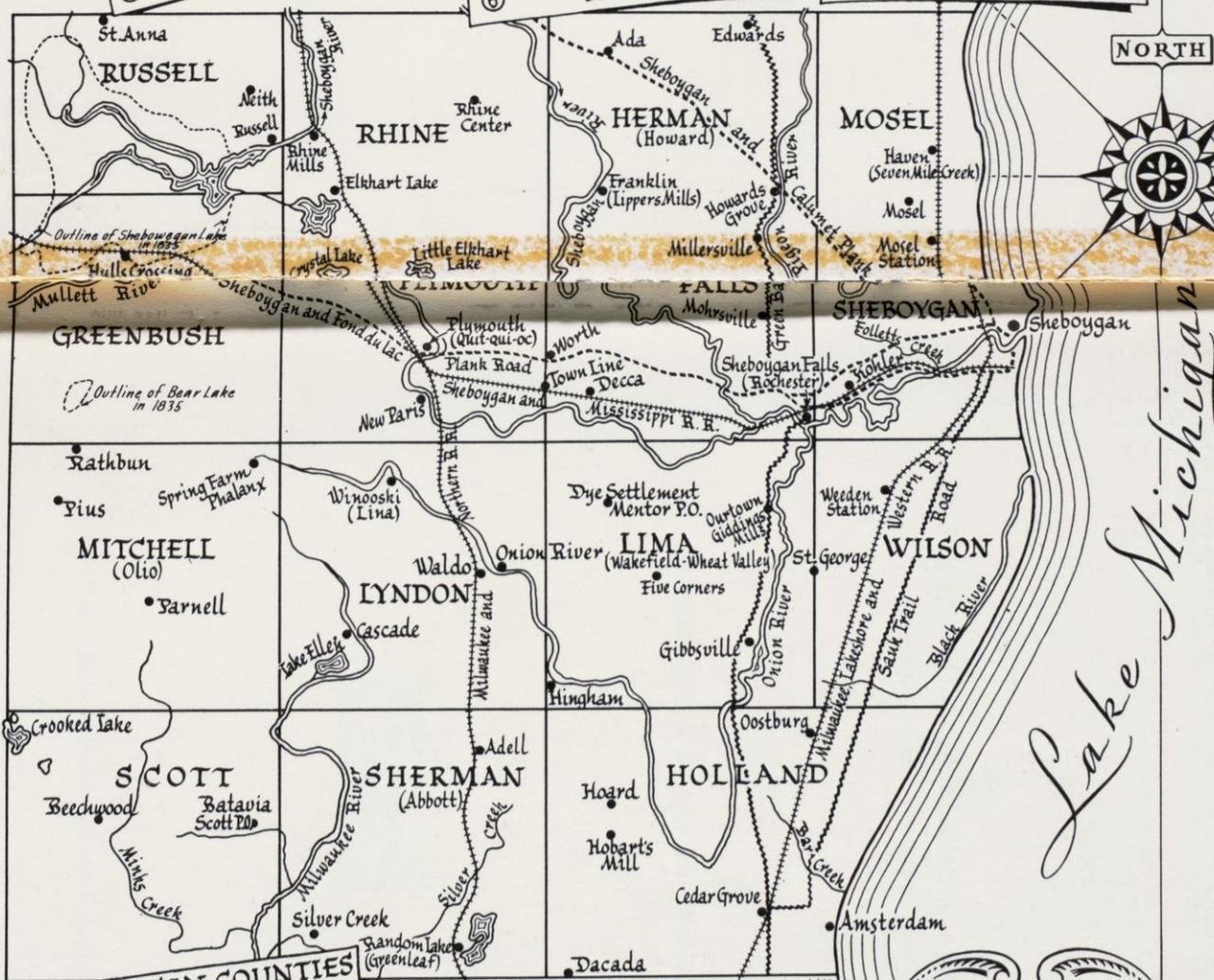
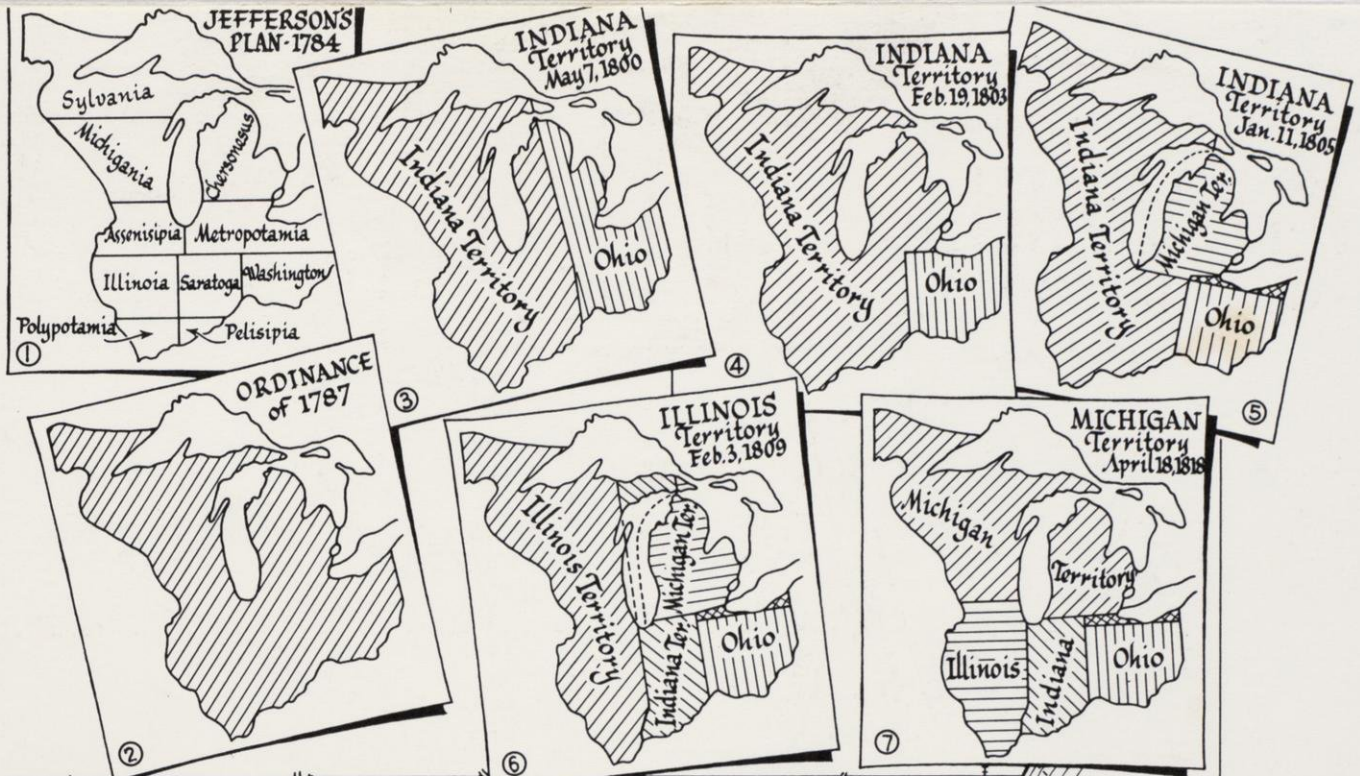
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Green Bush	Plymouth	Sheboygan Falls	Sheboygan
Lyndon	Gibberville		
Scott	Holland		

County in 1849

HISTORIC SHEBOYGAN COUNTY

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By
GUSTAVE WILLIAM BUCHEN, A. B., LL. B.
Member of the Wisconsin Bar

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RAY VAN HANDEL



Local history builds national history

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*Dedicated to the Memory of
My Father and Mother
Pioneer Settlers of Sheboygan County*

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PREFACE

A COMPREHENSIVE history of Sheboygan County has not hitherto been written. A local historian once declared that whoever would have the temerity to undertake to write such a history had a job cut out for him. In the preparation of this book I have found this to be only too true. It has taken most of my spare hours for a period of nearly ten years. Presenting practically an untouched field of research, the task of searching out and assembling the multitude of facts making up the story of the county from earliest times down to the present decade has been a stupendous venture, but withal a pleasurable one.

I have written this book not only for the general reader, but for use in schools to stimulate interest in local history among boys and girls who will be the citizens of to-morrow. In the interest of accuracy I have made it a point throughout my studies to go back, wherever possible, to original sources of information. Numerous mistakes have crept into existing histories and sketches of the county, owing to the tendency of writers to depend upon secondary rather than source material, which has resulted in many errors being perpetuated and carried down from one account to another. Also, wherever possible, I have tried not to leave the reader in doubt as to the sources of information, by giving citations of authority for the principal statements of the narrative.

I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to the following persons for allowing me the use of historical material in their possession or in other ways assisting me in my undertaking: Homer C. Denison, Eugene A. Hickey, Harry E. Barrows, Gail Donohue, the late Jerry Donohue, Mrs. Harry E. Thomas, August Lutze, Mary Denn, Mrs. George J. Kroeff, Martin F. Matthies, Charles E. Broughton, Hiram H. Born, Walter J. Pfister, Henry Kuiper, Sheboygan; William A. Lumsden, Lemont H. Richardson, Oscar A. Damrow, Sarah L. Spratt, L. O. Tetzlaff, Mrs. Leone Coleman, Sheboygan Falls; Ethel Gilman, Julius A. Laack, George L. Mooney, Mr. and Mrs. Edwin J. Larson, Plymouth; City Clerks Joseph E. Leberman, Sheboygan, Asher L. Leavens, Sheboygan Falls, Walter H. Kohl, Plymouth; Herbert J. Huyck, Harley Harling, Egbert S. Wierman, Waldo; Mae E. Gardner, Hingham; Mr. and Mrs. Jesse C. Saemann, Adell; Ralph Kohlman, Cascade; Mrs. Benno Wiffler, nee Heraty, Fond du Lac; Mrs. Ella Farnsworth Waful, Chicago;

John Farnsworth, Marinette; the late Frank H. Denison, Mellen; Dr. A. Voskuil, Cedar Grove; Mrs. Alma Arpke, town of Lima; Mrs. Florence Westerbeke, Oostburg; Fred G. Wilson, T. H. Bakken, Madison; town clerks George Phalen, Lyndon, Gus. Knauer, Mitchell, Norman Schierstedt, Plymouth, Clarence La Fever, Scott, Paul W. Frederich and Harry E. Howard, Sheboygan, Henry Schomberg, Sheboygan Falls, Arno Stolper, Sherman.

My special thanks go to Mr. Ray Van Handel, Sheboygan, whose authentic and artistic illustrations add so greatly to the interest and attractiveness of this book.

GUSTAVE W. BUCHEN.

Sheboygan, Wisconsin,
January 3, 1944.

FOREWORD

WHEN one delves into history it means treading on dangerous ground, for Father Time has made many changes and it takes a perusal of, and an exhaustive search through, time-worn records, and intimate contacts with pioneers, to present a true picture of bygone days.

A history of Sheboygan County in its early days, written a half century ago, would have been an easy matter. I know of no one better able to write a history now than Mr. Buchen, for the historical background of our state has been an absorbing topic with him.

Mr. Buchen was born and raised on a farm in the Town of Lyndon near the Village of Cascade. His father and mother, Gotthardt and Elizabeth Buchen,* were immigrants from Germany and early settlers in the county. They came here with their parents as a part of the early-day immigration of those who engaged in the German revolutionary movement in 1848. They were of that fine type of citizens who, as adopted sons and daughters, gave new blood to America.

The writer of the history of Sheboygan County was born in 1886. While he did not experience the full drama and struggle of the pioneer era, he grew up in the transition period between the pioneer and modern times, when many of the earlier primitive conditions still prevailed. Much of what he wrote he acquired by first hand observation and knowledge. The era in which he lived may be said to forcibly illustrate three significant sociological movements in American history: the rise of the immigrants and their descendants, the trend of the population from the country

* Gotthardt Buchen was born in Saxon Altenburg, Germany, Dec. 6, 1846, and after coming to the United States, in 1854, settled with his parents on a small farm in the Town of Wilson in Sheboygan County. On Aug. 21, 1862, when he was only fifteen years of age, he enlisted as a drummer boy in Co. E, 27th Reg. Wis. Vol. Inf. He served in the army three years, and was discharged from service at Brownsville, Texas, Aug. 29, 1865. On Nov. 17, 1867, he was married to Elizabeth Heinke, who was born in Mecklenburg, Germany, Mar. 24, 1847, and located with her parents on a farm in the town of Sheboygan Falls. In 1872 Gotthardt and Elizabeth Buchen bought a large farm in the town of Lyndon, where they continued to live until their deaths. He died Jan. 10, 1894, and she died Feb. 2, 1897. A successful farmer, Gotthardt Buchen was also an active live stock dealer, commercial thresherman, and cheese factory owner. At the time of his death he was commander of Abner O. Heald Post No. 192 of the G. A. R., at Cascade.

to the city, and the improvement of the status of the individual through the influence of the public schools.

A boy on the farm, Mr. Buchen attended Joint School District Number Two of the Townships of Lyndon and Sherman, and later, the graded school at Waldo, walking four miles to school in all kinds of weather. At the age of 12, after the death of his parents, he went to live with an older brother who had become sheriff, and that was the turning point of his life. As a boy in the Sheboygan High School, and mingling with the participants at trials in the court house, he conceived the ambition to become a lawyer. Graduating from the High School in 1905 he entered the State University at Madison, where he became interested in the study of American history, and more especially, the history of the West, under that great historian of the American frontier, Professor Frederick Jackson Turner.

Mr. Buchen graduated from the University in 1909, and for some time taught school in order that he might continue his education in the law. For two years he was a teacher of public speaking in the University of Oregon on the Pacific coast. Later he returned to the University of Wisconsin as an instructor of public speaking, and he was admitted to the bar of Wisconsin in June, 1912.

Since that time Mr. Buchen has been actively engaged in the practice of law in Sheboygan, and at the present time holds the position of State Senator from the twentieth senatorial district. A student and a lawyer, bent upon thoroughness at all times, it was but a step for him to enter upon his literary venture. He knew where to gain the information, and he sought out avenues and traced them religiously in his efforts to compile a history that would be historically correct. This work has taxed his efforts for ten long years, browsing among untouched fields of research. Many times have we been approached on some phase of this important work, and as President of the Sheboygan County Historical Society it gives me unbounded pleasure to recommend this book to the many lovers of history who have hesitated to undertake this task themselves because of the research and the cost incidental to preparing a book of this character.

We have always marveled at the detail in which the historically-minded people of Green Bay have preserved their records. Unfortunately many counties were less fortunate, and fires and other incidents of destruction have obscured early events. It took a man like Mr. Buchen to trace all this, and to bring it into one volume

where Sheboygan County can take its place with other counties, its early days recounted, including details which were a part of long lost or mislaid records.

This history and the author of it may not gain immediate recognition, but in the days that lie ahead in years hence people will point with pride to the author's work. It will be a textbook that can be used not only here at home, but in every library in the State of Wisconsin.

As one of the Curators of the State Historical Society it is my pleasure to welcome this new contribution to Wisconsin's many histories and documents of a truly great state.

C. E. BROUGHTON.

INTRODUCTION TO 1976 EDITION

In the preface to the first edition of this book my father wrote, "A comprehensive history of Sheboygan County has not hitherto been written." Since its publication in 1944 no other comprehensive history has been published. However, the book has long been out of print and just from the number of requests for the book I have received, it is time that it be made available again to a new generation and to the members of the older generations who have not had a chance to read it.

There is a renewed interest in history generated by the Nation's Bicentennial Celebration. It is an appropriate time to reissue the best and most complete local history. While the Indians were here long before 1776, the first fur trading post was established in Sheboygan County in 1795, only twelve years after the close of the Revolutionary War.

I do not remember when my father conceived the idea of writing this history, but I am certain that it was after he had spent many years gathering information on the history of the County. He had been the author of the short history of the County which appeared in the Sheboygan County Atlas published periodically for many years by the Donohue Engineering Company and he also wrote a number of other articles on local history before undertaking the writing of a complete history.

My father had a thorough knowledge of the County, its people and places. Almost every weekend he would drive out into the County to fish in one of its lakes or streams, to walk in a woods, or just to talk to an "oldtimer" to obtain information for his book. Sometimes he would take me along. He knew every road, stream and woods in the County.

He loved to speak and to write and did both exceedingly well. These attributes made him a highly respected trial lawyer. Wherever possible in this book he cited and often quoted his original source material, an indication of his legal background. If the book is read without reference to its many footnotes much of value will be missed. For example, the footnote on page 114 explains the system of land survey from which we get our legal property descriptions. On page 103 the footnote tells the story of one of the strangest coroner's inquests in 1847 ever to be held anywhere. Many others contain biographical sketches of important figures in the County's history and other interesting facts.

My favorite chapter is the first one entitled "Stiring Events" in which he tells the story, mostly in the form of contemporary accounts, of such events as the Phoenix disaster and the famous Indian Scare of 1862.

The book contains some surprising information such as the story of the Spring Farm Experiment which was a communal living group established in the Town of Mitchell in 1846.

It was suggested that a chapter be added to this new edition to bring the history up to date. However, the events of the last 30 years or so are well known and are too recent to be seen in proper perspective at this time. In addition, the information on what has happened in the past 30 years is readily available from other sources.

One thing the original edition lacks, is an index. Thanks to the Mead Public Library and its Reference Department, that need has now been supplied in this edition making the book an even more valuable reference source.

John G. Buchen

Sheboygan, Wisconsin
February 1976

CHAPTER 1

STIRRING EVENTS

SHEBOYGAN County has a past as colorful and romantic as can be found anywhere. For over a hundred years the steady stream of men and events that make up its history has proceeded onward:—Savage Indians skulking through the shadows of the underbrush and trees—Wandering hunters and traders thoroughly at home in the wilderness and ever in quest of the coveted furs and peltries with which the region abounded—Black-robed missionaries counting their beads as they plodded the weary miles, their one thought the salvation of heathen souls—Adventurous government surveyors running their survey lines across hitherto unexplored and unknown country—Greedy speculators searching out the most desirable tracts of land ahead of settlers—Hardy pioneers forsaking their old home-places and pushing westward by vessel and covered-wagon to seek their fortunes in a new land of opportunity—Courageous home-seekers carving homes and farms out of the unyielding forest, and laboring unremittingly to wrest a livelihood from the virgin soil—The building of highways, ships and railroads to reach the outside world—The founding of farms, towns, schools, churches and factories to provide the comforts of life and the amenities of civilization where only raw and untamed nature had since the dawn of time held sway.

All this and more is the story of Sheboygan County. History holds no more fascinating tales than these. In this chapter are collected some of the more picturesque and outstanding of the varied incidents that have marked its course. Many of them have been gleaned from old, musty, forgotten records, and will doubtless prove entirely new to most of our readers.

First, there is the story of how Lake Elkhart got its name. *Me-shay-wa-o-dey-ni-bis*—a word from the Potawatomie tongue—is what the Indians called it, according to Dr. Alphonse Gerend, a native Sheboygan County archaeologist of note. Popular belief is that it received its appellation because of its supposed resemblance to the heart of an elk; but it is irregular in outline, with many nooks and bays. More likely, the name descended from an old legend which is probably the only perfect example of an Indian myth laid in the county that is extant today. The tradition has

come down to us through the years in this wise: It was told by an old Indian hunter to the grandfather of a lady, who told it to her friend, Mark Harrison, an artist living at Elkhart Lake, who had it printed in the Fond du Lac Press, from which it was reprinted in the Evergreen City Times on April 14, 1866.

THE LEGEND OF LAKE ELKHART.—"The mighty storm had laid low tall forest trees, and made the spirit of the waters angry. The loud voice of thunder had ceased, but the lightning still played now and then through the dark clouds, which were fast breaking away over the lake. The air had become still, and the waters were again peaceful. Upon the shore stood an Indian girl. The storm was on her face. Lightning gleamed from her dark eyes. Cloudy was her forehead, and the rain drops were on her cheeks. The lake had become calm, but in her heart the storm raged fiercer than ever. The brave Wapita who by this lake had so often told his love for her, now cared for her no more, and in the heart of the Indian girl was despair. Her father, a chief, had been killed in the wars of his tribe, and her mother's grave was far away. She had no friend but Wapita, and he loved her no more. The daughter of the chief Oconostota was now Wapita's favorite, and he heeded not the dark eyes of his first love.

"To an old squaw had the Indian girl told her grief, and the squaw had spoke to her: 'Weep not! Wapita loves Oconostota's daughter because her eyes are softer and her hair more silky than yours; but drink the hearts' blood of an elk and you shall be more beautiful. Then, however, you will cease to love Wapita!' As the Indian girl stood on the shore of the lake with love and rage storming in her breast, an elk came bounding from the woods. Then remembered she the words of the old squaw, and as swift and keen as the lightning from her eyes, flew the arrow from her bow and pierced the flank of the elk. With a hunting knife, which she carried in her girdle, she quickly found the elk's heart and drank eagerly of its blood, until, looking into the clear water mirror, she beheld her eyes growing soft and dark as the dead elk's before her, and her hair soft and silky.

"Then she returned to her home, and Wapita saw and loved her. But she loved him not, nor would she suffer him to speak to her, for though her eyes had grown soft, her heart had become hard and cold, and the despair and grief which once had filled it, now found their way into the heart of Wapita. In vain did he strive for her favor. Bravest of warriors and handsomest of men! Yet she laughed at his love, and cared not for the jewelry he offered her. Then in madness did Wapita seek the lake and throw himself into its smiling waters, which became his grave; and the Indians called it the lake of the elk's heart, and we know it now by the name of Lake Elkhart."

There is also the dramatic story of the comely but fickle Indian maiden, the daughter of *Wau-me-ge-sa-ko*, or *Wampum*, a Chipewewa chief living at Sheboygan, for whose love two young braves poured out their life-blood in mortal combat. What a tale a Henry Wadsworth Longfellow could have woven around the incident! It would have been a classic of Indian lore comparable to "Hiawatha."

The event took place in the shadow of old Fort Dearborn at Chicago in the fall of 1833. A vast concourse of tribesmen from all parts of the Northwest, fantastically painted and arrayed, was assembled to negotiate treaties with the government for the sale of additional lands to the whites and to receive goods and finery. It was a wild and bustling scene, a festive gathering dear to the child-like savage heart. The lodges of the redmen were scattered in every direction, and their horses dotted the landscape for a great distance, grazing upon the grass which grew in abundance. Parties of warriors with their families continually came and went, the men wearing gay blankets, feathered head-dresses, leggings of buckskin, and beaded moccasins; the women also strikingly attired; and all mounted on ponies as varied in color as the costumes of their riders. Near the walls of the stockade, under the watchful eyes of the soldiers on the ramparts, their leaders sat in conference with the government commissioners. Outside the fort the young bucks engaged in various contests of physical prowess and skill, such as running, jumping, wrestling, shooting, racing, dancing, and feats of horsemanship. Before the lodges, knots of gamblers congregated, ready to chance not only their worldly possessions, but even their wives and daughters. Around the camp-fires the chattering squaws busied themselves roasting marrow-bones, tongues, ribs, humps, haunches, and other delicacies of beef and venison. The air rang with the general din and hubbub. Among this motley throng were two handsome young braves—specimens of Indian manhood as magnificent as one could hope to see. Both were sons of chiefs, and both were in love with Wampum's daughter. Unable to make up her mind as to which of her suitors she preferred, she finally agreed to marry the one who would prove victorious in a duel. Her strange proposal received the approval of the council of headmen after solemn deliberation around the council-fire, and preparations for the encounter proceeded apace. Two white eye-witnesses of the fight were Jacques Vieau, builder of the first fur-trading post in Sheboygan County, and his son-in-law, Solomon Juneau, the founder of Milwaukee. The story is recorded by Peter J. Vieau, son of old Jacques, who said that he

had often heard his father and Juneau tell it. Peters J. Vieau thus describes the scene:

"Then their ponies were brought, one a black, the other a gray. The duelists and their saddles were decked with beads, silver brooches, ribbons and other ornaments such as the traders bartered with the Indians; the ponies' manes and tails were tricked out with ribbons, and altogether it was like one of those ancient tournaments in France that I have read of in the old histories. First, the ponies were driven side by side one or two times in a circle around the council place in front of the store. Then together, the duelists and their friends started out for the place of encounter, swimming their horses across the river, and drew up on an open spot on the north side. Crude flags were hung on poles, which were stuck up in the sand round about, an Indian sign that a fight to the death was in progress. Indian guards were placed, to clear a ring of two or three hundred yards; heading these guards, and acting as seconds, were *Chepoi* and *Seebwasen*. A little outside the ring, all alone, stood the girl being fought for, apparently indifferent, her arms akimbo. The time was an hour before sundown, and there were present four or five hundred whites and Indians.

"One of the duelists wheeled to the right, the other to the left. Then they brought their horses sideways close together, head to tail, tail to head. Either *Chepoi* or *Seebwasen* cried in the Potawatomi tongue, "Time is up! Ready!" At this each fighter instantly drew his green-handled bowie, fully twenty inches long. As they rushed together, there was a frightful hubbub among the spectators. Juneau fainted, so did many others. The Indian women rent the air with their cries. Such thrusts as those fellows gave each other in the back! The blood spurted at each blow. Finally *Sanguanauneebee's* boy fell over backwards, his arm raised for a blow, but with the knife of the other in his spine. A moment later *Seebwasen's* son cried out in his death agony, and also fell backwards. Both died almost simultaneously. The horses stood stock still. The girl, now with no lover left, wrung her hands in frenzy".¹

Then there is the tragic account of the burning of the propellor *Phoenix*, one of the major marine disasters of all times, which occurred Nov. 21, 1847, when Sheboygan County was still an infant settlement on the fringe of the wilderness. News of the catastrophe shocked the entire world; but it was particularly appalling to the people of this county, not only because it happened in their immediate vicinity, but because most of those who lost their lives aboard the ship were immigrants from Holland—"strangers from a

¹ Narrative of Peter J. Vieau, Wis. Hist. Coll. XV, 452.

strange land"—nearing the end of their long journey to join relatives and friends who had preceded them here a short time before.

Extensive accounts of the catastrophe appeared a few days later in Milwaukee, Chicago, Detroit and Cleveland journals; and a graphic article about it, written by William O. Van Eyck, has been published in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*.² We are indebted to Mr. Van Eyck's article for most of the facts here presented, and have adopted some of his own language in describing the tragic event.

Nearly all the passengers aboard the ill-fated *Phoenix* were from Winterswijk, Varsseveld, Oosterbeek, Holten and Apeldoorn, in the provinces of Gelderland and Overijssel, having left the land of their birth with the object of improving their condition in the new world. Embarking at Rotterdam the latter part of September, they reached New York near the end of October; and from there they traveled to Buffalo, where they boarded the *Phoenix*, which was to carry them on the last leg of their trip to Sheboygan and the town of Holland. A vessel of 300 tons burden, and one of the crack ships on the lakes, it was bound for Chicago heavily laden with merchandise and carrying about 300 passengers. At Grand River, Fairport, Ohio, the captain, B. G. Sweet, injured his knee so severely that he had to take to his cabin, placing the vessel in charge of the mate. Encountering bad weather on Lake Michigan, the boat put in at Manitowoc late Saturday afternoon to take refuge from the storm and replenish its supply of wood. The gale abating in a few hours, she left Manitowoc for Sheboygan, 28 miles away, shortly after one o'clock Sunday morning. All seemed well with the ship. Most of the passengers were asleep. There was little or no wind, and the waves had subsided, except for the usual dead swell after a storm; but the air was bitterly cold and penetrating. The lights of Sheboygan were already in sight. Within an hour or so the vessel would be gliding into the harbor and discharging its human cargo safe and sound at the dock. No portent of impending disaster was observable.

Suddenly the alarm of fire rang out. The boiler-room was a mass of swirling smoke and flames. Almost immediately, everything was confusion and tumult; passengers and crew alike were thrown into a panic, although some semblance of order was maintained for a brief space. Bucket-brigades were formed to combat the conflagration, until it was seen that the *Phoenix* was doomed.

² Wis. Mag. of Hist. VII, p. 281.

Despite all efforts the flames gained headway, driving the terrified passengers and crew to bow and stern, to hurricane deck and rigging. Two small boats were the only life-saving equipment the vessel carried. These were launched about 4:45 o'clock, and into them 43 persons, including the injured Captain Sweet, were crowded, all of whom after a perilous trip finally reached shore and safety. Meanwhile the situation aboard the ship, while becoming increasingly desperate, did not seem entirely hopeless. Help from nearby Sheboygan and from other vessels that must be in the vicinity, attracted by the flames that lighted the sky, it was felt would surely arrive in time. The shore being not more than five miles away, it was also expected that the lifeboats would soon return. But with each passing moment, hope yielded to despair. Realizing their awful fate, men, women and children became frantic and ungovernable; agonized pleas, cries, screams, rent the air; the whole presenting a scene that beggars description. The cabin was hastily torn apart, and together with doors, ladders, furniture, thrown into the water to serve as floats. Many jumped overboard, but either drowned outright, or if they succeeded in reaching a piece of floating wreckage, became so benumbed by the cold that they lost their hold and perished. A few sought to escape death by climbing into the ratlines and rigging, but the fire mounted the tarred ropes and forced them to drop, their clothing aflame and their flesh seared, upon the burning deck or into the icy lake. Some tried to swim ashore, but were lost; others were found on their floats literally killed by the cold.

Some of the individual incidents of the tragic occurrence are particularly affecting. Two young girls, daughters of Hiram Hazleton, proprietor of the Merchants' Hotel in Sheboygan, returning from school in the east, almost back home, but with all escape cut off, leaped overboard together, only to sink at once. Several of the young immigrants who had planned to marry as soon as they had chosen their new homes, their plans cut short by the disaster, joined hands and jumped into the water so that they would not be divided even in death. One woman clinging to a floating settee, when told that a rescue-boat was near, swooned away from joy at the prospect of her deliverance, and thereby lost her grip, and sank out of sight. A girl who jumped into the water, succeeded in getting her hands on one of the boats as it was leaving the ship, but the occupants, forced to choose between the loss of one or all, loosened her hold and allowed her to perish. A young mother, managing to save herself by clinging desperately to the stern of

a boat all the way to shore, never rallied from the shock and died six months later. The cabin boy was found on a floating ladder, lying on his side, his head resting on his hand, as if asleep. He had died from the cold. The engineer, who escaped, supported himself upon a floating door about two hours, surrounded by many other persons on rafts, whom he saw, one after another, bitten by cold, lose their hold and sink to a watery grave. And so the terrible details could be multiplied many fold. But enough.

The *Phoenix* disaster produced many deeds of heroism as well as acts of selfishness. The hero of the hour was David Blish Jr.,³ a young business man of Kenosha, who proved to be an angel of mercy in the midst of the raging inferno. His hair singed and his clothes burned, he went bravely about aiding, encouraging and consoling the fear-stricken passengers. Assisting the injured captain to the lifeboat, he declined a seat for himself, saying, "There is work left for me here, and I want to take my chances with the rest." He stood at the gangplank to prevent the swamping of the lifeboats, and then after they had left, turned to resume the fight against the fire. When practically the whole boat was afire, he took into his arms a lost and bewildered child, protecting her body against the licking flames, and exposing his own. The last heard of Mr. Blish was that he was active among the rafts; that he had finally constructed a little one for himself; and that, holding two children, he clung tenaciously to it until, benumbed by the cold, he had to let go, and perished—a hero to the last. For days after the catastrophe people hoped and prayed for his safety. His heroism and self-sacrifice had thrilled every heart. The hope was cherished that he was still afloat on a raft, or on a supposed third lifeboat, and had been driven farther out into the lake; but it was a vain hope. Nothing was ever found of the heroic Blish, and nothing further will be known of his great sacrifice until "the sea gives up its dead." The suggestion has been made that some day a suitable memorial should be erected on North Point in memory of the *Phoenix* victims, with the name of Blish leading all the rest, for

³ "Mr. Blish was one of the earliest residents of Wisconsin, having emigrated to the Territory in 1833 or '34. He was born in Walpole, N. H., and at the time of his death, was within a few days of thirty-three years of age. For six or seven years prior to 1840, he resided at Green Bay. In 1840 he removed to this village and engaged in the mercantile business. He had earned for himself an enviable reputation as a business man, and a high character as an intelligent and useful citizen. Our village furnishes evidences of his enterprise. The large warehouse and pier he had just completed are among these evidences. His loss cannot but be considered a public loss." Southport Telegraph, Dec. 1, 1847.

"greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

The trip of the overcrowded lifeboats to shore in the cold, gray morning, shortly after the conflagration set in, was a precarious one. The second boat in the confusion got but one oar, and was sculled all the way to land. It dipped a great deal of water, which the Hollanders baled out with their wooden shoes, while one of the men, Dirk A. Voskuil, helped row with a broom. The occupants were scantily dressed, some being almost naked. When they landed, it was so cold that the ground was hard with frost, and large bonfires had to be kindled. Most of them were nervous wrecks, and were kept under physicians' care for weeks. The confusion, the encroaching flames, the shouting, the cries of mothers and children standing at the rail with outstretched arms, pleading for release from their death-trap, had completely unnerved them. Their grief was inconsolable, and never during their lifetimes was the horrible scene effaced from their memories.

While the tragedy was being enacted, some watchful eye at Sheboygan discovered the burning ship and spread the alarm. Captain Porter of the schooner *Liberty*, then lying in the harbor, unable to sail his ship on account of the little wind, manned his lifeboat and started for the rescue, while the propellor *Delaware*, also there, began to steam up at once. In half an hour all Sheboygan was on the beach, and many small boats were on their way to the scene of disaster. The *Delaware*, after a delay that seemed age-long, was the first to arrive, at about seven o'clock. Captain Porter arrived a few minutes later, and later yet one of the *Phoenix's* own lifeboats returned from shore. But long before the *Delaware* hove to, all was over, and three men, two clinging to the rudder chains, and engineer House on his drifting door, besides the forty-three who had escaped in the lifeboats, were the only ones left to tell the tale.

Finding the *Phoenix* burned to the water's edge, and no sign of any survivors, the *Delaware* took the smoking ruin, then nothing but a floating hearse and cemetery, in tow. With the beach crowded by anxious and grief-stricken people, and with the survivors on shore delirious from the shock, weeping piteously for the lost, it was one of the most mournful funeral processions on earth. The crew of the *Delaware*, rough seamen though they were, stood bare-headed all the way to Sheboygan, and there was not a dry eye among them. The survivors who had escaped in the lifeboats, and landed about eight miles north of Sheboygan, were brought in on

wagons, or walked, reaching the city about noon. The good people of Sheboygan did everything possible for them, and kept them for weeks until they were able to proceed.

On her way to Manitowoc the same day, the *Delaware* passed the scene of the tragedy, and counted between thirty and forty floating bodies of victims. Capt. Tuttle, although importuned by many to pick up the bodies, rather callously, it would seem, refused to stop, supposing, as later stated, that boats from Sheboygan or Manitowoc would do so. It is believed that none of these bodies were ever recovered, as winter storms set in almost immediately afterward.

The cause of the disaster was never definitely established. Although the general belief at the time was that it was due to intoxication of part of the crew, Dr. J. J. Brown says, "I am satisfied that this was not the case, as several very intelligent passengers say they saw no such thing."

The total number of people lost on the ill-fated *Phoenix* is as uncertain as the cause of the disaster. Mr. Van Eyck, after a careful investigation, estimates that the number lost was not much below 250, of whom about 127 were Hollanders; and that of the 46 persons saved, 25 were Hollanders. These survivors for the most part settled in Sheboygan County, progenitors of some of the leading Holland families in our community today.⁴

⁴ Mr. Van Eyck's article is also printed in a booklet entitled, "The History of the Landeweerd's", published in 1925, and revised in 1939, by The Landeweerd Clan, an organization of the descendants of those members of the Landeweerd family who survived the *Phoenix* disaster. Among the Hollanders on board the ship was Hendrik Landeweerd, with his wife, 8 children and one grandchild. Of these all were lost except four children, Gerdina, Teuntje, Hendrika and Hanna, and the grandchild, Dena Johanna Schuppert, the daughter of Gerdina. Teuntje later married Jan Berend Wissink, Hendrika married Dirk Anthony Voskuil, and Hanna married H. J. Meengs. In May 1939 the Landeweerd family numbered 529 persons, of whom 420 were living and 109 had died. They are scattered all over the United States, but located principally in Sheboygan County and at Baldwin, Wis. Every year since 1918 the descendants have held a family picnic in the county, to keep green the memory of their ancestors. "The History of the Landeweerd's" was written by Mesdames H. Kreunen, W. Renskers and Will Hilbelink.

The list of the survivors and the lost in the *Phoenix* disaster was read at the 50th Anniversary of the settlement of the town of Holland celebrated in Blekkink's Grove, near Oostburg, July 5, 1897.

Additional Accounts of the *Phoenix* Disaster: Sheb. Herald, June 5, 1897, from Milw. Sentinel; by W. W. Potter, Hingham, Sheb. Herald, June 12, 1897, relating the stories of Mrs. B. W. Pietenpol and Mrs. H. J. Wilterdink, both survivors; by John Geerlings, one of the survivors, Sheb. Herald, Mar. 12, 1904. The only local story now in existence, written at the time of the catastrophe, is one by Dr. J. J. Brown, a physician at Sheboygan, who attended the *Phoenix* survivors, published in the Sheboygan Mercury Nov. 26, 1847, and reprinted in the Sheboygan Herald, June 5, 1897.

In contrast to the sad story of the *Phoenix* disaster is a happy one of a typical pioneer wedding—the marriage of David Giddings to Dorothy Trowbridge. David, then a promising young business man of Sheboygan Falls, was destined to become one of the county's most influential citizens. Dorothy was the daughter of William Trowbridge, residing on a farm on the road to Plymouth about three miles west of the Falls. "Deacon" Trowbridge, he was affectionately called by all who knew him. The account of the wedding is written by Giddings' friend, James H. Denison. A man of no inconsiderable education, and a contributor to the newspapers of his day on subjects of local history, Mr. Denison's style, while flowery and quaint, like that of most early writers, charmingly reflects the spirit of the occasion of which he is the chronicler. The story has never been published before, so far as is known, and has been taken from a manuscript in the possession of his son, the late Frank H. Denison, formerly an attorney at Sheboygan, and later residing at Mellen, Wisconsin. Records reveal that the all-important event took place June 7, 1842. Mr. Denison writes:

"At the Trowbridge homestead all was hustle with the tense air of nervous preparation. The long looked for day had arrived at last. For many weeks all the young people for miles about had thought of, talked of, dreamed of nothing else.

"Now some of the neighbor women had come in to help out. The pioneer bread made from unbolted wheat flour ground in the corner of the saw mill at the Falls in a crude home-made contrivance consisting of two hardened rocks, the one stationary while the other was made to revolve above it, had been baked the day before, and was piled in attractive looking piles beneath the window. Maple sugar was piled high on a table. Some rude cake, made of a combination of the flour and sugar, seasoned with carroway and inlaid with carefully shelled beechnuts, very precious stuff, was just coming, steaming hot, from the oven. Venison, wild pigeon, and a day's shooting of partridges were seen in various stages of preparation for the eager palates of the coming guests. Garlands and festoons of cedar were hung all about and the wild flowers of the endless woods were there in profusion.

"Dorothy, the precious forest bred child of the sturdy blacksmith, farmer, lay preacher, and justice of the peace, was to be married this afternoon to David Giddings, the young surveyor, Harvard graduate, farmer and land dealer, who had come to the great woods some years before and laid the foundations of the neighboring village. He had attained that maturity that left yet much of promise, supported by the well merited achievements of the past. She was in the full bloom of a sheltered young womanhood, as pure as the wild flowers

that grew up beside her, sturdy and familiar with the hardships of a pioneer life, possessed of that rare combination of firmness and gentleness in just the right proportion to make a radiant household queen as well as capable wife and model mother.

"A wedding,—fraught with such tremendous possibilities for good or ill to the participants and to future generations,—viewed by the historian and the descendants of the contracting parties as an event of momentous gravity, is seen by its contemporaries as an occasion for levity, practical jokes, flippant remarks and opportunity for display. To David, the step he was about to take was the most serious event of his career. For his bride he had selected a young woman of serious mind and congenial spirit, inured to the deprivations of pioneer life, who seemed to him the embodiment of all the practical virtues. She was fair to look upon and her bright eyes and warm lips bespoke a temperament cheerful, placid, vivacious. Her smile carried with it a cordial good fellowship that made her loved and admired by all. If her happiness on this her wedding day was composed in part of a spirit of exultation, it was none the less marked by a full realization of the duties as well as the opportunities which awaited her.

"Deacon Trowbridge, the father of the young bride, was to perform the ceremony. His best black suit had been carefully brushed and lay on the bed ready for him. Of all the millions of men the world has seen, there was never another such a man as this Deacon William Trowbridge. Although but little past fifty years of age, his long flowing beard, already well sprinkled with white, gave him a patriarchal appearance which, in a land where men past forty were few, caused him to be revered as a sort of father to the whole community. Gentle, kindly, unselfish, moderate and deeply pious, in a land without priest or pastor, he was frequently sought by the tortured soul in its hour of trouble, and he gave freely of his consolation and counsel. On Sunday mornings he gathered about him a little flock of kindred spirits and in simple but impressive language, told them the story of the Redeemer of men. During the week he toiled upon his farm, but was ever ready to suspend his own work to perform some job at his blacksmith forge to mend the broken tool of a neighbor.

"The sun was but little past the meridian when the guests began to arrive. A motley crowd of men and women they were, dressed in the simple garb of the pioneer; each woman was her own dressmaker, and her husband's tailor. Every stitch in the family apparel was her handiwork. The day of the sewing machine was not yet. There was little time for frills and furbelows and little thought of Parisian style. Clothing was to cover the nakedness and to retain the animal warmth of the body clothed, not to adorn the body and expose or suggest its voluptuous attractions. Many came on foot. More came on

logboats drawn by oxen. An Indian or two came on ponies, but a horse was of no use to a white man among those stumps.

"Slowly chewing their cud as they walked leisurely along the old winding Indian trail, widened by the axe of the white man, an immense pair of red and white oxen with wide spreading horns, was observed approaching the festive scene in languid indifference to the fact that, momentarily at least, they were the center of interest. Their yoke was polished. They were sleek and fat, the admiration of the assembled guests and the pride of their driver, who was mounted on a logboat of the better type, made of two maple planks sawed with a hip on the old muley saw at the Falls, and fastened together by arched cross pieces to which the planks were firmly bolted. Over all was a floor of maple plank upon which the driver stood. His close knit frame was clad in a suit of broadcloth, and he wore the only stiff collar in the assembly, save that worn by the good old Deacon. Thus came David Giddings to his wedding, and handing his gad to one of the Trowbridge boys who saw that the oxen were disposed of, he shook hands with all who had gathered and proceeded to welcome those who came later.

"It was not poverty that compelled David Giddings to go to his wedding in this equipage. It was the simple fact that at this stage of the country's development, the ox was the only animal adapted to the work which confronted this farming community. Boys and girls grew to considerable size without ever having seen a horse.

"Upon the arrival of the last invited guest the ceremonies began. Mary Cole, just arrived from the east, presided at the big pipe organ made by the deacon himself. She played a simple march while the bride and groom, accompanied by the usual assortment of bridesmaids and groomsmen, marched slowly from an inner room to a shady bower just in front of the little house. There the deacon awaited them and, the audience arising as the participants arranged themselves facing the assembled company, all joined in singing *Nearer my God to Thee*. Then the deacon knelt upon the soft grass and poured out his heart to God in simple but impressive language, praying that the blessings of heaven might fall upon this union about to be formed, a prayer in which every one present joined with a full heart. Then the usual simple pledges to "love, honor and obey," and to "love, honor and protect," and the two were made one in spirit and in truth. There followed, as the custom then was, a short sermon fraught with much of good advice and wise counsel to which it is feared little heed was paid. The soul yearns for counsel when in trouble, but when the sun is shining and the heart is overflowing with happiness, words of wisdom and experience too often fall upon thorny ground. Then came another song and a final benediction and the company was at ease. Congratulations were showered upon the newly married pair and, little by little, the suspended air of

levity began to break loose. The tones of the organ were quickened, some jolly songs were sung, and all joined in a general jollification.

"Soon the mistress of ceremonies announced that dinner was ready and all gathered about extemporized tables in the front yard. To all who have ever seen a crowd of hungry farmers and farmers' wives sit down to eat a dinner nearly two hours late, no description of that scene is necessary. Such timeworn expressions as: "The assembled multitude did full justice to the luscious viands set before them," fall far short of an adequate description of just what happens at such a time. But at last all were satisfied save the waiters who perchance had nibbled a bit here and there while serving the more favored guests. They now took their turn and were waited upon by some of the ladies who had sat at the first tables. Be not shocked if some liquid refreshments were quietly served. The serious agitation of the temperance question began later. Then the tobacco was passed and the male guests gathered in groups about the place and talked about the crops and the weather, the perfidy of President Tyler, the hard times and the bright prospects of this becoming a great country some day. The ladies cleared away the dishes, washed and separated them that each might have her own, then gathered in friendly groups, usually apart from the men, and talked about the "leeky" flavour of the last roll of butter, the lambs they had nursed through the spring, the hens that wouldn't "set", and that one ever-uppermost topic in the mind of every mother, the babies. Some of the younger people danced on the soft green grass, and those still younger played pom pom pullaway.

"Meanwhile the bride had slipped away and changed her gown. The wedding gifts, all very practical and useful rather than ornamental, were packed for transport. Also an "outfit" of clothing and linen and numerous other articles of household goods were prepared for removal. When the time for the breakup came, the big oxen and the logboat were brought up to the door, the effects were piled aboard, and the bride mounted herself well toward the top of the load. With many a parting kiss and many expressions of love and well wishing from the assembled guests, the load sallied forth, the groom walking beside the "nigh" ox.

"All went well until they reached the small stream which crossed their homeward road. Recent rains had raised the water so that the current carried the logboat downstream somewhat, to the embarrassment of the patient oxen. Some of the goods were washed overboard and, in the effort to rescue them, both bride and groom got a good wetting, but their spirits were young and the adventure only added a memorable joy to the occasion.

"Reaching the little house prepared by the groom, the bride forthwith donned a big apron, rolled up her sleeves and

"got busy" about her household affairs. When her husband came in after finishing his night work out at the barn, he found a dainty spread awaiting him and everything in apple-pie order. Dorothy met him at the door and after a fond embrace such as only true lovers know, they sat down at their first meal alone together. Thus was founded another home,—another link in the endless chain of the generations. Could every home be as happy as that one proved to be, could every pair united in the holy bonds of wedlock prove as faithful to their day and generation as that pair was, this would be a fine world in which to live."⁵

Deacon Trowbridge, mentioned in the foregoing incident, was the central figure in two other unusual stories that have come down to us. Besides tilling a little patch of ground near Sheboygan Falls, and working at his blacksmith forge, he was in the habit, every Sunday morning, of making his way from his home to the schoolhouse in the village, used on Sunday as a place of worship, to conduct religious services. Col. J. A. Watrous, who resided in Sheboygan Falls as a boy from 1844 to 1847, says of him, "I can see the good old Deacon going to the first schoolhouse erected in the village . . . He always carried a large Bible. Very often after he passed our house on Sunday it was the custom of my father to assemble the older children and accompany them to hear Deacon Trowbridge read the Bible and preach a sermon. I can see how the Deacon looked as he regulated his glasses and opened the Bible and read, and how saintly he appeared when he made the opening prayer."⁶

⁵ James Hervey Hurd Denison lived from June 3, 1817, to Nov. 28, 1909. He was born at Covert, N. Y., and received a partial education at Union College, Schenectady, N. Y. In 1846 he married Louisa Cole, and shortly afterward left with his bride for Wisconsin via the Erie Canal and the Great Lakes, arriving at Milwaukee in the fall of that year. Leaving his wife there to await his return, he left on foot and explored Fond du Lac and Sheboygan counties. They finally took passage on a small steamboat for Sheboygan. The boat was wrecked about five miles south of Sheboygan, but all got safely ashore, and they were brought to Sheboygan with such conveyances and over such roads as the country then afforded. Settling at Sheboygan Falls, they lived for a time with friends until they could erect a home of their own. Mr. Denison purchased 160 acres of unimproved land in the town of Sheboygan Falls, but the first 6 years they lived in the village. Afterward he bought 80 more acres of land in the same town, where he and his family lived for fifty years. They had six children, of whom four lived to old age. Mr. Denison was always a student. He had a theory that by keeping the mind active in the study of ever new problems, one may keep his mental balance in old age. The correctness of this theory he exemplified in his own experience, retaining his mental equilibrium until he died at the advanced age of 92.—Biography furnished by his son, Frank H. Denison, Mellen, Wis. See also Portrait & Biog. Record of Sheb. Co., p. 569.

⁶ Sheb. Press, Sept. 30, 1914.

Deacon Trowbridge was not a regularly ordained preacher, but a lay preacher; the country was too young to support regular ministers as yet; but what he may have lacked in education and training as an exponent of the Word of God, he made up in piety and zeal. There was no sham about him, he was sincerity itself; and he had the confidence and love of everyone in his community. His audiences were made up of all classes, including half-civilized Indians, people who belonged to various denominations or no denomination at all, the most zealous of Christians, and the rankest of infidels. Far and wide he was called upon to officiate at funerals and weddings, on the latter occasions serving as a Justice of the Peace, to make the tie legally binding.

In the winter of 1846-47 a widespread epidemic of smallpox broke out in the county, bringing death to many people, including great numbers of Indians. Deacon Trowbridge bravely led the movement to relieve the suffering of the sick and dying. Col. Watrous, who lived in Sheboygan Falls at the time, thus describes his unselfish and dangerous service during the scourge:

"The first Sunday after the dreaded disease made its appearance the deacon's congregation was quite large. At the end of the service he made an announcement in about these words: 'These services will be postponed until after the smallpox disappears from the community. From this time on I shall give my services to the stricken families. I shall minister to their wants, help to nurse them, and when they die, follow them to the grave. It may be a long term or it may be a short term, but, however long or however short, it is my plain duty to help my distressed neighbors.'

"The word was well suited to the action which followed. The good old deacon hurried to his home, changed his clothes, bade his family good-by and at once began his work of mercy. What a work it was. The epidemic lasted nearly all winter; few in the village escaped the disease. The deacon's example was followed by others. Men went to their homes, told their wives and children what the deacon had said and was doing, arranged their business, provided fuel and provisions, kissed their dear ones and went to the aid of the unfortunate. Like the deacon, they went without reward or hope of reward. Like him, they spent weeks and some of them months in that service, without daring to go home, lest their families catch the disease.

"The strangest of all this strange experience is the fact that neither the deacon, the good souls who imitated his example or their families were overtaken by the malady, notwithstanding the fact that the watchers, helpers and nurses were almost constantly in the presence of the suffering

patients and the fact that they laid out and helped to bury the dead.

"Nearly half of the deacon's congregation had disappeared when, the next spring, he resumed services in the school house. It was a sorrowful Sunday. When the good old Christian had read a chapter, prayed and talked, a practical sermon, he referred feelingly to the scenes through which the community had passed. I think every man, woman and child in the room, including the deacon, wept. At the close of the talk he asked all present to join him on their knees in asking that the community might escape such visitations for all time to come. It was a most earnest appeal. I believe that prayer has been answered. There may have been a few cases of smallpox there since then, but there has never been anything like such an epidemic."

The favorite theme of the deacon's sermons was "Keep the Sabbath holy." Hardly a Sunday went by that he did not exhort his hearers against breaking the third commandment. His fixed views on this subject add spice and color to the next story about him, also related by Col. Watrous:

"The Sunday after Sumter was fired upon, and while Deacon Trowbridge was conducting services in the Baptist church, the denomination to which he belonged for over eighty years, he and his congregation were disturbed by a great commotion in the street right in front of the church. There was beating of drums and sound of fifes, much out of tune. It was so uncommon a thing that the most of the congregation walked or ran out of the church. Finally the deacon closed the Bible, and slowly followed his fleeing flock. When outside he asked the cause of 'this unseemly disturbance on the Lord's day.' Someone told him that the President had called for soldiers to uphold the honor of the flag of the nation, and that they were going to raise a company right then and there.

"The old deacon's eyes flashed as he walked out into the street where a young fellow was irregularly pounding a bass drum, and said: 'Nathan, I know it is Sunday, and that all but the Lord's work should be abandoned, but the saving of our country and the shielding of its flag from dishonor is the Lord's work. Give me that drum.'

"And that model of piety strapped on the big drum and went to pounding, greatly outdoing Nathan in two respects—he made more noise and kept perfect time. He drummed as no one before had ever drummed in the little village. As if it had gone on lightning wings, word flew through the community that Deacon Trowbridge had left his pulpit to beat a drum, and on Sunday, too. Within half an hour everyone in town and many from the outskirts had gathered around the old drummer to cheer and encourage him."

⁷ Milw. Sentinel, Feb. 17, 1913.

This incident of white-haired, pious old Deacon Trowbridge beating the drum on a solemn Sunday morning to encourage the men of his community to respond to Lincoln's call for volunteers, deserves a place in song and story alongside that of the famed Pastor John Peter Gabriel Muhlenberg, of Woodstock, Virginia, who, on another Sunday years before, at the outbreak of the War of the Revolution, threw off his clerical gown in the middle of his sermon, revealing himself dressed in the full uniform of an officer in Washington's army, and called upon the men of his parish to enlist in his battalion. In sheer dramatic power the Deacon's beating of the drum is probably unsurpassed in the chronicles of our county's history.⁸

⁸ William Trowbridge was born in Worcester, Mass., Oct. 16, 1790. Until he was 16 years old, he worked on a farm, and in a flour mill and saw-mill, attending school during winter terms and at intervals in the summer-time. From the age of 16 to 21, he worked at blacksmithing and white-smithing, learning the trade from his future father-in-law, Mr. Chapin. His specialty was the making of all kinds of sharp-edged tools, such as scythes, sickles, knives, hoes, scissors and wool-carding machines. In association with his father, brother and brother-in-law, he built a cotton factory in a village called Trowbridgeville. For six months he was one of the Minute Men of Massachusetts.

Nov. 26, 1812, he married Dorothy Chapin, by whom he had eight children—five sons and three daughters. About 1830 he removed to Tomkins county, New York, where he started a cutlery factory, and in 1836 he came west with his family. After a trip of four weeks in a sailing vessel he landed at Sheboygan, where he operated a blacksmith shop, and lived in the home of his son-in-law, Charles D. Cole. Dec. 12, 1837, he bought from Mr. Cole 240 acres of land at \$1.25 an acre on the Plymouth road in sections 27 and 22 of the town of Sheboygan Falls. Most of this land has remained in the Trowbridge family until recently. Here he pursued the occupations of farmer, blacksmith and lay preacher. The present house on the farm, built by Mr. Trowbridge in place of the original log cabin, likewise erected by him, is a typical example of the old New England style of square, frame, two-story dwelling. When he arrived there was not a settler between his house and Sheboygan Falls, and none to the west of him. Plymouth was then unknown. Sheboygan had no more than fifteen or twenty habitations, and Sheboygan Falls about five, besides a sawmill. Wolves frequently entered the village, and Indians were a common sight; they often came to Mr. Trowbridge to have their guns and hatchets repaired.

An extremely religious man, Mr. Trowbridge was probably the first preacher in the county, preaching regularly from the time of his arrival until his death, Nov. 20, 1880. It is said that he preached upwards of 250 funeral sermons in the course of his life. Most of his sermons were delivered in the small 16 x 20 ft. side-hill schoolhouse in Sheboygan Falls. He was one of the prime movers in the founding of the Baptist church, which was organized at Sheboygan Feb. 11, 1838, but was later removed to the Falls, and permanently located there in 1845. For 42 years he served as a deacon in the church. He also held the offices of county commissioner and justice of the peace, and was probably the oldest member of the Masonic lodge in Wisconsin. His wife died Jan. 1, 1844, probably the first white woman to die in Sheboygan County. Revered by everyone, he was familiarly called "Deacon," "Father," and "Grandpa." Sheb. Herald, Oct. 24, 1873, Aug. 23, 1902; Sheb. Press, Sept. 30, 1914, Apr. 29, 1927; Potrait and Biog. Record of Sheb. Co., p. 412; Records of Sheboygan Falls Baptist Church; Sheb. Co. News, Nov. 24, 1880.

"The Man With The Branded Hand," would be a fitting title for our next story. In 1858 there came to reside on a farm near Winooski in this county a sea-faring man named Capt. Jonathan Walker, who had spent a large part of his adventurous life as the master of a sailing vessel plying in the coastwide trade on our eastern seacoast. The strangest thing about him was that he bore in the ball of his right hand a large double S, put there with a red hot branding iron. Behind the circumstance lay a most unusual tale of hardship and adventure. An ardent New England abolitionist, Capt. Walker in 1844 took on board his ship in Florida seven fugitive negro slaves, with the intention of landing them at Nassau in the British-owned Bahama Islands. While at sea he suffered a sunstroke, which disabled him from navigating his vessel, so that it was overhauled by an American ship and taken to Key West.

Here Capt. Walker was confined in a ship's hold amid filth, rubbish and extreme heat, and thence taken in chains to Pensacola, where he was secured by a chain and a shackle weighing 20 pounds riveted to his ankle so tightly that it became imbedded nearly out of sight in his swollen flesh. Only the watchfulness of the sheriff prevented him from being lynched by an irate mob on the way to prison. His cell had no bed, chair nor table, and his only resting place was the foul, damp floor. Tried by a federal district court, he was sentenced to spend one hour in the pillory, where the crowd pelted him with stale eggs, and also to serve one year in prison in solitary confinement, to pay a fine of \$600 for each slave he sought to free, and finally, to be branded in the hand with letters SS, which stood for slave stealer. His fine was eventually paid through the efforts of northern friends, and he was released after eleven months of imprisonment. Upon his release he was hailed in the north as a hero and martyr. At Providence, Rhode Island, he was greeted by a large crowd of 3,000 people, many of whom were of national reputation. Anti-slavery leaders like Garrison, Phillips and Whittier, heralded him as a "slave savior". Going about the country as an anti-slavery lecturer, his story was said to be "worth an army corps to the north" during the Civil War. Whittier immortalized him in a poem "The Branded Hand", one verse of which reads:

"Hold it up before our sunshine, up against our Northern air;
Ho! men of Massachusetts, for the love of God, look there!
Take it henceforth for your standard, like the Bruce's heart of
yore,
In the dark strife closing round ye, let that hand be seen before!"

The words of the poem were set to music and sung at anti-slavery meetings. After living at Winooski until 1863, Capt. Walker moved to Muskegon, Michigan, where he died in 1878. The United States government joined the city of Muskegon in erecting a granite obelisk at his grave, on which was carved a replica of the branded hand. Capt. Walker's daughter, Mrs. Erwin Underhill, lived at Winooski for many years until her death in 1928. Her brother, Lloyd Garrison Walker, was named after the famous abolitionist, William Lloyd Garrison.

Sheboygan County once had a lost child case, now nearly a century old, which aroused widespread local interest as keen as that caused by the nationally celebrated "Charlie Ross" mystery. It happened Apr. 19, 1852. The child was little Frankie Bond, between two and three years of age, the son of Dr. and Mrs. M. A. Bond residing at Sheboygan Falls. Walking out into the street through the open gate in front of his home in broad daylight, he suddenly disappeared. The river from Sheboygan Falls to its outlet into the lake was dragged, foot by foot, and the surrounding country was scoured for a distance of ten miles in every direction. The whole community joined in the search; but all efforts to discover any trace of him were unavailing. Satisfied that he was dead, the parents held a formal funeral, and made up their minds to forget their grief as best they might. Finding that time did not relieve their feelings, after a few years they removed to Fox Lake, Wisconsin, and later went back to their native state of Vermont.

Here the case rested, and would probably never have awakened public attention again, except that over twelve years afterward reports began to circulate that the child was still alive. Carefully run down, these reports all proved groundless, the work of mere publicity-seekers and highly imaginative minds.

The full details of this mysterious case have been preserved in a series of articles by E. Frank Barrows, entitled "After 20 Years!" published in the Sheboygan Times, Jan. 2nd to Feb. 20th, 1875. A friend of the Bond's, Mr. Barrows personally investigated the various rumors afloat as to the child's fate. His account of the episode is therefore particularly authoritative.

The facts concerning the disappearance are meager. A Mr. Mead, who had called at Dr. Bond's for some medicine, had allowed Frankie to pass through the gate. After that he was seen by patrons of Brown's hotel near the corner of Pine and Broadway. A lady living in the old postoffice building also saw a child dressed in black and red checked flannel goods following a man towards

the bridge. Seated at a dinner table in the range of a window next to the street, she started to see who it was, but at that moment her attention was distracted by the fall of her own child from a chair, and she was not able to positively state that it was the Bond child she had seen. It was learned that the Hon. Harrison C. Hobart had crossed the river about that time, but he had seen nothing of the boy. A freshet, a few days before, had swept away the bridge, and passage across the stream was made on stringers without any railing. The natural conclusion was that Frankie had started to cross the river, but, losing his balance on the narrow footing, was swept down by the current. Below the dam the river was obstructed by large piles of slabs and edgings, through which the water rushed with great force. The waste gates of the dam were opened, but the water was so high that it was seven days before it had lowered enough to allow a thorough search of the pond and the floodwood below the dam. But no traces of the missing child were found.

Naturally there were many who believed that the boy was not drowned, and a faint ray of hope for his discovery persisted for many years. The fact that his body was never recovered, and that he was apparently last seen following an unknown man near the river, lent credence to the view that he might have been kidnapped. Various and sundry stories of his fate circulated from time to time.

One to the effect that the Indians had taken him, and that he was somewhere in Michigan, was traced to a woman in jail in Manitowoc. It turned out, however, that she was an imposter and had told the yarn to be released from confinement. Another story was that a woman in Hillsdale, Michigan, apparently of Irish birth, living in a poor hut, and lying on her death bed, convinced that she could not die until she had confessed a dark secret, called some friends to her bedside, and pointing to a little boy near by, said that people generally supposed he was her child, but that he was not; that once she and her husband had been driving through Sheboygan Falls and stole the child as he came through a gate and fled with him. The dying woman was unable to go any further, and died two hours later with her secret only partly revealed.

One version had it that the story of the woman's confession was repeated by a couple of ladies, who appeared to know the facts, in the United States hotel at Milwaukee; and another, that it was told by two strange ladies in a hotel parlor at Minnesota Junction while stopping there between trains. According to the latter version, the story was heard by Mrs. J. F. Johnston, the hotelkeeper's wife, who had lived at Sheboygan Falls at the time of the child's

disappearance. Greatly interested, she went to call her husband that he too might hear the unusual tale, but before he could be found the train arrived and the visitors left without their names being had or more definite information obtained. Thus the rumors continued to circulate, more or less alike in their main features, but some placing the deathbed scene in Hillsdale, others in Coldwater, and still others in Kalamazoo. Mr. Barrows, with admirable persistency, ran all of these rumors to earth, and found them to be without any foundation in fact, so that at the conclusion of his articles he could properly say, "And now, 'After Twenty Years,' of fitful agitation, we sadly and tenderly recommit our little friend to the silent embrace of death, hoping that henceforth he may peacefully rest in his unknown tomb, until the final resurrection, and that the hearts of his sorrowful parents may never more be pained by false hopes or unsubstantial rumors."

Sept. 3, 1862, will always be remembered as a red letter day in local annals. It marks the date of the famous Indian Scare, by all odds the most extraordinary incident in the county's history. The early settlers, whose lot it was to be made the innocent victims of the widespread delusion, have passed the strange tale on to their children, so that even now, after a lapse of eighty years, the outstanding facts of the event are pretty generally known. There is hardly a descendant of a pioneer family in the county who cannot relate some interesting personal experience his parents or grandparents had on that momentous day. Fortunately there are in existence some excellent contemporary accounts of the occasion. Some of them, written only a day or two after the event took place, when the incidents recorded were fresh in mind, are of exceptional historical value.

Particularly interesting is the description given by H. N. Ross, editor of the Evergreen City Times, appearing in the edition of that newspaper published Sept. 6, 1862. The excitement of the moment certainly lent wings to his editorial pen:

"The ever-to-be-memorable third of September was ushered in with all the serene glories of an unclouded autumn day . . . Suddenly there appeared, approaching the city from the north, a solitary horseman, hatless and coatless, lashing his foaming and jaded steed, and evidently wild with excitement and fear of—*something*. On he came with all the speed and fury of a Mercury, while our goodly citizens paused to view the headlong race.

"Almost speechless with excitement and fright, the horseman drew up at the Kossuth House, on Center street, and with

difficulty told his tale of horror. Its burden and refrain were 'Ingins! Ingins!! Ingins!!!' The red devils, fifty strong, were burning Centerville, twelve miles north on the lake shore, and massacring all the inhabitants! and every man and boy that could shoulder a musket or carry a pitchfork was frantically called upon to fly at once to the rescue. On being questioned, our courier admitted that he had not seen an Indian, nor the burning of a building, nor the murder of an inhabitant; but he had seen two men who told the tale to him, and urged him to bring the horrible news here and call for help.

"Scarcely had he finished the terrible narration, when a second courier arrived with the report that three hundred Indians were wreaking vengeance on the inhabitants of Hermann indiscriminately. And soon another that five hundred were carrying destruction and desolation in their track, and were rapidly approaching the city; and this news was emphasized by the arrival of a two-horse wagon load of women and children, who had evidently been piled in upon a bed or two with the most unceremonious haste, while the horses were reeking with sweat and trembling with fatigue; and the babel of languages issuing from the crowd in and out of the vehicle rendered confusion worse confounded. But amid it all we contrived to ascertain the fact that none of the fleeing ones had yet seen an Indian, or a burning building, or an injured person.

"As the forenoon advanced and the arrival of teams with fleeing families began to multiply, the excitement in the city reached an alarming pitch. Business was entirely suspended. Everybody was in the streets anxiously asking the news from the latest arrivals from the seat of carnage; and these arrivals were now incessant. Every rifle, shot-gun, musket, and antiquated fire-lock—the latter old, rusty and long-forgotten—was brought into requisition, and heavily charged for duty, yet still there was a demand for arms, and the hardware stores were at once relieved of all their forks and hatchets and most of their scythes and bush-hooks.

"Captain Marschner had his company of volunteers marshaled under arms, ready for any needed service, and *fork-ed* squads of citizens were being put through a system of extemporized tactics by voluntary leaders to render them more efficient in repelling the savage inroads of the approaching foe, which was now positively declared by the latest arrivals to number 3,000, and all armed with new United States rifles! Still no one had *seen* an Indian, or even a squaw or papoose.

"On the first arrival of the fleeing families from the towns north of us, Sheriff Mallory and Adjutant Thayer had sent out scouts with instructions to go until they could find from their own personal observation, the real cause of the evidently approaching stampede, and the more cool and reflecting of our citizens had prevailed upon the excitable to await their report before starting upon a wild-geese chase.

"As mid-day approached the crowd of fugitives flying from the tomahawk and scalping-knife had become truly formidable. Roads leading into the city from the north were lined with wagons loaded with from 8 to 16 persons each, and generally with the accompaniment of a bed or two, a basket of provisions and a coffee pot, and sometimes a cow tied behind, all laboring under the most intense excitement, the women and children pale and trembling with fear, the men armed with guns and pitchforks. Each had a story more harrowing, if possible, than his predecessor, to tell, yet no one had *seen* a red-skin. But it was a *fact* that 10,000 of them had come down from Kewaunee County into Manitowoc, laid that town and Manitowoc Rapids in ruins, and were enroute for Sheboygan and Port Washington, burning, killing and destroying everything in their way.

"The influx of families continued with little cessation until in the evening, when it is estimated that they amounted to not less than 4,000 souls. Just at night the first tangible incident was obtained. A woman from near Howards Grove arrived, saying that a barn in that vicinity had been burned the night previously by the Indians, and that they had shot a man in the shoulder that morning, because he refused them a cow they wanted. She had seen the wounded man, who was now under the care of Dr. Bodenshtab, in that vicinity, but had *not* seen the Indians.

"At nightfall the scouts returned, having been as far as Centerville and found the village unharmed in person and property. Reports, however, had arrived there of the depredations of the savages at Manitowoc Rapids, and scouts had been sent out to learn their extent. Our scouts awaited their return, and learned that no trace of Indians had been found by them, but that a colony was known to have resided for a year or two somewhere near the Kewaunee line, and were supposed to be still there. The scouts further ascertained that the man who was shot in the shoulder, as above related, was actually wounded by a fall from his horse, while hurriedly endeavoring to make his escape from the fancied savages to this city.

"By this time it was pretty generally believed that Bull Run had been totally eclipsed by the Indian scare in this county, and our citizens generally retired to their couches and ended their excitement in a refreshing sleep.

"The extent of the scare herein recorded was not confined to two or three towns lying north of us, but was equally felt throughout the entire county, and extended south to Port Washington, where the inhabitants are said to have gathered on the pier and importuned Capt. Morgan, of the Sunbeam, to stay by them, and take them off if the Indians should make their appearance. The Milwaukeeans called the attention of

Governor Salomon to the matter, and had the Light Infantry ordered out to meet the bloody 'Ingins' before they reached the city."

The course of events at Plymouth on that memorable day are recorded in a communication to the *Evergreen City Times*, Sept. 6, 1862, by Luther Witt, a farmer living in the town of Plymouth:

"Editor Times: Yesterday P. M. our staid and sober town was startled by couriers dashing into town on two or three different roads, and announcing that 14,000 Indians were approaching the town from the north, massacring women and children and burning everything they came to. That the village of Franklin was burned, and every man must turn out and fight.

"Well, about two-thirds of the men turned out to fight. The writer thinks that every old shotgun but one was brought into town, some minus ram-roads and others minus locks. The weather was very hot, and we all had to walk up and drink, then gather in groups and discuss the news. In the meantime loads of women and children began to arrive, some with loads of bedding hastily flung into wagons, and some bare-headed; and it was very hot, we had to drink often, and still the excitement increased. One man came in and reported that Sinz's house in the south part of Rhine was burning; another man came in and reported that the steam mill and three or four barns were burning; others came in and reported that Matthes' mill was burning. In the meantime one man went into the school house and ordered the school dismissed that the teacher might help defend the town. The writer thinks that the gentleman showed great want of military sag-ass-ity by not having the little girls armed with pudding sticks.

"About this time it was discovered that there was no powder in town, and a man was despatched to the Falls, for a wagon-load of powder . . . As time passed along men appeared in the streets armed with pitchforks. One fellow had an old bayonet stuck on a stick; two men appeared armed with old scythes; several men were armed with manure forks, and still the excitement increased. Evening came and companies of men paraded the streets around, pitchforks still increasing in numbers, and ever and anon we walked up and drank. At nine o'clock in the evening there were about 20 ox teams and very many horse teams, and very near 500 persons in the streets, some gathered in groups, and others parading the streets, the liquor holes all full of men and boys drinking."

Peter Daane, writing in 1892, under the caption, "History and Anecdotes of the Town of Holland", describes his personal observations and experiences during the great scare as it spread into that section of the county:

"Intense was the excitement in the country where the news rapidly spread, where one after another came riding on horseback in full gallop, yelling as they came, 'flee for your lives, the Indians are coming', not one of whom had seen an Indian that day; the people fled from their homes, crowded together in some houses that were selected as a place of refuge, the men gathered together in groups with what weapons were available; some with shot guns, some armed with hay and manure forks, others with old scythes, wherewith they hoped to be able to check the advancing foe. When night came large companies of men armed with such weapons as above described were posted on the principal roads in the Town of Holland, watching for the enemy; couriers on horseback were sent out as a patrol during the night, to act as advance pickets, to give timely warning of the advance of the supposed enemy; two others and myself were selected for the advance pickets; with an old sword dating from the time of Napoleon, buckled on my waist and a shot gun on our shoulders, we set out on our dangerous task, and in reality it was dangerous, not from the supposed enemy, but from our own friends, for how easily could they have mistaken us for the Indians in the dark. Very many were less courageous and loaded their families with their valuables on wagons and fled to Milwaukee; others beyond Milwaukee, fled to Chicago; threshers left their machines, grain standing in sacks and fences open, so that cattle and horses ran at large over the farms; some hid for the night in corn fields, so the night was passed in suspense by very many, all of this growing out of a drunken spree of a few Indians, wherein one Indian was killed, as we afterward learned; the next day the great scare wore gradually away and the great Indian war, as some termed it, was over."⁹

The wonder is how such an unfounded panic could get started. A Milwaukee editor wrote concerning it, "The human family is at times ridiculous or frightened or desperate or foolish or cowardly, but never until the Indian scare of 1862 were the dwellers of Milwaukee and Wisconsin possessed of all five of these attributes at once."¹⁰ But from earliest times there was always an instinctive fear of the Indians among the settlers. Reports had come of recent Indian uprisings at Mankato and New Ulm in Minnesota. There was a general feeling of uneasiness over new defeats of the Union armies in the Civil War and gloomy prospects that the North might lose the war. Large numbers of young men from every community were at the front, and long casualty lists were appearing almost

⁹ Sheb. Herald, Mar. 19, 1892.

¹⁰ The Panic of 1862 in Wisconsin, by M. M. Quaife, Wis. Mag. of Hist., Dec. 1920.

daily. The soil was fertile for almost any kind of a wild rumor to take root and spread, and the celebrated Indian scare was no exception.¹¹

¹¹ "Additional Accounts Of The Indian Scare: By J. O. Thayer in "A Short History of Sheboygan County," by Gustave W. Buchen, in Atlas of Sheboygan County (1941); by Mrs. H. N. Smith, Ply. Rep. Apr. 17, 1873, Sheb. Press, July 25, 1913; by Edith Hostman, Plymouth, Sheb. Herald, Mar. 20, 1897; by Clara M. Thomas, Sheboygan Falls, Sheb. Herald, Mar. 27, 1897; by Mrs. Myrta Williams Stannard, Greenbush, Sheb. Telegram, Jan. 27, 1923; by Mrs. Viola Sisson Stout, Wauwatosa, Sheb. Press, July 1, 1932.

CHAPTER 2

UP FROM PRIMEVAL WILDNESS¹

SHEBOYGAN County, on account of its favorable geographical location, has from earliest times occupied a position of considerable strategic importance. Situated about midway on the west shore of Lake Michigan, it lay directly on one of the three ancient trade routes between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi—the one down Lake Michigan to its head, and thence to the Father of Waters by way of the Chicago, Des Plaines and Illinois rivers. The other two routes were from the foot of Lake Michigan to Green Bay, and from there to the Fox and Wisconsin rivers; and from the head of Lake Superior to the St. Louis and St. Croix rivers. Over the long period of years embracing its history, Indians, explorers, missionaries and traders, and in later times, sailing vessels and steamboats, in picturesque procession, passed or stopped here in their journeys up and down the lake. It was also on the direct line of communication by water between the heart of the continent and the Atlantic seaboard via the St. Lawrence river and the Erie canal. Its streams, discharging into Lake Michigan, were favorite arteries of canoe transportation of the Indians and traders to and from the interior of the county and beyond. Of these, the Sheboygan river was especially important. Rising a few miles east of Lake Winnebago, and flowing southeasterly into Lake Michigan, it constituted an almost uninterrupted thoroughfare between these two great bodies of water. Natives and fur-traders intending to go from Lake Winnebago to places on the middle or south shore of Lake Michigan portaged their craft to its headwaters and paddled down its course to the mouth. No other stream in eastern Wisconsin offered as direct a route for primitive traffic from the upper Fox and Winnebago areas eastward to the lake shore. One version of the origin of the name *Sheboygan* is that the Indians applied it to the river, and that it means “a waterway or passage between lakes”.

When, at some undetermined date in the distant past, white men first penetrated as far as Sheboygan County, the sight that

¹ The author's article, “Sheboygan County: Out Of A Wilderness,” in the Wisconsin Magazine of History (June 1942), Vol. XXV, p. 425, is a condensation of this chapter.

spread before their gaze was a vast stretch of territory covered by a dense virgin forest of pine and hardwoods, unbroken even by an occasional natural opening among the trees. This forest, as we shall see, was destined to have a tremendous influence upon the history of the county. Inhabiting this dark, mysterious wilderness were various bands of Indians, a primitive race of men still living in the stone age and the hunting stage of economic development. They were a semi-nomadic, war-like people, existing under a tribal form of government, and holding their lands in common as a tribal possession. Jealousies, rivalries and wars between the different tribes, especially for the control of the choicest hunting grounds, were prevalent. Depending for their subsistence largely upon the products of nature, the Indians' main reliance was upon the wild game, such as elk, deer, bears, wolves, beaver, mink, otter, muskrats, that made the forest their habitat. These denizens of the wilds not only furnished them with food, but with clothing, ornaments, tools, implements and other necessities; the standing of a member in his tribe was judged largely by his skill as a hunter.

The hunting habits of the Indians, together with the abundance of fur-bearing animals, determined the character of the relation between the first whites and the redmen. It gave rise to the fur-trade, which was for many years Sheboygan County's sole industry. The white men coveted the rich furs the country afforded; and the Indians craved the goods of civilized manufacture, superior in every respect to the crude products of their own handicraft. A system of bartering, by which each side acquired the things they most desired, naturally developed. The first fur-trading post was established in Sheboygan County in 1795.

The effect of the fur-trade was to work a complete change in the character and habits of the Indians. From an unspoiled, self-reliant race, they gradually declined, and became dependent to a large extent upon the whites. As their demand for the white men's goods grew, it turned them more and more to hunting. The trade guns and steel traps they were able to obtain from the traders, representing a great improvement over their own rude weapons and devices, also increased their effectiveness as hunters and trappers. This meant the eventual disappearance of game, and with it the loss of their chief means of livelihood; and when this had occurred, it marked the end of the fur-trading industry in the county, and the end of the Indians here as well. With Indian society undermined and weakened by contact with the fur-traders, and the last Indian resistance broken by the Black Hawk War in 1832, the

way was cleared for the influx of home-seeking settlers that was to follow. No wars between the Indians and the whites were ever fought on Sheboygan County soil; but despite the cession of their lands to the government in 1833, the natives naturally were not pleased at the white intrusion. They merely bowed to the inevitable, yielding up their lands and retreating to other parts of the country only with the greatest reluctance. During their stay here their relations with the early settlers, while not always cordial, were nevertheless peaceful.

The incoming wave of settlement to Sheboygan County was part of the larger tide of migration that flooded the west and swept into the Badger State. This invading push into Wisconsin came at a late date compared to that of the other states of the Old Northwest, excepting, of course, Minnesota. Wisconsin was the last great area east of the Mississippi to be settled. As the most northern and western of these states, it was the remotest from the principal centers from which migration headed westward. It was also the least accessible by way of the customary course of travel down the old historic Ohio river route that led into the magnificent Mississippi valley. As a rule Wisconsin was peopled by immigrants who adopted the newer, easier and more northerly course, made possible by the introduction of steamboating on the Great Lakes in 1818 and the completion of the Erie canal in 1825. Ordinarily they came through the canal, or by railroad or highway, to Buffalo. From this point many journeyed overland by wagon along the south shore of Lake Erie and around the southern end of Lake Michigan and thence northward into the state. But by far the greater number, including most of the foreign immigrants intending to settle in this county, boarded sailing vessels or steam packets or propellers at Buffalo, and sailed up the Great Lakes to Sheboygan and other ports of entry on the west shore of Lake Michigan. These early crafts were frail affairs that had to seek refuge in some convenient harbor upon the approach of the slightest storms. Collisions, shipwrecks, boiler explosions and fires were common, frequently resulting in terrible loss of lives. Distress in Europe and the spirit of restlessness and discontent among large classes of people in the eastern states gave impetus to the westward movement. The west offered an avenue of escape from intolerable conditions back home and a chance to start life anew. Cheap lands were the great attraction. The background and traits of the various racial elements that made up this incoming flow of population, as

will be seen, were destined to have far-reaching consequences in the development of the county.

The incomparable stands of timber which covered the county would ordinarily indicate that after the decline of the fur-trade, lumbering would become its next leading industry. But commercial lumbering had not yet moved westward from Maine and other eastern timber areas when the region was first opened up to settlement. Had settlement been delayed for a few years, a large-scale lumber industry would undoubtedly have made its appearance here. As it was, it never gained a foothold in the county, like it did in Northern Wisconsin at a later time. Lumbering was essentially an agricultural pursuit carried on by the farmers themselves. There were no timber kings or lumber barons in this section. Every farmer was his own timber-cutter, his chief aim being not to profit by the forest crop, but to get his land cleared and planted to cultivated crops in the shortest possible time. From the settler's viewpoint, though the forest might furnish building materials, it was on the whole an enemy standing in the way of his one consuming passion—that of developing a farm.

Many factors combined to make the county predominantly a farming community. Nearly all of the early settlers, native-born as well as foreign-born, were farmers by habit and inheritance, and untrained in any other way of making a living. Quite a number were artisans, mechanics and professional men, who, finding no opportunities for their talents in a new country, had to turn to agriculture for a livelihood. Strangely, the dense growth of timber, which would ordinarily be considered a serious drawback, proved to be an attraction for farming. The clearing of the forest to make way for farms was a titanic task, calculated to discourage even the stoutest hearts. On the other hand, the prairies of Iowa, southern Minnesota and other treeless areas, awaiting only the settler's plow, would seem to have offered far easier opportunities. However, the belief had gained wide acceptance, fostered by the land agents, that land which did not support trees was not rich enough to support farm crops. Men therefore were content to endure the struggle and hardships of clearing away the heavy timber that they might acquire the type of soil they wanted.

The lack of adequate capital, and indeed the outright poverty of the average pioneers likewise drew them to this section. Most of them, after paying for their long trip west, had little or no money left. This was especially true of the immigrants from Europe. Government lands were no cheaper here than elsewhere;

but it took more than mere land to make a home and farm. Houses, barns, fences and other improvements had to be built. Under these circumstances it would have been folly to go to the barren prairies, where the cost of timber for shelter, fuel, building and fencing would have been prohibitive, whereas in a thickly wooded area they could obtain those necessities out of the surrounding forest, while engaged in clearing it away, without any great outlay except their own unremitting toil. Another inducement the forest offered was that until the settlers were able to begin farming operations, they could eke out a slender existence from the natural products of the forest, for instance, by getting out for the market saw-logs, shingles, barrel-staves and railroad ties.

In addition, the county was favorably located in regard to transportation facilities. Before the coming of the railroads, settlers had to depend almost entirely on water transportation in order to reach outside markets. Nearness to Lake Michigan as a link in the chain of traffic to the east was therefore an important factor in attracting settlement to this locality, despite the disadvantages of its forested character.

Settlement in Sheboygan County had certain well-defined characteristics differing markedly from those of other frontier areas. Occupation of the west in general moved forward in a succession of waves or steps, according to a more or less definite pattern. First upon the heels of the fur-traders came the backwoodsmen, who depended chiefly upon the products of the wilderness for a livelihood. From a few acres cleared in the forest, called a "truck patch", they raised enough corn, beans and potatoes for their own use, but spent most of their time hunting, trapping and fishing. Seldom owning the land on which their rude cabins were built, they were imbued with a restless, roving spirit, and rarely remained in one place for more than a few years. When they tired of a spot, or hunting became somewhat precarious, or neighbors crowded too close, they cleared out and migrated to some new region farther west, to begin the same process over again. Daniel Boone will always remain as the outstanding example of this class of pioneers.

Behind the backwoodsmen, perhaps twenty-five or so miles to the rear, appeared another class of border inhabitants, who devoted their time to raising horses, cattle, sheep and hogs. Like the backwoodsmen, they did not own their lands, but allowed their livestock to range at large. They drove their product to market on

the hoof, often hundreds of miles across the mountains to the Atlantic seaboard, or shipped it as salt meat packed in barrels.

Probably another fifty miles back, came the pioneer farmers. Although they became the owners of the land they occupied, many of this class too were possessed of a restless spirit, and responding to the urge within them, sold out again and removed to a more virgin soil in the general direction of the setting sun.

These distinctive thrusts of settlement, characteristic of the frontier as a whole, never spread into Sheboygan County, however. Here, the permanent settlers followed directly in the footsteps of the fur-traders and still met the Indians in their primitive state. There were no intermediate stages of backwoods, cattle-raising or primitive-farming advance into the wilderness. Once a settler had located on the land of his choice, he became, with few exceptions, a permanent resident, and combined in himself the varied occupations of hunter, trader, backwoodsman, cattle-raiser and general farmer—a status from which he gradually grew in the course of time to the type of intensive farmer prevalent in the county today.

In advance of the actual home-making settlers came the crews of government surveyors with surveying instruments and tools to measure and subdivide the land for settlement. According to law public lands could not be opened to settlement until after the survey was made. In some districts, so great was the prevailing land-hunger that settlers swept in and pre-empted the land before surveys were begun. In Sheboygan County, however, this confusion was avoided, as the surveys here were completed ahead of settlement. The work of the surveyors was a valuable aid to settlement by enabling purchasers readily to locate their properties, and making possible an orderly occupation of the land with a minimum of friction over land holdings.

Life on the frontier presented problems to which the new settlers were unaccustomed either back east or abroad, and they had much to learn from the Indians. The formidable task of removing the wild vegetation, they found, could be lightened by adopting the Indian method of girdling and burning the trees and underbrush to admit the sunlight to the soil. The Indian custom of planting corn and vegetables in hills and then heaping the earth about the stalks was another adaptation. They were taught by the Indians how to tap the hard maple for spring sap, and how to boil it down to sugar. When food for livestock failed in winter, they learned from them the practice of cutting brush and young trees and letting it lie for the animals to save themselves from starva-

tion by feeding upon the buds, twigs, and young bark. From the Indians also they learned the kinds of crops best adapted to the soil and climate, like corn, potatoes, beans, pumpkins and squashes. Of these the principal crop was corn, as the manner of its cultivation fitted it for raising in the small stump obstructed clearings; and since it was indigenous, there was always a reasonable prospect of growing a successful crop. According to a reliable estimate, approximately four-sevenths of the present total agricultural production of the United States, measured in farm values, originated from plant life domesticated by the Indians and taken over by the white men.² The Indians, however, grew no small grains, such as wheat, rye, oats, barley and buckwheat. These crops were brought in by the whites, but were not grown extensively until the fields were sufficiently enlarged and cleared to permit broadcast seeding, an essential mode of planting small grains.

An important effect of life on the edge of the wilderness, far removed from the comforts and conveniences of civilization, was to force the settlers to return to a primitive mode of living. Until a settler had cleared an acre or two and harvested the first crops he was to a large extent dependent for food on the native plants and wild animals, and even on the good will of the Indians. Berries of various kinds, including strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, gooseberries and cranberries, and fruits such as wild cherries, plums and grapes, as well as butter, hazel and hickory nuts, and certain edible roots, and maple sugar and wild honey, were available in season. There was also plenty of wild game, such as rabbits, squirrels, partridges, pigeons, geese and ducks, likewise deer and bears. Some, unable to adapt themselves readily to the new conditions, almost starved in the midst of what appeared to be plenty. At first no farm surpluses were produced, each farmer raising hardly enough for his own needs, with perhaps a scant surplus to be exchanged at the local store for groceries and provisions. For quite a number of years considerable quantities of staples, such as flour, potatoes, beans and pork, had to be imported into the county. However, as more and more land was cleared, surpluses for outside markets were gradually created.

Farming operations, in order to meet the new conditions, reverted to simple methods comparable to those in vogue in biblical times. Agriculture on a large scale was impossible. Small patches of one to three acres were the general rule at the beginning; and

² 1940 Yearbook of Agriculture, U. S. Dept. of Agriculture, p. 174.

improvement proceeded at a slow pace. Most settlers were too poor to buy machinery, and had to resort to the use of hand tools and implements in the work of plowing, planting, cultivating, harvesting and threshing. Furthermore, the small clearings, filled with stumps, roots and stones, precluded the use of machinery. It was only after the fields were gradually enlarged and cleared of obstructions that labor-saving machinery became economically profitable, or indeed even invented. The steel plow, the seed drill, the self-binder and the threshing machine did not come into existence until a later time. All the basic farm duties in the beginning had to be performed the hard way. Sickles, scythes, grain cradles, brush hooks, grub hoes, mattocks and flails, now seen mostly as museum pieces, were common items of early farm equipment.

Each farm was a self-sufficient economic unit, producing practically everything it consumed. The pioneer built his house and barn out of the trees which he cleared from his land. He raised his own food, butchered his own meat, churned his own butter, made his own soap and candles. His women folk converted the wool from his sheep into homespun clothes. Neighbors were few and far between; travel was difficult; and money to buy goods was scarce. What he could not provide with his own labor and materials, such as sugar, coffee, salt and spices, he obtained by barter from the nearest storekeeper, or managed to do without. This produced a resourceful and inventive race of men. This economic self-sufficiency was a distinctive feature of farm life, continuing until the farms began to produce surpluses for the market. Then the farmhouse became less and less self-contained. The farmers had some cash income with which to buy manufactured goods. Industries developed, and gradually shifted manufacturing processes from farm to factory.

As population pushed into the county, transportation facilities became imperative to connect with markets and the outside world. At first the white men used the rude Indian trails that traversed the county in every direction. Gradually improved by a process of widening, the principal trails were transformed into roads capable of being traveled on horseback and by carts and wagons. Several of the highways today are laid out along the routes of these primitive paths, furnishing another example of Indian contribution to the development of the county. The forest likewise was an aid to road improvement by making lumber and logs conveniently available for the construction of bridges, culverts and stretches of corduroy. Road building was perhaps the leading activity of local units

of government; but because of the newness of the country, the meager funds raised by public taxation were inadequate to construct and maintain roads as rapidly as needed. Private capital therefore entered the field and engaged in the construction of plank roads, charging tolls for their use; but neither could private enterprise build them without some public assistance. This took the form of aid from the townships and cities primarily served by the roads. The method was for the various political subdivisions to issue their bonds, and purchase stock in the companies for the amount; and then the companies disposed of the bonds in eastern financial circles for cash. This was called "lending their credit to the roads". Despite these improved roads, traffic was still too slow and expensive; and railroads came into existence. Their appearance marked the decline of the plank roads. Never very profitable for the companies which built them, nor popular with the public, the plank roads served a useful purpose in stimulating the growth of population and the development of the county. When they were discontinued they very properly became free public highways.

Altogether, two plank roads were built in the county—the Sheboygan & Fond du Lac, and the Sheboygan & Calumet. The railroads met considerable opposition not only from these roads, but from farmers who feared the loss of markets for horses, hay and oats, and from blacksmiths, harness-makers, livery-stable keepers, teamsters, stage-coach owners, taverners and store-keepers, whose business might be undermined by the new agency. But railroads, on account of their superior speed, availability for year-round use, and facilities for reaching distant markets, soon gained the upper hand. The Sheboygan & Fond du Lac plank road, which lay parallel with the Sheboygan & Mississippi railroad, was partly abandoned in 1864, only four years after the completion of the railroad as far as Glenbeulah.

Water transportation also suffered at the hands of the railroads. Instead of serving merely as adjuncts to navigation, as at first thought, they eventually superseded it. They were the major factor responsible for the decadence of lake shipping, and with it the decline of Sheboygan as a lake port. With an excellent harbor, lined with piers, docks, grain elevators and ship yards, and crowded with steamboats and sailing vessels, the port of Sheboygan once stood second to none on the west shore of Lake Michigan. But when the railroads, with their all-year service, appeared on the scene and challenged the supremacy of the lake carriers, taking the traffic that had previously moved by water, the importance of Sheboygan

as a lake port began to wane, until today its water-borne shipping is confined solely to imports of coal. The railroads likewise determined the fate of numerous villages and urban settlements in the county. These centers often sprang up, or declined in importance, or vanished entirely, depending upon whether the railroad lines were laid out so as to serve them, or passed them by. The threat to the dominance of the railroads due to the rise of the automobile and the motor truck seems the irony of fate.

The diverse racial stocks that settled here, and especially the preponderance of people of foreign origin among the settlers, have left a conspicuous mark upon the life and development of the county. First to come were the so-called Yankees from down east—descendants of Englishmen who had settled in the eastern states three and four generations earlier. Their occupation of the county may be said roughly to have taken place between the years of 1836 and 1860. After them, beginning about 1845, came the influx of Germans, Hollanders and Irish who landed here directly from Europe. The widely divergent origins of these two streams of immigrants were of the utmost consequence. The Yankees, schooled by many years of experience under American conditions, were thoroughly American in their ways and viewpoints; whereas the newcomers from Europe, without any previous contact with conditions in this country, were dominated by Old World customs and ideas.

The Yankees as a class were imaginative, speculative, venture-some; and endowed with a sharp business sense and an instinct for making money. Yankee enterprise and daring are well known the world over. They were drawn here by the prospect of increasing the size and quality of their land holdings. The lure of larger holdings in the west, and the hope of possessing new land in such quantities as to dwarf their small, stony, unproductive farms back East, stirred their imaginations. Their farming habits and ideas were extensive rather than intensive. Grain-farming, and especially the raising of wheat, was their main interest; it promised the largest returns for the least effort. Wheat-growing thrived best on new and unworn land, and consequently kept pace with the advancing tide of settlement, moving westward from New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio. In the rank of states, Wisconsin from 1850 to 1860 rose from ninth place to third in the production of wheat. It became Sheboygan County's leading industry. As the Yankees viewed it, farming was strictly a business to be pursued solely for the money in it; they had little inherent love for the land

itself or for rural life. They practiced large-scale farming. Dreading heavy clearing, they cleared the land as rapidly and with as little effort as possible, by slashing and burning the timber, being content to plow, cultivate and reap among the stumps and dead trees until they gradually rotted away.

A single kind of crop raised on the same land year after year, however, could only have the effect of finally exhausting the soil. A new system was needed that would restore the fertility of the land. Added to the farmers' difficulties was the chinch-bug, an insect pest that attacked the growing wheat-crop. Dairy farming, with its advantage of returning to the soil the essential elements taken from it, offered the solution of the problem. But dairying never greatly suited the fancy of the Yankees. They disliked the drudgery of it, and the close and regular attention it required. Few Yankee farmers, for instance, stabled their cattle, but permitted them to run at large all winter without any shelter except what the animals could find on the leeward side of a granary, straw-stack, or pile of marsh hay, or in clumps of trees and brush. When the soil ceased to respond, and failure of the wheat crop confronted them, instead of changing their method of farming by giving up the one-crop system and adopting crop rotation and manuring of the land, they were prone to sell out and move to fresh wheat lands further west, or abandon farming altogether.

The new immigrants from Europe, on the other hand, brought with them a heritage of intensive cultivation of the soil as practiced on the limited acreages in the old country, where they had been small farmers, orchardists, vineyardists, and hired hands. By nature they were slower, more plodding, patient and persevering than their Yankee neighbors. They looked on land ownership, not so much as a chance to make money, as an opportunity to make a home and gain a livelihood for themselves and their families—a task in which all the members of the household joined. Whereas the Yankee was impatient to clear a large tract in a few years, his newly-arrived neighbor from abroad was content to be able to clear his farm over a long period of time. The prospect of waiting twenty-five years or more, if necessary, before his farm was entirely free of stumps and obstructions, and under plow, did not deter him. A partly improved farm, with only a few acres cleared was always amply sufficient for his needs, as he gradually enlarged it three to five acres each year.

The foreign-born immigrants were accustomed to the use of hand tools, and introduced the practice of grubbing instead of

slashing. A stump-infested field was a challenge to their esthetic sense. After the timber was felled, the stumps had to come out at once with mattock and grub-hoe. They were not one-crop farmers, but grew a little of everything, including root crops for the cattle; and they were apt to build better barns and sheds for their stock than houses for themselves. They understood crop rotation, and clover-growing and manuring, as a means of restoring fertility to the soil. Habituated to the care of a cow or two on their little plots in the lands from which they came, they made dairying a fine art. As a vocation it was admirably suited to their inclinations. Little by little they saved money, and when their Yankee friends, discouraged by the repeated wheat failures, wanted to sell out, they became ready buyers of their partly improved farms. In the course of time the Yankees as a class largely deserted farm life in the county, their places being taken by the incoming Germans, Hollanders and Irish. Those who did not migrate to newer wheat country on the western prairies were disposed to enter business. Plank roads, railroads, shipping, cheese-making, cheese-buying, grain-buying, manufacturing, and merchandising principally attracted their interest.

Early dairy farming was not without its difficulties, and was slow in getting a start. Livestock was scarce and expensive. Immigrants from Europe could bring no domestic animals with them; all had to be imported from the East. It took capital to acquire stock, and most settlers had no money to buy any. Many had only a single cow, kept for its double utility as a milk-producer and beast of burden. It was also difficult to provide forage, shelter and protection for the animals during the severe winters. Indigenous grasses of sufficient nutritive value for livestock were lacking. In summer the cattle were allowed to roam at large and shift for themselves as best they could, feeding on the forage in the woods; but hay made from native grasses had too high a proportion of roughage for winter feeding. This is why the ox was the chief draft animal. It is slow, but strong and hardy, and able to thrive on the rough native forage plants, on which a horse would starve. The possession of a yoke of oxen gave to the owner a position of prominence in the community. With it he frequently helped out his less fortunate neighbors in return for the latter's services when needed. Domesticated hay and pasture plants, such as timothy, clover and other grasses, had to be imported from the east; and it was only after these new grasses were introduced that it was

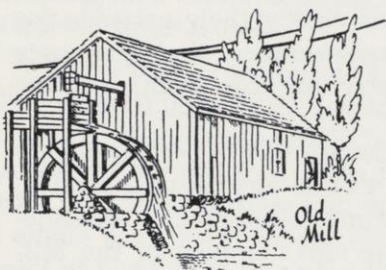
possible to have horses and dairy cattle, and dairying placed on a firm footing.

The dairy industry in the county owes its origin and success to both the Yankees and the European immigrants, each contributing a definite share toward its development. The first cattle were of a scrub variety not really profitable to keep. The Yankees were the first to understand this, and became the leaders of the movement for better herds, obtaining blooded stock from eastern centers with which they were familiar. When a pure-bred sire or cow would cost perhaps several hundred dollars, they did not hesitate to make the investment. Their more cautious neighbors from overseas, of a less speculative bent, were more inclined to hold back through fear that the animal might die—a feeling, let it be said, they soon outgrew as they came to realize the soundness of investment in blooded stock. The Yankees, with their genius for business, were also of invaluable aid to the new industry as leaders in agricultural organizations for the betterment of farming methods, in the establishment of cheese factories and cheese boards, and in the introduction of silos. To the credit of the settlers of European origin it must be said, however, it was chiefly their aptitude for the calling, and their industry and perseverance, that has made dairying by far the outstanding industry not only in this county, but in the state at large.

Nature ordained that Sheboygan County was to become a leading industrial and manufacturing as well as agricultural section. It is exceptionally well watered by five good-sized rivers—the Sheboygan, Onion, Mullet, Pigeon, and the north branch of the Milwaukee—that drain a large share of the county. All of these streams, with the exception of the last named, empty directly or indirectly into Lake Michigan within the confines of the county. Four of them have their source in the “kettles” near its western limits, and the fifth rises further east a few miles north of the Manitowoc county line. They flow across the county mainly in a southerly or southeasterly direction, and have a descent of as much as 400 feet to the lake. Here, hidden in the shadows of the forest, was a wealth of potential water power, waiting only to be harnessed to start the wheels of industry turning. The lands along these rivers best suited for power development were eagerly sought for dam sites and mill sites, especially by the speculators, and brought good prices. Saw-mills and flour- and grist-mills were the earliest manufacturing plants to be established, built in response to the settlers’ most immediate needs. At one time there were over thirty of such

mill privileges within the county.³ No other county in the state had so many developed water powers.

The saw-mills bought logs the individual farmers brought in, cut while clearing their lands of obstructing timber. They usually paid cash for the logs and thus provided the farmers with a small cash income while getting a start on their little patches of clearing. Some of the lumber was sold locally for the construction of new buildings that were everywhere springing up in nearby cities and villages; but it was mostly hauled to a lake port like Sheboygan, or floated downstream to the river mouth, and there loaded onto sailing vessels and shipped to Milwaukee, Chicago and other growing lake-shore cities. Farmers also hauled saw logs to the mills in order to obtain lumber to build frame houses and barns for themselves, usually paying for the sawing by delivering more logs. The flour- and grist-mills for the most part did custom milling for neighboring farmers, grinding their wheat and corn into flour and meal for a cash charge or a share of the product. The larger mills shipped considerable quantities of flour to outside markets, although



for a long time it actually had to be imported to supply the local demand. Quite a number of these mill privileges are still in use, but more have long been abandoned, their remains visible to this day, mute reminders of the colorful past. The one-time importance of water power is strikingly illustrated in the case of Sheboygan Falls. Favored with the

finest water power in the county—a fall of 42 feet—and Sheboygan with none whatever, the Falls actually outranked Sheboygan in manufacturing up to Civil war times.⁴

With an apparently inexhaustible supply of timber, unequaled as a source of cheap and convenient raw materials, it was inevitable that woodworking industries should be among the very first manufacturing enterprises to spring into existence in the county. Leading manufacturing centers were Sheboygan, Sheboygan Falls, Ply-

³ The Water Powers of Wisconsin, by Leonard C. Smith, in Wis. Geological and Natural History Survey, Bull. No. 20, (1908) p. 280.

⁴ "The manufactures of Sheboygan are not so fully developed as are those of our sister town of Sheboygan Falls."—Evergreen City Times, Mar. 5, 1859.

Christian Lutze had an oil mill run by water power, situated on a creek emptying into the Sheboygan river from the south about 1,000 feet east of the Ashby bridge. It was used for producing linseed and rape seed oil. In the fall settlers brought beech nuts to the mill to be pressed for their oil.

mouth and Glenbeulah. The first factories were small concerns, hardly more than shops, employing only a few men, and situated on the main business streets. The shop was usually located in the rear of the building, the front part serving as a display and sales room. Little power-driven machinery was used—and that of the simplest kind, such as lathes, saws and planers, most of the work being done with hand tools. The principal manufactured articles were fanning mills, feed cutters, cradles, rakes, wooden pumps, wooden wind mills, wagons, carriages, sleighs, hubs, spokes, felloes, shingles, laths, siding, sashes, doors, window blinds, clothes reels, churns, spinning wheels, chairs and barrels.



The finished products consisted of articles in demand in a pioneer community, and were for the most part sold locally directly to the users or consumers. Many advertised their wares in local newspapers. Customers were expected to call to make their selections, and to take their purchases with them, as they would at a store. Farm produce was frequently accepted in payment where cash was not obtainable. A list of the various manufacturers would be too lengthy to be given here. Most of them enjoyed only brief careers. "Business mortality" was high.

In the 50's and 60's cooperage was an outstanding industry, as barrels were in demand for packing pork, fish, flour and molasses, and were exported to larger industrial centers. All barrel staves were called whiskey staves regardless of their use. In 1859 in Sheboygan alone, 42,975 barrels were produced.⁵ Besides the regular manufacturing shops, common in every city and village, settlers on the farms pieced out their income by devoting their spare time to splitting shingles, siding and barrel staves, which they sold to nearby factories to be finished, and in hewing railroad ties, piles and timbers for construction projects. In addition to wood-working plants, there were the customary shops of blacksmiths, shoemakers, harnessmakers and tailors; and woolen mills, tanneries, potteries, breweries, brick yards, iron works, candle factories and asheries. Asheries, long gone out of existence, were engaged in the business of buying and making potash from the ashes produced by the burning of log piles, and brush and stump heaps, during the progress of land clearing.

⁵ Sheboygan Journal, Feb. 9, 1860.

To a large extent, manufacturing in the county owed its beginnings to the unusually large sprinkling of skilled mechanics and craftsmen among the early settlers. This was particularly true of those who came from abroad, and is explained by their background of training in the trade schools and guilds of Europe. Naturally preferring their own callings to farming, they congregated in the towns, and helped lay the foundations of our early manufacturing institutions. Many of our present-day industries had their genesis in these small early industrial enterprises. Labor was cheap. As late as 1880 the average wage in wood-working factories was 90 cents per day.⁶

Despite the disappearance of the adjacent forest, and the increasing distance from the source of raw materials, wood-working has always been Sheboygan County's most characteristic industry. During a period of over a hundred years the market for its products has expanded from a local to a nation-wide and world-wide field. It has developed a far-flung reputation for its chairs and other articles of furniture. Its principal city, Sheboygan, is known everywhere as the Chair City. Recent years, however, have witnessed the introduction of more diversified industries, which now outrank the wood-working plants. The manufacture of plumbing fixtures and fittings, lighting plants, heating systems, toys, enameled and stainless steel kitchenware, shoes, gloves, leather, knitwear, packing cases, machinery, food and dairy products, and other lines, has gained a substantial and permanent foothold.

From an agricultural standpoint Sheboygan County exhibits a number of characteristics worthy of note. Favored by climate, soil and geographical position, it has achieved a high degree of rural stability and prosperity. The era of pioneer agriculture, and the processes of settlement, land clearing and farm expansion, have long come to a close. Farming today is concerned with efficient production and management of lands already fully occupied, in order to obtain the maximum returns of which they are capable. Droughts, tornadoes, floods, insect pests and similar scourges, common in many areas are practically unknown. While the weather is cold in winter, it is favorable to crop growth in summer. Rainfall is usually well distributed during the growing season. If in unfavorable seasons, a shortage occurs in one or two crops, other crops are unaffected. The county has never experienced a complete crop failure.

⁶ Thomas M. Blackstock in Sheboygan Herald, Apr. 23, 1904.

Dairying, its principal industry, has markedly influenced the farming situation. Requiring less acreage than grain-raising, the trend has been toward small, family-size farms, in the operation of which the whole family takes part. Hired laborers are few. There are about 3,500 farms in the county, of an average size of 85.4 acres, although there are many farms of only 20, 40 and 60 acres. Farm tenancy is low. Over 83 per cent of the farmers own their farms and live on them, which accounts for the well-kept and thrifty appearance of their fields and buildings. The dairy industry has also wrought a pronounced change in farm production. Acreage at one time devoted to cash crops for the market is now utilized primarily to produce feed for the livestock. Cattle are essentially living machines kept for the purpose of transforming farm crops into the more convenient and profitable form of dairy and meat products. Corn, oats and hay, especially suitable for feeding purposes, instead of wheat, rye and barley, are the main crops. But little farm income is any longer derived directly from crops. About 87 per cent of the revenue from farms arises from livestock and livestock products. The total number of cattle in the county is about 60,000, or an average of seventeen per farm.

One of the important developments in the dairy industry has been the shift of the milk output from a seasonal to an all-year basis. Until recent times milk was primarily a product of the warmer months; and when winter came the cows "dried up". But with the introduction of the silo, permitting adequate winter feeding of livestock, and the practice of staggering the breeding of cattle so as to increase the period of milk production, farmers have come to enjoy the benefits of a regular monthly income throughout the year. Its advantages, especially over the once-a-year returns of former grain-marketing days, are apparent. The winter output of milk, however, is not as heavy as the summer output, nor does cheese from silo-fed cows have the same high quality as cheese from grass-fed cattle. The latter cures and keeps better and is in greater demand. Farmers understand the need for blooded stock; the nondescript varieties of pioneer days have long disappeared.

Peculiarly, their almost universal preference is for the Holstein-Friesian breed of cattle. An occasional herd of Guernseys, Jerseys or Ayreshires may be seen, but it is the pure-bred black and white Holsteins that have captured the popular fancy. Most of the milk goes into the manufacture of cheese, which in the long run has proven more profitable than creamery butter. Neighborhood cheese factories, usually located at country cross-roads, and

scattered at intervals of four or five miles, produce the type commonly known as American cheese. As a rule the factories are owned by the cheese-makers, who perform their services for an agreed rate per pound of the product, although some factories, in line with the co-operative movement in Wisconsin, are owned by the patrons themselves. Some milk is hauled to condenseries to be converted into condensed and evaporated whole milk, and some is delivered to adjacent cities for urban consumption. Sheboygan County's pre-eminence as a dairy center, however, rests primarily on its output of cheese. Ranking fourth among the counties of the state in this respect, yet when its smaller area is considered it stands at the top. It is appropriate that Plymouth, situated in the heart of the county, and the seat of the Wisconsin Cheese Exchange, should be designated "The Cheese Center of the World."

Although grown to a smaller extent than formerly, cash crops still are a no inconsiderable source of farm income in the county. Prominent among these crops are green peas, raised for canning purposes. A delicate crop with a short growing season, Sheboygan County seems to offer the right combination of moisture, limestone soil and cool weather for its best production. Peas were for many years marketed in dry form, but since the introduction of the process of packing in tin cans they are sold to the canning plants which have sprung up in various communities. Farmers make contracts with these canneries to take their output, and are paid for it upon an acreage or weight basis. Closely related to the soil, and drawing upon the surrounding country for their raw materials, as well as for part of their labor, the canning factories are a potent influence in the economic life of the farmers.⁷

As early as 1875 it was recorded, "This (the raising of peas) and the dairy interest are strongly contesting for the honor of being ranked as the leading ones of the county. The townships along the lake shore, from some peculiarity of their climate and soil, produce the most choice variety and quality of green peas—peas that are of the most perfect green color when ripe—to be found in the country. Their color, plump form, freedom from insects, and delicate flavor, render them much sought after, and secure a price much above the ordinary market quotations. The county shipped, of the crop of 1875, upward of 175,000 bushels."⁸

⁷ The first pea canning company in the county was the Albert Landreth Co., Sheboygan; the second, the Oostburg Canning Co., Oostburg, organized in 1902.

⁸ Snyder, Van Vechten & Co's Historical Atlas of Wisconsin.

Other specialty crops of today are sweet corn for canning, sugar beets for sugar, flax for seed, and barley for malting purposes.

The story of Sheboygan County, as we have seen, is a story of continual change. Nothing has remained static or permanent. It is the principal fact in its development. The Indians yielded to the white men, the wilderness to cleared fields, and the products of the forest to cultivated crops. Farming methods have come all the way from the use of simple hand tools to modern power-driven machinery. The ox has been supplanted by the horse, and the horse by the automobile and the tractor. The Indian trails have evolved into roads; water transportation has been overshadowed by railroads; and railroads face the competition of motor trucks. Grain-raising has given way to dairying; water power has been displaced by steam power, and steam by electricity. These changes, and many others, have been vast and far-reaching, profoundly influencing the social and economic life of the county. Adjustment to these changes has marked its growth in the past, and must be the key-note in meeting the problems of the future. The further we can look back and read a coherent story of mankind, the further we can look forward and plan for what lies ahead.

CHAPTER 3

INDIANS OF THE COUNTY

WHEN the first whites came, there were probably only about a thousand Indians permanently residing in Sheboygan County.¹ During the fishing season on Lake Michigan in spring there were for a few weeks perhaps one or two thousand more. In the entire territory east of the Mississippi, authorities are pretty well agreed, the native population was somewhat less than two hundred thousand. The tendency has been to greatly overestimate the number of Indian inhabitants. Wherever the white men went they encountered the tribesmen, and perforce supposed that their numbers were everywhere the same. But they only saw the natives in their natural centers of population, living in villages on the banks of lakes and streams and along established routes of trade and travel. The same natural advantages and features that appealed to the whites likewise attracted the redskins. In the back-country, however, away from the usual habitats of men, were vast stretches of territory destitute of Indian as well as of white inhabitants—a veritable no-man's land unknown save to the occasional roving hunter or warrior. So it was in Sheboygan County. The Indians were a gregarious people, living almost entirely in villages located upon sites selected for their natural advantages; and the intervening areas were largely devoid of human habitation.

Little is known of the Indians of Sheboygan County or of Wisconsin. They neither kept nor left any written records; they had no written language forms. What is known of their manner of life, their history and traditions, has come down to us in their myths and legends, through archeological remains, and in the ac-

¹Sketches of Early Times in Sheb. Co., by J. H. Denison, reprinted in Supp. to Sheb. Herald, Apr. 15, 1899.

General References.—Wisconsin Indians, by Charles E. Brown, Wis. Blue Book 1923, pp. 65-69; The Indians of Wisconsin, by Mrs. Mary M. Kirch, Wis. Blue Book 1931, pp. 99-112; The Potawatomi, by Publius V. Lawson, Wis. Archeol., Vol. 19, No. 2 Apr. 1920; The Menominee Indians, by Walter J. Hoffman, 14th Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, pp. 3-328; The Winnebago Tribe, by Paul Rodin, 37th Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, pp. 35-550; Indian Land Cessions in the United States, by Charles C. Royce, 18th Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, pp. 521-964; The French Regime in Wisconsin and the Northwest, by Louise P. Kellogg (1925); The British Regime in Wisconsin and the Northwest, by Louise P. Kellogg (1925); Basis of American History: The American Nation. A History, by Livingston Farrand, p. 215.

counts of explorers, missionaries, traders and early settlers. The records of even their white observers are scattered and scanty. They are mainly recitals of their own activities, their references to the Indians usually being only incidental. Much valuable information concerning the life and characteristics of the Indians has been obliterated, although some remains.

The Indians of Sheboygan County were a mixed lot of allied tribes, composed of Potawatomes, Chippewas, Ottawas, Winnebago, and a few Menominee. How these various tribes came to be thus intermingled is best understood by a glance at the background of Indian history in Wisconsin.

When the French explorer, Jean Nicolet, who was the first white man to set foot on Wisconsin soil, came to this state the entire southern half was dominated by the Winnebago, an offshoot of the Sioux. A fierce, war-like tribe, they had been in undisturbed possession of this area a long time before the coming of the whites. Nicolet's visit was in 1634; but for over twenty years no white men followed in his tracks. During all this period Wisconsin remained an unknown wilderness peopled only by primitive savages and roamed by wild beasts.

Twenty years after Nicolet, however, saw a great change in the Indian population. Gone were the once mighty Winnebago, only a few helpless, scattered remnants remaining; and in their places dwelt a vast influx of new and distant tribes that had moved into the state from points to the northeast and east. Two major catastrophes contributed to produce the transformation. Not long after Nicolet's visit a dreadful pestilence swept the Winnebago, which, together with a devastating war against the Illinois, and the loss of five hundred warriors in a tempest on Lake Michigan, reduced their numbers to such an extent that they could no longer successfully resist the incursions of invading tribes.

About the same time the powerful Iroquois of New York, notorious for their ferocity and bloodthirstiness, went upon the warpath against the Algonquian tribes to the west of them, and drove them from their homes where they had dwelt for generations. Forced to flee before their enemies, these fugitive tribes escaped to the west and took refuge in Wisconsin behind the barrier of Lake Michigan. Powerless to offer effective resistance to the invaders, the few Winnebago still clinging to their ancestral homes made friends with the newcomers, and thereafter dwelt in peace and amity with them. Likewise the invaders, confronted with the menace of their common foe, the dreaded Iroquois, and grateful

for the asylum the swamps and woodlands of Wisconsin afforded, forgot their inter-tribal jealousies and enmities and lived on good terms with one another.

Among the Algonquian tribes who thus made Wisconsin their new home were the Potawatomes, Chippewas, Ottawas, Menominee, Sauk and Foxes, bands of which were located in Sheboygan County. They came from points in Canada and the upper and lower peninsulas of Michigan in the vicinity of the Sault and the straits of Mackinac, gradually spreading westward and southward, until at the time of the arrival of the first settlers, they occupied the entire lake shore district from Green Bay to the southern boundary of the state. Some Sauk or (Sac) and Foxes lived in the western part of Sheboygan County; but their real home was along the Fox river and Lake Winnebago.

Before the various Indian bands finally settled down in peace and harmony, it appears that the invaders met resistance at the hands of the resident Winnebagoes. There is a record of a battle fought between warring Indian tribes on the present site of the city of Sheboygan long before the coming of the white men. The story is told by "Hezekiah" (identified as Samuel R. Knowles, of Hingham). Unfortunately, Mr. Knowles fails to state his authority for the event or the source of his information, but his narrative bears all the earmarks of authenticity; and the author is inclined to accept his account as trustworthy. Mr. Knowles writes:

"The Chippewas and Menominees joined forces for the purpose of driving out the Winnebagoes and thus to occupy the splendid hunting grounds along the lake shore region south to Illinois. Several hot battles were fought, the hardest one on the east bank of Lake Winnebago. Although the allied tribes outnumbered the Winnebagoes they were defeated and driven east, making their next stand at Sheboygan. Black Wolf, said to be grandfather of Blackhawk, was chief of the Winnebagoes and pushed his foes so hard that the latter made no halt till they reached the south bank of the Sheboygan river, where they threw up stockades, finally taking a position on the high bluff between south 6th and 8th streets, overlooking the whole region where the city now stands. Here, with the river picketed for miles up stream, with good pasturage in the rear for their ponies, the lake to protect their right flank, they bid defiance to the Winnebagoes. But their chief having the ferocity of a wolf and cunning of the fox, on a dark stormy night swam the mouth of the river with his band, waded up the shallow water of the lake shore and got in the rear of his enemies of whom he killed and scalped several and captured many ponies. The head chief of the Chippewas (QUETONKA) held a coun-

cil with the Menominees the next day and they determined to carry out their design of holding these hunting grounds. He sent runners to the Sacs and Foxes on the Mississippi for help to defeat the Winnebagoes, their old enemies.

"The next night being dark they deserted the lake shore bluff, taking their ponies and camp outfit, passed up the south bank of the river and erected the fort near the old Ashby farm and camped on the high and nearby perpendicular bluff on the south side. This bluff cuts south to the river running northeast to level land where Wildwood Cemetery now stands. The two tribes were here held in siege for months; many attempts were made to fight their way out but were always beaten back by the fierce Winnebagoes. The hill was fortified all around and to the rear with a heavy palisade, protecting the path to the river. The besieged Indians here killed their ponies and smoked the meat to keep from starvation. As they got no help from the Sacs and Foxes and hunger was upon them, on a dark and stormy night they with their squaws and papooses swam the river and made their escape. This bluff till it was cut in two by the Railroad in 1859 was visited by hundreds of people for relics, etc. and was until 1850 called Fort Hill. About that time one Dr. Seeley bought it and it has since been called Seeley's hill. The bluff between 6th and 8th streets was called Council Knob."²

In the selection of their village sites the Indians had an eye both for the practical and the picturesque. High, well-drained ground, commanding view, shelter from the direct force of winds and storms, abundant water, fuel and forage, and easy means of travel by water, were factors that dictated their choice. A trail junction, or a spot where a stream discharged into a lake, or a place on the bank of a river near a water-fall or rapids, or where a number of spring brooks emptied into it, was always a favored location. Many cities in Wisconsin—among them Sheboygan—are built on the sites of earlier Indian towns.

Although little visible evidence remains today, the sites of the principal Indian villages in Sheboygan County are fairly well known. The Wisconsin Archaeological Atlas lists 28 village and 15 camp sites in the county, and also 158 mounds and 18 mound groups.³

The largest village was situated in the sand dune country on the shore of Lake Michigan in the southern half of the county. It really was a series of villages forming practically one continuous

² Sheb. Herald, Apr. 8, 1899.

³ Prepared by Theodore T. Brown from data of the Wisconsin Archaeological Society and other sources, 1928 and 1929, under the direction of Charles E. Brown, chief of the State Historical Museum, Madison.

line that stretched for a distance of ten miles from the mouth of Black river, called by the Indians Black Water creek, in the town of Wilson nearly to the southern county line. The site at Amsterdam in the town of Holland marked the southern termination of the group, and extended along the lake about one and a half miles, with its northern terminus at Bar Creek, a small stream emptying into Lake Michigan. In some places the settlements closely hugged the water's edge, but in others they spread inland for over a mile.

At the mouths of the Sheboygan and Pigeon rivers were Indian villages. Of the one at Sheboygan, which was located on the north bank of the stream, David Giddings relates,

"It was on the 25th day of June 1835, between sundown and dark, that I first saw the Sheboygan river and its surroundings. I had come from Milwaukee on foot in company with a young man from Vermont. We came on the beach of the lake, and when we arrived in sight of the river the mouth or outlet was full of young Indians swimming. At that time there was a row of bark wigwams, some twelve or fifteen in number, extending from the mouth up to the high ground or present level of the streets. In and around these houses was a multitude of squaws, children and dogs. The trail ran along in front of the wigwams, and as we passed, we were surrounded by their yelping curs who seemed determined to prevent our passing, but the squaws finally quieted them and we got safely by. We found no difficulty in following the trail up to the mill, two miles or more up the river."⁴

The shore of Lake Michigan was a veritable "happy hunting ground" for the Indians. Here each spring the white fish swarmed in the shallow water near the shore to spawn and were easily caught in great numbers. It was a favorite Indian fishing place, attracting the natives from far and wide. Fish were a staple article of food in the redman's diet, and every household put up a plentiful stock. They were preserved by drying in the sun or over fires, or pounded into powdered form, and kept in bags made of cedar and basswood bark. Whole villages migrated in early spring from as far away as the Mississippi to lay in their season's supply of fish, setting up their temporary camps near the fishing grounds, and then when their needs were satisfied, packing up and setting out for home again. During the fishing season each year, therefore, the region temporarily experienced a marked increase in its Indian population.

⁴ Joerns Bros. Atlas of Sheb. Co., 1902; Snyder Van Vechten & Co's Historical Atlas of Wisconsin.

Fishing was engaged in by the Indians with considerable ingenuity and skill. The usual method of catching fish in the lake was by shooting or spearing. In the daytime the fisherman would wade waist-deep into the water, and capture his prey with spear or bow and arrow, a string, for retrieving purposes, being tied to the spear or arrow, and in turn fastened to the bow or the fisher's body. At night two men would go out fishing in a canoe with the aid of lights. A flaming pine knot or bark torch was held aloft in the hand or fastened to a framework in the bow of the canoe. While the man in the stern paddled the canoe, the other shot or speared the fish attracted by the light. A man's standing in his tribe was determined largely by his skill as a fisher and hunter.⁵

Isaac Ernisse, an old settler and fisherman, told Dr. Gerend that from the time he arrived in 1850 until 1860, several hundred Indians, mostly Chippewas, camped at a spot half a mile north of the Holland town line and about one mile west of the lake shore. These people, he stated, came in spring and remained until the latter part of August each year. Mr. Ernisse often saw them wading into the lake waist deep shooting white fish, their arrows fastened to their bodies by cords.⁶

At the first rapids of the Sheboygan river about three miles from its mouth, and just below the Paine saw-mill, was another populous Indian village. It lay on both sides of the river and along down the stream toward Sheboygan, and was comprised of perhaps a hundred wigwams, with probably four to five hundred inhabitants.⁷ In summer the natives were inclined to occupy the nearby bluffs of Ashby hill and Seeley hill with their wigwams, to get the benefit of the cool breezes, but in winter they returned to the protection of the sheltered flats adjoining the river. When. Col. Oliver C. Crocker, one of the owners of the mill, came here in 1834 to build the mill, he carried a letter of introduction from T. J. V. Owen, Indian agent at Chicago, addressed to the Chippewas, in which he stated, "The white men who take this letter to you are good men; they do not want to meddle with your fields or your hunting grounds; all they want is to build a mill. I hope you will not interrupt these men, as they will be good friends to you, they will do none of you any harm." Despite the Indian agent's assur-

⁵ Wisconsin Indian Fishing, by Herbert W. Kuhm, Wis. Archeol. vii n.s. No. 2.

⁶ Sheboygan County, by Alphonse Gerend, Wis. Archeol. xix, No. 3, p. 163.

⁷ Sketches of Early Times in Sheb. Co., by J. H. Denison, reprinted in Supp. to Sheb. Herald, Apr. 15, 1899; also Wis. Hist. Coll XI, 404.

ances, however, when the villagers became aware of the preparations to build a dam for the mill, some four or five hundred of them assembled to protest against the erection of this obstruction to fish ascending the river, cutting off one of their important sources of food supply. After long and tedious negotiations, their consent was finally obtained and the dam built.⁸

These rapids were another favored Indian fishing spot. Morgan L. Martin, describing his return trip from Milwaukee in 1833 by way of the lake shore, said, "On the Sheboygan river, four miles above the mouth, there was an Indian village. We found a net spread near the mouth of the river and in it two fine fish which we appropriated without ceremony. Next morning an Indian from the village overtook us and supplied us with a dried and smoked white fish which we found quite palatable."⁹ The Indians had a fish dam at the rapids, where, according to Quito and Joe Wisconsin, two natives who had formerly lived in the vicinity of Sheboygan, they caught pickerel, pike and suckers with nets in spring as they ascended the stream to spawn. The village located here was known as *Pe-ji-bo-nau-ga-ning*, meaning "fish dam."¹⁰

Fish dams were always built at shallow places from one side of the stream to the other. They consisted of a low wall or barrier made of stones laid one upon another, or of stakes driven into the bed of the stream in a row and interlaced with a network of willow branches, to prevent the fish from getting through. A small opening was left in the dam through which the fish were forced to pass. By stationing themselves at the opening the fishermen could easily take them with dip-nets or scoop-nets, or by spearing, clubbing, or even stoning. At night they used hoop-nets or set-nets—bag-shaped contrivances about four feet in diameter and fourteen feet long, held in place in front of the dam-opening in such a manner that the fish could readily enter the net but not escape. The nets were fashioned out of basswood bark cord.¹¹

The area of the Sheboygan marsh in the towns of Russell and Greenbush was a place of resort for the Indians second only to the shore of Lake Michigan. The banks or bluffs overlooking the marsh were well lined with wigwams. Hunting and trapping, unequaled

⁸ Pioneer Settlement of Sheb. Co., by John E. Thomas, Wis. Hist. Coll. ix, 389; Snyder, Van Vechten & Co's Historical Atlas of Wisconsin.

⁹ Quoted in Wis. Archeol. xix, No. 3, p. 141.

¹⁰ Sheboygan County, by Dr. A. Gerend, Wis. Archeol. xix, No. 3, p. 141.

¹¹ Wisconsin Indian Fishing, by Herbert W. Kuhm, Wis. Archeol. vii, n.s. No. 2.

almost anywhere else, were the chief attractions of this favored and picturesque region. It was a hunter's and trapper's paradise. Covering a territory of over fifteen square miles, its middle occupied by a large shallow lake, and its fringes covered with savannahs of luxuriant grass and dense growths of tamarack, cedar, spruce and hemlock, it was the haunt of a great variety of game. Deer, elk, bears, wolves and bob-cats roamed its wild pastures and woods, while beaver,¹² muskrats, mink, otter, and vast flocks of wild fowl, swarmed in and about its waters, furnishing food and clothing for the aborigines and peltries for trading with the whites. So deep was the attachment of the Indians to the marsh that their homes in its vicinity were the last in the county to be given up; and many returned to visit the place, it is said, long after they had moved away.

To the eastward in the town of Rhine lay a number of Indian towns, of which the largest, known as *Bugitsquian* (meaning river flat marsh or great swamp), was located in the southeast quarter of section six about a quarter mile east of the Sheboygan river on what is now known as the Becker farm. In 1856, according to George W. Wolff, a farmer who resided in the town of Rhine, the village consisted of fifty or sixty wigwams and had a population of about two hundred and fifty—mostly Chippewas, with a handful of Menominees. The site, about four acres in area, was occupied only during the summer months. During the winter-time the dwellers removed to another location some four or five miles to the northeast, in order to obtain a better feeding place for their ponies. These animals, of which they had 150 to 200, running loose, had to maintain a precarious existence in winter by feeding upon buds, twigs and the bark of small trees, which was provided for them by cutting several acres of brush, shoots and young growth, and letting it lie for them to browse upon. Ponies were valued at from twenty-two to twenty-five dollars each, and constituted much of the wealth of their owners. Next to the village was a cornfield, irregular in shape, about fifteen acres in extent, and surrounded by a brush fence. An extensive burial ground also adjoined the village.¹³

¹² Some doubt whether there were beaver in Sheboygan County. But according to the field notes of the original government survey, in the town of Plymouth 65 chains and 50 links north of the south line of sections 11 and 12, and on the line between these sections, was a beaver dam; and in the town of Sheboygan Falls on the line between sections 9 and 16, and 42 chains and 74 links west of the east line of those sections, was a stream which was the outlet of a beaver pond.

¹³ Sheboygan County, by Dr. A. Gerend, Wis. Archeol. xix, No. 3.

There was a Potawatomi village between Crystal and Elkhart lakes,¹⁴ and a Menominee camp at the outlet of Elkhart Lake.¹⁵ George W. Wolff describes a fish trap he found in this outlet, stating that it consisted of three parallel lines of upright sticks placed across the creek bed in a diagonal position, the first row being farthest apart, the second somewhat closer, and the third so close together as to allow only very small fish to escape. At one end of this line was a pocket in which the fish congregated. In his youth, Mr. Wolff says, he often took from 50 to 100 pounds of fish from one of these traps, and that other whites followed the same practice.¹⁶

A flourishing Indian town also lay in the town of Lyndon a short distance east of the present village of Cascade on the Herman Zelm farm in the northwest quarter of section 28. Situated in a



Indian Wigwam

small natural opening in the solid forest, it was named *Mush-ke-dasing* or Little Prairie. The government surveyors in their field notes refer to these openings, which they occasionally encountered as they ran their lines, either as dry prairies or wet prairies. Another Indian village was on the town line between Lyndon and Sherman

about two miles south of Little Prairie; and further west were one or two others.¹⁷

To describe the location of all the Indian villages in the county would be impracticable. Their settlements were clustered at one time or another at Sheboygan Falls, Horseshoe bend in the Sheboygan river, Plymouth, Ourtown, Franklin, Lake Ellen, Random Lake, Gerber's Lake, Crystal Lake, Little Elkhart Lake, and in fact somewhere on the shore of practically every body of water. But whether these settlements were villages of a more or less permanent nature, or only temporary camps where the inhabitants sojourned for a short while, the records do not disclose. The Indians were a semi-nomadic people moving readily about from place to place as suited their fancies or circumstances. From late spring,

¹⁴ Wis. Archeol. xix, No. 3.

¹⁵ Wis. Archeol. vii, n.s. No. 2; xix, No. 3.

¹⁶ Wis. Archeol. xix, No. 3.

¹⁷ The surveyors' notes of the original government survey of the town of Mitchell show that between sections 19 and 20, and 26 chains north of the south line of these sections, was an old Indian camp.

through the hot months of summer, and until the early fall, they led a sedentary existence in and near their villages, doing little except to plant, cultivate and harvest their crops; but in early spring they migrated to the best fishing grounds and maple sugar groves; and in late fall and winter they sought the depths of the woodlands to do hunting and trapping and to escape the severest rigors of wind and cold. Comparatively few of the tribesmen had a fixed habitation where they lived all year round. Even their dwellings were adapted to the needs of a migratory life, so built as to be easily put up and taken down. George W. Wolff gives a good description of these structures:

"The wigwams were built of poles from six to ten feet in height, set in the ground and covered with bark and mats, the bark being cut from living elm and basswood trees of from 10 to 15 inches in diameter. The pieces thus obtained were from 3 to 5 feet in length. They were roughly serrated at top and bottom and then tied to the wooden framework of poles with the smooth sides inwards. The wigwam of a family was usually from 8 to 12 feet in diameter, from 6 to 10 feet in height, round, oblong or square in shape and always open at the top to allow for the exit of the smoke arising from the green wood burning near the center. Some of the larger wigwams consisted of two stories, the upper being tied to the framework and used to stow away younger members of the family, or as a store room for peltries and provisions. The floor of the wigwam was usually covered with cedar bark and mats made of rushes interwoven with the inner bark of the basswood. Some of these mats were made in ornamental patterns, dyed black and red".¹⁸

The Indians excelled as hunters. Before the introduction of firearms, hunting had to be carried on mostly by stalking, driving, and the use of snares and pitfalls, entailing not only a keen knowledge of the habits of wild animals, but infinite patience and skill. Wildfowl such as ducks and geese were caught in large nets stretched in the wild rice beds on the borders of lakes and ponds where they alighted to feed. Guns and traps, acquired by barter from the whites, revolutionized their hunting methods. Contact with white civilization developed in them new tastes and habits unknown to their ancestors. Iron tools and implements took the place of stone axes, knives and drills. Woolen and cotton clothing and blankets replaced garments made of skins. Metal cooking and household utensils supplanted earthenware pottery, and wooden

¹⁸ Sheboygan County, by Dr. A. Gerend, Wis. Archeol. xix, No. 3.

and gourd dishes, ladles and spoons. Steel needles, awls and hand tools superseded those of bone, horn, wood, copper and shell. To acquire the peltries with which to satisfy their new desires, they had to increase their hunting. This naturally produced a scarcity of game; and when the game had largely disappeared, they became a dependent race.

Next to hunting and fishing, farming was the Indians' principal source of livelihood. As is customary among barbaric peoples,

most of the work on the land was done by the squaws, old men and children, while the able-bodied men hunted, fished, built canoes, fashioned weapons, tools and implements, or lay around doing nothing. Their farming tools were of the rudest sort, consisting of stone hoes and mattocks, wooden shovels, deer-horn rakes, and the like; and

their methods were primitive. Luther Witt, a farmer who lived first in the town of Lyndon, and later in the town of Plymouth, describing the Indian mode of corn planting, says:



Indian
Bark Hut

“Each family had a field of corn which contained on an average about an acre of land. They cultivated also a few potatoes, beans and squashes. Their fields were of every conceivable shape except a regular form, enclosed by a slender fence of stakes and poles. In preparing their fields they cleared away the small timber and girdled that of larger growth. In fitting the ground they commenced a week or two before the time for planting to dig holes, with a grub hoe about 18 inches in diameter and 6 inches deep, and when the oak leaves were about half their size they commenced planting. They never planted in rows; you could scarcely find three hills in a straight line. I never saw an Indian touch the planting. But the squaw would take a dish of seed corn and seating herself by the side of the place dug out for a hill, would push back the dirt with her hand and fill up the hole within about two inches of the top, when with great care she would place about eight kernels of seed about four inches apart in a hill, then with her hand she would cover the seed from the remaining dirt and hitch herself along to the next hill. I saw corn planted by them for six or seven years, but never in any other way. I have sometimes taken a hoe and showed them our way of planting. They would look on very coolly and then say ‘guh cowin nisheshin’ and keep on their own way. They always kept the field entirely free of weeds, and hoed their crop very

nicely. Before planting time the Indians came together and had a dance and a drunken row; when the corn was in the milk they had another. Their dances and rows were kept up for several days, and by their singing, yelling and fighting they would make night and day hideous. At such times the squaws would carry off and hide their guns, knives and hatchets.

"When the corn was ripe, it was husked and dried on a rack of small poles over a slow fire until it was perfectly dry. It was then shelled and put in a rude kind of sack called "mokock", made by the squaws of basswood bark, and would hold about a half bushel. These sacks, filled with corn, were placed in pits dug in sandy knolls; they were surrounded with bark and covered with sand, and the top of the pit was again covered with bark to keep off the rain. One of these sand hills was on my farm in Lyndon. I have seen other places in the county where corn was stored in this way, which was uniformly the Indian method."¹⁹

The Indians also practiced the art of making maple sugar in the spring, tapping the trees with a hatchet about 12 to 18 inches above the ground and catching the flowing sap in receptacles or buckets made of birch bark. They boiled the sap in large kettles over open-air fires and reduced it to sugar. Most of their product they bartered with the traders in exchange for things they needed. Charles D. Cole carried on an extensive trade with the Indians at Sheboygan Falls, selling them blankets, calicoes, broadcloth, knives and axes, and accepting furs and maple sugar in return. At one time he sent off to the market 20 or 30 barrels of maple sugar, and several hundred dollars worth of furs, chiefly beaver, otter, mink, muskrat and marten.²⁰

Indian children were carried bound to a board swung upon the back of the mother. This board, according to J. H. Denison, was about two feet long and eight inches wide, with a foot piece at the bottom and sometimes side pieces. Near the top was a hole through which a strap was drawn and fastened around the mother's forehead; a blanket was wrapped around both. The Indian women with their papooses frequently came to the stores of the pioneer traders. Here they set the boards, leaning against the wall, while they did their bartering. In camp the mother would attach the board, with

¹⁹ Letter to J. H. Denison, published in *Sketches of Early Times in Sheb. Co.* reprinted in *Suppl. to Sheb. Herald*, Apr. 15, 1899.

²⁰ The original government survey notes show that there were Indian sugar groves in the town of Sheboygan Falls between sections 34 and 35, and between sections 22 and 27, and an Indian corn field on New Jersey Ave. on the bank of the Sheboygan river between sections 22 and 27 in the town of Sheboygan; *Wis. Archeol.* xix, No. 3, p. 143.

the child strapped to it, on the outer end of the branch of a tree, in such a way that its weight would keep the limb close to the ground. This was the Indian cradle. When the child manifested uneasiness, the mother would set the limb in motion and keep on with her household tasks, or perhaps the wind would do it for her. Mr. Denison states that in 1848 he saw one of these cradles in use near Sheboygan Falls.²¹

In the main, the Indians were peaceably inclined; but at times they were exceedingly troublesome, especially when their passions were inflamed with the white men's firewater. Although it was illegal to sell intoxicants to the natives, the latter had little difficulty in obtaining it. Whiskey was a part of the stock in trade of nearly every merchant and trader, and the law was violated with impunity. Col. J. A. Watrous gives a graphic description of the effect of liquor on the Indians: "Every old settler of the Falls will remember the howling trips they used to make from the 'Mouth' five miles away. We could hear them when they were two miles away, and the people began to run for cover if it was in the night, and it usually was, for Sheboygan venders of *budge* drove them out early in the evening after getting all the money they could from them. Sometimes in passing through the village, these drunken Indians would call at a house. Of course the door was locked. They would rap on the door and look through the windows, but there was no light and no word of welcome."²²

Wentworth Barber once had an encounter with a drunken Indian. Before he removed to the town of Lyndon, Mr. Barber was employed by William Farnsworth, in charge of the "flats" near Sheboygan. A party of Indians pitched their wigwams too close by, and were ordered by him to remove them. Upon their refusing to do so, he took them one by one and threw them in the river. A short time later, one of the Indians, Little Thunder by name, smarting under his humiliation, and his courage fortified by whiskey, threatened to kill his assailant. Firmly grasping an ox goad about four feet in length, on one end of which was a large spike, Mr. Barber jabbed Little Thunder smartly in the hand with it. This took all the fight out of the Indian, and he was led away by some squaws. Thereafter he had no further trouble with the natives.²³

A few of the white men were special friends of the Indians. Two of these were Deacon A. G. Dye and Deacon William Trow-

²¹ Unpublished manuscript of J. H. Denison.

²² Sheb. Press, Sept. 30, 1914.

²³ Zillier, Hist. of Sheb. Co., p. 56.

bridge. Their cabin doors were always left unlocked, so that any Indian traveling past could enter and lie down on the floor to sleep at any hour of the night. It was a common thing for the master of the house to get up in the morning and find the floor covered with sleeping Indians, lying so closely together that there was hardly space to walk between them. Mr. Dye was often invited to accompany parties of Indians setting out upon their bee hunting expeditions. In the woods were numerous swarms of wild bees, which made their hives in hollow trees, and filled them with honey. The Indians relished wild honey as highly as did the whites; and always sought Mr. Dye's assistance in cutting down the bee trees on account of his skill with the axe. In this way his table was bountifully supplied with honey.²⁴ Mrs. Horace Stone used to tell of the friendliness of the squaws, and how they would come to the house and take her baby to their wigwams, and after a short time return with the *wish-i-shin* papoose (pretty baby), all covered with beads and other Indian finery, including tiny moccasins.²⁵ Old Solomon, a Potawatomi chief, had the goodwill and respect of all the whites. A familiar figure in the community for years, he did not remove from the county until 1883, and was the last of his race to leave.²⁶

Among the aborigines the birch bark canoe was the chief means of conveyance. Strong, speedy and light, it was easily handled in the shallow waters of smaller streams. Its length varied from 15 or 20 feet to 50 or 60 feet, and its width was about three to five feet in the widest part. In fashioning a canoe, large pieces of white birch bark, sewed together with long, tough, slender fibrous roots of tamarack or balsam, were fastened over a framework made of thin strips of cedar or spruce. Then after the joints were covered with hot pitch from the balsam or spruce, the craft was water tight and ready for use. The bark covering was not over an eighth of an inch in thickness, and the whole was so light that one or two men could easily carry it.

Supplementing the natural waterways as arteries of travel, and reaching many places inaccessible by canoe, were the numerous Indian trails leading everywhere through the country, twisting, turning and criss-crossing in every possible direction. There were trails running from village to village for local intercourse and trade; trails leading to hunting, trapping and fishing grounds, and

²⁴ Ziller, Hist. of Sheb. Co., p. 57.

²⁵ Sheb. Telegram, Jan. 31, 1908.

²⁶ Joerns Bros. Hist. Atlas of Sheboygan Co., p. 9.

to maple sugar groves and salt springs; river trails along the banks of streams; portage trails around falls and rapids, and connecting navigable bodies of water; traders' trails, war trails, and trails penetrating to far distant areas and tribes.

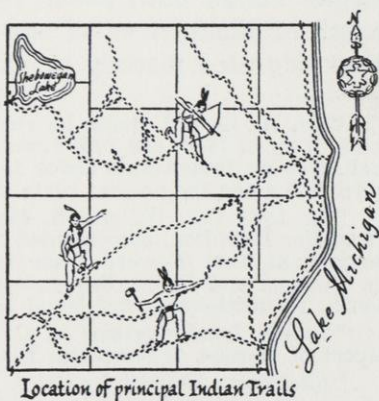
These trails were rough and crude. Indians when traveling always went single file, placing one foot straight in line in front of the other. Even when whole villages migrated, they stretched out for a great distance in straggling procession. Their trails were mere narrow runways through the forest, seldom more than eighteen inches wide. They were not cut or cleared, but simply beaten down by the constant tread of moccasined feet; nothing was done to mark or improve them. If one became impassable, another was started. The Indian trails resembled game trails, and were formed in much the same manner. They avoided obstacles wherever possible, going around trees and rocks, beneath fallen timber and over piles of prostrate trunks, here skirting the edge of a thicket or swamp, and there running through a ravine or beside the margin of a lake or stream, yet following the most practicable course available. Trails clung to the high ground, and even in low places kept to the points of highest altitude. Some of the less traveled trails were so inconspicuous as to be scarcely visible to the unpracticed eye. Others, better traveled, were cut deeply into the soil, often a foot or more, leaving a plainly marked and narrow track. If the track became so deeply cut as to make travel difficult, other tracks were started near it, forming parallel paths running side by side for miles.

Before roads were built, the early settlers used the Indian trails as avenues of communication. Andrew J. Vieau Sr. tells of a trip he made in February 1837 with his bride from Green Bay to Milwaukee in a sleigh called a "French train." It consisted of a deep box, six feet long and thirty-five inches wide, which slipped easily on the surface of the snow, when drawn by two horses hitched tandem. He says, "There were, of course, no wagon roads in those days, but there were two regularly-traveled trails to Milwaukee. The one we took led first on a short cut southeast from Green Bay to Manitowoc. At Manitowoc Rapids, $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the lake shore, the path turned almost due south, striking the mouth of the Sheboygan river. Thence we would proceed up the lake, sometimes on the beach, and again on the high land, for fifteen or sixteen miles; thence west southwest to Saukville, a small Chippewa village."²⁷

²⁷ Narrative of Andrew J. Vieau Sr., Wis. Hist. Coll. xi, 218.

Two principal Indian trails traversed Sheboygan County. The first was the famous Chicago and Green Bay trail, one of the main Indian land routes in Wisconsin; the other was an unnamed trail running from Lake Michigan westward far into the interior of the county. Entering the county at its extreme southeast corner, the Chicago and Green Bay trail extended northward along the lake beach as far as section 11 in the town of Wilson, where it left the beach and veered northwesterly to the Sheboygan river at a point in section 28 of the town of Sheboygan a short distance east of the old Ashby bridge. From this river, it continued in a northwesterly direction, crossing the Pigeon river in the northeast quarter of section 17 of the town of Sheboygan. At Howards Grove it turned northward to the Manitowoc county line and beyond. The second trail followed the bank of the Sheboygan river to Sheboygan Falls, where it branched, one trunk swinging southwestward to Cascade, and thence to the southwest corner of the county and onward, the other branch stretching westward from Sheboygan Falls to section 19 in the town of Sheboygan Falls. Here it again forked; one fork diverged northwesterly to Crystal and Elkhart lakes; and the other proceeded west through Plymouth as far as Greenbush, whence it turned northward to the Sheboygan marsh.

Most of the main Indian trails in the county are shown on the accompanying map, which was drawn largely from data entered in the field notes of the original government surveys made in 1833 and 1834. When the government surveyors ran their lines, they jotted down the precise location of the prominent landscape features they came across, including Indian trails. They probably failed to note all the trails, especially the lesser ones, but those they did indicate are authentic. These surveyors notes are the most reliable source of information we have regarding our early Indian land routes.



In many cases Indian trails are the predecessors of our highways. They became roads by a process of widening and improvement. Highway 28, formerly known as the Madison road, closely

follows an Indian trail.²⁸ So does Highway 23, or the Fond du Lac road, over part of its route; and Highway 32, or the Calumet road; and also Highway 42, or the Green Bay road, at its northern end.²⁹

Another favorite path of the Indians and early whites was along the bare, sandy beach of Lake Michigan. The numerous streams that discharged into the lake were crossed by wading through the shallow water over the sand bars found at every outlet. Trips on the open beach going to and from Milwaukee and Green Bay are frequently mentioned in stories of the time.

In a treaty made at Chicago, Sept. 26, 1833, the Indians ceded to the United States government all their lands along the western shore of Lake Michigan, including all of what is now Sheboygan County, so that when settlers began to move in a year or two later the Indian titles had been formally extinguished.³⁰ By the terms of the treaty, the tribes were supposed to remove within three years; but the great body of the tribesmen refused to be bound by the compact made by their chiefs. The Indian's view of property in land differs from that of the whites. Land is regarded as a tribal possession; and no man, not even a chief, can transfer anything but his own individual right. Despite the treaty, the Indians continued to regard the county as their home, and for many years made no preparations to leave. They had a deep attachment for their ancestral surroundings, and a feeling of veneration for the graves of their forefathers. Some of them were camped at Sheboygan marsh until about 1870,³¹ and on the lake shore at the mouth of Black river as late as 1877.³² When they left, most of them migrated directly to various points in northern Wisconsin

²⁸ Dr. A. Gerend states he remembers his mother telling him that as a young girl, in 1850, she rode from the town of Scott to Sheboygan on horseback upon an Indian path about 20 to 24 inches wide, and 3 to 4 inches deep, which ran along the present route of Highway 28.—Sheb. Press, Apr. 29, 1927.

²⁹ In 1825 Col. William S. Hamilton, son of the celebrated statesman, Alexander Hamilton, accompanied by four men, drove a herd of cattle for the garrison at Fort Howard from near Springfield, Ill., to Green Bay, along the Chicago and Green Bay Indian trail. The trip required a little over a month. No settlement was found between Milwaukee and Manitowoc.

³⁰ Indian Land Cessions in the U. S., by Chas. C. Royce, 18th Annual Report of Bureau of American Ethnology, 1896-1897.

³¹ Sheboygan County, by Dr. A. Gerend, Wis. Archeol., vol. 19, No. 3.

³² A Record of Wis. Antiquities, by Chas. E. Brown, Wis. Archeol. vol. 5, p. 391. Collections of Indian relics in Sheboygan County, open to the public, are: the Gerend Collection, in the Sheboygan County Historical Museum in the court house, Sheboygan; the Rudolph Kuehne Collection, owned by the Kohler family, Kohler; the Achilles-Miller Collection, in the Sheboygan County Rural Normal School, Sheboygan Falls; and the George W. Wolff Collection, in the Public Museum, City Hall, Plymouth.

and Michigan, and Canada, where they have ever since made their homes. A part of them went to Kansas, but, meeting unfriendly bands and factions in that section, they returned within a year or two and joined their brethren in the north.

Indian Burial and Marriage Customs—"Near the Follett place, on the north side of the river, a little below the present bridge near the Ashby farm, was an Indian burying ground, which was fenced in with posts six or eight feet high, set in the ground so near together as to exclude dogs and wolves. The dead body was first laid in a crude coffin made of the half of a hollow log; this was laid on the ground within the enclosure, covered with bark and left. When they buried in the open field, a grave was dug about a foot in depth. The body, clad in the Indian's best clothing and blanket, was laid in it. His knife and hatchet were placed in his belt, and his drinking vessel at his feet. Thus accoutred, he was buried, and over the grave was a sort of roof made of slabs or bark. At the head of the grave was set a stake, often painted. At the burial there was a sort of wail, somewhat similar to an Irish wake, and often there were speeches made eulogizing the character of the deceased . . . After an Indian was buried his relatives or friends placed meat and tobacco under the slab covering the grave in order to supply his needs on his passage to the distant hunting grounds. And for some time after his death when a deer was killed, a piece of venison was placed on the grave. The wolves or dogs frequently carried off the meat, and sometimes white men would carry away the tobacco. Often a small fire was built near the grave to light the deceased through the dark valley.

Marriages were concluded with less ceremony than among the whites. After his betrothal the young Indian wore leggings of different colors. The young squaw did the same. After the marriage the young man lived with his father-in-law for about a year, after which he would build his own wigwam. J. H. Denison, *Sketches of Early Times in Sheboygan County*, Reprinted in *Supp. to Sheb. Herald*, Apr. 15, 1899.

CHAPTER 4

FUR TRADING DAYS

THE first white man's establishment in what is now Sheboygan County was a fur trading post built on the Sheboygan river in 1795. This was twelve years after the close of the War of the Revolution, and over forty years before the county was created. At that time the entire Great Lakes region was still an unsubdued wilderness, with only occasional settlements scattered at wide intervals; and the fur trade was practically the sole industry carried on in it. The Northwest Fur Company, predecessor of John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company, with headquarters at Michilimackinac (Mackinac), near the foot of Lake Michigan, dominated and controlled the fur trade in the whole area.

In the summer of 1795 the Northwest Fur Company sent out one of its agents, Jacques Vieau, to explore and establish a chain of fur trading posts on the west shore of Lake Michigan. Upon this expedition Vieau erected posts at Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Sheboygan and Milwaukee. He and his party made their way down the lake in two boats, a large Mackinaw boat heavily loaded with a supply of trade goods and manned by twelve men, and a large birch bark canoe occupied by himself, his wife and children, and holding the camping equipment.

Arriving at Sheboygan, he entered the river and proceeded on upstream for a distance of about three miles. Impressed with the advantages of the locality, he decided to build a trading post there. His son, Andrew J. Vieau Sr., later said of the spot, "This place was at the foot of the rapids on the north side, and has been pointed out to me by Ottawa and Chippewa Indians."¹

Commanding the commerce in furs and peltries over a wide territory, the location was a strategic one for a trading station. It was at the first rapids in the Sheboygan river, the site of an extensive Indian village, the location of an Indian fish dam, the junction of two prominent Indian trails, the focus of traffic down three good-sized rivers, and on the course of an important water

¹ Narrative of Andrew J. Vieau Sr., Wis. Hist. Coll. xi, 220. General References: *Vanguards of the Frontier* (1941), by Everett Dick, Chap. 1, *The Great Fur Companies*; *The Character and Influence of the Fur Trade in Wisconsin*, by Frederick J. Turner, Wis. Hist. Proc. (1889), p. 52; *The American Fur Trade of the Far West*, by Hiram M. Chittenden, (1902).

route leading far into the interior of the country. Besides, the banks of the river here were high and dry, and free from the hazards of spring freshets and running ice which threatened the lower stretches of the stream. The convenience of the Indians and the geography of the country were always controlling factors in selecting the site of a trading post.

Vieau's post at Sheboygan was a subsidiary of the one he started at Milwaukee, which was the principal station in the chain, and in charge of Vieau himself. The Sheboygan station, intended for temporary occupancy only, was called a "jack-knife" post, because, in the parlance of the trade, it could easily be opened and closed like a jack-knife. Vieau left the post in charge of a clerk. The name of the clerk has not been preserved, nor is any picture or description of the post extant. It was probably only a simple log building, serving the combined purposes of trading room, warehouse and living quarters.

Every spring, after packing up his winter's collection of pelts, and buying all the maple sugar obtainable from the Indians, Vieau left Milwaukee with his family and goods to return to Michilimackinac, stopping enroute at Sheboygan and the other posts to collect their stocks, and often to relieve and replace the men stationed there. This trip up the lake, in fair weather, would take about a month. In August he returned to Milwaukee to resume his trading, distributing goods and supplies along the way to the secondary posts, inspecting conditions, issuing instructions, and preparing for the new season's business at each, and then remaining in Milwaukee until the next May.

Vieau was a part of the organized fur trade of the region. His connections with the Northwest Fur Company in conducting his far-flung operations was as a so-called wintering partner, a common arrangement made by the fur companies with the more reliable traders. Its nature is indicated by an agreement made at Michilimackinac on Aug. 4, 1824, between Vieau and Robert Stuart, agent of the American Fur Company. By its terms Stuart agreed to stake Vieau with the necessary supplies and goods "for the trade of *Shabouegan*, on the confines of *Miliwakie*"; and Vieau agreed to bring or send the furs he obtained to Michilimackinac as early as practicable the next spring, for which Stuart was to pay him current prices.² It is not known how long Vieau kept his first trading post at the Sheboygan river rapids, but it was prob-

² Wis. Hist. Coll., xx, 342.

ably only a few years. George C. Hille has stated, on the authority of an old resident, that Vieau once had a trading station at the outlet of the Sheboygan on the south side. This tradition is partly substantiated by the record of his agreement with Stuart in 1824; if he did have a post there, it must have been sometime in the 1820's. Vieau retained his post at Milwaukee until 1819, when he disposed of it to his son-in-law, Solomon Juneau, credited with being the founder of Milwaukee. Juneau married Josette, Vieau's third child. She was fifteen years of age at the time of her marriage, and had been born at Sheboygan. As early as 1822 Juneau occasionally came to Sheboygan over the trail with eighty pounds of goods upon his back to trade with the Indians.³

The fur companies wielded a despotic control over all their subordinates, the service being of a semi-military nature. Men usually enlisted in their employ first as *voyageurs* or *engagees*, the lowest stratum in the company ranks. They were mostly young, hardy French-Canadian peasants, or half-breeds, who, rather than engage in hum-drum work at home, volunteered for this free life of the forests and waterways. They were employed under written contracts or *engagements* for a term of three to five years at wages of \$50 to \$150 a year, together with an "outfit", consisting of a Mackinaw blanket, two cotton shirts, a *capote* or loose sack coat, two pairs of coarse pants, shoes, socks, and some other small articles, including soap. Their duties were to paddle the canoe, load and unload, carry the craft and its cargo over portages, pitch the tents, prepare the meals, and in general perform the menial tasks, and obey their master in all things. Subsisting for the most part on corn and tallow, occasionally enriched by a piece of fat pork or venison or bear meat, their powers of endurance were truly remarkable, paddling or marching all day, toting on their backs large packs of furs or goods weighing 100 or 130 pounds suspended by a strap or band across the breast or forehead, and then when night came enjoying their frugal meal. Newcomers, or tenderfeet, were dubbed *mangeurs de lard*, or pork-eaters, a term derived from

³ Jacques Vieau was a typical French-Canadian fur trader. He was known to the Indians by the name of Jean Beau, and was occasionally called Jean by his white associates. Born in lower Canada in the suburbs of Montreal May 5, 1757, he joined the ranks of the Northwest Fur Company, first as a voyageur, and later becoming a clerk, and then an agent. He was married in 1786 to a half-breed squaw, Angeline, who was the daughter of a trader at Green Bay named Joseph le Roy, and a niece of the Indian chief Onaugesa. There were twelve or thirteen children as the result of the marriage. Vieau always considered Green Bay his home, and died there July 1, 1852, and is buried in the French Catholic cemetery at Shanty Town.

their daily fare of corn and fat. Veterans were known as *hivernants*, or winterers, as an indication of their experience and ability to endure the rigors of the forest. If a *voyageur* was ambitious, he could aspire to become a *commis*, or clerk.

Clerks were assistants to the agents in charge of trading posts. They did the clerical work, aided in barter with the Indians, trading gunpowder, liquor, tobacco, traps, vermilion, ribbons, looking glasses, and other articles attractive to the native fancy, for furs; took charge of subsidiary posts, like the one at Sheboygan; and commanded side expeditions to native villages supposedly rich in peltries. Many clerks, showing special aptitude in the calling, received promotions to the office of *bourgeois* or agent. Good traders made friends of the Indians and inspired their confidence. Frequently in fall they gave credit to natives whom they felt they could trust by furnishing wanted supplies over the winter, and depending on their honor to bring in enough peltries in spring to pay for the goods advanced.⁴

Furs purchased were of two kinds: the fine furs obtained from beaver, otter, mink, fox, raccoon, skunk; and the coarser products, such as bear, deer and elk skins, which were not used for furs so much as for lap robes, heavy coats and the like. From May to September the trade in furs was largely suspended. In the warmer months the skins of most fur-bearing animals are of little value—all except the deer, whose red or summer hides, known as “summer furs” or “deerskins in the red”, were accepted the year round. During the hey-day of the fur trade beaver skins passed as money, with an established rating of approximately four dollars for a raw skin. They were used mainly in the making of gentlemen’s top hats.

Vieau conducted his business at a fixed location, except possibly for occasional trips to remote Indian villages for temporary trading purposes. During his time, however, and for many years before, another class of roving traders traversed the county, and the entire territory of which it was a part, in every direction, and were familiar with its every landmark, lake, stream, Indian trail and camp. The name of *coureurs du bois*, or bush-rangers, was applied to them. Some of them were “staked” by agents of the company, and were bound to deliver their peltries to their employer at a certain rate per skin. Others owed allegiance to no one, providing their own equipment and supplies, trading entirely on their own account, and coming and going as they pleased. They were a

⁴ Wis. Hist. Coll., xix, preface xiii; Recollections of the Early History of Northern Wisconsin, by Henry S. Baird, Wis. Hist. Coll. iv, 197.

more independent class than the first named, and disposed of their skins and peltries to the highest bidder. None of these wandering traders have left any account of their adventures in Sheboygan County. But there can be no doubt that they were here in large numbers for many years, propelling their venturesome craft, or pushing forward on foot or horseback, into many an out-of-the-way corner of the county, oftentimes where no white man had ever penetrated before. They were really the advance-agents of civilization in these parts, and left their impress upon savage life and customs long before Jacques Vieau, and others of his class appeared upon the scene.

The *coureurs du bois* were a picturesque, devil-may-care, roistering, hard-bitten crew, who in reckless daring and hardihood, rivalled the slave- and ivory-traders of Africa. They not only cultivated the friendship of the Indians, but fraternized with them, became their boon companions, mated with their squaws, produced broods of half-breed children, and often became as wild as the savages themselves. What copper-colored maiden would not exchange the prospect of a dreary existence as the slave and drudge of an ordinary Indian buck for the pomp and circumstance of a life as the mate of a gay, dashing white trader? The free, ungoverned life of the tribesmen appealed to the traders. Many of them looked and acted more like Indians than white men.

Another class of persons whose rugged travels brought them to the county, over a period of many years, and especially during the French regime, were the black-robed priests and missionaries of the religious orders, particularly the Jesuits. They too, came and went largely without record; and left no trace of their visitations, except the throngs of natives converted by them to Christianity. If the Jesuit friars ever erected mission houses or stations anywhere in the county, they were of a flimsy and insecure construction, the frames built of sapling poles planted in the ground, with ends bent into an arch for the roof, and the whole covered with sheets of bark; and have long since mouldered away. More likely, they performed their holy offices in the shade of some branching oak or elm tree at the edge of a convenient clearing, their savage converts kneeling on the grassy sward before them; or in inclement weather, conducted their services beneath the roof of a tribal councilhouse. Dressed in close-fitting black cassocks, the rosary hanging at the waist, their wide black hats looped up at the sides, their journeys as they went about converting the barbaric tribesmen to

the faith, have about them a picturesqueness and romance exceeded only by the glamour of the Spanish conquest of Mexico and Peru.

In the long stretch of years between 1635, when Nicolet discovered Wisconsin, and 1795, when Jacques Vieau set up his trading post near Sheboygan, scores of adventurers must have voyaged past or visited Sheboygan County in their journeys up and down Lake Michigan. But the records are extremely meagre. We know that Nicolet in 1635, Jolliet and Marquette in 1673, Marquette again in 1674, and LaSalle in 1679, skirted the western shore of the lake and stopped at Indian villages along the way; but the descriptions which they left behind of the places where they landed are too vague for identification. The only traveler identified as having stopped was Father St. Cosme, who according to the historian, Reuben G. Thwaites, found at the present site of Sheboygan a Potawatomi village, "where the Reverend Father Marest had wintered with some Frenchmen and planted a cross."

After Vieau, another considerable space of time was to elapse before the next adventurer came to Sheboygan County. It was William Farnsworth, who established a new trading post on the Sheboygan river in 1820.⁵ His first visit to the place was in 1818, upon a canoe trip up the lake. In the summer of that year, as related in Gen. William R. Smith's History of Wisconsin, Farnsworth, in the company of Ramsay Crooks, of the American Fur Company, embarked in a single birch-bark canoe, containing seventeen voyageurs and three passengers, at Michilimackinac, for St. Louis. Outward bound they pursued the Fox-Wisconsin and the Mississippi route to their destination, and on their homeward course followed the Mississippi and the Illinois-Des Plaines-Chicago route. From the present site of Chicago they coasted along the western shore of Lake Michigan; and after having been out only one month on this long voyage of more than 1800 miles the entire party reached home safely in the same canoe in which they started.

Gen. Smith's account of the journey reads in part, "The next point our travelers came to was the mouth of the Sheboygan river, and here they landed on the 1st of July 1818. A great number of Indians were at this time assembled here, and from their representations, and the beauty of the location, together with its apparent appropriateness for a trading post, Mr. Farnsworth was

⁵ Gov. Lewis Cass of Michigan Territory is said by some to have landed at Sheboygan with a fleet of canoes upon an exploring expedition in 1818, but this expedition was not until 1820, and it is not clear from Henry R. Schoolcraft's Narrative Journal of the trip that he actually landed here.

induced, two years afterward, to commence trading with them at this point. In 1820, Mr. Farnsworth sent two persons in his employ to the mouth of Sheboygan river, with merchandise, to trade with the Indians, which trade was continued by him until 1834.”⁶

Like Vieau, Farnsworth did not build his post near the mouth of the river, but at the more favored location at the first rapids three miles upstream, at the same spot where Vieau had built his post in 1795. No mention is made anywhere whether there were any rival traders in the vicinity at the time, but probably his only competitors were occasional wandering traders. Farnsworth himself did not take up his residence at Sheboygan until 1835. His home up to that time had been on the Menominee river, upon the site of the present city of Marinette; but he doubtless made frequent visits to the post at Sheboygan, which he left in the hands of clerks to conduct.

William Farnsworth may properly be regarded as the founder of Sheboygan, and is deserving of more than ordinary mention for this reason. He was not given to talking much about himself, according to Morgan L. Martin, and the records concerning his eventful life are scanty and conflicting. The information about him collected here has been gathered from many scattered sources. His career illustrates a phase of the fur trade different from that of his predecessor, Jacques Vieau. He was an independent trader, not associated with any fur company, and a bitter rival of the organized fur trade.

Born in Vermont of American parentage, Sept. 26, 1796, he went to Montreal at an early age, and on April 13, 1818, entered the employ of the American Fur Company as a clerk for a term of five years at a salary of \$220 a year. He was assigned for service to the district of Fond du Lac of Lake Superior. Of a bold, impetuous and independent nature, he chafed under the restraints of the company, which ruled its employees with an iron hand. He soon had difficulty with his employer, and was discharged on July 5th after serving less than three months of his term.⁷ This was immediately after his return from St. Louis with Ramsay Crooks, as before related. He thereupon procured an outfit of goods and provisions of his own and set up a trading post as an independent trader close alongside that of the American Fur Company; and

⁶ Statements that Farnsworth visited the place as early as 1814 are apparently erroneous.

⁷ Roster of Employees of American Fur Co. for Years 1818 and 1819, Wis. Hist. Coll. xii, 160.

from that time on he became the persistent and implacable foe of his former employer. The company was the personification of monopoly in its day, and was thoroughly hated even by its own servants. Its policy was to rule or ruin, and its attitude toward competitors severe and merciless. It stopped at nothing to crush opposition. Morgan L. Martin of Green Bay, a friend of Farnsworth, writes of the company's tactics, "At that period, it was no easy task to undertake the prosecution of a trade with the native tribes of this region, except with the countenance at least of the government agents, and the great fur company with John Jacob Astor and his immense wealth at its head, exercising almost despotic sway over them, as well as all others. Everybody was in their interest, and their influence with the Indian tribes was so powerful that the man who undertook the hazardous task of thwarting their plans for profit, did so at the peril of his property, and even of his life."⁸

Just where Farnsworth conducted his trading operations between 1818 and 1820 is not clear. Some accounts indicate that it was at Mackinac, and others, that it was at Marinette on the Menominee river. Available records point to his presence on the Menominee for the first time in 1820. Wily, daring and resourceful, he was more than a match for his powerful competitor. In the winter of 1820-1821, as told by Morgan L. Martin, a large delegation of headmen of the Menominee tribe called on Farnsworth, undoubtedly at the instigation of the American Fur Company, to notify him that he must quit their country at once, otherwise they would seize his goods, and warning him that resistance would cost him his life. Fifteen or twenty Indians crowded into his cabin to see that their demands were obeyed, while he was attended by only one man, too terrified to be of any assistance. In this emergency Farnsworth seized a keg of powder he had on hand and inserted a stump of burning candle in the hole at the top. Then he addressed them in a calm but resolute voice, stating that he knew they were "braves", but that he also was a "brave" of the white men. If his property and life must be sacrificed, they must all suffer the same fate; no truly *brave* man should ever fear death. Nothing further was said, but as the candle gradually burned dangerously low, one after another of the Indians slunk away. Finally left alone, Farnsworth extinguished the candle, and doubtless breathed a sigh of relief. This incident proved of great advantage to him, enhancing

⁸ Sketch of William Farnsworth, by Morgan L. Martin, Wis. Hist. Coll. ix, 397.

his prestige among the tribesmen, making them his devoted friends and admirers, and enabling him to continue his trading there for many years.⁹

Another expedient to which the American Fur Company resorted to get rid of Farnsworth was by reporting him to the commanding officer at Fort Howard for selling whiskey to the Indians. The sale of liquor to the natives was prohibited by government edict; but the law was universally violated, the company being no less guilty than the most lawless trader. It was impossible to succeed in the calling without exchanging whiskey for furs. Upon learning of Farnsworth's offense, the commandant sent an officer with a squad of soldiers to destroy the liquor and drive its owner out of the country. Expressing astonishment that such a complaint should be lodged against him, Farnsworth invited the officer to make a thorough search. He confessed that he always kept a little good brandy on hand for himself and his friends, but declared that he had never sold any. After inviting the officer to have a drink with him, he obtained his permission to also serve some to his men, giving each a generous portion. The officer stuck close to the brandy while he sent the soldiers in search of any hidden *cache*, but they were unable to find any. Their report being perfectly satisfactory, their genial host gave them all a good supper, lodging and breakfast, and of course, more liquor; and when they left next morning, they parted the best of friends, the trader not forgetting to speed them on their way with several extra bottles from his private stock. During all this time Farnsworth had four or five barrels of precious whiskey buried close to his house.¹⁰

In 1823, George Boyd, the Indian agent at Mackinac, in sympathy with the fur company, refused to grant Farnsworth a government license to trade with the Indians on the Menominee, on the ground that on former occasions he had violated the laws of trade and intercourse with the tribesmen. Farnsworth hired two Indians with canoes and started for Sault Ste. Marie to secure a license from the Indian agent there. After going some distance, he was overtaken by another canoe, strongly manned and armed, sent out by the Mackinac agent, and forced to return to Mackinac, where they were ordered into the Agency House. Exercising his privileges as an American citizen, Farnsworth refused to obey and

⁹ Sketch of William Farnsworth, by Morgan L. Martin, Wis. Hist. Coll. ix, 397.

¹⁰ Recollections of Wisconsin, by Col. Ebenezer Childs, Wis. Hist. Coll. iv, 156.

went his way unmolested, but the Indians were marched to the garrison as prisoners and given a dozen lashes each by the commanding officer at the agent's request before Farnsworth could obtain a writ of *habeas corpus* for their release. Farnsworth also sued out a writ of replevin to recover his baggage and effects, and a warrant for Boyd's arrest for robbing him of his "person and property." What became of these actions is not known, but Farnsworth did obtain a judgment for \$80 against Boyd in a Justice's court by way of damages for the ill treatment he received. The agent appealed the case to the County court. The jury, however, which was composed of Indian traders, not only sustained the other court, but increased the damages to \$90. Boyd complained to Gov. Lewis Cass of the territory of Michigan, denouncing Farnsworth bitterly, but concluded his letter, "The opinion of judges, lawyers, and the good people at large is that no license or passport can be withheld by the Agent from any American citizen applying therefor, and that any part of the Indian lands may be traversed for any purpose without the necessity of a passport from any Agent."¹¹

Two incidents are recorded of Farnsworth taking forcible possession of trading posts belonging to his hated rival, the American Fur Company. For about twenty-six years, one Louis Chappue, or Chappee, an agent of the company, had enjoyed an unmolested monopoly of the fur trade on the Menominee; but in 1822 Farnsworth and his partner, Charles Brush, with the aid of a band of Chippewa Indians, whose favor they had gained by effecting the release of two of their chiefs whom Chappee had caused to be imprisoned at Fort Howard, drove him out and forced him to establish himself again about four miles up the river at a place still called Chappee Rapids. Chappee's death a few years later is attributed by some to personal injuries he received on that occasion. In 1824 Paul Grignon Jr. made a sworn affidavit that on Oct. 16th, Farnsworth came to him and requested permission to store some of his goods in Lewis Grignon's store-house, and that when consent was refused a group of intoxicated natives, under Farnsworth's direction, led by an Indian named Eagle, took an axe and broke the padlock of the building, throwing out Grignon's property, and replacing it with Farnsworth's.¹²

When Farnsworth first located on the Menominee, the American Fur Company sent an experienced trader there in the hope,

¹¹ Early History and Condition of Wisconsin, by Henry S. Baird, Wis. Hist. Coll. ii, 84; Wis. Hist. Coll. xx, 345.

¹² Wis. Hist. Coll. xx, 345, 358; iv, 156.

by fair means or foul, of getting the interloper out of the way. The man proving all too fond of liquor, Farnsworth succeeded in trading him out of his supply of skins little by little for whiskey. Later on when one of the company's agents came around to inspect the post, and learned from a young Indian in the trader's employ the reason for his shortage in stock, he discharged the improvident trader and sent another in his place. John Baptiste Jacobs, the new trader, according to Col. Ebenezer Childs, had a comely half-breed wife, who accompanied him from one post to another; but he, like his predecessor, was fond of his drops, and also fell a victim to his competitor's wiles. Farnsworth became friendly with him, invited him to his house, and plied him freely with his favorite beverage. In time he managed not only to obtain his stock of furs, but to win away the affections of his squaw, forcing the hapless trader to leave the country *sans* wife as well as property.¹³ Whether this incident took place on the Menominee, or elsewhere, is uncertain, as some accounts have it that when Farnsworth came to the Menominee he brought his Indian wife with him.

The wife of William Farnsworth was a remarkable representative of her race. Her name was Marie Antoinette Chevalier. One of her grandfathers was Jean Baptiste Chevalier, a man prominent in Canada in his day. Her grandmother on this side was Marie Francois Alovin, commonly known as "Manon". Another grandfather was *Wabashish*, a Menominee chief, known as "The Marten." Her mother was an Indian woman, the wife of Bartholomew Chevalier, a white man. She was born at Post Lake, a tributary of the Peshtigo river, in 1793, and had two or three children by her first husband, who were born at Mackinac, and three children—George P., Joseph, and Jane—as the issue of her marriage to Farnsworth.

She was a shrewd and capable woman, having business talent seldom possessed by one of her sex and race. Esteemed one of the best traders in the Northwest, wonderful stories are told about her business genius. It is said of her that she would sometimes carry on the considerable transactions of the trading post for days and weeks on end during her husband's absence, frequently trading with as many as forty or fifty persons at a time. Although she could not read or write, or keep records, she had a marvellous memory, and was able to report accurately all her dealings, and render an account to the last penny. She was never caught in a

¹³ Recollections of Wisconsin, by Col. Ebenezer Childs, Wis. Hist. Coll. iv, 156.

blunder at figures. Her home early became the rendezvous of the entire population, white as well as Indian. What social life there was, revolved around her. The members of her tribe annually paid her tribute in the form of great quantities of maple sugar as a token of her high station among them. The city and county of Marinette have been named after her, the appellation being a contraction of her name, Marie Antoinette. Queen Marinette was the name by which everyone knew her, out of respect both for her qualities of leadership and her distinguished Indian lineage. She died in Green Bay in 1865 at the age of 72 years. Frank E. Noyes, publisher of the *Marinette Eagle-Star*, erected a red granite boulder in her memory at Marinette in 1940.¹⁴

The marriage of William Farnsworth and Queen Marinette was destined not to be permanent. Strangely enough, it was she, and not he, who dissolved the relation. Like their marriage, the divorce was effected according to tribal laws and customs, which were that marriage could be assumed and terminated at the will of the parties, without formal ceremony. Probably her actuating motive was to protect her right to tribal lands which the government allotted to individual Indians. The law was that when an allotment was made, it was to the "head of an Indian family"; and where the head of the family happened to be a white man, he nevertheless got the land. It was doubtless to secure these lands for herself that Queen Marinette severed her marriage tie.

Some time after divorce, Farnsworth married Lydia Anne, the widow of his cousin, James Farnsworth, who had lived at Sheboygan.¹⁵ She had a son by her first marriage, William R. Farnsworth, who became a second lieutenant in Company D, 20th Wisconsin Regiment, during the Civil War.¹⁶ Lydia Anne died Oct. 15, 1844, at the age of 26 years. Later, Farnsworth married again; but the name of his third wife is unknown. An inscription on a tombstone in Wildwood Cemetery at Sheboygan reads that Arlile, daughter of William and M. Farnsworth, died in infancy Aug. 26, 1855.

Farnsworth is described as a man of medium height and wearing a full beard. He was pleasant, active, industrious and popular. Mrs. Horace Stone, who came to Sheboygan with her husband in 1839, and knew Farnsworth, says of him, "The Indians almost wor-

¹⁴ History of Northern Wisconsin (1881), p. 578, *Marinette Eagle-Star*, Nov. 8, 1940.

¹⁵ H. N. Smith in *Sheb. Co. Herald*, Feb. 4, 1870.

¹⁶ *Evergreen City Times*, June 6, 1863.

shipped him, and would do his bidding on all occasions. They feared as well as respected him. He was given the name of *Ni-Kick* (probably meaning a ruler or one they must obey). In his family were two boys, George and Joe. George was like his father, ambitious, and wished for a good education, while Joe was just the opposite. He had his mother's swarthy complexion, black hair, and all the natural instincts of an Indian. His father said he would probably have to give him a blanket and let him run wild with them."¹⁷ Another testimonial of his character is given in a letter written by one Jacobs to Judge Lawe, dated Jan. 20, 1823, "My Girl told me that you said I would be blam'd if I don't inform of Mr. Farnsworth giving Whiskey to Indians. I cannot prove it and if I could I should not injure a Man that has prevented me from Starveing this winter and have clothed my poor Children that was Naked—but I am afraid if Mr. Farnsworth wish to prove about Chapue given or retaling Whiskey to Indians he can bring forward two witnesses . . . "¹⁸

During his long and eventful career, Farnsworth engaged in many business undertakings. With Charles R. Brush, of Detroit, as his partner, he not only conducted the trading station on the Menominee, but built the first sawmill there in 1831–1832.¹⁹ Samuel Stambaugh wrote in 1831, "There are two American Traders located about three miles up this river from its mouth, who raise excellent crops of corn, oats and potatoes. Messrs. Farnsworth and Brush, the traders, are erecting a sawmill on the premises they occupy. They take, and export every season, from three to eight hundred barrels of White Fish. They catch the fish in a basket, fixed under a dam in the river."²⁰

In addition to the trading stations on the Menominee and Sheboygan rivers, Farnsworth, either by himself or in the company with others, was the owner of two sailing vessels on the Great Lakes, the *Jefferson* and the *Traveler*, as well as of a mercantile establishment at Green Bay, known as Brush, Rees & Co., and of a sawmill on the Sheboygan river. Besides these enterprises, he left an indelible impress upon the early development of Sheboygan as a land speculator, a promoter of the original town site, a proprietor of the store and warehouse of C. D. Cole & Co., an owner of the North Pier Co., a commission and forwarding merchant, and an active participant in public affairs. Further details of his

¹⁷ Sheb. Telegram, Jan. 31, 1908.

¹⁸ Wis. Hist. Coll. xii, 458.

¹⁹ Editor's note, Wis. Hist. Coll. xx, 176.

²⁰ Wis. Hist. Coll. xv, 435.

adventurous life will be found in their appropriate places elsewhere in this history.

William Farnsworth lost his life on board the ill-fated steamer *Lady Elgin*, Sept. 8, 1860, when it was rammed during a storm by the schooner *Augusta* off Point Winnetka about sixteen miles north of Chicago. His body was washed ashore between Grosse Point and Evanston and taken to Chicago. It arrived in Sheboygan on Sept. 12th. According to a newspaper account of the time, his remains were followed to the grave by one of the largest processions seen in the city. Obsequies were conducted by the Free Masons of Sheboygan and Sheboygan Falls who marched to the cemetery followed by the German Rifle Company and Protection Fire Company No. 1, both in uniform, and a long line of carriages filled with citizens. Although a man of large and active business experience, he met with financial reverses during the later years of his life, and left but little property behind him. Nearly 64 years of age at the time of his death, he was survived by his wife, his son, George P., and a step-daughter. His body lies in Wildwood Cemetery at Sheboygan.²¹

The period between 1820, when Farnsworth established his fur trading post on the Sheboygan, and 1836, represents another scanty page in local history. There was practically no activity or progress. What few records there are, make only passing or incidental references to this locality. Col. Abram Edwards writes that in 1818 he made a trip from Green Bay to Chicago in a canoe manned by seven expert paddlers. While enroute he saw the shore of the lake at Twin Rivers, Manitowoc, Sheboygan and Milwaukee lined with Indians.²²

Gen. Albert G. Ellis, of Green Bay, writing of the year 1822, says, "There was a trail from Green Bay to Manitowoc, on Lake Michigan and from thence, via Sheboygan and Milwaukee to Chicago; but not a house or settler the whole distance, except that of Mr. Veaux, who had a trading post on the Menominee branch of the Milwaukee river." "About the year 1826," Gen. Ellis adds, "Moses Swan and Isaac Haertzel, as companions in trade, made a voyage each spring and fall with a Mackinaw boat of goods, round the Bay, via the Port des Mort, to Manitowoc, Sheboygan and Milwaukee, trading with the Potawatomes, which they continued till 1833."²³

²¹ Evergreen City Times, Sept. 15, 1860.

²² Wis. Hist. Coll. v, 158.

²³ Fifty-Four Years' Recollections of Men and Events in Wisconsin, by Gen. Albert G. Ellis, Wis. Hist. Coll. vii, 240.

At *Milliwaky* on Nov. 12, 1824, according to a report that has been preserved, one Jacobs complained to Judge Law at Green Bay that a son of Mr. Lashley wintering at *Chabouegan* had given whiskey to the Indians and gotten them drunk.²⁴

On Dec. 1, 1824, Henry B. Brevoort, Indian agent at Green Bay, wrote to Gov. Lewis Cass, "In addition to the number of places for trading in the Indian country, I would recommend the river *shipburgen* (Sheboygan), about sixty miles south of this place, and nearly half way to *Mil wah kie*, it being a great place of resort for Indians in the spring, for the purpose of taking White fish for their summers food."²⁵

Henry S. Baird, referring to the year 1824, writes, "The principal trading posts, at that period, in Northern Wisconsin, were the following: Milwaukee, Sheboygan and Manitowoc, on Lake Michigan."²⁶

Col. Ebenezer Childs relates that in 1828 he was employed by Judge John P. Arndt, of Green Bay, who had a contract with the government to supply the troops at Fort Howard with fresh beef. Col. Childs purchased cattle in Missouri and Illinois, and drove them on the hoof to Wisconsin, stating, "We followed the Lake shore to Sheboygan, where we tarried a few days to recruit the cattle, 262 head." Col. William S. Hamilton, a son of the celebrated statesman, Alexander Hamilton, with four men, in 1825, was the first to drive cattle along the Indian trail through Sheboygan to Green Bay for the use of the troops stationed there. The trip required over a month. No settlement was found between Milwaukee and Manitowoc.²⁷

Morgan L. Martin records, "When I came here, sixty years ago (1828), the whole region extending from the entrance to the bay as far south as Milwaukee, on the lake shore, was occupied by the Potawatomes and Ottawas. Their principal villages were at Manitowoc, Pigeon and Sheboygan rivers."²⁸ "There was no white man at Sheboygan, Mr. Martin also says, "when I was there in July 1833, on my return from Milwaukee."²⁹

Most regular of the visitors at Sheboygan during this little known period were the United States mail carriers, who ran the

²⁴ Wis. Hist. Coll. xx, 360.

²⁵ Wis. Hist. Coll. xx, 362.

²⁶ Recollections of the Early History of Northern Wisconsin, by Henry S. Baird, Wis. Hist. Coll. iv, 202.

²⁷ Recollections of Wisconsin, by Col. Ebenezer Childs, Wis. Hist. Coll. iv, 171.

²⁸ Narrative of Morgan L. Martin, Wis. Hist. Coll. xi, 394.

²⁹ Sketch of William Farnsworth, by Morgan L. Martin, Wis. Hist. Coll. ix, 400.

mail between Green Bay and Chicago as early as 1825.³⁰ Of these, the first of whom there is any record, was Alexis Clermont, in the employ of a mail contractor, Pierre B. Grignon, of Green Bay. Clermont was accustomed to make the journey on foot, by way of Two Rivers, Manitowoc, Sheboygan, Milwaukee and Grosse Point to Chicago, along the old trail, in company with an Oneida Indian. The distance was 240 miles, and it took a whole month to complete the round trip. Sixty to sixty-five dollars was the pay for the round trip, and the official load was limited to sixty pounds. For food the carriers depended mainly on supplies procured from the Indians along the road and game that could be shot in passing. At times all the Indians were absent on hunting or fishing expeditions, and to guard against starvation they always took with them two shot bags filled with parched corn, one hulled, the other ground. Camping out wherever darkness overtook them, they wrapped themselves in blankets which were made up into a roll strapped upon their shoulders during the day. In addition to mail-pouch and pack, they carried a loaded musket, and in winter a pair of snowshoes. Clermont made his last trip in the spring of 1836. In an interview he later stated, "As for Indians, there were always large villages of them at Manitowoc and Sheboygan, not many at Milwaukee."³¹ Later on the mail carriers made the long trip on horseback. Mrs. C. D. Cole said that in 1840 the ladies depended on the carrier, who came once a week on an Indian pony, to do some of their shopping in Milwaukee. He was very obliging, she stated, and would bring anything wanted from a paper of pins to a joint of stove pipe, and on one occasion led a cow from Milwaukee for Mr. Cole.³²

By 1835 the gradual disappearance of game and the growing scarcity of peltries had worked such a decline in the fur traffic as to bring the industry in Sheboygan County practically to an end. Farnsworth discontinued his post on the Sheboygan that year, and no other was begun in its place. Whatever furs were collected after that were handled by the regular merchants as a side line. Already the Indians had surrendered their hunting grounds to the government, and the government surveyors had subdivided the land, as a prelude to the wave of agricultural settlement that was soon to inundate the area. The dawn of a new day was about to break.

³⁰ Early Wisconsin Mail Service Described, Sheb. Press, Jan. 5, 1934.

³¹ Narrative of Alexis Clermont, Wis. Hist. Coll. xv, 452.

³² Diary of David Giddings in State Historical Library, Madison.

CHAPTER 5

THE DAYS OF '36—AND AFTER

SETTLEMENT of Sheboygan County achieved its first real start in 1836. In that year seventeen dwelling-houses, shops and stores were established on the present site of Sheboygan; and a sawmill was erected at Sheboygan Falls. Milwaukee, destined to become the metropolis of the state, then had only 150 to 200 inhabitants. Chicago was but a small, struggling frontier village.

As a prelude to the movement, in the summer of 1834, two easterners, William Payne (or Paine) and Col. Oliver C. Crocker, attracted by the opportunities this section of the west afforded, left their homes in New York state and migrated to Chicago. There they purchased the equipment for a saw-mill to be erected at Sheboygan, with the intention of making and shipping lumber from Sheboygan to Chicago and other growing lakeshore cities. Accompanied by a gang of men they set sail in a small schooner up the lake. Reaching Milwaukee, they are said to have landed at that port, sending the ship with their equipment on ahead. From Milwaukee they traveled the rest of the way on horseback, carrying their provisions, and camping wherever night overtook them.

Upon arrival at the Sheboygan river they selected the first rapids, near the Farnsworth trading post, as the site for their mill. It was when they started to build this mill that they aroused the opposition of the Indians described in chapter three.¹ This mill was the forerunner of the many sawmills that later dotted the county; and was for a time the only improvement of any kind in the entire country between Milwaukee and Green Bay. Payne and Crocker spent the fall and winter of 1834-35 building the mill, but having only insecure "squatter rights" in the land, and encountering freshets in spring that washed out their dam, they became discouraged and disposed of their interests before they completed the project. This was in the summer of 1835.²

¹ This incident is depicted in a large mural painting in the Bank of Sheboygan.

² Payne was born in or near London, England, Dec. 22, 1806. Coming to the United States at the age of 20, he first settled at Buffalo, and then went to Chicago. After the sale of his interest in the sawmill near Sheboygan, he remained there at least a year, for he acted as postmaster from Apr. 18 to July 21, 1836. Then he went to Milwaukee, where he engaged in the lumber business in 1843. He left Milwaukee in 1846 and founded the village of Sauk-

The purchaser was William Farnsworth, who thus added another unit to the ever-growing list of enterprises owned by him and his associates. The price he paid was \$10,000. Shortly after acquiring the mill, Farnsworth went to Chicago and engaged Jonathan S. Follett to take charge of it. Follett was probably the first permanent white settler in the county, as Farnsworth had not then as yet established his fixed abode at Sheboygan. Eliza Follett, wife of Jonathan Follett, was the first white woman to settle in the county. The Folletts occupied a small frame tenement, boarded up, near the mill, in which Mrs. Follett conducted a boarding house for the mill hands and a hostelry for the accommodation of occasional passing travelers.

An interesting incident, illustrating the trials and privations of pioneer women, is told about Mrs. Follett by David Giddings. A rumor was current, in 1836, that as soon as the grass had grown sufficiently in spring to feed their ponies the Indians would rise up and kill off all the whites. "This belief had become so strong in the minds of the people in the mill," says Mr. Giddings, "that a short time after I left, they all, when a vessel came for lumber, went down determined to leave the place and would have gone to Chicago had it not been for Mrs. Follett. She, after getting down to the 'mouth', as they called the city at that time, began to think about her household goods they had left behind; for they had started in such a hurry that they took little or nothing with them. Rather than leave her behind, they let the vessel go away without them, and after a while got over their fright and went back to the mill."³ August 12, 1836, Follett purchased a tract of land from Farnsworth on the north side of the river several hundred yards east of the mill on the banks of a small stream, still visible, known as Follett's creek.⁴

Farnsworth continued to operate the mill until 1845, when he sold out to Samuel B. Ormsbee; and it was thereafter known

ville in Ozaukee county, where he owned a large tract of land. Here he erected grist- and saw-mills, and kept a store and tavern. In 1858 he sold out and went to Chicago, entering the wood and coal business. He died in Chicago Nov. 1, 1868, at the age of 62 years. Wis. Hist. Coll. ix, 394.

Col. Crocker was born in Union, Broome County, New York, May 2, 1811. After leaving Sheboygan in 1835 he returned to Chicago, and in 1836 went to Binghamton, N. Y., where he became prominent in politics, serving in the New York legislature in 1847, and running as an unsuccessful candidate for Congress several times. He visited Sheboygan in 1879, and died suddenly in Chicago on his return home Aug. 1, 1879. He left a large estate to his descendants. Wis. Hist. Coll. ix, 391.

³ Letter printed in Sheboygan County News, July 2, 1884.

⁴ Records in Register of Deeds Office, Sheboygan.

throughout the countryside as the Ormsbee mill. Nothing remains of it today, except a few rocks once a part of the dam. When it was finally abandoned, the machinery was hauled to Sheboygan and used in a steam mill on the south side of the river near the outflow.

In addition to the house near the mill, Payne had built another indifferent shanty on Center avenue in what is now the city of Sheboygan. This was on the north side of the river, near where the Grand Hotel now stands. It had been put up for the purpose of making a pre-emption claim to the land on that side of the river, and later became a part of the original townsite of Sheboygan. At the first public land sale, which was held in Chicago in July 1835, Farnsworth as the purchaser of Payne's interest, attempted to secure the land by asserting the pre-emptive rights he claimed to have derived from Payne. But the law happened to be that public land was not subject to pre-emption



Cabin built by Wm. Payne in 1834
on the bank of the Sheboygan River
(from an old sketch in Atlas of 1875)

unless it had actually been occupied and improved in 1833; and inasmuch as Payne's claim did not originate until 1834, Farnsworth and his group had to be content to purchase the tract at the public land sale held in Green Bay in November 1835. No one bid against them at the sale, however, and they became the owners without any trouble.

Another man, Wooster Harrison, had also built a log shanty at an undetermined location on the south side of the river near the outlet, intending to establish a pre-emption or squatter claim to the land in that vicinity; but his claim was likewise rejected.⁵ The

⁵ David Giddings gives this vivid picture of Harrison as he describes the sight that greeted his eye upon his arrival at Sheboygan, June 25, 1835: "On looking up the river we saw a little 8 x 10 shanty about which was a collection of Indians, apparently drunk. We went to the shanty door and looking in saw on a bench the barrel from which the Indians were filling their cups. Behind the barrel sat a man whom we asked why he let them draw the whiskey as they pleased, and he said he could not prevent it, said his name was Harrison, that he came there two weeks before to make a claim on the south side of the river, that he brought with him two barrels of whiskey to trade with the Indians, that he had commenced drawing from one barrel but that the Indians were too much for him. They took possession of the barrel and soon made an end of the whiskey. To save the other barrel he had in the night rolled it back into the bushes and buried it. But the morning we came, they found it and compelled him to dig it up and let them have it. They commenced to drink and many of them were soon drunk. Every chance he got

Payne and Harrison cabins were the first structures built by white men on the present site of Sheboygan.

Shortly after acquiring the land on which Sheboygan now stands, Farnsworth and his associates proceeded to lay it out as a townsite for the purpose of selling lots; but not much is known in regard to the original plat, as records are meager and confusing. The ambitious plans of the promoters were thwarted by the crushing blow of the panic of 1837. As early as 1841 three commissioners, appointed by the Brown county district court in a land partition action,⁶ reported to the court that they were "creditably informed" that a plat of the town had been made, but that a diligent search failed to reveal its existence or recording. The commissioners, therefore, prepared a rough sketch of their own which they filed with their report; and this sketch, to be found in the Register of Deeds office, is the oldest map of the town extant. Many suppose this to be the original plat; in fact an attempt was made in a court

when they were out, he would run to the river, get a pail of water and pour into the barrel. In that way they were not so drunk as the morning before we came".—Zillier Hist. of Sheboygan, p. 59.

Wooster Harrison is best known as the promoter of the townsite of Port Washington, in Ozaukee County, which he purchased from the government at the first Green Bay land sale in Nov. 1835. He also acquired an interest in Walker's Point at Milwaukee. He came from Michigan City, Ind., and was invariably addressed as "General." Southeastern Wisconsin: A History of Old Milwaukee County, by John G. Gregory (1932) p. 1186.

⁶The suit referred to in the text was entitled *George Smith vs. Daniel Whitney et als.* A. G. Miller was the judge. The commissioners, William H. Bruce, Charles Fuller and T. Charles Morgan, appointed to make the partition, recommended that the 200 lots already sold should remain in common and undivided among all the owners until the further order of the court, the remaining lots meanwhile to be set apart to the claimants, George Smith, of Chicago, Daniel Whitney, of Green Bay, and Robert A. Forsyth, of Michigan, and disposed of at public sale. Judgment of partition, in accordance with this report, was entered Oct. 4, 1842. The sale was conducted in Green Bay in January 1843. Some of the lots sold at this sale for as little as 25¢ and all of them together brought only \$773.07. The principal buyers were Daniel Whitney and Henry S. Baird. Records in Register of Deeds office: 28 Deeds 1; 8 Plats 2.

In 1854 another partition action was commenced before Judge Timothy O. Howe in the Circuit Court of Sheboygan county by Daniel Whitney against Winthrop W. Gilman, Jacob Leroy, Daniel Wells Jr., and Farmers and Mechanics Bank of Michigan, to clear up the title to the lots in the original plat of Sheboygan not included in the previous partition action of 1841. The commissioners who made the partition were Charles D. Cole, Samuel Camp and Charles E. Morris. Records in Register of Deeds Office, 30 Deeds 176.

These two partition judgments—1842 and 1854—are the basis for the present title to all property in the original plat of Sheboygan. Title to the full tract now having been definitely established, the Common Council of Sheboygan in 1855 appointed Thomas M. Foy and Charles Pinney as surveyors, and William Farnsworth, A. H. Brooks, Bille Williams, H. H. Conklin, Joseph L. Moore and David Taylor as commissioners, to survey and prepare a plat of the tract. This map, brown and faded with age, is dated Oct. 16, 1855, and hangs as a valued treasure in the City Engineer's office of Sheboygan. It has not been recorded in the Register of Deeds office.

proceeding in the 1890's to introduce it as such in evidence in the case, but its validity was not accepted. Surveyor Otto B. Joerns, searching for the original map in 1897, went to William Ashby, who informed him that when he came to Sheboygan in 1836, the original surveyor's stakes were up, but that he did not know who did the work, as it was done before his arrival. At Mr. Ashby's suggestion Mr. Joerns consulted David Giddings, from whom he learned that William S. Trowbridge, formerly a government surveyor under Nehemiah King, had been the surveyor of the town; but upon inquiring of Mr. Trowbridge's son at Milwaukee, the latter stated that he remembered hearing his father tell of laying out Sheboygan. Nothing pertaining to the original plat was found, however.

A few additional facts about the original Sheboygan townsite are revealed in the commissioners' report and other sources. The tract consisted of about 1025 acres, the plat showing blocks, lots, streets, alleys, islands and public squares, and was designated the town of Sheboygan. Prior to 1841 about 200 lots had been sold, upon 17 of which buildings were erected. According to some accounts, George Smith, Daniel Whitney, William Bruce and Seth Rees, of Green Bay, were the owners of the townsite. But William Farnsworth and Charles Brush were also owners. Farnsworth owned a one-half interest in the plat, a one-sixteenth of which he sold in 1836 to the New York & Erie Transportation Co. for \$30,000, and another one-sixteenth of which he disposed of for \$25,000.⁷

The townsite of Sheboygan Falls was acquired at the same public land sale as the Sheboygan townsite, that is, the Green Bay sale in November 1835. The founder of Sheboygan Falls was Col. Silas Stedman,⁸ a New Englander, who first gazed on the spot in August that year. The events leading to the establishment of the town have fortunately been preserved in the writings of Col. Sted-

⁷ Evergreen City Times, Sept. 15, 1860; History of Northern Wisconsin, p. 968.

⁸ Silas Stedman was born in 1785 at Chicopee, Mass. He grew up with a taste for military life, and was successively sergeant, lieutenant, captain, major and colonel of militia, and also served one term in the Massachusetts legislature. He came to Sheboygan County in 1835, and in 1836 brought his family to Sheboygan Falls, which he named Rochester. In 1841 he was elected county commissioner and school commissioner, and in 1848 collector. He was elected to the Constitutional Convention of Wisconsin of 1847-1848 as a Whig, serving on the committee on education and school funds. At the time of the Civil War he became a Republican, and was postmaster at Sheboygan Falls from 1861-1865. He died in 1869.—Private records in possession of Harry E. Thomas, Sheboygan.

man himself. As he relates, he came to Chicago from the east a short time before, and made his way on foot northward along the lake shore. Accompanied by two others, he pushed forward along the sandy beach, the great inland sea stretching far beyond the vision, on the one hand, and an interminable forest extending for many miles to the west. When he reached the Sheboygan river he passed the night at the Farnsworth mill and started next morning to explore the country upriver. At Sheboygan Falls he heard the sound of unseen falling waters, and descending a steep declivity through dense woods and underbrush, saw the rapid waters of the Sheboygan dashing down a rocky ledge. It was not only an ideal location for a mill- and town-site, but afforded the best natural water power in the entire county. Upon his return to the lake, his companions retraced their steps to Milwaukee, but he continued his journey in company with the mail carrier northward along the lakeshore to Green Bay, where he found that the sale of lands in Sheboygan County, including the present sites of both Sheboygan and Sheboygan Falls, would take place in November.

Obtaining a sectional map of the area around Sheboygan Falls prepared by a government surveyor, Stedman returned to Milwaukee, and late in October started once more for Green Bay in order to be on hand for the land sale. "Arriving at Paine's mill," he says, "I visited the Falls, and by the aid of my maps I ascertained the section and indeed the eighty which contained them." While at the mill he met Randolph B. Marcy, a lieutenant in the United States army, and Samuel W. Beall, a pioneer lawyer and receiver in the land office in Green Bay, both interested in finding a desirable tract of land to bid in at the sale. They all agreed that instead of bidding against each other for the tract at the "falls", they would cast their lots together and share equally. At Green Bay they found three others who intended to bid for the same land—Governor James Doty, a man named Jones, and Albert G. Ellis, the surveyor. The six men then agreed to go in company, and that Marcy should bid for all of them. On the day of sale, however, they discovered several other persons ready to bid on the identical property, among them, George Smith, afterwards a banker at Milwaukee. The Stedman group, however, bid as high as \$13.50 an acre and succeeded in obtaining the land. Stedman afterwards bought out Beall, Jones and Ellis, leaving only Doty, Marcy and himself as the sole owners.⁹ Stedman and Marcy later became the only owners of the tract,

⁹ Supp. to Sheb. Herald, Apr. 15, 1899.

and had a plat of it made, which was prepared by H. S. Wright and bears date March 31, 1837. This plat was not recorded and is no longer in existence. Frank H. Denison says of this plat, "History discloses few cities laid out upon a more wretched and impracticable plan, with streets in more impossible places and less suited to the needs of the traveling public. In extenuation of Mr. Wright's blundering work it must be remembered that the field was in 1837 an untrodden forest with many inaccessible places and that the view was obstructed in all directions by the dense growth of timber." Upon this first plat a public square was designated, bounded by Broadway, Maple, Buffalo and Pine streets; but in 1846 when the village was re-surveyed and a new plat made, the public square was eliminated.¹⁰

The new town plat was surveyed by David Giddings, dated Jan. 6, 1846, and was recorded in the Register of Deeds office June 1, 1847. The owners were Silas Stedman, David Giddings, Albert Rounseville and B. C. Trowbridge. Both the original plat and the re-plat describe the town as Rochester, but the inhabitants always spoke of it as "the Falls". The territorial legislature, as early as 1840, declared it lawful for the county offices to be kept at "Sheboygan Falls"; but it was not until Feb. 1, 1850, that the legislature decreed, "The name of the village of Rochester in the county of Sheboygan is hereby changed to Sheboygan Falls by which name it shall be known in all places whatsoever." An effort was made at one time, according to J. H. Denison, to have the Indian name of "Coppacon", which means "falls", given to the town, but it was too Indian to suit the inhabitants.¹¹

After the purchase of the Sheboygan Falls townsite in 1835, Col. Stedman and his partners made a contract with a man to put up and complete a sawmill there by the following June, and Stedman then returned to Massachusetts. In June 1836 when he got back to Chicago he learned that the mill had not been built. The man complained that he had been sick and unfortunate and wished to be released from his contract. Leaving his wife with her brother in Chicago, Stedman hurried to the Falls and engaged a man to put up a mill in six weeks time. This man was David Giddings. Lumber was bringing \$50 per thousand at the time, which made it an object to commence sawing as soon as possible. He paid \$5

¹⁰ Jubilee Edition of Sheb. Demokrat Apr. 1907. Nov. 25, 1941, Mr. Denison wrote the author, "The fact that I inserted the name of the surveyor and the date of the original plat would indicate that I must have seen it somewhere, but I have no recollection of such an incident."

¹¹ Col. J. A. Watrous in Sheb. Press., Feb. 21, 1910.

per day for master carpenters and millwrights, and \$2.50 per day for common workmen. The mill, however, was not completed until December, after navigation had closed, so that nothing could be realized from lumber that year.¹² The mill was located on the south side of the street at the east approach to the present bridge. It was a two-story frame building mounted upon log supports, which rested upon the rock foundation of the river bed. At the same time a log cabin was also put up for the use of the workmen employed in the mill. In a corner of the saw-mill Col. Stedman also installed a set of stones for grinding flour and grist. It was a crude affair cut from a granite boulder about a foot in diameter, with a book-muslin bolt, and no larger than a small-sized fanning mill. For several years there was not enough grain raised in the county to keep its one set of burrs running a fourth of the time; it supplied flour for most people in what is now Fond du Lac, Manitowoc, Calumet, Ozaukee, Washington and Kewaunee counties. It was not until 1842 that the first mill devoted entirely to grinding grain was built in the county.¹³ Until it was swept away in the flood of 1883, the Stedman mill at one time or another housed a number of new and budding manufacturing industries, such as the Quinlan rake, the Mattoon chair spindle, the Taylor Bros. sash, door and blind, factories, and the Prentice woolen mills.¹⁴

To understand how Sheboygan County came to be settled, it is important to consider the conditions in the country as a whole at this time. It was a period of great national prosperity, doubtless greater than any before known; the mania of speculation was abroad in the land. The west was like a young giant awakening from a long sleep. The most extravagant dreams were indulged. Prices of land went up. Population forged westward with renewed impetus. New towns and cities rose with magical rapidity. Many of them existed only on paper or in the fanciful imaginations of land speculators intent on making fortunes out of the prevailing national intoxication.

The settlement of Sheboygan County, and the establishment of Sheboygan and Sheboygan Falls, was the outgrowth of this widespread fever. High expectations of unexampled growth and prosperity were entertained. Maps and pamphlets, inspired by the fertile fancies of the speculators, picturing the county as a new

¹² Supp. to Sheb. Herald, Apr. 15, 1899.

¹³ Snyder, Van Vechten & Co's. Hist. Atlas of Wis.; Wis. Hist. Coll. iv, p. 341.

¹⁴ Sheb. Press, Apr. 29, 1927.

El Dorado of unbounded wealth and opportunities, were distributed in the east. They showed the *Shebowegan* river as a navigable stream with numerous vessels sailing majestically in full sail upon its ample bosom all the way from Lake Michigan to a body of water known as *Lake Shebowegan*, which was pictured as being a small inland sea located at the head of the river in the present location of the Sheboygan marsh. On the southwest shore of *Lake Shebowegan*, adjacent to the western county line, was depicted a town called *Lisbon*, with beautiful parks and avenues, a spacious harbor emptying its waters into the lake, and a number of large vessels riding at anchor near the huge wharves. The *Shebowegan* river was pictured as being the source of wonderful water power, swift and powerful enough to operate large mills.

At the mouth of the Pigeon river a thriving city called *Memee* was indicated, the streets and boulevards of which bore such enticing names as State, Dock and Exchange streets; and at the outlet of Black river was marked a town named *Charleston*. On the map, too, the town of *Salina* was shown on Lake Michigan at the spot where Amsterdam in the town of Holland was later built. It was represented as the center of a great salt industry, with the explanation that the government had made a survey and found two rich layers of salt nearby, and that it had reserved the land and divided it into a town one-fourth of a square mile in extent. The only element of truth in this statement was that the government surveyors in running their lines ran across a natural salt lick on the line between sections 23 and 24 exactly 37 chains north of the south lines of these two sections, and within the present limits of Cedar Grove. Licks such as this were not uncommon in the wilderness; wild animals resorted to them to partake of their saline properties. Every government surveyor was required to note in his field book "the true situation of all salt licks, salt springs . . . which shall come to his knowledge"; and the law also provided that "every salt *spring* which may be discovered, together with the section of one mile square which includes it, shall be reserved for the future disposal of the United States". But there were no salt licks or salt springs worth mentioning anywhere in the vicinity. The circulars also went on to describe how two piers were constructed at the river mouth in *Salina*, one on each side of the harbor, with a lookout tower at the end of the north pier. A more dazzling and illusory picture of conditions can hardly be imagined.¹⁵

¹⁵ Sheb. Press. Apr. 17, 1916.

Aroused to a high pitch of fever and hope by this publicity, a number of families came to Sheboygan County in search of the imaginary fortunes awaiting them here. Of the seventeen buildings erected in Sheboygan, some were clustered on what is now Pennsylvania avenue, some on Jefferson avenue, and two or three on Eighth street. Real estate sold at fabulous prices. Every third person was a land agent. The Green Bay Intelligencer, Wisconsin's first newspaper, founded in 1833 by Gen. Albert G. Ellis, reported on Mar. 2, 1836, "Sac Creek, Sheboygan, Sleeping River and Manitowoc are at this moment the rage. At the Sheboygan, the most beautiful, and we doubt not the most important town on the Lake, the property has risen to an enormous height. A company of purchasers are laying out a thousand or more town lots, and will have them offered for sale in a short time. The Troy and Erie Line, it is understood are interested, and the Boats will touch there the ensuing season." Lots were considered a bargain at \$500 or \$600, and some corner lots sold for as high as \$8000 to \$15,000. Jonathan Follett laid out 33 acres near the Farnsworth mill for building purposes, part of which he sold to a Mr. Winslow, of Milwaukee, taking in exchange \$2,000 worth of merchandise. It is impossible at this late date to make even an approximate estimate of the number or amount of land purchases at the time, but they must have been considerable. Only a portion of the conveyances were by deed, or placed on record. Most of the lots were sold on margins, for which articles or contracts were issued, and transferred from purchaser to purchaser, without any record of the transactions being preserved. The impossibility of determining, only five years later, after the boom collapsed, led the commissioners appointed by the court, to recommend partition and public sale of all lots except those upon which buildings had actually been erected.¹⁶

High hopes were held for the future of the city. The newcomers believed that, situated as they were, about midway between Green Bay and the southern boundary of the Territory, their town would soon outgrow Milwaukee, then a small village, and soon become the metropolis of Wisconsin. What they did not take into consideration was that the country to the north, south and west, as far as Green Bay, Milwaukee and the prairies of Fond du Lac, was a vast unbroken forest, and that there were not twenty acres of cultivated land within forty miles. No one stopped to consider that in order to have business and commerce, sell goods, engage in

¹⁶ Sheb. Press. Apr. 17, 1916; Sheb. Herald, Feb. 2, 1897; Mrs. J. T. Trowbridge, Sheboygan Falls, in Sheb. Times, Jan. 17, 1874.

the trades, grow and prosper, there must of necessity be an extensive producing and consuming class in the vicinity. But this did not deter the new arrivals. Everybody was expecting a new influx of immigration the next year, and sudden affluence from the rise in the prices of town lots and wild lands. For a time there was a temporary show of prosperity, while they were patronizing one another, putting up their houses, and getting settled for the wave of fortune they confidently expected to overtake them.

Soon, however, it was discovered that everybody was out of money, and that nobody had anything to do. Winter came upon them; provisions were scarce and dear. There was no communication with the outside world except by Indian trail. Their roseate dreams began to fade. Still they held on in vain hopes until spring. Then the panic of 1837 struck the land like a prairie fire. The game of speculation came to an abrupt end; the country was prostrate. In due time the rude awakening reached Sheboygan. The tide of immigrants did not arrive with the opening of navigation in spring as expected; and there was nothing left for people to do but to seek new fields of opportunity elsewhere. Most of them left for parts unknown. Some moved into the interior of the county, settling in or near Sheboygan Falls. Two inhabitants placed their houses on scows and hauled them to Milwaukee. Sheboygan literally became a "deserted village". Not a soul was left finally except one family.¹⁷

To be a 36'er in Sheboygan County was a mark of distinction similar to that of being a 49'er in the days of the California gold rush. Probably the first in point of time among the 36'ers were A. G. Dye¹⁸ and Levi Conro. Dye and his family came up the

¹⁷ Sheb. Press, Oct. 10, 1931.

¹⁸ In the spring of 1837, Mr. Dye built a dwelling, a large one for that day, near the present intersection of N. 8th street and Niagara Ave., Sheboygan. It was in this house that the oldest Baptist church in Wisconsin was organized Feb. 11, 1838. Those present were A. G. and Mary Dye, William, Dorothy and William S. Trowbridge, and Sarah W. Cole, wife of Charles D. Cole. This was during Sheboygan's big slump following the panic of 1837. Dye remained long after most of the other inhabitants had moved away, undoubtedly believing that the town would again revive; but he, too must have finally despaired, for he followed the example of the others and moved out into the county later in 1838, settling on a 320 acre tract of land about five miles southwest of Sheboygan Falls in section 8 of the town of Lima, which he had purchased the year before from the government. Having no wagon, he hauled his household effects to this new home upon a primitive device resembling an Indian *travois*. It consisted of the forked limb of a tree, dragged along the rude path by a pony. Mr. Dye's house in the wilderness was only 12 x 16 feet, made of rough boards covered with slabs. There was no chimney; the smoke escaped through a stove-pipe thrust through the roof. With the furniture in the room there was hardly enough space to set

lakes from Fulton county, New York, bound for Chicago, in May 1836, on board the steamer, *Michigan*. At Green Bay he met Conro, a mechanic, with five or six workmen, including Elihu Thorp, who later settled at Sheboygan Falls, all of whom took passage on the ship for Sheboygan, to build a hotel known as the Sheboygan House, for the proprietors of the town plat. Conro and his men disembarked at Sheboygan to commence work on the building; but Dye went on to Chicago. Meeting Farnsworth and Charles D. Cole there, he took a contract to put up a warehouse and dock for them on the north side of the Sheboygan river below the 7th street bridge, and returned to Sheboygan on a sailing vessel in August 1836, bringing with him Morris Farmin¹⁹ and family. At the time of his arrival there was no pier or other conveniences for landing except by yawl boats. Conro and his crew had by this time raised the Sheboygan House, but Dye could not find a place to live except a small house near the mouth of the river on the north side, probably the shanty, previously mentioned, that Payne had erected. Although the structure was incomplete, Dye made it habitable by laying a floor and making other improvements, and then began to work on the warehouse and dock.²⁰ The Dye and Farmin families were the first to settle on the present site of Sheboygan.

The next bold venturer to seek his fortune in Sheboygan County was Charles D. Cole, who landed here the first time June 16, 1836. He left Cleveland, Ohio, on the steamer *New York*, stopping at Green Bay in April that year. Aboard ship, while enroute

the table. An Indian trail passed the door. Deer and other wild game were plentiful. Wolves often prowled around. On different occasions Mrs. Dye went to the door and threw fire-brands among them to frighten them away. Indians would sometimes come to the house and spend the night, lying so thick on the floor that in the morning Mr. Dye could hardly get through to make the fire. Mrs. Dye is said to have made the first pound of butter in Sheboygan County, producing it in a can by stirring with a spoon. Other families, like the Parrishes, and the Harmons, settling nearby, the neighborhood came to be known as Dye's Settlement. It was a group bound together by such ties as kinship, common nationality, and similar educational, social and religious views. In 1849 a postoffice, called Mentor, of which John D. Parrish was the postmaster, was established here, but the place never attained the dignity of a village. It was what rural sociologists call a neighborhood settlement. The road running past the Dye farm (S. T. Hiway 28) has always been called the Dye road. Mr. Dye was a deeply religious man, and was familiarly known as Deacon Dye. His diary reveals that he was a faithful attendant of Deacon Trowbridge's church in Sheboygan Falls. His full name was Asel Gordon Dye. He had three sons and five daughters. His trade was that of carpenter and joiner.—Records of Sheboygan Falls Baptist Church; Portrait and Biog. Record of Sheb. Co. (1894) p. 553; Diary of A. G. Dye, Wis. Hist. Library, Madison; Sheb. Times, Dec. 2, 1876.

¹⁹ Farmin Cemetery situated on the Dye road is named after this family. Morris Farmin later removed to Dodge county.

²⁰ Sheb. Co. Herald, Apr. 15, 1899.

from Detroit, he met William Farnsworth, who encouraged him to set up in the mercantile and forwarding business at Sheboygan. After tarrying in Green Bay several weeks he took passage on the steamer *Michigan*, Capt. Pease, for Sheboygan, where he waited two or three days for Farnsworth to come through by land, in the meantime visiting the Farnsworth mill and looking over the site of the future city. Deciding to locate here, he and Farnsworth then rode to Milwaukee on horseback along the lakeshore, and sailed from there to Chicago on a schooner to attend the July land sales. Cole states that while he was at Chicago he engaged A. G. Dye to erect a warehouse and dock at Sheboygan, and that he purchased three lots on the Sheboygan river at the sale, doubtless the lots on which the warehouse was to be built. Returning to Green Bay he completed arrangements to start the new Sheboygan business venture in company with Brush, Rees & Co. As an advertisement in the Green Bay Intelligencer of Dec. 16, 1835, shows, Brush, Rees & Co. was a partnership consisting of Charles R. Brush, Seth Rees, and William Farnsworth. This firm owned or had an interest in a large number of enterprises located at various points along the west shore of Lake Michigan, such as stores, warehouses, trading posts, saw-mills, and townsites. It was their habit, first practiced by the old fur-trading companies, to enter into business connections, in the nature of partnerships, or strictly speaking, joint ventures, with enterprising individuals for the operation of these establishments, each contributing part of the capital of the undertaking. Brush, Rees & Co.'s arrangement with Mr. Cole was of this kind.

Arrangements perfected, Mr. Cole returned to Cleveland for his family, and a stock of merchandise, consisting of groceries, dry goods and hardware. He got back to Sheboygan about the middle of August after a two-week trip in the brig *U. C. Baldwin*, Capt. Sweet. All vessels and steamers at that time went to Green Bay before touching at Sheboygan.

It had been Mr. Cole's intention to board at the Sheboygan House, but it was not completed, and he was obliged to erect a temporary structure to shelter his family and goods. For a roof he used slabs from the sawmill, and he "sided up" with boxes, barrels and blankets. "When I had occasion to sell any of my merchandise", says Mr. Cole, "I opened the box containing the article, and after waiting upon my customer, I closed the box again." When the Coles arrived, the Dye family had been there a week. Mrs. Cole, in speaking of the time, says she was well satisfied with her hab-

itation, but when she saw Mrs. Dye, almost the only woman about her, sick and helpless, with a little one year old child also very ill to care for, she became homesick; but that the feeling passed off after the first day of their arrival, and never returned.

The Coles remained in their flimsy shack for about two weeks, and then moved into the Sheboygan House as soon as a portion of it was finished. In the meantime Dye and his crew were busy on the warehouse and dock, which when completed was 40 x 60 feet in size and two stories high. The dock was 160 feet long and built out into the water ten feet deep. This was the first commercial establishment on the present site of Sheboygan.

On Nov. 25, 1836, Mr. Cole was appointed the first postmaster at Sheboygan, succeeding Joel S. Fisk, who had acted in that capacity since July 21st. It was the only postoffice in the county at the time. In 1838, after Sheboygan's collapse, he moved to Sheboygan Falls, which became for a few years the center of population of the county. The abundance of natural water power was the attraction that drew people there. In 1840 the territorial legislature passed a law permitting county officers to keep their offices at Sheboygan Falls. It thus appears that while Sheboygan Falls never became the county seat, it was from 1840 to about 1845 the seat of county government, as well as the location of the only postoffice in the county.²¹



Mr. Cole has left a graphic account of the dire extremities to which the inhabitants of Sheboygan and Sheboygan Falls were driven to keep from starvation during the winter of 1836-1837. He states that while he was getting settled and ready for business, Farnsworth went to New York to buy a large stock of goods for his stores at Menominee and Green Bay, as well as for the one at Sheboygan. The goods arriving at Green Bay late in the fall, Cole went there to divide them, and returned home by the overland route, expecting the sailing vessel to follow with his stock within a few days. But the vessel became frozen in near the head of the

²¹ Sheb. Co. Herald, Apr. 15, 1899; Pioneer Settlement of Sheboygan County, by John E. Thomas, Wis. Hist. Coll., ix, 389.

On Apr. 8, 1839, James Farnsworth Jr. was appointed postmaster at Sheboygan, and served until Nov. 20, 1839, when the office was discontinued. On Oct. 25, 1844, it was re-established, with Samuel B. Ormsbee as postmaster. The first postmaster at Sheboygan Falls was George B. Babcock, appointed Sept. 25, 1837. He was succeeded by Charles D. Cole, Jan. 11, 1840.

Bay, and remained ice-bound three or four weeks; and when it finally reached Lake Michigan, a severe storm prevented it from anchoring off Sheboygan. It had to continue on to Chicago, where it was laid up for the winter with its entire cargo on board. It was now December. Communication with the outside world was practically cut off. Cole's stock of provisions was nearly exhausted. He had divided a half barrel of crackers, some hard bread, and a small quantity of other provisions, between the families at Sheboygan and the men at the Farnsworth and Stedman saw-mills. Things began to look desperate; something had to be done.

Cole finally took a yoke of oxen from Farnsworth's mill, and with William Ashby,²² James Harlan and Thomas Perry, who

²² William Ashby was born in Oneida county, New York, May 4, 1816. He spent the first 19 years of his life in his native county. At the age of 13 he left home and worked for a farmer for five years. On Oct. 9, 1835, he became one of a party of about twenty young men who entered into a contract to work in the lumber mill of Brush, Rees & Co. on the Menominee river in Wisconsin. Transported to Buffalo on the Erie canal, they presented an order from William Farnsworth to the captain of the steamboat *Robert Fulton* for their passage to Detroit. At Detroit they waited ten days for Farnsworth's sailing vessel *Jefferson* to carry them on the last leg of their journey, in the meantime staying at a hotel where they boarded on the credit of the company. The vessel arrived at the Menominee on Nov. 9, 1835, where he worked a year at \$16 a month, and then started through the woods, with ten or twelve others, for Milwaukee, bearing a draft or order from Farnsworth on Solomon Juneau for their year's labor.

Arriving at Sheboygan Nov. 9, 1836, they found the people at the mill out of flour, but with a small stock of potatoes and beef. On the present site of the city were the Sheboygan House, the Cole warehouse, and only two dwellings, in which lived Mr. Cole and A. G. Dye. Obtaining a few crackers from Mr. Cole, they continued on their way. Not successful in getting any pay from Juneau, Ashby retraced his steps to Sheboygan with one companion, and started to work at the Farnsworth mill. It was during the next month that Mr. Ashby made the momentous trip to Milwaukee with Mr. Cole for food supplies described on another page. One account has it that he worked at the mill four years; and another, until 1846. Then for two years he owned and ran the North Pier at Sheboygan in company with Farnsworth. In 1844 he purchased 130 acres of land at \$3 per acre in section 28 of the town of Sheboygan, near the mill, where he spent the remainder of his life.

Mr. Ashby married Harriet Walker, a native of Virginia, Mar. 4, 1842. They had three children—Elizabeth, Hattie and James. Ashby served as county commissioner two years, county treasurer four years, town chairman 16 years, and county chairman 12 to 14 years. Mr. Ashby died May 1, 1898, and Mrs. Ashby May 27, 1892. His sister Elizabeth married Wentworth Barber, who was employed in the Farnsworth mill at \$18 a month. The Barbers in 1847 moved on a farm in the town of Lyndon.

Mr. Ashby was better known as Sam Ashby. When a relative from the east came to visit him and inquired for William Ashby, no one knew such a person. There are three versions of how he got his nickname—one, that he always had a little money to loan, and hence was called Uncle Sam, another, that he had once been a paymaster for the government; and another, that he had acted as the custodian of the funds of the group of young men who came west with him. An interesting incident has come down to us about Mr. Ashby. While attending an Indian pow-wow, one young buck persisted in dancing in front of him and knocking off his hat. After repeating this two or three times,

worked in the mill, started for Milwaukee in a sled after supplies. There was no road cut out at that time; it was the dead of winter; the snow lay on the ground in immense drifts. The first day they went only as far as Bark Creek, a distance of seven miles, and thought they had done well. It took six or seven days to get to Milwaukee, and another two days buying provisions and having their oxen shod. Their purchases consisted of corn, oats, flour and groceries. On their return, while they were camped one night near the present village of Saukville, the men were aroused from sleep to find that the oxen had broken into the stock of provisions and filled themselves so full of corn that it was feared they would die. Hurrily yoking the beasts up, they attached them to the sleigh, hoping by exercising them to save their lives. One of the animals, however, died from having overeaten. A group of Indians nearby took possession of the carcass, opened the entrails, and ate all the undigested corn. The surviving ox had to haul the load the rest of the way home.

Their arrival home was hailed with joy by everyone. But naturally, the small stock of supplies they brought along could not last long; and Mr. Cole staid at home only a few days before he had to start for Green Bay on horseback for more provisions. At the Bay he purchased a horse team and sled, but on the return journey he found the hills so steep in many places that he had to unhitch the horses, and let the sled down the slope by "snubbing" around a tree with a rope. The going was bad, notwithstanding that the inhabitants of Sheboygan Falls and Manitowoc Rapids, by their combined efforts had cut through a road of sorts. Nevertheless Mr. Cole got along fairly well until he reached the Pigeon river, four miles from Sheboygan, where he broke through the ice and partially spoiled his goods.

Mr. Cole was a friend in need to the settlers in their time of hardship and privation. In the winter of 1836-1837 he spent most of his time going to Green Bay after provisions; and in the summer of 1837 he made several trips for supplies to Milwaukee in a birch bark canoe, which the Milwaukee settlers dubbed "the She-

Mr. Ashby warned him not to do it again. Disregarding the warning, the Indian knocked it off once more, whereupon Mr. Ashby "drew off and knocked him flat." Fearful of being set upon in force, Mr. Ashby picked up his hat and started for home, at first walking slowly, but when he was out of sight, running as fast as he could. Next morning the Indian, accompanied by some of his friends, came to Mr. Ashby's home and said, "Brave white man. Me bad Injun."—Portrait & Biog. Record of Sheb. Co., (1894), p. 413; Sheb. Herald, Feb. 27, 1897, Mar. 28, 1914; Hist. of Nor. Wis., p. 985; Channing Mather in Sheb. Press, Apr. 29, 1927.

boygan express." "We were often pinched for food", says Mr. Cole, "and at one time we dug up and ate the potatoes we had put in the ground for an increase; and at another, we cut the hoops and staves off a barrel of condemned flour that had mildewed and become hard, and was rolled under the warehouse to be out of the way; this flour we pounded up with a hatchet, and made it into bread, or something we called such."²³

Every city in Wisconsin was seriously affected by the panic of 1837; but probably in no other community were the inhabitants reduced to the verge of starvation. Sheboygan was so hard-hit that by 1839 James Farnsworth Jr., a cousin of William Farnsworth, and his family, were the only persons left. The future of the town appeared dark and gloomy. In the meantime, Sheboygan Falls, six miles to the west, was experiencing a slow growth, due largely to the exodus from Sheboygan.

²³ Pioneer Settlement of Sheboygan County, by John E. Thomas, Wis. Hist. Coll. ix, 389.

CHAPTER 6

THE DECADE OF THE FORTIES

AGAIN, during the period of about a decade from the year 1839, little is known of conditions and events in Sheboygan County. There was no regular newspaper until 1847. The public records of the county, except the records in the Register of Deeds office, were destroyed in the court house fire in 1860. Few letters, diaries or other accounts of the era have been preserved. But newspapers of later days occasionally published the "reminiscences" of some of the old-timers; and it is from these that most of our knowledge of the period is obtained. Available information on the decade, however, is extremely meagre and sketchy. It is a scanty but colorful page in the county's history.

In 1840, three years after the great financial panic, and shortly after the last of the 36'ers but one, had left Sheboygan, the second and permanent wave of settlement began to make its appearance. Good fortune was about to smile on the county once more. Immigration and settlement, slow in getting under way, but steadily increasing in *tempo* from year to year, until it reached flood proportions, characterized the period. The Wisconsin Gazetteer, published in 1853, gives the population of Sheboygan County as follows: 1840—133; 1842—227; 1846—4,637; 1847—5,580; 1850—8,836. In 1853 there were 1,790 dwellings, 581 farms and 30 manufactories in the county. The city of Sheboygan increased from 400 inhabitants in 1846 to 2,000 in 1853. The Sheboygan Mercury of July 21, 1849, published these figures on immigration into the county: 1845—1,417; 1846—4,380; 1847—4,228; 1848—6,200. H. N. Smith, of Plymouth, in a paper read before the Pioneer Association, named the following heads of families resident in the county in 1840: city of Sheboygan: James Farnsworth; town of Sheboygan: William Ashby, Adonikam Farrow, John Johnson and Alvin (Alvah) Rublee; Sheboygan Falls: C. D. Cole, David Giddings, John McNish, Steven Palmer, Col. Silas Stedman, and Dea. William Trowbridge; town of Lima: A. G. Dye, Benjamin Firman (Farmin), B. L. Gibbs, J. D. Gibbs, James H. Gibbs, and Dr. Wendell Hoffman.¹

¹ Appendix, Proc. Sheb. Co. Bd., 1870, p. 44.

Horace Rublee, however, who landed at Sheboygan in 1840, gives a more complete account of the county's inhabitants that year:

"In the summer of 1840, there were but three families at the village of Sheboygan . . . Three white families, however, did reside somewhere near the harbor at this period; those of Joshua Brown, Hugh Ritter and Horace Stone. I think I can now recollect the name of every white man then living in the county. Besides those mentioned, a young man of the name of Samuel Farnsworth (James S. Farnsworth Jr.) resided at Sheboygan. Back from the lake about a mile, in the vicinity of the present City Cemetery, there lived a hardy old English farmer, John Johnson, with a large family. Three of his sons, George, John and Michael, were grown up men, who were employed about Farnsworth's Mill, which was then in charge of A. Farrow, and my father, Alvah Rublee. At the Falls lived Charles D. Cole, David Giddings, McNish, Bragg, Elihu Thorpe, John Arnold and Quincy Hall. Giddings, Arnold and Thorpe were single men. Two miles west, on the present Fond du Lac road, William Trowbridge had commenced a farm. His sons, Benjamin, William and James were grown men. About four miles to the South-west, in the present town of Lima, A. G. Dye, Wendell Hoffman, Newell Upham, and Benjamin Firmin (Farmin) had begun farms. Five or six miles south, in the present town of Gibbsville, John D. Gibbs, James Gibbs, and William and Peter Palmer, had begun farms. During the year Benj. Gibbs settled on an adjoining tract. The other newcomers that year were Albert Rounseville, Stephen Woolverton, who came to take charge of the Light House near Sheboygan, and Col. Benjamin F. Mooers, of late years connected with the Land Office at Menasha. William Farnsworth spent a part of his time there. Such was Sheboygan in 1840 . . . In the spring of 1843, Henry Conklin brought a small stock of dry goods and groceries, and opened a store at Sheboygan, and the following year, the road being opened westward to Fond du Lac, the tide of emigration began to turn in that direction, and the county rapidly to fill with settlers."²

The earliest glimpse of the period is given by Mrs. Horace Stone, who came from Dunkirk, New York, in the spring of 1839 with her husband, a cabinet maker and carpenter. She states that there was no harbor at Sheboygan at the time, and that they had to land from a schooner in a yawl boat. They were escorted to the Sheboygan House, of which James Farnsworth and his family were the sole occupants. Many good buildings, mostly painted, she observed, had been erected, but all were vacant.³

² Early Times in Sheb. Co., Wis. Hist. Coll., iv, 335 (1859).

³ Sheb. Telegram, Jan. 31, 1908.

Horace Rublee⁴ draws this interesting picture of Sheboygan in 1840:

"In the summer of 1840, there were about three families at the village Sheboygan. Only small coasting vessels, engaged in carrying lumber south, touched there. Our family came around the lakes, by steamer, to Milwaukee. Thence we proceeded by a small schooner. This, after a passage of about sixteen hours, anchored off Sheboygan; and, an hour or two before dawn, one beautiful summer night, in the latter part of June, we were transferred to a scow-boat, which was soon rowed in at the mouth of the river, and landed. The morning showed a strange spectacle. Scattered about through the pleasant groves of second-growth pine and oak, which covered the plat, were well-built dwelling houses, neatly painted and new; and along several streets were a number of buildings, designed for stores, all abandoned. Now and then a straggling Indian might be seen, or the tinkle of his pony's bell heard, but of other inhabitants there was neither sight nor sound. Three white families, however, did reside somewhere near the har-

⁴Horace Rublee was the son of Alvah Rublee and Martha Kent Rublee, who hailed from Vermont. The elder Rublee came west to Sheboygan County in 1839 and obtained employment managing the Farnsworth sawmill with A. Farrow. Mrs. Rublee and her three children, among them Horace, age 10, joined him in June 1840. For about a year the Rublees lived in a frame house near the mill, and then removed to another built on land where Wildwood cemetery is now located. Alvah Rublee divided his time between farming and working in the mill, and commenced clearing a farm in the Dye Settlement in the town of Lima, intending to make it his home; but he died in 1844. His cousin, Francis Manville Rublee had taught the first school in Sheboygan County in the winter of 1836-37. It was supported by private subscription, and held in a private room, and had only a few pupils. After remaining here only a year, F. M. Rublee went out west.

Horace Rublee attended school in District No. 1, near the Farnsworth saw mill, during the first years of their residence here, and then, his mother having married Mr. Farrow, the family moved to a farm four miles west of Sheboygan near the present site of Falls cemetery. Here the Rublee children grew up, attended school, and all became teachers. In 1846, at the age of 17, Horace Rublee taught school at Sheboygan Falls in District No. 2 of Sheboygan County in a schoolhouse situated on Poplar street on the road leading into the city from Sheboygan. The contract for the construction of the school building being dated Aug. 26, 1845, it was, until its removal in recent years, the oldest schoolhouse in the county.

About 1850 Mr. Rublee went to Madison and became a reporter on the State Journal under Gen. David Atwood. Two years later he became one of the editors and owners of that newspaper. He was an uncompromising abolitionist and one of the ablest advocates of the newly born Republican party. For a number of years he was chairman of the Republican state central committee. In 1868 he was a candidate for United States Senator, but was defeated by Matt. H. Carpenter. A few months later he was appointed minister to Switzerland by President Grant, a position he held for nearly eight years, when he resigned. Early in the 80's he helped to establish the Milwaukee Republican, later named the Milwaukee Sentinel, of which he was the editor until his death. It is said that he was Wisconsin's greatest editor. Mr. Rublee died in 1896 at the age of 67 years.—L. K. Howe in Milw. Free Press, Feb. 15, 1914; Col. J. A. Watrous in Sheb. Press, Sept. 30, 1914; Hist. of School Supervision in Wis., by W. C. Whitford, Wis. Hist. Coll. v, 336, 354.

bor at this period: those of Joshua Brown, Hugh Ritter and Horace Stone . . . There was not a store or trading shop of any kind in the county. Everything had to be obtained from Milwaukee.⁵

Writing again in 1859 Horace Rublee recorded in the Madison Journal this reminiscence of his arrival at Sheboygan in 1840:

"A pleasant ride of five hours on the steamer north from Milwaukee, brings one to Sheboygan. It is nineteen years ago, this very month of June, since, one sultry summer night, we saw, from the deck of a little schooner—the only craft that then visited the place—the hill which forms the site of the present city loom dimly through the dark. The fire-flies that gleamed intermittently along the bushy shores were the only lights visible. The schooner anchored some distance from the land. A scow boat came out and took the half dozen passengers on shore, the writer of this being then a boy of ten. We have always had a vivid memory of that night, or rather morning—for the day was just beginning to dawn in the east—of the warm air of the shore, the black piled masses of a thunder-storm gathering in the west, the glittering fire-flies more brilliant than we had ever seen before, the scent of the wild roses and strange flowers that loaded the light breeze, and the feeling of awe which the idea of the almost interminable forest that stretched on all sides except the lake, impressed upon us. There were then but two families on the site of the present city. A number of houses had been built there in 1837, and subsequently deserted. There was no wagon road that extended more than ten miles back into the country. The mail came once a week from Milwaukee on horseback, over an Indian trail. The country towards Fond du Lac was a pathless wilderness. Eleven families comprised the population of the county."⁶

Mrs. Martha J. Cole, wife of Ebenezer E. Cole, who came from Milwaukee to Sheboygan in 1843 with her first husband, Thomas C. Horner, says of the place:

"In 1843 we moved to Sheboygan. It was considered a desirable point to locate. We went on board the schooner. When we reached Sheboygan, there were only seven families there. We went at once into a house that had been built, but was unoccupied, and there I lived for fifty years. The house had stood empty and the Indians had camped in it. The walls were covered with pictures of animals they had drawn with red paint. I didn't like the decorations much, and so I tried

⁵ Early Times in Sheb. Co., Wis. Hist. Coll. iv, 335 (1859).

⁶ Reprinted in Evergreen City Times, July 9, 1859.

to get some lime to make whitewash and cover up the pictures. There was no lime in town, and we had to send five miles for some. The little settlement of seven families were dependent on the Indians for their provisions. They brought in deer and geese to sell. When they found out that I could speak their language, they always came to my house when they first came in with their game, and gave me the best they brought. If they had a deer they gave me my choice of the meat. The result was there never was any scarcity of food with us.

"The Indians called me *Mishinemakinagogua*, which means 'Mackinaw Woman', and they called Mr. Horner *Kesus*, signifying 'One Side of the Sky'. They came to me for advice about their trades, and wouldn't buy or sell unless I told them where to go and how much they ought to pay. My experience with the Indians was that they were good friends to those they considered friendly to them, and who treated them well. They remember kindness a long time, and, I suppose, remember injuries quite as long."

An anonymous person who signs himself as M. N. R. writes his impressions of Sheboygan in 1845 in these words:

"In June 1845 I first landed at Sheboygan City, which then could boast of some 25 or 30 dwellings, including shanties, and about 200 inhabitants. In those days—or nights—when we heard the welcome cry of "Steam Boat!" and heard the puffing of the "Old Madison" as each inhabitant took the "shortest cut" to the pier, regardless of streets or sidewalks, it was small matter to take the census of the town. On such times we could often count as many red men of the forest as white men from the east. And while the latter were earnestly setting forth the advantages of location that our village possessed, the beauty of the site, the richness of the land back in the country, its splendid water powers etc., the former were as earnest in shooting their arrows at pennies set upon a stick by passengers from the boat. The few they obtained in this way served to refill the tin pails that would then pass from one to another, and from which they would drink the white man's "fire water", which caused those midnight "pow wows" with their fiendish yells and often murderous results, that many of the old settlers well remember."⁷

Hector North Ross, editor and proprietor of the *Evergreen City Times*, who came to Sheboygan in June 1847, in an address before the Pioneer Society in 1868, gave an account of the city in 1845, which he gleaned from the *Sheboygan Gazette*. Although the *Sheboygan Mercury*, founded in 1847, is commonly supposed to be the first newspaper published in Sheboygan, the distinction really

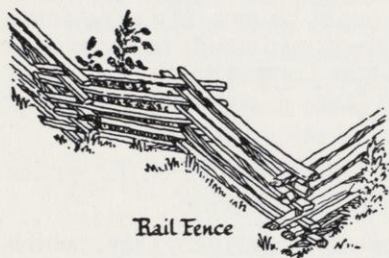
⁷ Sheb. Herald, July 29, 1899, from Milw. Sentinel.

⁸ *Evergreen City Times*, Aug. 3, 1867.

belongs to the Gazette. It was produced by a local firm of land agents and speculators known as Thomas C. Hornor & Co. (or Horner), but was printed in New Jersey. It was more of an organ to boost this section of the country and attract settlers, than it was a dispenser of news. Only three numbers were ever published, and these irregularly. The date of the first number is unknown, but it was prior to Oct. 14, 1845. The second number is dated Oct. 25, 1845; and the third is dated July 1, 1846. Editor Ross says of the paper, "It spoke in glowing terms of its charming location, its splendid natural harbor, its prospective railroad, its great water

power, its large lumber trade, its rich adjacent farming lands, its extensive white fisheries, its swelling tide of immigration, and its rapidly increasing business."

The advertisers in the paper, according to Mr. Ross, were: J. S. Harvey, Cornwall & Smith, J. L. Moore, Tripp & Carrington, Amos Adams & Co., merchants; Thomas



Rail Fence

Wimble, Calvin Hill, S. Roberts, A. Kind, Daniel Wheeler, mechanics; E. H. Howard, D. U. Harrington, M. W. Kellogg, C. P. Hiller, lawyers; and Drs. Rankin and Bull. Mr. Ross continues, "There were real estate and exchange brokers, storage, forwarding and commission merchants, milliners and mantua makers. There were hotels and boarding houses with high sounding name, such as the Sheboygan House, the Farmer's House, the Nebraska Boarding House, the Conowahga, Potawotomi, and I know not how many other unpronounceable selections from the Indian vocabulary."⁹ In the Gazette were several articles by Rev. Huntington Lyman, advocating the building of a railroad from Sheboygan to the Mississippi River, and even beyond to the Pacific ocean. Extracts from these articles appear in the Sheboygan Times of Sept. 4, 1875.

Dr. J. J. Brown,¹⁰ the only doctor and druggist in Sheboygan for many years, and internationally known as a student of con-

⁹ Evergreen City Times, Feb. 22, 1868.

¹⁰ Dr. John Junius Brown, a native of Massachusetts was born Jan. 24, 1819, a descendant of a long line of Puritan ancestry. In 1822 his family moved to Buffalo, N. Y. and about 1839 he entered Alexander Academy. He taught school one year near Mt. Pleasant, Ohio, and in 1845 was graduated from the Genessee Medical College. Besides practicing his profession in Sheboygan, he owned a drug store there, and held such positions as coroner, superintendent of schools, president of a literary society known as the Young Men's Institute, and faculty member of the Sheboygan Academy. During the

chology, botany and minerals, first heard of the place from a traveler who had been in Wisconsin. The traveler's account striking the doctor's fancy, he took a steamboat at Buffalo for Milwaukee, where he hired a horse and buggy, and in company with a young man from Ohio, drove along the beach to Sheboygan, the appearance of which in 1846 he describes as follows:

"The day was well advanced, when coming around the point south of Sheboygan our eyes were gladdened by a tall, white cone-shaped light house, and in a short time we crossed

Civil War he sold the drug store to his clerk, Thomas M. Blackstock, and in 1862 was commissioned Lieut. Col. of the 27th Wis. Inf. by Gov. Salomon. His natural history collection, and especially his collection of shells, which was purchased by Lawrence College in 1891, was acknowledged to be one of the best in the United States. To collect these objects he made a number of trips to the south, Honduras, the Bahamas, and the West Indies. In 1868 he occupied the chair of natural science at the state normal school in Whitewater, and in 1884-85 the chair of chemistry and botany at the university of Florida. He was also a lecturer at Rush Medical College and curator of the Academy of Sciences in Chicago. He frequently addressed farmers' institutes on scientific subjects like fermentation in ensilage, prevention of corn smut, killing of noxious weeds, and destruction of the cherry slug. He died Aug. 27, 1897.

Dr. Brown entertained strict views against the saloon, intemperance, Sabbath desecration, and violation of the Sunday laws. One time his opponents in Sheboygan tried to burn him in effigy, putting the figure in a wagon with a derogatory sign attached, and parading it up the street. At the German bank corner a crowd of his friends gathered and forcibly broke up the procession.

As coroner he was remembered chiefly on account of the unique inquest held over the body of J. W. Pidge, a well-known local drunkard. Pidge was found dead in 1846-47 on the lake shore south of Black river, evidently having drowned while trying to wade around some flood wood on the beach, although the water was scarcely knee-deep. Summoning a jury in Sheboygan, Dr. Brown got a span of horses, a wagon and teamster, and started with the jury for the scene of death. It was midnight when they reached the spot, where they found a small party keeping watch with a bright fire. Knowing that the deceased had left Sheboygan considerably under the influence of liquor, the jury, after viewing the scene and body, made up the following verdict: "J. W. Pidge, now lying here dead, came to his death by accidentally taking in too much water with his whiskey." The inquest over, poor Pidge was carefully stretched out on the bottom of the wagon box for the return to town. The driver nervously perched himself on the wagon as far as possible from his unpleasant passenger, and the others followed close behind on foot. When they came to a carduo road leading through a dark, lonely stretch of woods, the driver became more uneasy, but he felt reassured by the proximity of his companions. Deciding to play a joke on the frightened teamster, the walkers gradually fell behind, and finally deserted the road for the path along the lake shore some distance away. Unaware of being thus betrayed, the driver courageously pursued his way. All went well until he ran over a log, partially upsetting the wagon. He was thrown backward, and to his horror found himself and the dead man sliding out of the vehicle together. He yelled for help, but soon realized that he was alone and abandoned in the lonely woods. Terrified almost to death, he emitted a series of fearful screams, which brought his friends running to his aid. When they reached him, he had partly unhitched the horses and was trying to mount one and get away. The party reached town at day-break without further trouble. A bottle of whiskey found in Pidge's pocket was presented to the temperance society at Sheboygan Falls, significantly labelled "This was the critter that killed J. W. Pidge."—Sheb. Herald, Sept. 4, and 18, 1897; Sheb. Times, Oct. 10, 1891; Portrait & Biog. Rec. of Sheb. County (1894) p. 226.

the Sheboygan river, on a foot bridge, and climbed the steep bank to the "Merchants Hotel", where we stopped, and found to our dismay that they had absolutely nothing for our horse to eat. They tried to comfort us with the information that they had sent south by a schooner for some feed which they were daily expecting, and our best efforts failed to get anything in the place; but we were kindly told that at Sheboygan Falls, five miles west, we could get plenty, so to that place for our horse's sake we felt obliged to go. But here I was in Sheboygan—the place that had engaged my thoughts for so many weeks, the place I had journeyed so many hundred miles to see—and see it I would and did. And I found that for the past ten years the place had been abandoned. The buildings put up during the '36 speculation time had been empty, and at times only one white family had been left. Sheboygan was indeed a new place; it was wild. There was not travel enough through the street to interfere with the growth of grass and hazel brush, and close by were primeval forest trees; and to add to its romantic wildness, a band of roaming Indians with their ponies had come from the woods to see the palefaces.

"We were soon again in the woods on our way to Sheboygan Falls, where we arrived just as the sun was sinking in the west—and only to hear substantially the same story about horse feed as at Sheboygan. But a bystander came to our relief with the assurance that "at Trowbridge's" there was plenty and to spare. The good people at "the Falls" kindly showed us on the way, and, a little after dark we reached Trowbridge's, told our story and received that welcome that none but a pioneer can give. Our horse was made happy, and we two strangers were made to feel at home. Morning came. Though looking like rain we bid the hospitable Trowbridges good-bye, and were soon in the wild woods headed for Fond du Lac. The water power at the Falls, the big saw logs, the general appearance of the people there, and especially those where we staid over night, more than confirmed my faith in the surrounding country."¹¹

H. S. Anable, a pioneer merchant of Sheboygan, in a communication to the Pioneer Association read at its 6th annual gathering held Feb. 4, 1873, wrote of his first visit to Sheboygan in 1846, while on a prospecting tour of the west:

"Sheboygan was just beginning to be talked about. I had heard of it and wanted to land there. The first upper cabin steamer ever built and run upon the lakes was the Great Western. Capt. Walker said he intended to stop at Sheboygan, so I took passage with him, and the next morning was landed on the old north pier kept by William Farnsworth, and took

¹¹ Sheb. Herald Sept. 14, 1895, from address by Dr. Brown before Sheb. Co. Pioneer Ass'n., Aug. 28, 1895.

a room at the Merchant's Hotel, corner of 6th street and Pennsylvania Avenue, kept by Hiram Hazelton. Milwaukee boasted then of having 14,000 inhabitants. Chicago (was) then a dirty, dusty, wooden city of 18,000 inhabitants, and far from attractive to me. Well, Sheboygan was a nice spot to build a city upon, as time has proved, but it was all embraced within Center street on the north, Eighth street on the west, and Jefferson street on the south. There were a few old "36" houses and fewer new ones. There were twenty stumps to one house and twenty trees to one stump. The best wood sold for one dollar a cord, delivered, and store pay at that.

"A P. Lyman had opened in an old "36" store on Pennsylvania avenue, formerly kept by J. L. Moore. Harvey & McKillip kept a store on the corner of 7th street and the avenue, Amos Adams on the corner of 8th street, and Andrew Payne the "Giraffe" under the hill below the Merchants, where he sold root beer, cakes, pies, red herring and crackers and cheese. It was said he took most of the money spent in the place. Whitefish and shingles were considered a lawful tender at the other stores. Hobart, Woodbury & Gorsline and Taylor & Hiller were the law firms. R. P. Harriman kept the Sheboygan House, corner Jefferson and 8th street. He was converting his old barn on the corner of 8th and the alley, into a store. E. Gilman was there speculating in town lots, and so was Warren Smith. Deacon Wheeler kept a blacksmith shop on 8th street, and Deacon Brown a boarding house on Center street. John Maynard was there looking after Daniel Whitney's interests. John Marvin and Squire Kellogg, and Gay Lee and Tom. Horner were there, all talking up Sheboygan and its magnificent harbor. Fox Cook kept the light house, Jimmy Berry "morticed holes in the ground" on the banks of the ravine above the little island, and Sam. Ormsby kept a saw-mill three miles up the river. Squire Russell was in his prime as a justice of the peace, and gathered fame by threatening on a memorable occasion, to *squash* the proceedings in his court.

"Doctor Rankin kept the Post Office in his hat. The mail came once a week. Dominie Lyman preached the gospel in the old school house, where the men sat on one side and the women on the other. A bridge was being built across the river on the Sauk Trail road near Walther's tannery, and Henry Conklin was president of the village. Indians were about as numerous as white folks, often frightened women and children by staring at them through the windows when least expected; and in the season amused all by exhibitions of the "corn dance" through the streets. The Dye settlement, the Gibbs settlement and the Mallory settlement were attracting some attention, but were not easily reached. Oh, how new and desolate everything was! yet all was hope and energy and kind feelings.

"I had been there but a day or two when Newcomb Van Arnam arrived on a visit to his brother Stephen. He and I hired a pair of horses and buggy of Geo. Throup, then and for many years after a noted livery man. We started out after dinner to explore the back country. The year before "Uncle Sam" had cut a road thro' the forest to Fond du Lac. There were more stumps than road, but a team *could* get through in dry weather if not too heavily laden. I have since seen worse roads but it was among the Rocky and Sierra Nevada mountains. At Sheboygan Falls, Charley Cole as everybody called him, kept a land office, and Col. Stedman a mill. The "Falls" wanted to be the big place of the county, but the "Mouth" was too large. A mile or two farther on were "Quaker" Smith's, Nathan Sargent, and good old deacon Trowbridge, with his big heart and ever smiling countenance, preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ, and by his daily walk and conversation causing all to love and honor him. Towards night we arrived at Plymouth, and put up with Davidson, in his four roomed log tavern. He had that day sold out to John W. Taylor. There was the same magnificent spring at his back door, and that was all there was of Plymouth.

"Next morning we climbed the rough and steep hill on the old road by General Newland's and the Pot-Ash Kettles to Greenbush. Sylvanus Wade had just built a small log tavern; where we dined, and that is all there was of Greenbush. From there to Butler's tavern was a dense forest. Passing on by Harry Giltner's we came into the "openings" and soon after to Fond du Lac. Not a hotel there, and not more than ten houses. Mason C. Darling sometimes accommodated travelers with a meal and a night's lodging. The "Lewis House" was just being enclosed.

"Soon after, the "Empire", Capt. Howe, came along from the East, and for a wonder landed at Sheboygan. The landing of a steamer at Sheboygan was an event of so rare an occurrence that when one did land, men, women and children ran down to the pier to see it. I went home so well pleased with Sheboygan, and the prospect of its becoming a place of importance, that the following month we opened a store in Hariman's old barn, where we continued in business, until, with the old Sheboygan House, we were burned out in 1850, and finally left Sheboygan in 1852.

"Everything needed for man and beast was imported from the East and South; a few white fish and shingles were the only exports. The following winter (1846-47) George Gillett started the "Mercury" over our store . . . The next summer the steamers found that it paid to stop at Sheboygan. Immigration began to pour in, the land began to be cleared and the place began to grow."¹²

¹² Sheb. Times, Feb. 8, 1873.

Early in 1847 the first printing press was brought to Sheboygan, and the Sheboygan Mercury, the first regular newspaper in the county, started. J. W. Gillett was the publisher, George W. Gillett the editor, and E. M. Comb the printer. The office was in the barn-like loft over Henry Anable's store. The first volume of this newspaper, containing all the numbers up to Feb. 19, 1848, is missing, but all the succeeding issues have been preserved, and are the source of invaluable information about early times in the county. George W. Gillett was the father of King C. Gillette, of South

Boston, Massachusetts, of Gillette safety razor fame.¹³ In January 1848 H. N. Ross became employed in the office, where he learned to be a practical type-setter. He had been a school teacher back east, and later was admitted to the bar in Ohio. Like many other young eastern lawyers, he sought an opening in the west to practice his profession, and naturally drifted to Sheboygan, where he had a brother; but finding the legal talent far in excess of the demand, he turned to the field of journalism, which he followed the remainder of his life. Writing in 1868 Mr. Ross says of the local legal profession in 1847:

"There were an abundance of lawyers, but no cases, and most of them were eking out a livelihood in some other vocation. Some, as the agents of eastern capitalists, shaved notes and loaned money at six and eight percent a month, receiving, of course, a good slice of the profits themselves. Others sought and obtained office, while others still went to brick making, or left for better openings."¹⁴

Mr. Ross bought the Mercury in 1854, and changed the name to Evergreen City Times, a title suggested by the fact that pines and evergreen trees predominated on the site of the city in those days. In 1870 he changed the name to Sheboygan Times, by which it was known until he discontinued its publication.¹⁵ The paper was always strongly Republican. Its Democratic rival was the Sheboygan Lake Democrat, established in 1851, which was later named the Sheboygan Lake Journal, and still later, the Sheboygan Journal. Flavius J. Mills was the proprietor and editor.



Stump Fence

¹³ Sheb. Press, Sept. 29, 1915.

¹⁴ Evergreen City Times, Feb. 22, 1868.

¹⁵ Portrait and Biog. Rec. of Sheb. Co. (1894), p. 659.

All accounts have it that the first issue of the Sheboygan Mercury was published in February 1847, but Vol. 1, No. 2 is dated Feb. 3, 1847, and it being a weekly paper, the first publication must have been Jan. 27, 1847. An extract from Vol. 1, No. 2, describing Sheboygan County in 1847, appears in an unidentified number of the Sheboygan County News:

"The county of Sheboygan three years ago was almost an uninhabitated wilderness and it now contains about 2,500 inhabitants, nearly all from New England and New York. And it would astonish anyone unacquainted with such scenes, to see how the dense forest recedes before the sturdy pioneer, who is richly paid for his labor by obtaining a beautiful and fertile farm.

"The village of Sheboygan contained in 1844, 75 inhabitants. In 1847 it contained 700, with almost all the comforts and conveniences of any eastern city. Flowing into Lake Michigan at this place is a large river of the same name, and were it not for a narrow sand-bar across its mouth, caused by the waves of the lake, it would be the most splendid harbor on this side of the lake. The Sheboygan lighthouse is the first that is made by vessels on their way up the lake and will be last on their way down. Two piers with store houses are already built to accommodate landing, etc., and some 2,000 and 3,000 cords of wood getting ready for steamboats. Never did nature furnish more splendid locations for private dwellings than are found in the suburbs of this village. But they will not long remain unoccupied for at the rapid rate of settlement which this place has experienced in the last few years, it is destined to become one of the most populous and important points on the lake. The shore south of the village for a number of miles abounds with exhaustless white fisheries and from which thousands of barrels are sent annually to southern and eastern markets. Sheboygan Falls about five miles west of this village with 300 inhabitants is beyond doubt soon to become an important town, as the "Falls" at this place affords an abundance of water power. It now has three public houses, saw and grist mills, iron foundry, churches and a public school."

Advertisers in Vol. 1, No. 2 of the Mercury were: "Sheboygan: Kirkland & Newberry, storage, forwarding and commission merchants, and dealers in salt, provisions, etc.; H. C. Hobart and W. H. Woodbury, land agents; Sheboygan House, E. P. Eaton, prop.; A. P. and G. N. Lyman, dealers in fancy and staple dry goods, groceries, crockery, hardware, iron, nails, provisions, stoves, etc., and manufacturers of tin, sheet-iron and copper ware. Sheboygan Falls: J. C. Shadbolt, tailor; Jedediah Brown, attorney and counsellor at law; F. S. Ben-

jamin, physician and surgeon; Temperance House, M. P. Maynard, prop. Gibbsville, S. Roberts, justice of the peace. Plymouth, Thomas I. Davidson, justice of the peace.”¹⁶

Dr. Elisha Knowles, who arrived here Sept. 30, 1845, in a letter to his family dated Oct. 18, 1845, interestingly describes Sheboygan County, and particularly Sheboygan Falls, in that year. Dr. Knowles practiced his profession at the Falls until his death Oct. 7, 1847.

“. . . and have at last made up my mind to stop in Sheboygan County—it is a very healthy soil, good air, solubrious, no disease, but I have seen in Michig(a)n and Indianna and Illinois a distressed people by fever and ague—the society here is good for a new place—all temperance folks, in fact the most so of any place I have seen in my travels (.) I am much pleased with the country . . . I have just commenced some labor upon a piece of land under the preemption law and can sell out at any moment . . . There is plenty of prairie land very near here and plenty of Indian trails—can tramp on horseback anywhere in the woods. I have rode same a hundred mile(s) since on horseback and have seen some choice land, sublime in the extreme. No stones here James! The great cry here is where shall we get stones to stone our well or cellar. Sheboygan river is one of the most beautiful rivers I have ever seen—water pure as christal—a quick sliding current—banks not deep but good water power at the falls. The inhabitants of this territory is mixed with all the states in the union and from all parts of the world, especially from Germany. Almost one-half Germans in this territory, but we are all Yankee here . . .

“We have in our village about thirty houses, 2 saw mills one grist mill, one lath machine, one shingle machine, one furnace, two blacksmiths, six joiners, one store verry full, one shoe shop, our large tavern building will be completed in June next (.W)e are six miles from the mouth of the Sheboygan river where there is another village growing upon the lake shore very thriving and will be one day our harbour—it is laid out for a city, but oh—the fish such as Salmnon and just about as big as our Shard (or Shad). They hallied in one hundred barrels at one draft of the saine the other day. (.W)e could not enumerate all the ni(c)e things we have here. (.W)e have three tame deer running about our streets and plenty in the wo(o)d(s). I stoped at Sac the other day for something to eat and the man went out and caught a wild pig and put him in his pen.”¹⁷

¹⁶ Newspaper clipping in scrapbook kept by Mae Gardner, Hingham. See also Sheb. Herald, Aug. 27, 1887, Sheb. Press-Telegram, Oct. 29, 1923.

¹⁷ Printed copy of letter in Sheb. Public Library.

Joseph Benedict wrote his impressions of Sheboygan Falls and vicinity to his friend Artemas Matteson, North Bennington, Vermont, in a letter dated Nov. 25, 1845:

"Both from my own observation and the report of the other settlers here this is a very healthy country—no fever and ague—none of those lingering consumption coughs so prevalent at the east . . . A very open winter here last winter, & the cows and hogs can in ordinary winters gather pretty much of their living for themselves in the woods. This place is as you know on the Sheboygan River which has a fall here of some fifteen feet, & there are other mill privileges on the stream above and below unoccupied. There is a considerable of pine around here which is interspersed throughout with other tim(ber) & great quantities of it up the river & which is floated down by the course of the river as it seems some fifteen miles or: it is here wrought into lumber by the two mills—transported sometimes by wagon 2 or 3 miles below this place and there rafted to the Lake & sometimes it is rafted from here, & then carried by schooners to Milwaukee, Southport, Racine, Chicago and other markets where it at all times commands from 10 to 18 & 20 dollars according to the quality. Although there were some few folks that found their way into this county 6 or 8 years ago, still the settlement of the county did not fairly commence till about 18 mos. or 2 years ago, & the people are now finding out that there is plenty of good land here at \$1.25 per acre and for years to come the tide of settlement will be more rapid towards this section than elsewhere as all the good lands are taken below this. There are at present but few farmers who have been professed farmers elsewhere, but with their slovenly careless farming they can with half tillage raise here from 25 to 40 bushels per acre—get good old industrious farmers here who have been bred to the business & 40 to 50 bushels would be as supposed a general yield—the market for everything now & for years and at the best price will be right around a farmer's own neighborhood such is and will be for years the flow of immigration. There are grand materials for brick all around here & they do not make them as large as East & they command readily a fair good price in cash for you will remember that your wood will cost little or nothing except the cutting & hauling—There is a great cry for brick here—very little of it done & a grand chance for a brick maker—I could scarcely get brick enough at any price to top out my chimney. When the country is a little cleared up it will be a grand place for sheep, for they could it is supposed live 10 months in the year without any feeding—a good yoke of oxen here may be purchased here for from 40 to 60 dollars. Plenty of wild honey—Lime is worth 50 cents a barrel—. The Indians bring in cranberries in great abundance & wild plums & goose berries—Peaches & fruit of any

kind are not much grown here as yet but there is no reason why they should not grow here as they raise them North of this around Lake Winnebago 75 NWest of this . . . You know when a person gets out into this great broad open glorious country you will find that there is such an expansion of ones mind & thoughts he can get but very little into the compass of a sheet. The frosts are generally later here in appearing every season than East."¹⁸

H. N. Smith, of Plymouth, former president of the Sheboygan County Agricultural Society, in an address before the Pioneer Association in 1868, said:

"I came to the country in 1847, and my first experience in agriculture matters was in buying provisions and vegetables in Chicago to live on, for I could obtain none here. The population of the county was then about six thousand, and rapidly increasing, and for several years after every species of agricultural products were imported for the supply of the inhabitants."¹⁹

P. W., of Sheboygan, wrote the following to the editor of the Michigan Christian Herald on June 23, 1847, which was reprinted in the Wisconsin Magazine of History, September 1943:

"Large tracts of lands lying west and northwest of Sheboygan are still to be obtained at government price, but the settlers are taking it up with great rapidity. For the last week or two the arrivals per day at this port have ranged from 23 to 50. We are constantly receiving accessions from the south part of this state, and from Illinois. Most of this class were from the east a few years since. Having tried prairie farms and fever and ague localities, they are anxious to find a more healthy country abounding in timber. In coming to this region, the object of the search is gained."

In a letter dated May 2, 1848, J. McMullen wrote of conditions in Sheboygan County to his friend I. C. Eaton:

"We have scattered over Sheboygan Co. quite a number of small villages, most of which were started the past season to wit Gibbssville, Plymouth, Mulleton, Forest, Greenbush. The land in the county has nearly all been taken up by actual settlers, there are but a few government eightys of any value left, but some that have been bought by speculators can be bought for a small advance upon the government price. We have no prairies or "oak openings" in our region, they lay further west, it being covered with valuable timber. Among the most valuable trees are Oak & Pine. The white Oak is

¹⁸ Original letter in Wis. Hist. Library, Madison.

¹⁹ Evergreen City Times, Feb. 22, 1868.

truly a magnificent tree, as some have been found here of gigantic dimensions. Nothing in the eastern forests can begin to equal it in size and majesty. The Dutch are crowding into our territory in great numbers. They are filling up every nook & cubbyhole of this broad land, but they are generally sober & industrious, & when they get "anglicized" will make good citizens. Many from the higher & educated classes are emigrating from Germany, forming no inconsiderable part of the village & city inhabitants. I find that instead of the "scum" & offscouring of the east coming here, that you have lost many enterprising & talented men, who are working their way to eminence & wealth (would that it were to usefulness), but I hope you "have a few more of the same sort" who have staid behind. I taught school in the middle of the woods & had between forty & fifty scholars. There was nothing else but log houses in that region, yet most of the residents were intelligent & well informed. I am happy to say they venerated the Sabbath, & were living ornaments of the Christian Religion. We started a debating school, & I heard many sound logical speeches & even brilliant flights of fancy, that would even do honor to the Betasophian, from men who by day were engaged in such occupations as logging, chopping, & by night sleeping on a bedstead of their own construction in a log house covered with "oak shakes" instead of shingles . . .

"Have you any idea of the rapidity of the emigration? Could you stand on our piers at Sheboygan, & see the steamers disgorge their hundreds from their capacious cabins, eager to get foot on Wisconsin's soil, & yet hundreds more remaining bound for Milwaukee & southern ports. Consider the growth of our towns & cities. Twelve years ago Milwaukee contained but one log house upon the city plat. Now it numbers over 14,000 inhabitants, & supports two or three daily papers (quite equal to the eastern in size & neatness). May 8 Sheboygan 4 years since contained but two or three families, it now numbers nearly two thousand inhabitants with two weekly journals, (another to be started soon), three bookstores, one of them will be open in a few days, and eight or ten commodious Hotels, and numerous stores & groceries. Our location has been pronounced to be the best on the Lakeshore, both for a harbor & for building purposes . . . In 1829 the first steamboat entered Lake Michigan & without a single harbor to enter. Now there are over 100 propellers & steamers that regularly stop at our ports. They are indeed "sailing palaces", embellished with all the refinements & luxury & ease, & one on board of them could over well imagine himself to be in one of "Earth's gayest halls" . . . I am at present engaged as clerk in the principal Bookstore of Sheboygan."²⁰

²⁰ Original letter in Wis. State Hist. Library, Madison.

Interviewed by the Sheboygan Press in 1918, Henry Herzog said of Sheboygan in 1852:

"When we landed here practically everything was a wilderness. The dense forests were filled with game. Deer were plentiful and squirrels were to be had by the hundreds. Scores of sailing ships were always coming and going from the piers. It was no uncommon sight to see 40 or 50 ships on the lake just in front of our place preceding a storm. The harbor offered ample protection from the winds. Indian dances were often held in our village. There were always quite a number of them (Indians) in the village, especially in the spring when they brought in their maple sugar for trade. During the first few years we were here we used very little actual money. What we wanted we paid for in cord wood or shingles. Cord wood during these times sold for 25 or 50 cents a cord. Later on we made shingles and got a better price for our products."²¹

²¹ Sheb. Press. Jan. 18, 1918.

CHAPTER 7

GOVERNMENT LANDS

UPON the extinguishment of the Indian title in 1833, the land comprising Sheboygan County became a part of the public domain and belonged to the national government. With public lands practically gone to-day, their influence upon the life and times of a hundred years ago is but little understood. The opportunity of acquiring these lands for a mere song, as it were, was the great attraction that drew the vast tide of home seekers to this section of the country.

Before the area could be thrown open to settlement, it had to be surveyed. Under the law, settlement rights could not be acquired in unsurveyed lands. The system adopted was the official rectangular system in vogue in the United States, in which the lands were laid out in ranges six miles wide and townships six miles square, and each of the latter subdivided into thirty-six sections of a mile square and containing 640 acres. These sections were further divided into half, quarter, eighth and sixteenth of sections.¹

General References: *A History of the Public Land Policies*, by Benjamin H. Hibbard (1924); *The Public Domain*, by Thomas Donaldson (1884); *Vanguards of the Frontier*, by Everett Dick (1941).

¹ The rectangular system of land survey, probably devised by Gen. Rufus Putnam, an American army officer in the Revolutionary War, and recommended by a committee headed by Thomas Jefferson, was adopted by an act of Congress passed May 20, 1785, and is still in use. The official boundaries of Sheboygan County, as defined in the statutes, are based upon this system. Its principal features are the laying out of the land in rectangular subdivisions known as ranges, townships and sections, numbered in a standard manner. A range is a tier of townships lying between two consecutive meridian lines six miles apart; a township is an area six miles square within a range; and a section is a tract one mile square within a township. Range lines extend north and south, and town lines east and west, both at intervals of six miles, the range lines being parallel to the principal meridian and the town lines parallel to a so-called base line. The range lines, therefore, form the east and west boundary lines of each township. Ranges are numbered consecutively from 1 upward, beginning at the principal meridian; townships are likewise numbered consecutively from 1 upward, but beginning at the base line; and sections are numbered consecutively from 1 to 36, beginning with number 1 in the northeast corner of the section, and counting to 6 along the north side thereof, then with number 7 south of section 6, and continuing back to the east side of the township, and thus back and forth through the entire township, so that section 36 is in the southeast corner.

The principal meridian governing the survey of Sheboygan County is the 4th principal meridian, which begins in the middle of the channel at the mouth of the Illinois river in latitude 38°-58'-12" North and longitude 90°-29'-56"

The survey of Sheboygan County was conducted in two parts, each by a different set of surveyors. First the township boundaries were established, no lines being run inside the townships. These

West from Greenwich, and extends north through Wisconsin along the east line of Grant county. The base line was taken as the southern boundary of Wisconsin or the parallel of latitude 42°-30'. With these two principal lines as a basis, the whole of Sheboygan County was surveyed and laid out. Thus, for example, the towns of Scott, Mitchell, Greenbush and Russell are in Range 20 East, because they are in the twentieth tier of townships east of the principal meridian. Similarly, the next tier of townships to the east are in Range 21 East, and so on. Also, for example, the towns of Scott, Sherman and Holland are each given the designation Township 13 North, because they are in the thirteenth row of townships north of the base line. Similarly, the next row of townships to the north are each designated as Township 14 North, and so on. Thus, for instance, the description Township 13 North of Range 20 East readily distinguishes the town of Scott from any other town. Once understood the system is simplicity itself. Knowing the township, range and section number of any piece of land, one may easily locate it on the map. The system made it impossible for patents or titles obtained from the government to conflict; enabled settlers to easily locate their land; and prevented litigation over land ownership common in the colonial states where original boundaries were designated by irregular lines. A complete table of the towns in Sheboygan County, with their township and range numbers, follows:

	Township	Range		Township	Range
Greenbush -----	15-16	20	Rhine -----	16	21
Herman -----	16	22	Russell -----	16	20
Holland -----	13	22-23	Scott -----	13	20
Lima -----	14	22	Sheboygan -----	15	23
Lyndon -----	14	21	Sheboygan Falls --	15	22
Mitchell -----	14	20	Sherman -----	13	21
Mosel -----	16	23	Wilson -----	14	23
Plymouth -----	15	21			

A surveyor's township is not to be confused with a civil township or town. Usually the one is co-extensive with the other, but in some cases the latter is either larger or smaller than the former. A surveyor's township is six miles square, never larger, and if it happens to be smaller it is called a fractional township. Similarly, a section less than a square mile in area is called a fractional section. Special topographical and geographical conditions prevented the laying out in all cases of full surveyor's townships and sections in Sheboygan County. These factors were the irregular shore line of Lake Michigan, the "meandering" of the Sheboygan river and certain lakes, and the impassability of the Sheboygan marsh. Thus the towns of Mosel, Sheboygan and Wilson are fractional townships because their outer boundary lines could not be carried out in full on account of the indentations of the lake shore. Likewise, Russell is a fractional township. The situation of the Sheboygan marsh in the southern part of the township made it difficult for inhabitants living south of the marsh to have access to the rest of the town. Consequently this area was attached to the town of Greenbush, leaving Russell two-thirds and creating Greenbush one and one-third times the size of a surveyor's township. Holland is also larger than a surveyor's township. Its eastern part, Range 23 East, was too small to be erected into a separate civil town, and was therefore added to the town of Holland. Holland and Greenbush are the largest, and Russell and Mosel the smallest towns in the county. Only 9 of the 15 towns in the county are of standard size and form.

According to surveying rules, when any land borders on large streams or lakes, the shore lines are "meandered", and the property on either side of the body of water separately described, notwithstanding that it might otherwise be a part of the same subdivision. This involves a special survey, in which the

completed, the section or subdivisional lines were laid out, run from the points established by the township survey. The township or exterior survey was made during the last quarter of 1833 and the first quarter of 1834, jointly by two surveyors named John Mullet and John Brink. The subdivisional or interior survey was run during the last quarter of 1834 and the first half of 1835, the work in the northern towns being done by Nehemiah King, and in the southern towns by Hiram Burnham.² These surveyors, whose title was deputy surveyors-general, operated under contracts with the government, and acted under the supervision of the Surveyor-General of the United States, at Cincinnati, Ohio. Coming from outside the county, and having left again when their tasks were finished, not much is known about them.

To appreciate the difficulties the surveyors encountered, it must be remembered that the county was at that time a virgin wilderness covered with dense forest, without any roads or means of communication except rude Indian trails, and without any sign of white habitation or civilization in the entire district. They carried their surveying instruments, saddle-bags, blankets, tents and provisions on pack ponies, and camped out nights in the woods wherever their work might take them. But despite their unfamiliarity with the country, the roughness of the terrain, the obstruction to sight produced by the heavy growth of underbrush and timber, and guided only by simple compasses, the accuracy of their surveys has proven to be truly remarkable. Later surveyors have

survey lines follow the bends, indentations and irregularities of the bank or shore from one section or quarter section corner to the next. A tract so subdivided will necessarily have some irregular pieces which cannot be designated like an ordinary square or rectangular tract. These irregular tracts are termed government lots. The shores of Lake Michigan, and of Elkhart, Little Elkhart, Crystal, Bear and Random lakes are meandered, they being the only lakes in the county thus specially surveyed. The Sheboygan river is the only stream that is meandered, but only up to the west boundary line of the town of Sheboygan. The original government surveyors also meandered Sheboygan lake, a shallow body of water in the present Sheboygan marsh region. A resurvey of the area was made in 1850 by Gen. Albert G. Ellis, who subdivided it into sections and abolished the original meander lines.

² Original Government Survey of Sheboygan County; Deputy Surveyors; Dates of Surveys; as shown in plats and surveyors' field notes: Rhine, by Nehemiah King, Mar. 10-20, 1835; Herman, Neh. King, Feb. 25-Mar. 8, 1835; Mosel, Neh. King, Feb. 18-25, 1835; Plymouth, Neh. King, Dec. 24, 1834-Jan. 7, 1835; Sheboygan Falls, Neh. King, Dec. 14-23, 1834; Sheboygan, Neh. King, Dec. 3-12, 1834; Mitchell, by Hiram Burnham, May 20-29, 1835; Lyndon, H. Burnham, Apr.-May, 1835; Wilson, H. Burnham, Apr. 1835; Scott, H. Burnham, Mar. 22-30, 1835; Range 23, Holland, H. Burnham, Feb. 21-23, 1835; Russell, Neh. King, 2nd quarter, 1835; Range 22, Holland, H. Burnham, 1st quar. 1835; Sherman, H. Burnham, 1st. quar. 1835; Greenbush, Neh. King, 1st quar. 1835; Lima, H. Burnham, 2nd quar. 1835.

found but few errors in their data. It took about a week or ten days to complete the survey of a single township.

A surveying crew was ordinarily made up of five men—a compass man, a flagman or marker, two chainmen or chain carriers, and one or more axemen to clear the course of the line of obstructions. Besides establishing lines, boundaries, monuments and corners, the surveyors had to keep accurate field notes, jotting down in note books provided for the purpose, not only compass readings and measurements, but also unusual surface features and appearances, such as the bearing trees, hills, valleys, lakes, streams, wind-falls, dry prairies and Indian trails their survey lines passed over. In some cases they named lakes and streams, as for instance, Elkhart, Little Elkhart, Cedar, Bear and Random lakes, and the Sheboygan, Mullett, Onion and Memee rivers.³

The surveyors also had to put into their official notes a sufficient description of the interior of each section of land to be helpful to settlers, noting particularly the quality of soil, topography, and kind and quality of timber. Soil was designated as first, second or third rate. Topography was described as level, rolling, hilly, stony, swampy. Timber was listed as dense, thin, scrubby, poor; and in addition the leading kinds of trees were listed, such as elm, oak, pine, cherry, aspen, hazel and brier. Nehemiah King's notes are especially enlightening. At the end of his regular notes on each township he always gave his general impressions of the area sur-

³ The original surveyor's note books, and copies of the surveyor-general's maps of each township in Sheboygan County, are on file in the office of the Commissioners of the Public Lands in the State Capitol at Madison. Incomplete copies of the note books and maps are kept in the Register of Deeds office at Sheboygan.

TYPICAL ENTRIES IN SURVEYOR'S NOTE BOOK

North between Secs. 34 and 35

2.00 Elm	49.40 Left bank of creek
6.50 Enter tamarack swamp	50.00 Right bank of creek
18.20 Leave swamp	50.11 Indian trail N. W.
21.30 Brook	56.40 Hickory
24.78 Thorn.	60.22 W. birch
27.25 W. Oak	68.14 Lake or pond 5 chains W.
30.42 Ironwood	10 acres
33.16 Sugar	75.12 Beech
36.28 Linden	78.06 Summit of hill
40.00 Set $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. post	80.00 Section corner
44.64 Bl. Ash	

The figures to the left of the period indicate chains, and the figures to the right, indicate links. There are 80 chains in a mile, and 100 links in a chain. Sugar means sugar maple tree; and thorn, thornapple tree.

veyed, including the natural water supply and possible mill sites.⁴ Blazing their way along parallels one mile apart, the surveyors were able, where the timber was not too dense, to look into each square mile of land from all four sides, in addition to what they actually traversed in running their lines. The information so recorded was of value to prospective purchasers, who could procure from the land office a transcript of the surveyor's notes on any given township to guide them in selecting their land. The law also required the deputy surveyors to include in their field notes a rough

⁴ Neh. King's notes on the town of Herman:—"In addition to the remarks upon the several sections contained in the foregoing field notes, it may be said that this is a good Township of land. Although the Terms Marsh and swamp often occur, it is to be understood that neither of them are so bad as not to be susceptible of cultivation by draining—an operation which will be resorted to after the dry lands are brought into use. The most of them will make fine grass land. There is a considerable quantity of good white pine between the Memee and Sheboygan River. Either of these streams afford Mill sites equal in number to the future wants of the country. Nearly every section is abundantly watered by them or their tributaries. The Township appears not to abound in Rock—but a good supply may be had in the beds of the streams. The land is sufficiently level; but not so much so that the water is rapidly drained off. Fine sugar groves abound; and the swamps will afford a good supply of Ash for fencing. For this use they will be of value. The water is of good quality, although it is believed to be moderately saturated with Lime. It is now March, and although somewhat cold, it is, in the whole, agreeable weather. As I have several times remarked before, nothing can exceed the mellow and beautiful tints of the atmosphere—and in the night time the brilliancy of the stars. There is not much cloudy weather—nor any or very few strong currents of air. No country that I have ever seen exceeds or equals it in these respects. These remarks may not be of much value—they would however be otherwise to me were I ever to become a settler here. March 9th, 1835."

Neh. King's notes on the town of Sheboygan:—"From appearances here was, at a period gone by, a large Indian town. It is now reduced to a few Wigwams. The River is well stored with fish—passing up it at a distance of half a mile the bottom land begins and extends up it, on each side, about two miles—varying in width from 50 to 100 rods. There the Indians cultivate and grow a considerable quantity of Indian corn, potatoes, etc. The soil is of the first quality. Farther up, the river becomes of less depth and is rapid. I have meandered it to the west line of the township. From its magnitude I judged it is (thus) far Navigable. This is but a little below the Falls in the next township. There is considerable White pine timber, greatest in quality near the River. The most of it is large and very fine. The Saw-Mill, built on Section 28 (noticed in the Field-book) is in operation and doing good business—It is now producing and will continue to produce a considerable destruction of the valuable timber in its vicinity. The Sugar trees abound in great abundance. The Indians manufacture Sugar from them in considerable quantities. December 15th, 1835. From the mouth of this River an important intercourse with the south end of Lake Winnebago and to the west of that place will be established at no very distant day. The ground is favorable for building a road. At that place (The Fond du Lac) it will intersect with the road from Milwaukee, Green Bay and the Portage between the Fox and Wisconsin rivers. The climate is fine and to all appearances healthy. No country that I have ever seen is better supplied with Water; and Water power applicable to all the purposes of supplying human wants, is found at a short distance; both on the Shaboweeagan and Memee. The Memee is sufficiently large for Mills and affords good sites."

topographical sketch, and the surveyor-general had to protract a map or tract of each township surveyed. These maps indicate that they were filed in the surveyor-general's office Sept. 14, 1835.

Serving as the advance guard of settlement, no sooner had the surveyors completed their work, than the government proceeded to dispose of the lands. This was done pursuant to the Public Land Law of 1820. The keynote of the land policy of the government at that time was liberality, the object being to induce early and rapid settlement. Lands were sold in tracts of 80, 160, 320 or 640 acres each, so that as small a sum as \$100 was sufficient to buy an adequate farm. Sales were made at public auction to the highest bidder at a minimum price of \$1.25 an acre; and payments had to be in cash at the time of sale. No credit was extended.⁵ Under the law in effect from 1800 to 1820 the minimum price of government land had been \$2.00 an acre, one-fourth to be paid at the beginning and the rest in installments spread over several years; but this method, proving unsatisfactory, was supplanted by the act of 1820. Each sale lasted two weeks, and was "proclaimed" by the President not less than three nor more than six months beforehand. Sales were conducted at the nearest United States land office, located at Green Bay under an act of Congress passed June 26, 1834, but later removed to Menasha.

Not all the lands in the county were offered for sale at one time, but were disposed of in installments extending over a period of years. The lands along Lake Michigan as far back as Sheboygan Falls, on both sides of the Sheboygan river as far up as the Sheboygan marsh, and on both sides of the United States road crossing the county from north to south, were the first to be sold; and then the less accessible lands in the back-country were put upon the market; until by 1860 most of the desirable government lands were in private hands.

Nor were the public lands sold in large single tracts; they were scattered about in such a way that it was difficult to buy more than a quarter or half section in one body. This was to curb to some extent the activities of land speculators, a class of men who made it a practice to bid in as much as possible of the lands that were considered valuable, for the sole purpose of making profits. These speculators were for the most part persons of means living down east, with no intention of settling on or cultivating the lands they acquired. They bought to sell them again at advanced prices, usually

⁵ U. S. Stats. at Large, III, p. 566.

to actual settlers. Sales during 1835 and 1836 were in large measure made to speculators.

The land speculators exercised quite an influence in the development of the county. Like mining prospectors in the far west at a later time, they or their agents roamed the county in considerable numbers, ahead of settlers, seeking out the best lands—and bought them up at the land sales, for the purpose of offering them in turn at an advance to bona fide colonizers. To stimulate purchasing they advertised in eastern and foreign newspapers, circulated pamphlets, interviewed prospective buyers back east, importuned immigrants upon arrival at boat landings and hotels, guided them on trips of inspection, and in every way sought to encourage sales. It is doubtful whether the country would have been settled so fast except for the speculators.

And yet these gentry, not entirely without reason, were the targets of the bitterest attack and opprobrium. "Land pirates", "land grabbers", and "claim jumpers" were epithets commonly applied to them. Not only were they apt to forestall actual settlers by picking the best locations, but they could bid more at the public auctions, thus driving up the cost of land. They likewise frequently exacted exorbitant prices, far above the government price, before they would sell. Horace Greeley, in his New York Tribune, scathingly branded speculators as "a blight and a scourge", and speculation as "a pestilent calling." In the long run they probably were an impediment rather than a help to settlement.

Popular resentment against speculators rapidly grew to such proportions that settlers banded themselves together to circumvent what they believed to be an invasion of their undoubted rights. They considered that they were entitled by nature to a portion of the soil of the country, and that it was largely their efforts and expenditures that gave value to the land, and contributed to the up-building of the community. Attending government sales *en masse*, they discouraged bidding by others by show of force, if necessary, and likewise kept them from examining property, so that it was unsafe for an outsider to try to acquire land occupied by a homeseeker ahead of the public sale or wanted by him. At the same time the settlers agreed among themselves not to bid against each other. When, as occasionally happened, a speculator did succeed in overbidding a luckless settler, he was apt to find himself roughly handled by the crowd, even to the extent of being given a ducking in a nearby pond, or forced by threats of lynching to relinquish his rights by signing a warranty deed in the presence

of a handy justice of the peace, and taking a solemn oath that it was his "voluntary act and deed."

In some parts of Wisconsin the inhabitants formed so-called "claim associations" or "protective associations" for mutual assistance in such matters, but the writings of the time do not indicate the existence of any such formal organizations in Sheboygan County. Probably the movement here went no farther than a common understanding that it was to the interest of bona fide settlers to thus cooperate. A speculator to them was an interloper and a thief, with no rights worthy of being respected. One result of the practice was that bids were rarely above the minimum of \$1.25 per acre, no matter how desirable the land or numerous or keen the bidders. President Jackson in his annual message of 1837 reported that in the United States as a whole land sales for the period from 1820 to 1837 had not averaged six cents an acre above the minimum price.

Prior to 1841 the law operated to the advantage of the speculator. It was illegal for anyone to occupy government lands before they were sold at public sale. The clamor for land was so pressing, however, that settling on these lands without permission became a common custom everywhere on the frontier. To have stopped it would have been impossible. Wherever land was expected to be brought into the market, land-hungry home-seekers, obedient to the "unwritten law of the west" occupied or "squatted" on any vacant or unappropriated tracts suitable to their purpose or fancy, fully expecting that Congress would sooner or later grant them the first right to buy, and relying in the meantime on the truth of the old adage that "possession is nine points of the law". In this attitude they were not actuated by lawless motives, but from the sincere conviction that, once settling down, building a home, and starting to clear the timber, they had a natural right to be exempted from competition by usurping speculators at auction sales. Naturally there sprang up a strong agitation for pre-emption laws to protect their rights, which resulted finally in the passage by Congress on Sept. 4, 1841, of a general pre-emption law, giving to every person in actual possession of land without authority, who had improved it, and had or would erect a dwelling house on it, the prior right to purchase 160 acres at the minimum price of \$1.25 an acre without the necessity of bidding for it at any public land sale. Although



it is impossible to determine at this late date how much land in Sheboygan County was obtained by pre-emption, it was undoubtedly considerable. A later law, even more favorable to settlers, the Homestead Act, under which one who lived on a piece of land five years received it free, was passed in 1862;⁶ but practically all the government land having been taken by that time, it had little or no effect in the county.

Government lands were not all disposed of for cash. Some were conveyed in exchange for military bounty warrants. These warrants entitled the holder to 160 acres of land free. They were given for a two-fold purpose—as an inducement to men to enlist in the armed forces of the nation, and as a reward for past military service. By act of Congress in 1847 they were first offered only to soldiers who had fought in the Mexican War, but by later acts passed in 1855 and 1856 they were enlarged to include every branch of the service in any war of the United States as far back as the War of the Revolution. In the beginning these land warrants were not supposed to be transferable, but speculators found ways to get around the law. In 1848 the *Sheboygan Mercury* editorialized, "Were the original owners themselves to settle and cultivate the unoccupied lands in our Territory, the result could not but be in the highest degree beneficial, both to the territory and to the settler. But as it is, advantage is taken of the discharged soldier by the Land Speculator, who purchases his warrants at a shave of from thirty to fifty per cent and many times at even a greater discount, and thus not only the soldier is defrauded of a great share of the pittance which he received for exposing his life to the tender mercies of an inhospitable climate, in an aggressive war, but large quantities of the warrants are accumulated in the hands of these speculators, who have entered thousands of acres in our own and adjoining counties, and the actual settlement and consequent prosperity of these counties cannot but be materially retarded thereby." In 1852 the warrants were made assignable; and thereafter they fell more than ever into the hands of speculators, to further aggravate the universal feeling against this already feared and hated class. Numerous examples of lands acquired by military bounty warrants are contained in the Register of Deeds records in Sheboygan.

Besides the regular public lands was another type known as school lands, which comprised the whole of section 16 in every

⁶ U. S. Stats. at Large, XII, p. 392.

township in the county. These lands, however, were owned and sold by the state rather than the national government. Aug. 6, 1846, Congress passed an enabling act "to enable the people of Wisconsin Territory to form a constitution and state government, and for the admission of such State into the Union". Section 7 of the act provided, "That section numbered sixteen, in every township of the public lands in said State . . . shall be granted to said State for the use of schools". Consequently, when Wisconsin was admitted to the Union in 1848, the title to section 16 in each township became vested in the State. Art. X, sec. 7 and 8, of the state constitution provided that all school lands should be sold after they were appraised, under the control of the commissioners of public lands, consisting of the secretary of state, state treasurer and attorney general. Under a law passed Feb. 9, 1850, three appraisers were appointed in each county to fix the fair price of school lands in the county in 40 acre tracts.⁷ Sales were conducted at the county seat to the highest bidder, but no sales were permitted below the appraised valuation. Pre-emption rights in 160 acres were allowed to settlers paying the appraised value, but in no case less than \$1.25 an acre. Sales commenced May 1, 1850.

Another class of public lands were the so-called swamp lands. Like the school lands, they originally belonged to the federal government, but they were donated to the state pursuant to the Swamp Land Act of Sept. 28, 1850, entitled, "An act to enable the State of Arkansas and other States to reclaim the 'Swamp Lands' within their limits."⁸ Altogether there were 9773.07 acres of swamp land in Sheboygan County coming within the terms of this law, located principally in the region of the Sheboygan marsh, although there were smaller scattering tracts in the towns of Mitchell, Lyndon, Scott, Sherman, Holland, Rhine and Mosel.⁹ The state legislature, by a law enacted Oct. 11, 1856, placed these lands under the control of the Commissioners of School and University Lands, consisting of the Secretary of State, State Treasurer and Attorney General, who, under the law, disposed of them to private purchasers at a minimum price of \$1.25 an acre to pre-emptioners, and \$5.00 an acre to all others.¹⁰ The federal government, in donating these swamp lands had declared the purpose to be to "reclaim said lands by means of levees and drains"; but this object was ignored and

⁷ Chap. 236, Laws of 1850.

⁸ U. S. Stats. at Large, IX, p. 519.

⁹ Certificate of Gov. Coles Bashford of Wis., recorded in Vol. 2 of Deeds, p. 307, Reg. of Deeds office, Sheboygan.

¹⁰ Laws of Wis., 1856, chap. 125.

defeated, and the proceeds used for almost every purpose except that intended by Congress.

The settlers who acquired lands in Sheboygan County were not wealthy or aristocratic people, but ordinary, hard-working folk, who wanted only land enough to give them a fair opportunity to make their way in life by their own exertions. In the disposal of the public lands, the policy of the government was to subordinate revenues from this source to settlement and development of the country. As a result of this policy, the county became a section where men owned their own homesteads and operated their own farms, and where small, family-size farms rather than large ones were universal. While the settlers got their land initially for little money, when all the effort they put into their farms to make them habitable and productive is considered, the price they paid was high enough.

CHAPTER 8

THE COMING OF THE PEOPLE

BUFFALO, New York, was the great jumping-off place for most of the immigrants intending to settle in Sheboygan County.

From this bustling western terminus of the Erie canal, and the New York and Erie railroad, two routes of travel stretched toward the west—the water route by way of the Great Lakes, and the land route around the south side of the lakes.¹ No railroad lines had as yet pushed beyond Buffalo. Reaching that point by canal boat or train, vast multitudes crowded on board steamships or sailing vessels for the long trip up the lakes. It was the favorite route followed by immigrants from foreign shores, who, forced to leave all but their most necessary personal effects at home, lacked the vehicles and equipment to make the arduous overland journey to their destination.

Connecting the Hudson river at Albany with Lake Erie, the Erie canal for many years served as the main artery of traffic between the Atlantic seaboard and the interior of the country. Its influence upon the settlement of Sheboygan County and the entire west was tremendous. Construction began in 1817 and was completed in 1825. As originally built, the canal was 364 miles long, 40 feet wide at the surface, 28 feet wide at the bottom, and 4 feet deep; and had 83 locks to overcome a difference in elevation of nearly 700 feet between its eastern and western ends. Fostered by Gov. De Witt Clinton, skeptics at the start dubbed it "Clinton's Big Ditch", but when it became an assured success it was proudly referred to as "The Grand Canal." Although it was a common highway open to anyone to transport goods on it, the bulk of the carrying was done by persons who made it their regular business.

Boats operating on it were of three types: line boats, packet boats, and freight or cargo boats. Line boats were low-fare passenger boats designed to transport emigrants going west. Accommodations were much poorer than in first-class passenger packets; the boats were slower; and the fare was cheaper, being about 1½¢ a mile compared to 3 or 4 cents on the packets. Line boats covered 45 to 50 miles a day and made the trip one way in 7 or 8 days, as

¹ Immigration Routes to Wisconsin, by Chester Lloyd-Jones, B. L. Thesis Univ. of Wis. (1902), State Hist. Library, Madison.

against packets, which made 80 to 100 miles a day, and completed the trip in 3½ days. A speed of more than 4 miles an hour was prohibited to prevent erosion of the banks by the waves. The boats were long, narrow devices of shallow draft, expressly built for canal traffic, and hauled by teams of horses hitched to them by means of long towlines, the horses traveling upon the towpath running along one side of the canal.

Life as a passenger on a canal boat was no easy pastime. When not out on deck or walking along the towpath beside the boat, the travelers had to spend their time in the cabin, a single long, narrow room that served as a combined living, dining and sleeping room. Meals, as a general rule indifferently prepared, were eaten on a long table set lengthwise in the cabin. Upon retiring, the table was removed, and narrow, shelf-like berths, looking like so many hanging book-shelves, were put up to serve as beds. The sleeping space reserved for women was shut off by a drawn curtain. Washing accommodations were simple. Ablutions were performed on deck. Water for cleansing purposes was dipped from the dirty canal. The deck was small. Most of the space was devoted to baggage, bedding and household goods, leaving but little room for walking or lounging. Bridges over the canal were numerous. Whenever the steersman called "bridge" those on deck had to bend low, and whenever he cried "low bridge" they had to lie nearly flat. But this mode of traveling was not without its compensations. The serene, peaceful country-side, the slowly changing panorama of scenery, the lazy motion of the boat, the absence of any noise or sound except the hoof-beats of the straining horses, the commands of their drivers, the rippling of the water as the boat calmly glided on, were sights and sensations remembered long after the discomforts and tedium of the journey were forgotten.

The lake trip from Buffalo to Wisconsin on the slow-moving sail vessels and steamers of the day often took three weeks to a month, and sometimes longer, depending on the wind and weather. The number of people who found their way by this route to Sheboygan alone is almost incredible. Between May 1st and December 1st, 1853, according to T. J. Townsend, immigration agent for Wisconsin, 13,400 immigrants were landed at Sheboygan and Port Washington; and in 1854 the number of passengers disembarking at Sheboygan was 20,914.² During the 1850's, when the stream of newcomers was at its height, Sheboygan presented much the ap-

² Report of Michael Lynch, Deputy Collector, Sheb. Lake Journal, Nov. 8, 1854 and Jan. 2, 1855.

pearance of a western mining camp in the days of the discovery of gold.

Other thousands of migrants, mostly settlers from the eastern states, chose the land route below the lakes as their pathway to the west. It enabled them to take along more of their worldly possessions to ease their start in their new homes in the wilderness. Vehicles of every description, from light two-wheeled carts to big, clumsy Pittsburgh or Conestoga wagons, were to be seen along the way in seemingly never-ending procession. One observer counted as many as 250 wagons moving west in a single day along the south shore of Lake Erie.³ It was the day of the "covered wagon." Over the wagons were large wooden arches covered with canvas to keep out the sun and rain. People from the same neighborhood usually traveled together in one wagon-train for mutual help and company on the long, tedious trip. Viewed from a distance, a white-canopied caravan creeping slowly along looked like a line of huge sunbonnets on wheels.

The wagons were drawn by two yokes of oxen or teams of horses. In the wagons the women and younger children found room among the food supplies, tools, implements and household goods; while the men and older boys rode in front or behind on horseback, or trudged along beside the conveyance, goading the oxen or herding the loose livestock before them. Included in the load, carefully packed so as to occupy as little room as possible, were tools such as axes, saws, hammers, augers; implements such as plows, shovels, hoes, forks; food such as flour, bacon, beans, sugar, coffee, salt, yeast; utensils such as kettles, pots, pans, cutlery, dishes; seeds for the first planting; and such prized family possessions as chest, bureau, linens, clock, bedstead, chair, spinning wheel. In addition, a hog or two, and a few chickens, were usually to be found penned in crates attached to some part of the wagon.

Progress was slow. The roads were bad. Frequent stops had to be made to rest the animals. The distance traveled each day averaged 15-25 miles. When night came the travelers camped at the roadside, selecting a place where wood and water were plentiful and the grass good for the livestock. Here they would kindle a fire and cook their meals in the open air. After supper they would gather around the fire, telling stories, recounting the experiences of the day, and talking of home. When the time came to retire they

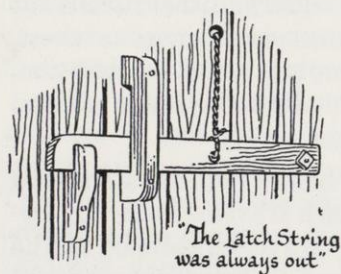
³ Wis. Mag. Hist., v, 389.

would spread their beds on top of the goods in the wagon and soon drop off to dreamless sleep.⁴

Their long journey finally ended, the newcomers' first task was to find a suitable location for a home. When they started out they usually had only a vague idea of where they were going to settle. The head of the family sometimes made a preliminary trip to select a satisfactory place, and then sent for the others, or went back to get them. Large numbers of single men went west to work, doing jobs like farm labor, teamstering, clerking, book-keeping, surveying and teaching, until they had accumulated enough money to acquire a farm or set themselves up in business, and then returned back east to take a boyhood sweetheart for bride. Many homeseekers were guided to their choice of location by the reports and tales of others who had preceded them. The natural tendency was for people from the same original locality, and especially for friends and relatives, and persons of the same racial group or religious faith, to settle in the same neighborhood. This accounts for the various colonies or settlements of people in Sheboygan County, as for instance, the Lippers in the town of Herman, the Irish in the town of Mitchell, and the Hollanders and Luxemburgers in the town of Holland. The county is unique in the unusually large number of nationalities and racial groups that go to make up its population.

Everybody went west because of dissatisfaction with conditions under which they had lived and to improve their station in life. Cheap lands, and the chance to grow up with a new country, was the lodestone that drew them on.

Why should one stay tied down to a bench or a few unprofitable acres in the settled parts of the country, or among the crowded hedge-rows of Europe, condemned to a life of suppression, when the gates of opportunity out yonder stood ajar? The lure of the west, with its promise of freedom and independence, was irresist-



able. It was a time of optimism, buoyancy, expanded ideas, and unbounded confidence in the future. This spirit is reflected in an enthusiastic editorial appearing in the Sheboygan Lake Journal,

⁴ A Wagon Journey from Ohio to Wisconsin in 1846, by Sarah Foote, Wis. Hist. Soc. Proc. 1911, p. 188.

February 13, 1855, entitled, "Westward The Star of Empire Takes Its Way:"

"The West is large enough for all who may seek a home upon her broad bosom. She has food enough, and more than enough, for all. From the fact that Wisconsin has been blessed with successive good crops for the last few years—in that respect comparing favorably with other Western States—and also from its well known healthiness of climate, we predict that this State will have a larger emigration from the Eastern States the coming season than she has ever had before. That every man of enterprising character and industrious habits will derive great benefit from the change, we have not the shadow of a doubt. In fact it has long been a mystery to us why it is that men of moderate means, who have the desire and capacity to succeed in life, should remain where they are, overpowered by the weight of individual and corporate wealth. The contest between poverty constantly struggling upwards and wealth as constantly pushing it down, is, under any circumstances, an unequal one. In some instances, it is true, the aspirant may reach the desired haven, but such cases are rare, and by no means make the rule.

"Lands at the East are held at so high a rate that the poor man, the mechanic, and the artizan, can hardly expect ever to be the owner of a solitary acre; and the story of every man sitting beneath his own vine and fig tree is to him a fable requiring the exercise of more faith than most men possess.

"To this class the West offers great inducements. The road to prosperity and riches is open to all, and no bloated wealth obstructs the way. Here every man of ordinary capacity, with industry and economy, may reasonably expect to attain success. Lands are cheap, and that large class known at the East as the 'landless' is here almost unknown. And then, with its fertile soil, its bright and genial sky, its healthy climate, its great lakes and mighty rivers, its unbounded enterprise, its laws and its customs, striving to aid instead of oppress the poor; and, perhaps, above all, that sense of freedom which is here individualized, and which elevates the feelings and causes the blood to course more freely in the veins, the Great West presents attractions unsurpassed by any other part of the habitable globe."

The Emigrant's Hand Book and Guide to Wisconsin, published by Samuel Freeman in 1851, and intended for distribution to immi-

grants upon arrival in New York, presents a similar pen picture of the attractions of the west:

"In America, a strong and constant tide of emigration is setting Westward. The bold young American of the North Eastern States chooses a helpmate, collects some clothing, takes up his rifle and hatchet, and trusting entirely to his own prowess, marches off in the direction of the setting sun. He commits himself and mate to the rivers, and penetrates more than a thousand miles into the heart of the western wilderness. There is something highly exciting and grateful to youthful daring and independence in travelling onward in search of a future home, and having found some sweet encouraging spot in the bosom of the wilderness, in rearing everything by his own handiwork."

Settlement in Wisconsin was not left entirely to chance; various plans were adopted to encourage immigration, especially among arrivals directly from Europe. In 1852 the state created the office of Commissioner of Emigration with headquarters in New York City, the principal port of entry. Advertisements setting forth the advantages of Wisconsin were run in foreign language newspapers, and free pamphlets, printed in various foreign languages, describing its resources and opportunities, were distributed among immigrants both here and abroad. Among these publications were translations of a booklet, "A Geographical Description of Wisconsin," (1844), written by Wisconsin's first scholar, Dr. Increase A. Lapham.

Strangers to our laws and customs, and speaking alien tongues, the friendless newcomers were frequently made the victims of sharpers and swindlers as soon as they set foot in this country. Unscrupulous runners swarmed the wharves and docks where immigrants landed, and often enticed them in flocks into cheap hotels, dives, saloons and boarding houses, keeping them there as virtual prisoners, fleecing them of their savings, and compelling them to leave for sections of the country where they never intended to go, despite the efforts of protective societies and respectable immigration agencies to obtain fair treatment for them. One immigrant forwarding agent is said to have employed no less than sixty of such runners. In 1853 Thomas J. Townsend was appointed a traveling immigration agent to work between Wisconsin and New York helping homeseekers to come to this state. In 1855 the office of emigration commissioner was discontinued, but in 1867 a Board of Immigration was established, which was succeeded by a

Commissioner of Immigration in 1871. Many a forlorn and helpless foreign family owed their choice of a home in Sheboygan or surrounding counties, and protection from the hazards of their journey here, to the counsel and guidance of these and similar agencies.⁵

⁵ Report of State Commissioner of Emigration for 1852, by Gysbert Van Steenwijk; The Competition of the Northwestern States for Immigrants, by Theodore C. Blegen, Wis. Mag. Hist. iii, 3; Emigration and Immigration, by Richmond Mayo-Smith (1908).

CHAPTER 9

PIONEER LIFE AND CUSTOMS

THE pioneer's most immediate need was shelter; and to provide shelter he proceeded to clear a small space in the wilderness of obstructing timber, and erected a log cabin for himself and his family. Until the cabin was ready for occupancy he lived temporarily with some nearby hospitable neighbor, or in a frail camp hastily constructed out of poles, brush and leaves. In constructing his house he was careful to choose only such logs as were straight and of proper size. When the felled trees had been chopped into the right lengths, the logs were rolled to the site selected, and laid horizontally, one upon another, and notched at the ends, so that they would fit well together. To fill up the chinks, moss or three-cornered wooden strips were wedged between the logs and covered with mortar or clay. After the walls were erected, openings were cut through the logs for door, windows, fireplace and chimney.

Most cabins were built with gable-roofs, the triangular spaces at the ends being closed with shorter logs or boards. Some cabins were of the lean-to type, with an unbroken roof-line, the back about $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet lower than the front, so as to give a sufficient slope. Roofs were made of pieces of bark, or of large shingles, known as shakes, or in many cases, of clapboards, held down by saplings fastened with wooden pegs. Peter Daane describes another kind of roof made of small logs split in two and hollowed out like troughs to allow the rain to run down. These were laid side by side, hollow side up, and over the cracks others were laid with the hollow side down, to shed the rain. There was not a nail in the entire house.

Floors were made of rough, uneven planks, $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 inches in thickness, cut from logs with a whip-saw or hewed with a broadax. At one end of the house, and often taking up the entire end, was a large brick or stone fireplace, that did triple duty for cooking, heating and lighting.¹ Fastened at one end of the fireplace was

¹ "Who now understands the essential 'building' of firewood in a fireplace? Who knows, for instance, that a backlog is not meant to burn; that it is to last, its object being to fill in the back of the fireplace to prevent cold air from the chimney settling and driving smoke into the room, and also to thrust forward the other wood so that the heat will be driven outward? Therefore a backlog, green and huge, was placed not on the andirons, for that would make a draft and help the log to burn, but flat on the ashes well against the chimney back. On top of this basic log another green log, somewhat smaller,

an iron crane, so fixed that it could be swung over the fire. From it were suspended the pots, kettles and pans used in cooking and baking. The Germans preferred the stove to the fireplace, and are credited with having introduced it in this country. In some of the better cabins the oven was built into the fireplace, but in many cases it was erected out-doors. Constructed of stones or bricks, a fire was kept going in it until it was thoroughly heated. Then the wood and ashes were swept out, the food to be baked pushed in by a long handled shovel, the door closed, and the oven left to do its work. Such ovens were claimed to produce sweeter and more wholesome bread. Another structure in the back yard of every home was the ash-hopper, a V-shaped container of boards, filled with wood ashes, from which lye was obtained for making soap, by pouring water over and allowing it to seep through the ashes. Sometimes an old salt-barrel, with holes in the bottom, served the purpose. In every yard, also, was a smoke house for curing meats and sausages. No farm was without an apple orchard and a few cherry trees.

The average cabin was seldom larger than 18 x 24 feet, and was a one-room, single story affair, with a windowless loft or attic directly under the roof, where the children usually slept. It was reached by wooden pegs driven into the logs, or by a rude ladder, as steep as a step-ladder, made by splitting small logs into halves and inserting rounds of small saplings. Pegs in the walls also furnished a convenient place to hang clothing. Above the fireplace was a mantel-board, supported on wall-pins, and holding the clock, family dishes and household utensils; and over the door hung the ever-present gun on hooks or a pair of deer-horns. Beds were built-in affairs, usually corded, the ropes stretched web-fashion and held by short upright wooden pins in the bed rails and end pieces. An ingenious device was the trundle bed, a low bed which could be slid under the parents' bed during the day and pulled out for the younger children to sleep on at night. Three-legged stools were a necessity, as four legs could not all touch the uneven floor

was piled. Next to be laid in its place well to the front, on the andirons, was the forestick. This, too, must not burn quickly, as its purpose was to hold the burning fuel in place. But the lastingness of the forestick must depend not on its greenness, for green wood smokes. The forestick was selected for hardness, then; hornbeam or 'ironwood' was best. In between backlogs and forestick the combustible wood was piled, any sort, so that it was well cured and not snappy. The hearth must have been brushed a hundred times a day with Grandma's turkey wing. ('A clean hearth is a clean room,' she used to say.)—Bertha Damon, *Grandma Called it Carnal* (1938) Quoted by permission of Simon and Schuster, Inc., New York, N. Y.

at the same time. Nearly all furniture was home-made, as many settlers came here empty-handed, and had to rely on their own ingenuity for their equipment. Early cabins were not noted either for warmth or comfort. They were smoke-grimed, drafty and badly ventilated. Built usually of green timber, after the wood had shrunk, cracks from one to two inches wide were left in the joints, through which the wind and weather freely played. A big fire was needed in the fireplace to keep even partly warm.

The log cabin was the standard house of the frontier. It was neither elaborate nor beautiful; no time was wasted on ornamentation. Standing in its little space of partially cleared land full of great unsightly stumps and tangles of felled tree trunks lying on the ground, it presented a dismal and unkempt appearance. But it had the artistic merit of harmonizing with its primitive surroundings. When the family grew, and more room was needed, the original structure was enlarged by adding a second story, or erecting an addition or wing. Sometimes a twin cabin was built, composed of two separate cabins, with a space between, roofed and floored, but

open at the sides, in which hung a miscellaneous assortment of articles of husbandry. The first addition, however, was most apt to be a lean-to built on the rear of the house and covered by an extension of the back roof. Resembling a huge salt-box, a distinctive style of architecture known as the salt-box or lean-to house was thus evolved. The extra



Log Cabin

rooms created were generally used for bed rooms, but the fireplace or common room continued to be a combined kitchen, dining room and living room. As the years passed and the family prospered, the original log cabin was likely to be torn down and a fine, commodious frame dwelling built. Sometimes the parents continued to live in the old habitation, while a son and his family occupied the new house. Frequently the cabin did long service as a summer kitchen, laundry or storage place. Relics of these early log cabins are not uncommon on farms even at this late day.

After the log cabins came the large frame, brick or stone houses still seen in the county to-day. As the settlers started to get ahead in the world, they vied with each other in expressing their prosperity in the size and pretentiousness of their buildings. Although the houses they built vary in details of design, according

the individual tastes of the original builders, in the main they follow only a few general forms. By far the commonest is the house with two rectangular sections joined together at right angles, one with the gable end and the other with the slope of the gable toward the front, the lateral wing adorned with a long stoop or porch along the front. This style is said to have been imported from rural New York, whence many of our settlers emigrated. Another shape is the square, box-like, two-story house with a cupola or balustraded enclosure at the peak of the roof. Some believe that this superstructure was built as a vantage point for observing the approach of Indians; but it was purely decorative here, having been adopted from New England where ship owners and captains felt the need of an elevated place from which to watch for vessels returning home from their long voyages at sea. Still another type is usually found on the slope of a hill, with one side one story high and the other two stories, and built over a spring of water. Its purpose was not to ensure a supply of water in case of attack by the Indians, as some think, but to provide a cooling-place for milk, butter, meat and vegetables. The kitchen, as well as the spring room, was located in the basement, the living- and bed- rooms upstairs. In most cases, however, where there was a spring, it was not in the house itself, but somewhere outside in the yard, covered by a small shed called a spring house.

Like the west as a whole, the county in early times was a young man's country. The aged and dependent were almost wholly lacking. A man fifty years of age was considered an old man. The general exodus of youth seriously depleted the man-power of many eastern centers. Life on the frontier was strenuous, and tested the mettle of those who challenged it. The weak and faint-hearted succumbed; only the hardy and courageous survived. Unable to keep up the struggle, many went to their graves in the prime of life. This is curiously illustrated by the large number of men and women who married a second, third, and even fourth time; and by the number of mixed families of children—step- and half- and full-brothers and sisters. In the economy of the early household both man and wife were indispensable, and when one died prematurely another was taken on to fill the vacant place.

The rugged, out-door life of the settlers and the invigorating climate created a high level of health in the community. "Fever and ague", the plague of new regions farther south, was unknown here. And yet the lack of hygiene and sanitation, and of a varied and balanced diet, coupled with the woeful scarcity and want of

skill of doctors, the popular faith in home cures and remedies, and the widespread belief in spells and charms to drive off disease, carried off great numbers of persons to untimely graves. Many women died during child-birth, and many children died at birth or in infancy. Typhoid, diphtheria, scarlet fever, chicken pox, small pox, consumption, measles and mumps were the most common diseases, and were quite generally considered unavoidable. Plants of peppermint, pennyroyal, smartweed, wormwood, catnip, sage and plantain; roots of ginseng, mandrake, jack-in-the-pulpit, burdock and bloodroot; and the bark of slippery elm, wild cherry and prickly ash—all native to this region—were regularly garnered and used to effect all manner of cures. Every household had a liberal assortment of dried herbs and remedies always on hand, usually hung in the attic. Goose grease covered with a freshly worn stocking was supposed to be good for sore throat; a poultice of scraped potatoes, for burns; an old shrivelled potato carried in the pocket, skunk oil, and the stinging of bees, for rheumatism; a red string tied around the neck, for nosebleed; the blade of a large knife pressed against the affected area, to reduce bruises; a chew of tobacco or a wad of spider webs, to prevent bleeding of open wounds. And so on.

But the strangest of all the early attempts to ease sickness or suffering in humans and animals was the art of "hexerei" or "witching". The belief in "hexing" was prevalent mainly among the Germans and Hollanders, it being an inheritance from the old country; but not even the Yankees scoffed at it entirely. Based on the theory that the victim was under the spell of a witch or evil spirit, the cure was designed to drive away the baleful influence. Only a few favored individuals were supposed to possess the power to perform the mysterious feat, and frequently they were women. "Hex" stories are legion among the older inhabitants of the county; but a description of one of these performances by William Nell, an early German farmer in the town of Lyndon, will serve as an illustration. A neighbor's sick cow, that had refused to eat for several days, was the subject of Mr. Nell's ministrations. Assuming an air of vast mystery, he ran his fingers slowly and carefully over the animal from the tip of the nose and along the back to the very end of the tail, muttering a secret and unintelligible formula during the process. He did this three times. Within an hour after he had finished, it is asserted, the cow began to eat and appeared entirely well. "Hexing" was claimed to be founded on the 6th and 7th books of Moses. Knowledge of the art could be transmitted by

a man to a woman or by a woman to a man; but if imparted by a woman to a woman or by a man to a man the magic was lost.

Analogous to the "witching" described, was the method, still practiced at times, of determining where to dig or drill a well with the aid of a divining rod or "water-witching" outfit. It was called "witching" for water. The outfit was simple, consisting of a freshly cut, V-shaped bough from a water-loving tree or bush, such as alder, willow or witch-hazel. The operator grasped the forked ends tightly in his two hands, holding the crotch or point upright. Then he moved slowly forward. Presently the inverted V turned slowly down until it pointed straight down, and thus indicated the exact location of underground water. Not every one, it was claimed, could succeed at it. The theory was that a magnetic current flowed between the operator and the hidden water through the medium of the green branch.

The first settlers paid a heavy price to wrest a living in this new country for themselves and their families. Hardship, privation and danger were their ordinary lot; but they met the challenge with patience and grim courage. Peter Daane gives an interesting first-hand account of early hardships:

"Even for the money, provisions were not always to be had, and to buy anything on trust was not to be thought of. In those days real coffee was not indulged in, but a substitute was made out of browned rye or barley. Sugar was not to be had except maple sugar. I have known families who lived three weeks on nothing but white beans. The first greens that came out in spring were eagerly picked, not as a luxury, but for food. Never will I forget the time my father and myself traveled on foot to Sheboygan Falls, each with a bag, to buy provisions of whatever kind we could get. But there was nothing to be had for either love or money. G. N. Lyman had a small supply of middlings that my father tried to buy, but he said he could not spare them as it was all he had to feed his pigs on. So we were obliged to turn back with our empty bags, but on the way back father told his misfortune to Mr. Peter Palmer, near Gibbsville, and he, out of pity, sold us some corn meal. Father thanked him heartily and we trudged home, rejoicing under the load. Things which we would not carry half a mile now were then carried to Sheboygan, a distance of 12 to 15 miles. On one arm a basket of butter with 12 to 15 pounds, and on the other arm a basket with so many dozens of eggs, were traded out, for in those days it was always paid in store trade, and on the same afternoon the same baskets filled again, were carried back home. Not

alone the men, but also the women, carried heavy loads that distance, and were contented and happy as long as they had enough to eat, such as it was."²

Bille Williams, at the 6th annual gathering of the Pioneer Association, related this incident in the early life of Jacob Reis, of the town of Scott, as told to him by Mr. Reis:

"The first winter he was so poor that he had nothing but buckwheat flour for himself and wife to live on. In the spring he made 75 lbs. of maple sugar and carried it on his back to Milwaukee in one day. He procured with it such needed supplies as he could, and started home with them on his back and five cents in his pocket. Ten miles out, tired and hungry, he stopped at a hut and asked for two cents worth of bread. The woman, on learning the reason for his asking for so small an amount, gave him a full dinner without cost."³

N. S. Goodell, who lived with his parents on the Plymouth road, was fond of recounting this incident in his boyhood:

"On Monday morning father started out for the mouth of the Pigeon river to join a colony of settlers, with the idea of getting some flour, as we were all out. He stopped at Lyman's store at the Falls and bought six barrels, and ordered one sent out to the farm immediately, but in some way his orders were not carried out. As Mr. Lyman was out of flour he informed father that he would borrow a barrel and send it out, and the five would follow later. While father was away, thinking we had flour, we spent an entire week living on salt pork and wild onions. All of our neighbors were in the same straits waiting for the flour, as we had agreed to furnish them with this commodity. Finally mother becoming desperate sent me to the Falls, a distance of five miles, to meet father. In some manner we missed connections at the Falls. However, he secured the flour and continued on home. When father arrived at home four or five of the neighbors had gathered to get some flour. He knocked the head out of the barrel and proceeded to distribute the flour among them. All were invited to remain for supper and mother made a quantity of biscuits, and we would break them off, and it kept one person busy nearly all of the time breaking off the biscuits. The supper consisted of fresh biscuits, salt pork, gravy and butter."⁴ Reinhold LaBudde tells of his mother and her family of children living an entire winter on white acorns pounded into meal.

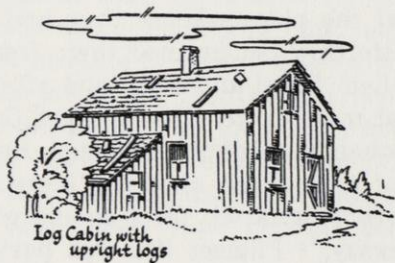
² Sheb. Herald, Feb. 6, 1892.

³ Sheb. Times, Feb. 8, 1873.

⁴ Sheb. Press, Jan. 16, 1915.

Danger in many forms lurked in the thick gloom of the forest. A frontiersman's body might be crushed beneath a falling tree, an axe slip and cut deeply into his flesh, or a gun accidentally discharge into his frame. And when this happened, no medical or surgical care was ordinarily available. Bears prowled in the wild berry patches. Hungry wolves skulked in the woods or along the trails. In the dead of winter they sometimes came in packs to the doorways and had to be frightened away by throwing fire-brands among them. There was always the hazard of getting caught in a storm or lost in the woods. One February morning George Koch left home about four miles south of Sheboygan and went to town to buy an axe handle. Returning in a raging blizzard, he apparently became bewildered and lost his way. His footprints seen later in the snow indicated that he left the road to avoid the huge snow-drifts and walked in circles. The next morning the Johann Meggers family discovered his stark, frozen body in their yard, kneeling in the snow, his arms wound around a post, and the axe handle still in his hands. Two Lippers, lost in the town of Herman, only a mile from home, came to the bank of the Sheboygan river, and had to follow the course of the stream through the dense forest all the way to Sheboygan Falls before they knew where they were. Cattle sometimes strayed miles away from home, and those who went to hunt them frequently got lost themselves. The woods often resounded with the halloing of lost cattle-hunters, and of those directing the hunters back home. Peter Daane tells an amusing story of a man who got lost in the woods while leading his stray cow home. Tying the cow to a tree, he went ahead to get his bearings. Upon returning to fetch the animal, he found that it had tugged so hard at the rope that he could not untie the knot. Without a knife to cut the rope, he decided to shoot it in two, but instead, shot and killed the cow. In the town of Herman a man and his wife became lost in the wilderness while in search of their cows, and had to sit all night between the roots of a large pine tree before they were rescued.

The Indians, remnants of which remained in the county for years, were never fully trusted, and were regarded as a potential danger. They were suspected of murdering Asenath Briggs, the wife of J. W. Briggs, in 1846. On the morning of May 6th she left



home to go to a neighbor's cabin a half mile away, taking with her a pail and a wooden measure to get some milk and meal, and leaving her little son with her disabled husband. She was never seen again alive. The alarm was spread among the scattered settlers, who followed her tracks for some distance to the north, but after days of fruitless search all hope was abandoned. Weeks afterward word was brought by some Indians that they had found her remains in the big bend of the Sheboygan river in Manitowoc county. Several settlers went to the spot, and found the skull severed from the trunk, her shawl under the body, her clothing spread over her, and the pail and measure standing near by. The incident cast a pall of terror over the country-side.⁵

More fearsome than the physical dangers the pioneer men and women faced was the terrible loneliness and isolation of their lives. It took courage of a high order to break old home ties and set themselves up anew in a strange, distant country, where friends and neighbors were few and far between, and even the bare necessities of life were often lacking. Especially at night, when the howling of wild beasts and the eerie cry of nocturnal birds broke the universal stillness, their hearts were filled with discouragement and fear, and they yearned for the happier, more comfortable days of the place whence they had come. Little wonder that the hard life they led drained their freshness and vigor of youth, and left them faded and worn and often broken down old men and women at middle age. This is what Grandma Cole must have referred to when, according to Sarah J. Bayley, she would comment upon news of each fresh arrival, "More fools!"; and Mrs. Bayley's mother often declared, "If I should give way to my feelings I should be crazy."⁶ Pioneer life was particularly hard on the women, many of them persons of culture and refinement.

The loneliness of their lives developed a spirit of neighborliness and mutual helpfulness among the early settlers, which was one of the pleasing characteristics of the frontier. It began with the building of the settler's cabin. Unable to roll and set the logs for his house unaided, neighbors for miles around—men and women—laid aside their own tasks at home, and gathered together in a happy crowd, to help him. Strong, willing hands fell to, laboring mightily with axes, saws, mauls, canthooks and pikepoles. Under the force of their combined efforts, log by log, the cabin grew, until in a day or two another modest home was established and another

⁵ Hist. of Plymouth, by Mrs. N. N. Smith, Sheb. Press, July 7, 1913.

⁶ "Sheboygan in '51," Milw. Sentinel, no date.

inroad made in the wilderness. Such an affair, following the fashion of the day, was made the occasion for a social gathering as well. While the men worked at their strenuous tasks, the women-folk were busily employed preparing the meals from such eatables as the circumstances afforded; and if the owner was not a temperance man the little brown jug circulated freely. The event was called a "raising bee," and was climaxed by a house-warming, a dance that lasted through the night, at which everybody had a good time. "Bees", combining useful merrymaking with employment, and pleasure with utility, were popular festivities of the time, that went far to relieve the monotony of life. Almost any form of activity was a suitable occasion for a "bee." There were logging, stump-pulling, road-making, stone, sugaring, spinning, quilting and husking "bees." They made tasks easier by cooperative effort. At husking bees the rule was that if a boy found a red ear of corn, he was privileged to kiss any girl he wished. Channing Mather, an old pioneer, observed, "When a girl saw a fellow coming toward her she would run, but just fast enough to allow him to catch her."⁷

Another example of neighborliness among the settlers was their universal habit of borrowing from each other. In a land where the very essentials of life were scarce at best, every man lacked some tools or implements or articles that his neighbors had; and when he needed something he did not hesitate to go and borrow it. The right to borrow was an unwritten law of the frontier. To have refused such a request would have been deemed an unfriendly act and cause for social ostracism. No one knew when he himself might have to borrow. Extracts from the diary of Abraham Laycock, a settler in the town of Scott in 1849, show how general the custom was:

"Rolled logs with Mr. Cleve's oxen . . . Burned logs all day . . . Lent Ray Wright my rifle . . . Went to Mr. Cleve's ashery to borrow a basket to get ashes in from the log heaps . . . James Morehouse came for his tools . . . Went to Israel Mangers to get a team to plow, stopped and hoed corn for him $\frac{3}{4}$ of the day . . . Went to Mrs. Hazelton's and ground my hoes . . . Went to Mrs. Hazelton's to see about getting her oxen to plow . . . Went to Mr. Cleve's to dig grave for his son John aged 3 years . . . William Hughes plowed all day for me with horse team . . . Went to meeting where they was trying to form a Baptist church . . . Mr. Frink dragged in oats on my land . . . Put Mrs. Hazelton's clock together and made it go, got some cabbage plants from her . . . Went to Mr. ——'s

⁷ Sheb. Press, Apr. 29, 1927.

rolling frolick . . . Made some brush fence . . . Got 2 bundles of straw from Mr. Graham to put in their bed . . . Richard sick of the scarlet fever, went to Israel Mangers and got some sage for him . . . Borrowed Mr. Adlebush's scythe and iron wedge . . . Borrowed Rufus Manger's cradle and cut my wheat . . . Bought one grass scythe at West Bend, paid \$1.00 . . . Went to Henry ——'s raising . . . Helped to dig Mrs. Graham's grave and dug up her child to bury with her in the same grave . . . Worked all day for Herman Hazelton at digging mill race . . . Went by Mr. Cleve's to get some wintergreen in Mr. Stanley's swamp . . . Borrowed 3 sap buckets . . . Worked all day at Mr. Blanchan's and made 186 rails at $37\frac{1}{2}\text{¢}$ per 100 . . . Lent Israel Mangers $36\frac{1}{2}$ lb. flour . . . Lent Mr. Cleve's $5\frac{1}{4}$ lb. meat . . . Had of Mr. Cleve's 1 gal. whiskey, 44¢ . . . Rolled logs for Mrs. Cleve's: 1 day— $62\frac{1}{2}\text{¢}$; $\frac{1}{2}$ day— $31\frac{1}{4}\text{¢}$; $\frac{3}{4}$ day—50¢."

Another pleasant trait of the pioneers was their open-natured hospitality, largely an outgrowth of the solitude and isolation of their lives. Travelers overtaken by nightfall or suffering misfortune on the road were sure of a hearty welcome at the nearest cabin, and of the best accommodations the house afforded. Visitors brought news of the outside world, and enlivened their humdrum existence. The latch string hanging on the outside of the door was an invitation to any passing stranger to walk in and make himself at home. Doors were never locked. Mrs. H. N. Smith gives a striking example of this hospitable spirit: In the fall of 1850 a family named Brown, consisting of an old couple and their two daughters, were making their way to the interior of the state. When they reached the top of Prospect Hill west of Plymouth, their wagon capsized, fracturing the old lady's leg. Alanson Treadwell took the unfortunate people into his home. Dr. Cary was called to set the injured limb. For four months the patient had to be constantly attended, day and night. Then the husband became sick and was confined to bed, so that there were two to attend instead of one. All this time the Treadwell's supported and cared for the strangers without thought of compensation or reward; and when they were able to travel again, they sent them onward to their destination.⁸

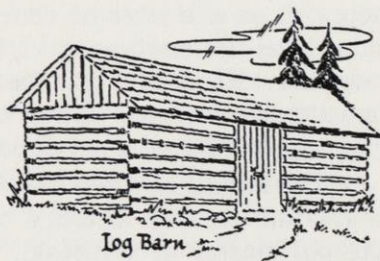
A noticeable feature of pioneer society was the prevalence of large families. Households of six or eight to twelve or more children were quite the rule. This was particularly true among the foreign-born settlers; the average Yankee families were considerably smaller. As in all undeveloped countries, children were an economic asset rather than a handicap—of invaluable aid in the

⁸ Sheb. Press, July 28, 1913.

task of carving a home and fortune out of the wilderness. The whole family joined in the common effort. Children did all the lighter work on the farm—and often not so light at that—such as feeding stock, fetching water, getting in wood, driving the team, cooling milk, turning the churn, the fanning mill, the feed cutter, and innumerable other tasks. There was little encouragement of play. Such a training, however, had the merit of developing habits of industriousness, self-reliance and daring, and explains why so many country boys who left the farm became leaders of commerce and industry, and in the professions, in the cities. Schooling was considered of secondary importance. School terms were commonly four months and seldom over six months long, and held during the winter months when farm work eased up a bit. As the family prospered, and the services of the children were less needed at home, the younger ones usually got a better education than had been afforded to their older brothers and sisters.

Among immigrants of foreign origin especially, the practice prevailed that parents were entitled to the services and earnings of their children until they became of age. There were but few instances of "emancipation" of minors. Older children who worked at home were given their clothing, board, room and washing, and a small amount of spending money; and those who worked out as hired hands or domestic servants had to bring their earnings home, receiving a small allowance for their personal use. Hired men were paid \$8-\$10 a month, and servant girls 50¢-80¢ per week. It was not until children were 21 years of age that they were allowed to be on their own. Some settlers obtained help on their farms by advancing the passage money to a poor relative or friend in the old country on the understanding that he was to work out the debt in his employ.

As the *paterfamilias*, the husband and father was the head of the household, and his word was law. Man and wife were one, and often that one the man. The word "obey" in the marriage ceremony was taken to mean exactly what it said. Children were supposed to be seen and not heard. Physical punishment was the recognized mode of correcting the misbehavior of children. Property division among children was not always equal. Boys were considered more important in the scheme of life than girls, and frequently



were given a decided preference in their inheritance. This inequality worked out fairly well in the long run, for the young man a girl married usually received similar consideration from his parents. Married life began early, for the bride was usually between 15 and 18 years old, and the groom 18 to 21. If a girl was still single at twenty-one, she was considered an "old maid." Another custom was for parents intending to retire from active work to convey their farm to a son on condition that the son would permit them to live in a portion of the house, or in a separate dwelling on the farm, and maintain them the remainder of their lives, and give them a good Christian burial after their deaths.

Cut off from the ordinary comforts and conveniences of civilization, the early settlers had to rely upon their own resources. Every family by force of necessity was a little world by itself, practically supplying every demand by its own efforts. Shearing sheep; carding, spinning, weaving, dyeing wool for clothing; knitting mittens, scarfs and stockings; tanning leather for boots, shoes and harnesses; fashioning tubs, pails and barrels; mending pots and pans; making axe handles, hoes, flails and furniture; molding tallow candles; butchering and canning; churning and cheese-making, were parts of the daily routine of every household, and accepted as a matter of course. Everyone was on practically the same level; no one was much higher in the economic scale than his neighbor. Naturally this produced an independent, self-reliant, inventive race of men and women, with a superb confidence in their own capabilities, and developed a spirit of equality and democracy.

The annals of the county abound with examples of pioneer resourcefulness. For instance, when Mrs. James Stone, the wife of the postmaster at Winooski, wanted to write home to her people in 1847, she had no pen or ink, and so she went out into the yard and found the quill of some bird, which she sharpened with a butcher knife. The ink she made of copperas and maple bark, and for a writing desk she used a peck measure turned upside down. When A. G. Dye had no wagon to move his household effects from Sheboygan to the town of Lima, he fastened his goods to the forked limb of a tree, hitched his horse on one end, and dragged the forked branches along the ground like an Indian *travois*.⁹

When the settlers first came the county abounded with many varieties of game. In every cabin where one could be afforded, a gun hung on pegs within easy reach over the door or chimney piece.

⁹ Zillier, History of Sheb. Co., p. 98.

Many a larder was kept supplied with fresh meat by the owner's skill as a hunter. Deer were numerous. The Indians hunted them from canoes at night by attracting them with lighted pine knots. It is recorded that Indians shot deer on the Onion river near the present site of Ourtown. They wreaked havoc in the farmers' grain and corn fields. It was not uncommon for a settler to stand in his doorway and shoot them as they came into his yard. But James McM. Shafter hunted them down with hounds, and rapidly depleted their numbers, although scattered individuals lingered on for some years.¹⁰ Black bears were wont to climb into pig-pens and walk off with a squealing shoat. Raccoons, squirrels, foxes, and rabbits were a constant nuisance.

One of the greatest pests, however was the countless millions of passenger pigeons that swept in prodigious flocks over the region during their migrations. When a flock alighted on a freshly-sown field, they would have all the seed picked out within a few minutes. The Evergreen City Times reported that Levi Laing killed 31 pigeons at one shot on a wheat field near the plank road.¹¹ They were so numerous, according to creditable witnesses, as to darken the sun in their flight; and the whirring of their wings sounded like a heavy wind in a forest. Audubon, the naturalist, tells of areas of forest of more than 120 square miles so densely packed by nests and birds that trees broke down under their weight. Their food was largely beechnuts and acorns. The Indians and early settlers destroyed them in incredible numbers, capturing them in nests and knocking them from the trees with long poles. Gathered up in bushel baskets and hauled away by the wagon-load, they were consumed for food and even fed to hogs. The supply appeared to be inexhaustible. But millions perished in flight across Lake Michigan when overtaken by a severe blizzard during the early 80's. Hundreds of thousands of their dead bodies washed upon the shore after the storm. Catastrophes such as this, together with their wanton slaughter, caused the speedy extinction of the species, and the last passenger pigeon, a captive bird, died at the Zoological Gardens, in Cincinnati, Sept. 1, 1914.¹² The last passenger pigeon shot in Wisconsin was at Babcock in Sept. 1899.¹³

¹⁰ Mrs. H. N. Smith, in Sheb. Press, July 21, 1913.

¹¹ Aug. 11, 1855.

¹² Wis. Mag. of Hist., iv, 282; Sheb. Press, Apr. 29, 1927.

¹³ Milw. Journal, Aug. 29, 1943.

CHAPTER 10

EARLY AGRICULTURE

AGRICULTURE as practiced by the early settlers was a hazardous and primitive process. Land clearing was accomplished by chopping away the underbrush and small trees with axe, mattock, brush-hook and grub-hoe. The larger trees were cut down within three or four feet of the ground, leaving the stumps standing; or the entire tree was left standing, but was girdled by cutting away the bark in a ring around the trunk so that the sap would not run, causing the tree to die, and allowing the sun to shine through the leafless branches down onto the ground. The brush was gathered into huge piles and burned; and the logs were hauled and sold to a near-by sawmill, or were split into rails for worm fences, or rolled together into heaps and destroyed by fire. The smell of burning brush and logs hung constantly in the air. Ashes resulting from these fires were spread over the ground for fertilizer, or disposed of by the bushel to asheries for use in making potash. Winter and early spring were the best period for clearing land. The cold days were favorable for chopping and hauling, and the season of the year permitted more time away from regular farm work.

Although "girdling" trees saved time and labor, yet it had its drawback, as crops grown amid the deadened timber did not always flourish or mature sufficiently. Larger stumps were left standing until they had rotted enough to be removed without too great an effort. Then they were pulled out by ox power, assisted, when necessary, by digging and chopping away at the toughest roots. An-

General References: Economic History of Wisconsin, by Frederick Merk, Publications of State Hist. Soc. of Wis., vol. 1, chap. 1; Wisconsin Domesday Book, A History of Agriculture in Wisconsin, by Joseph Schaefer, State Hist. Soc. of Wis., 1922; The History of Agriculture in Dane County, Wisconsin, by Benjamin H. Hibbard, Bulletin of the Univ. of Wis., Econ. and Pol. Sci. Series, vol. 1, No. 2, Sept. 1904; Readings in the Economic History of American Agriculture, by Louis B. Schmidt and Earle D. Ross, 1925; The History of the Silo in Wisconsin, by N. S. Fish, Wis. Mag. of Hist., viii, 160; The Rise and Decline of the Wheat Growing Industry in Wisconsin, by John G. Thompson, Bull. of the Univ. of Wis., Econ. and Pol. Sci. Series, vol. 5, No. 3, pp. 295-544; Annals of a Wisconsin Thresherman, by Angie K. Main, Wis. Mag. of Hist., xi, 301; The Beginnings of Agriculture in America, by Lyman Carrier, 1923; The Story of Agriculture in the United States, by Albert H. Sanford, 1916; The Development of Agriculture in Wisconsin, by Walter H. Ebling, 1929 Blue Book, pp. 51-75; A Century of Agriculture in Wisconsin, by Walter H. Ebling, 1940 Blue Book, pp. 185-196.

other method, practiced especially by the foreign-born settlers, was to grub them out by gruelling hard labor. The cost of blasting was prohibitive for most farmers. Hardwood stumps rotted in a few years, but the resinous pine stumps remained intact almost indefinitely. Stumps were either burned or turned over on their sides at the edges of the fields for fences, their spreading roots forming an impenetrable barrier against trespassing animals. Field stones, also, were picked up, and boulders split, and built into fence walls around the fields.

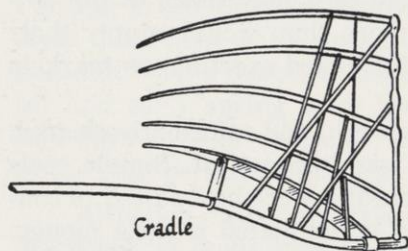
The first spring the settlers struggled to get enough crops into the ground to supply them with food during the coming winter, living meanwhile on such products of the forest as roots, fruits and nuts, and on what wild game they could procure, and such provisions as they could barter from neighbors or storekeepers. Corn yielded the most abundant first crop, and was the easiest to grow among the roots and stumps. Each year the settlers managed to clear more and more land, but strange as it may seem, at the outset they seldom attempted to raise more than would supply their own needs. There was no incentive for added exertion, as markets were few and difficult to reach.

Until pioneer fields were large enough, and sufficiently cleared, the use of labor-saving machinery was impractical. Simple tools like hoes, sickles, scythes and grain cradles were best suited to conditions. Until people in general had accumulated a little money, they could not buy their products; and until improved roads were built, they could not haul their products to market. The prevailing system, where every farm was a self-sufficing unit, met the needs of the stage of development of the country at the time. Agricultural methods had to wait upon invention and progress; and these did not come until they appeared to be justified. And so farming methods lagged until new demands furnished the incentive for improvement.

The outlay for early farming tools, fortunately, was not large. Wooden parts were made at home, iron parts by the village blacksmith. The pioneer plow was a clumsy affair with upright handles and a wooden moldboard on each side fitted with wrought iron straps—little better than the forked sticks of the Egyptians. It did not scour, like the modern steel plow, and the operator had to carry a paddle to clean off the clinging soil at frequent intervals. To keep the plow in the ground required the operator's full strength. Corn was planted by dropping the kernels, a hill at a time, into regularly spaced holes made with a hoe. Grain was broadcast by hand, some

using the one-hand, but the more expert the two-hand method. A small branching tree was dragged over the ground to brush in and cover the seed after it was sown. A drag or harrow was made from a small forked ironwood tree, with a cross piece in the middle. It was shaped like an "A", and furnished with teeth of wood or iron slanted backwards to go over roots. A later development of the "A" harrow was the double "A", hinged in the middle so that only half of it needed to be lifted in passing over an obstruction. A roller to pulverize the soil was built out of a section of log cut from a tree trunk and drawn by means of a frame attached to pins inserted in the ends of the log.

Hay was cut with a scythe, and corn and grain with a sickle. The sickle cut at the rate of three-fourths of an acre a day. The cradle, an implement with four long slender wooden fingers to catch the grain as it fell from the cutting blade, was a marked improvement over the sickle. A strong man could cradle two to three



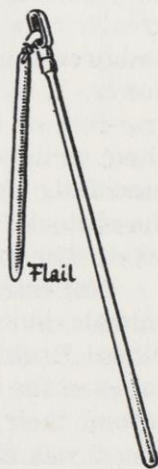
acres a day. In the case of all these tools, the crop had to be raked together with a hand rake, and the grain bound into sheaves by hand. Hay and grain was pitched with a clumsy, two-tined iron fork that resembled a pair of cow's horns. After the cradle came the reaper, a horse-drawn

machine, that cut an acre and a half an hour, and saved the labor of $4\frac{1}{2}$ men; but binding the grain still had to be done by hand, by tying a handful of grain stalks with a deft twist and tuck around each bundle. Later, a reaper appeared that bound the grain with wire, but it was displaced by the modern self-binder, which was made possible by the invention of the twine knotter by John F. Appleby, of De Pere, Wisconsin, in 1875.

Threshing was done with a flail, an instrument made of two sticks loosely fastened together at one end by leather thongs, one stick used as a handle and the other as a beater. The operator had to be careful not to hit himself on the head with the swinging part. Six to eight bushels could be flailed out in a day. There was also the process of tramping out the grain with horses or oxen upon a floor or platform in the open air as in ancient times. Men made it their business to go about the country to do threshing with a pair or two of cattle. The grain was spread out in a ring 30 to 40 feet in diameter, and the oxen were driven over it in a circle until the

seed was treaded out. Two men could thresh 50 to 60 bushels of wheat in a day, and the thresher took about four bushels for his pay. In the course of time these primitive methods were superseded by the threshing machine, operated with a tread mill or by sweep power, and later by the steam engine and the tractor. Commercial threshers went from farm to farm to do the threshing. To supply all the men needed for threshing, such as bundle pitchers, grain carriers and straw stack builders, farmers exchanged help with one another, and their wives helped each other out in feeding the hungry crew. The event represented the culmination of the year's activities on a farm, and was somewhat of a gala occasion. After the grain was threshed, it was winnowed by tossing it into the air so that the wind would blow away the chaff; but this method gave way to the fanning mill. In winter, when the roads were hard and covered with snow, the grain was hauled to market.

Few farms at the beginning had barns. The first shelter for livestock usually was a roof of marsh hay or straw supported by a rude frame of crotched poles, under which the animals huddled shivering and comfortless. Grain and hay were stored in stacks in the farmyard. As soon as they were able to afford something a little better, farmers put up log barns, built in much the same fashion as their cabins. And as they continued to prosper, they constructed the big picturesque frame barns that present such a familiar sight in the county today. Barns were often more pretentious than the houses, doubtless in the belief that a good barn would help earn enough to pay for a better house. After a new frame barn was built, the old log barn was seldom torn down, but continued to serve as a stable for young stock, a hog house, or a machinery shed. Barns in this area are of a distinctive type, common only in sections of the country where dairying is the principal farm interest. They are peculiarly designed for dairying purposes. Called general- or all-purpose barns, they have a basement with thick walls of masonried split boulders, which serves as a stable for housing the cattle. Above the stable, in the center of the barn, is a wide floor running from front to back, on both sides of which are the great roomy mows, with tremendous storage capacity, extending up to the very ridge-pole of the roof. The floor is used for driving and unloading loads of hay and grain in the barn, and also serves as a work space for threshing, feed-



cutting, feed-mixing, and similar operations. It permits the winter feeding of livestock to be done under one roof, and makes the work easier. Dairying requires big barns, and involves a relatively heavy investment in buildings.

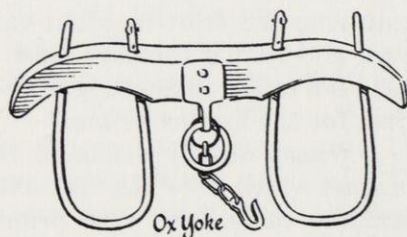
On top of many barns are perched attractive wooden cupolas. Built primarily for ventilation, yet with their green blinds, white trimmings and fancy weather vane at the pinnacle, they add greatly to the appearance of the structure. Barns are almost universally painted red, but in the northern part of the county black-painted barns are common; and in recent years there has been a trend toward gray and white. Another trend has been from ordinary gable roofs to hip roofs, in order to increase storage capacity. Other features of the barnyard are the tall, upright cylindrical silos alongside and often overtopping the barn, and the slatted corncrib.

The heavier work of pioneer farming was done almost exclusively with oxen. Few farmers had any other draught animals, and many lacked even such motive power. Some owned a yoke or team of oxen, others only a single ox, or a cow used as an ox, while others used an ox teamed with a horse. All things considered, the ox from time immemorial has been particularly suited to pioneer conditions; and is a symbol of the frontier. Although exasperatingly slow and plodding, it has enormous strength and an iron constitution, and thrives on food on which other animals would eventually perish. Horses are more delicate and high-strung, and require greater care and attention. Working in the woods, pulling stumps, and breaking up new land, especially, were jobs for the use of ox-power. If the plow share, for instance, got caught in an unexpected tree-root or boulder, horses were apt to become nervous and excited, while slow-motion oxen were content to stand perfectly still, peacefully chewing their cud, while the driver worked to clear the obstacle. Oxen were cheaper than horses, a yoke costing from \$90 to \$100, and a cow from \$10 to \$18, according to Peter Daane.

Not only did oxen cost little to keep and equip as working animals, but they furnished beef and sometimes milk. Gee! Haw! Whoa! Back! Go along! were the only commands they knew, and not even the cracking of a long blacksnake whip would hurry them beyond their leisurely mile-an-hour pace. Having a divided hoof, an ox was shod with eight small iron half shoes. No man was strong enough to hold an ox foot up for shoeing, and oxen were unable to stand on three feet while the fourth was being shod. A strong wooden frame with a wide belly-band had to be used to raise the animals from the floor. Of an obstinate nature, they

usually had to be dragged into the blacksmith shop by tying a rope around their horns and pulling them in with a windlass. When thirsty, they made a bee line for water, and nothing could stop them. They were seldom dehorned; and their horn tips were covered with shiny brass balls. Most farmers raised their own oxen from calves. Putting them to work when they were three years old, they were good until fifteen years old. Many are the tales old-timers had to tell of these interesting beasts. In the course of time, as improved farm machinery was introduced, horses, with their greater speed and intelligence, gradually displaced the clumsy oxen.

The tendency was to allow livestock to rustle for themselves in the unfenced forest as best they could, the greater part of the year. Hogs roamed about feeding in the woods and wastelands, and in the fall, during mast time, they fattened on the acorns and nuts that fell to the ground. They were not the well-fed porkers we know today, but long-legged, razor-backed creatures, with a neck nearly as long as the body, and a tusked snout not unlike that of a wild boar. Fleet-footed as a deer, the owner often could capture them only with a gun. Cattle were turned out to graze on the wild vegetation of forest and natural meadow. But wild grasses were good for only ten or twelve weeks in late spring and early summer, and then became unpalatable and unproductive. This led to the early introduction of cultivated grasses, such as timothy, red and white clovers and alsike, the seed imported from the east. Timothy or cat's tail grass was the first



tame grass to be generally utilized. Alfalfa was a much later importation. Before the advent of fences, cattle often had a propensity to wander far afield. To aid in locating them, a bell was tied on the neck of the leader; some of these bells could be heard for a distance of one or two miles. Farmers were able to find their own cattle by the distinctive tones of the bells. It was the task of someone in the family, usually the older children, to go out in the late afternoon to hunt the cattle and drive them home.

What to do with stray livestock that had wandered far from home presented considerable of a problem. Every town had its "pound law," and one or more pound masters were elected every year at the town meeting. Any stray animals found wandering about could be driven to a pound and kept there until the owner

called for them and paid the required fee. A typical example of such a law was adopted in the town of Sherman in 1883. Four or more pounds were established. Any person driving strays to a pound was entitled to 10¢ a mile for his trouble, and pound masters were authorized to charge the following fees per day for keeping and caring for them in the pound: horses, 50¢; cattle, 25¢; hogs, 15¢; sheep, 5¢. Farmers were slow to build fences, but as the practice of pasturing on cultivated grasses grew, the fencing of fields followed as a natural consequence, and straying animals ceased to be a problem.

Indian corn, because of the comparative ease with which it could be planted and cultivated in the limited spaces between the densely crowded tree trunks and stumps, was the settler's first crop. Even with the crude methods and tools at his disposal he was able to raise an acre or two the first season—enough for family use and the few farm animals he had. But corn in Wisconsin never became a predominant crop like it did in Illinois and Iowa. The state lies just north of the great corn belt of the nation. Killing frosts are apt to destroy the sprouting stalks in spring, and more frequently the ripening crop in fall before it fully matures. Improvement in the culture of corn has been made by raising earlier maturing and frost-resistant varieties, and by cutting the standing corn and letting the ears ripen in shocks. Since early times, corn has been raised in Sheboygan County principally for ensilage rather than for the market or seed.

Wheat rapidly displaced corn as the major crop. It was the magnet which drew the first settlers to this area. The eastern farmers who came here were primarily wheat growers by habit and tradition. Wheat did best on new land; it was easy to produce, and on the whole brought good prices. Wheat production was at its height roughly for a period of thirty years—1850 to 1880—and then declined. Impoverishment of the soil by the ruinous policy of unrotated wheat year after year, and the ravages of destructive pests, such as the chinch bug and army worm, were responsible for the decline, and made necessary a different type of agriculture. The *Evergreen City Times* in 1864 said of chinch bugs that the air was sometimes filled with them, not only in the country, but in the city, and that the noise of their humming was like that of bees swarming.¹

As wheat-raising became unprofitable, and the ruinous results of a single unrotated crop system increasingly evident, farmers

¹ Aug. 6, 1864.

began to turn their attention more and more to diversified farming, and especially to the production of livestock, and dairying. The shift, however, did not take place immediately; it was a gradual process. It takes time for men in any pursuit to change their ingrained habits of a lifetime. Many enterprising farmers became importers and breeders of blooded stock—cattle, horses, sheep and hogs—brought in from eastern markets and Europe, and disposed of to supply the local demand. The scrub cows and hogs, lumbering oxen, and pony-like horses of early pioneering days were unsuited to the dawning order of agriculture. Improved strains were needed which would make a higher quality beef, pork or mutton, more and richer milk, finer and longer wool, and more power and stamina in draft horses.

Among the leading stockmen in the county were H. N. Smith, L. M. Evans, J. T. Flint, Henry Tidman, Lyman D. Hill, Carl Reich, George Pieper, J. Stoddard, August Trutschel, T. M. Blackstock, A. P. Lyman, J. J. Gardner, Philip Pugh, William Wonser, Henry Rhodes, S. F. Hickinbotham, and others not less noteworthy. As early as 1852, Henry Tidman, of Sheboygan Falls, exhibited two Merino bucks at the Agricultural Fair at Plymouth, said to be the first fine wool sheep in the county. In 1854 J. A. Spear, of Braintree, Vt., sold 100 Merino sheep here for \$5.50 to \$8.00 a head.² Sheep thrived well on the rough forage of partly cleared land, and in the cool climate of this section. H. N. Smith, in 1868, declared, "We have imported from Vermont their best blooded sheep, and have improved the condition and quality of the wool, so that we can now sell to the manufacturers of New England at a handsome per cent above Vermont wool."³ In 1856 H. N. Smith brought from Vermont a large number of valuable horses, which sold readily.⁴ Surplus cattle, hogs and sheep not sold for breeding purposes were driven on the hoof, and grazed along the way, to market. After the advent of railroads they were shipped by train to meat packing plants in Milwaukee and Chicago. Every town in the county located on a railroad had its familiar stockpens where livestock was gathered for transport. This service today is largely performed by motor trucks.

The trend toward improved farming methods was stimulated by the formation of various agricultural societies and associations.



² Mrs. H. N. Smith in Sheb. Press, Aug. 11 and 25, 1913.

³ Evergreen City Times, Feb. 22, 1868.

⁴ Mrs. H. N. Smith in Sheb. Press, Sept. 22, 1913.

The first of these was the Sheboygan County Agricultural Society, organized in 1851, with Dr. J. F. Seeley, of Sheboygan, as its first president. It held an exhibition each year at Sheboygan Falls, the first being on Sept. 24-25, 1851.⁵ In 1859 the Sheboygan County Farmers Club was formed at Sheboygan Falls: president, A. H. Van Wie; secretary, E. Frank Barrows; treasurer, Hiram Smith.⁶ In 1867 the German Agricultural and Traders Society of Sheboygan County was created. The Sheboygan Times in 1874 reported that the society's 7th annual exhibition held at its fair grounds in Sheboygan that year was much larger than the Sheboygan County's fair two weeks before, but that "some cattle did not indicate the highest point of breeding," and that there were very few blooded cattle exhibited.⁷ On Dec. 12, 1872, seven men organized the Farmers Club of Hingham, for the "investigation of agricultural and horticultural questions." Hon. Charles Rogers was its president and Hon. M. Shaw its secretary. An active organization, it met regularly, and in 1874 had 70 members and a library of about 100 books upon the latest and most improved farm methods.⁸ In 1870 the Sheboygan County Horticultural Society was organized at Plymouth. On Oct. 1, 1871, the German Agricultural Society of Plymouth was created; and in 1872 the Plymouth Agricultural Society was formed. The Sheboygan County Fair Association held its first meeting Oct. 10, 1896, electing Harmon Wheeler Sr., as president; Otto Gaffron, secretary; and E. A. Dow, treasurer. These organizations, in cooperation with agricultural journals, farmers institutes, county agents, schools of agriculture and experimental stations, have through the years gradually developed a sentiment for better farming and raised the standards of agriculture to their present high level.

As a side line to general crops, Sheboygan County farmers from early times have experimented with a variety of special cash crops, some of which, like canning peas, and to a lesser extent, flax, sugar beets and beans, have survived through the years. Others once quite to the front, have dwindled away. Of unique interest among these special crops was hops, the culture of which reached surprising proportions in the county in the late 60's and early 70's. Writing in the *Evergreen City Times* in 1868, H. N. Smith reported, "The growth of hops is just beginning to be developed. The crop of Wisconsin now takes the highest rank among the hops

⁵ Sheb. Mercury, July 12 and Oct. 4, 1851.

⁶ Evergreen City Times, Dec. 31, 1859.

⁷ Oct. 3, 1874.

⁸ Sheb. Times, Jan. 11, 1873, Oct. 17, 1874.

of the world. In the city of New York last fall, hops from Germany, England, New England, New York, Ohio, Wisconsin and other states were tested, and ours took the precedence and brought the highest price."

Hop raising was an interesting pursuit. The vines, planted in hills 8 feet apart, were twined around poles 12 to 15 feet high. Picking time began about the first of September, the harvesting attracting gangs of men, women and children from far and near, who went about from hop yard to hop yard. Pickers were paid 75¢ a day, or 40¢ to 50¢ a box, and board and lodging. The average picker filled two to three boxes a day, and the more expert were able to fill four or five. Crews were fed like threshers—the best eatables the farm afforded. At night the women and girls were lodged in the house, and the men and boys slept on the hay in the barn. Evenings were spent in singing, dancing and games.

The town of Mitchell was the hop center of the county, its soil being specially adapted to the growth of the crop. Rufus Clark was the pioneer hop grower of the town, if not of the county; but John Rood's yard in the town of Lyndon was the "brag yard" of the county. Hops were dried in specially built structures known as hop houses, and after drying they were pressed into oblong bales weighing 200 pounds apiece. They sold for 50¢ to 60¢ a pound at the highest, but dropped to a low of 4¢ or 5¢. In 1867 Rufus Clark raised 6,000 lbs. on six acres of land, producing a gross income of \$3,000. His expenses were \$500. Other prominent hop growers were C. W. Humphrey, W. W. Andrews, G. W. Clark, S. L. Reed, J. M. Reed, Clark Payne, J. P. Ostrom and Patrick Doherty. Hop raising—commonly referred to as the hop craze—owed its brief career here to the temporary failure of the crop in its original center in New York, due to infestations of rust and the hop-louse, and the presence in this state of some of the country's largest breweries, who used the product in the manufacture of beer. The introduction of the business in this section is attributed to settlers who were familiar with hop culture in New York. It went out of existence as suddenly as it began, and the yards were plowed up for other crops when the industry was revived later in the east.⁹

⁹ Evergreen City Times, Sept. 21, 1867, Feb. 22, 1868; Sheb. Times, June 13, and July 18, 1874; Benjamin H. Hibbard, History of Agriculture in Dane County, Wisconsin; Frederick Merk, Economic History of Wisconsin, Publications of State Hist. Soc. of Wis. vol. 1; Hop culture in Early Sauk County, by Belle Cushman Bohn. Wis. Mag. of Hist. vol. 18, p. 389.

As an example of taxes paid by early settlers, an old tax receipt shows that Egbert S. Wierman, a farmer near Ourltown, paid \$2.12 in full for state, county, harbor, school and town taxes on his 40 acre farm for the year 1854.

CHAPTER 11

THE BUILDING OF ROADS

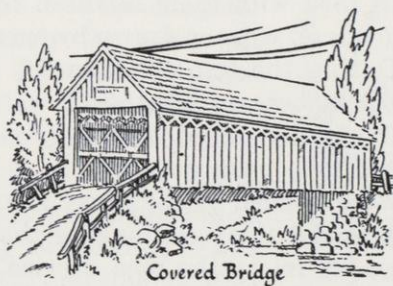
AS SETTLERS pushed into the county, the need for roads to establish contact with the outside world became of vital concern, especially after farmers had surplus products to sell. The demand for means of transportation was vocal and insistent, but there was little money to build them. Early roads were necessarily crude and primitive, and travelling was slow and laborious. Road building began at the centers of population, and gradually radiated fan-wise farther out into the back country as settlement spread. The very first roads were Indian trails, which were suitable only for travel on foot, or by pack horse and saddle horse. Little by little, as passing traffic tracked and trampled the trails, and wore away the underbrush that crowded on either side, they became wide enough for wheeled vehicles.

The earliest roads wound tortuously about upon no recognizable principle, although, wherever possible, they avoided swampy places and followed the higher, well-drained ground, but yet kept to the easiest grades. They rarely adhered to section lines, as later, but went wherever the going for the time being seemed best. The location of a road at a given place was no assurance that it would remain there; it was apt to be changed at any time by road officials, or more often by the caprices of the traveling public. Many a settler found himself without a traveled way past his house merely by a change in the fancies of ox-teamsters.

Even at best the roads were bad. They were only partially cleared. Construction meant only the cutting of trees without removing the stumps. The grades were not leveled or the tracks smoothened; no road beds were built, no rocks removed, no ditches dug, and no improvements made except at places otherwise impassable. Trees and heavy underbrush were cut away only the width of the road, so that the virgin forest extended on either side right up to the wheel tracks, preventing the sun from drying the road, and keeping it in a muddy condition much of the time. The way consisted of two parallel tracks beaten down by the feet of the draught-animals and the wheels of the vehicles, between which the grass and weeds sprang up.

Across sloughs and low places, where there was danger of becoming mired, stretches of corduroy were built by laying small logs, 8 to 10 feet long, side by side, crosswise of the roadway right on the soft earth, where they settled in the ground and created a sufficient foundation to keep passing traffic from sinking into the mud. To hold the corduroy in place, smaller logs were set in the harder ground at both approaches to make it easier for a vehicle to pull up on it; but in time a new mud-or chuck-hole would be formed at the outer edge of the approaches. After a team had once crossed a length of corduroy, it was hard to induce them to cross again, as the wagon tongue would keep the neckyoke thrashing violently back and forth, greatly to the discomfort of the animals. A common practice was to tie ropes or chains between the front and rear axles in such a manner as to hold the front wheels firmly in line. Driving over corduroy was an experience not lightly to be undertaken. As the wheels fell from log to log, the riders were shaken like pills in a box, at one time flung against each other, and at another, nearly thrown out of the vehicle. There was a saying that there were two bumps in every foot—one up and one down. To ease passage over corduroy, earth was shoveled in between and on top of the logs to make a smooth contour, but when the next heavy rain came and washed the filled ground away, the roads again lived up to their evil reputation. Most corduroy roads have gradually rotted away and disappeared; but remnants can be seen to this day near the west edge of the Sheboygan marsh. Streams were crossed at fords or over rude log or timber bridges. For many years there was a covered frame bridge—a well-known landmark—over the Sheboygan River near the first rapids, which was familiarly known as the Ashby bridge. It was built in 1874. Contrary to popular belief, covered bridges were not built to give protection against rain and snow, but to prevent horses and oxen from being frightened while crossing the bridge.

In early spring the roads were impassable; it was only in summer during dry weather, and in winter when the ground was frozen, that they became tolerable. Under these conditions the traveler had to pick his way along slowly and carefully; and even then vehicles were often overturned or wheels and axles broken.



Covered Bridge

Roadsides were lined with fragments of wagons and pieces of boxes and barrels as a result of such mishaps. When a driver came to a mud-hole in his path, he explored it with a pole to see if it had bottom. If not, he found his way around it, or threw logs into the hole to make an artificial bottom. It was a serious matter to get stalled on the way late in the day. Help was not always at hand, and many a driver had to wade in, unhitch his team, and spend the night out on the road. Sometimes he had to unload his cargo before the heavy wagon, once fairly "stuck", could be pulled out. Sometimes his vehicle was upset when the rut on one side or the other proved to be deeper than expected. And sometimes he failed to avoid an obstructing stump in the roadway. The expressions "up against a stump" and "stumped" originated from this misfortune. Every driver carried a shovel and an axe with him—a shovel to dig himself out of mud-holes in spring and snow-drifts in winter; and an axe to chop away trees that had fallen across the road, or to cut his way through the adjacent forest around impassable spots.

Travel over the early roads was always an adventure. When Thaddeus Harmon and John D. Parrish, coming from New York in 1844 with their families, reached Milwaukee, they loaded their goods on wagons drawn by oxen and started for Sheboygan County. During the trip the rain fell in torrents, and the road in many places became filled with water-holes and mud-holes. They were frequently mired, and everyone had to get out to lighten the load and help push and pry the vehicles out of the mud. The streams were swollen by the heavy rains. When they came to a stream they adjusted their clothing so that it would not get wet, and boldly waded in, or the men carried the women and children across on their backs. Where the water was deep the oxen were unhitched and forced to swim over to the other side, and the wagons were drawn across by means of long ropes. Their destination was Deacon Dye's settlement in section 8 of the town of Lima, near which they made their permanent homes.¹

In 1848 Johann Diederichs made a trip with two wagons from Milwaukee to Manitowoc. Leaving Port Washington, he drove along the Lake Michigan beach; but when he was two or three miles out, in passing over a log lying across the road, a wagon bolt was broken. There was nothing to do but to go back to Port Washington to have a new one made. After resuming his journey he was approaching a creek, but, although already dark, he decided

¹ Hist. of Sheb. County, by Carl Zillier, pp. 57, 90.

to cross on the ice. The ice was strong enough to hold the horses and the front wheels of the wagon, but when the rear wheels dropped down from the edge of the bank the ice broke, plunging the rear of the wagon into the water; and there it remained until the ice was chopped away, and all four horses in the wagon-train, pulling from the opposite bank on a long rope attached to it, hauled it ashore.²

Mrs. E. McIntyre recalls going with her father, when she was only four years of age, as he helped to move a family fresh from the east to their new home near Winooski. Her father drove a pair of steers yoked to a lumber wagon, guiding them with a rope. Part of the way the only road was a blazed trail, and they tipped over. No one was seriously hurt, but Mrs. McIntyre was thrown so far into the bushes and so stunned by the fall that they had quite a time to find her. It began to grow dark as they passed a swamp on their way home, and they could hear the wolves snapping and snarling, and see their eye-balls blazing among the bushes by the roadside. This so frightened the steers that they became unmanageable and broke into a run. Her father jumped into the wagon to hold his daughter in, and let the oxen run. Fortunately the road was fairly good from there on, so that they reached home in safety, but Mrs. McIntyre was so frightened that the incident made a lasting impression on her mind.³

Early roads were of four classes: United States roads, territorial roads, county roads and flank roads. Sheboygan County was traversed by two United States roads, one extending north and south, and linking Fort Howard at Green Bay with Fort Dearborn at Chicago, commonly called the Green Bay road; and the other running east and west, and connecting Sheboygan and Fond du Lac. Both were military roads, built by the United States War Department, primarily for defense against possible danger of the Indians. Morgan L. Martin writes that the proposal to build the military road from Green Bay to Chicago had its inception at a meeting at Green Bay in October 1829, which was the first public meeting ever held in that city. According to him, a petition to Congress for the establishment of the road was adopted at the meeting, and Congress in 1830 made an appropriation for the survey and location, which



² Letters and Diary of Joh. Fr. Diederichs, Wis. Mag. of Hist., vii, 350.

³ Paper read by Mrs. McIntyre at D.A.R. meeting, Feb. 3, 1912

he states was completed in 1831 and 1832.³ Lieut. Alexander J. Center, of the United States Army, and Judge James D. Doty, of Green Bay, were appointed commissioners to have charge of the project.⁴ Although the records relating to this road are incomplete, Mr. Martin is mistaken in dates. War Department records, now in the National Archives, at Washington, show that Lieut. Center was ordered by the Topographical Bureau of the department to make the survey and location of the road on April 16, 1832, and that on March 23, 1834, he sent in to the bureau an estimate of the funds and instruments required for his work. Informed, in reply, that the appropriation for surveys was exhausted, he was instructed to await further orders. Lieut. Center's compass notes indicate that he made the survey between June 30th and Aug. 25th, 1835. Construction, however, was not begun until 1838, after Congress, on July 7th, appropriated \$15,000 for the purpose.⁵

Completed in 1839 under the direction of Capt. Thomas Jefferson Cram, the road was laid out four rods wide, with a traveled track 15 feet wide. Little or no work was done upon it except to cut down and remove all brush and trees along the right of way, lay corduroy over the low, wet places, and span unfordable streams with rough bridges, the work being performed by gangs of soldiers. It was used mainly for the transportation of troops and supplies from one fort to another, and by settlers, mail carriers, and cattle drovers. The route was traveled mostly during the winter months, communication in summer being almost entirely by boats from Chicago to Green Bay. Herds of cattle were driven on the hoof along its course from the open prairies of Illinois and Missouri to furnish fresh meat to the garrison stationed at Fort Howard. The way lay through the heavy forest, extending from Green Bay to Manitowoc Rapids, Sheboygan Falls, Port Washington, Milwaukee, Racine, Grosse Point, and thence to Chicago, for a distance of 240 miles. It took five days to carry the mail one way. Originally the plan was for the road to pass through or near Sheboygan, but due to the efforts of David Giddings it was laid through Sheboygan Falls. In order to have the road come through that village he surveyed the route from Manitowoc Rapids to Port Washington without compensation—indicating the belief of the time that Sheboy-

³ Narrative of Morgan L. Martin, Wis. Hist. Coll., xi, 403.

⁴ Life and Services of J. D. Doty, by Genl. Albert G. Ellis, Wis. Hist. Coll. v. 369.

⁵ U. S. Stats. at Large, chap. 190, p. 303.

gan Falls was destined to have a brighter future than Sheboygan. Giddings Avenue in Sheboygan Falls, named after Mr. Giddings, is today a segment of the old Green Bay road. In 1839 the government also built a single-span wooden bridge in Sheboygan Falls at the point where the road crossed the Sheboygan river.

Although built for military purposes, the Green Bay road was likewise extensively used by civilians, and an important factor in the development of the county. Until the Sheboygan & Calumet Plank Road was opened in 1856 and 1859, it was the only route from Sheboygan to the northern part of the county. The colony of Lippers who settled in the town of Herman took this route when they founded their homes in that town in 1847, making their way by wagon from Sheboygan to Sheboygan Falls, and thence north. Records do not indicate when the road was discontinued as a United States highway and became a local highway, but it was probably not long after the abandonment of the Fort Howard military post in 1845.

Of territorial roads, there appear to have been five laid out in Sheboygan County altogether: from De Pere to Sheboygan through Manitowoc;⁶ from Sheboygan to Madison;⁷ from Sheboygan to Fond du Lac;⁸ from Sheboygan to the town of Manchester in Calumet county;⁹ and from the Mission House in Stockbridge settlement in Calumet county to Sheboygan.¹⁰ These roads were established by an act of the legislature passed in 1838 entitled, "An act to provide for laying out and opening territorial roads."¹¹ In each instance, commissioners were appointed, whose duty it was to

⁶ Route: "Beginning at De Pere on the east side of Fox river, thence on the most eligible route to the mouth of the Manitowoc river, thence the most eligible route to the mouth of the Sheboygan river." Board of commissioners: David Johnson, William Dickinson, R. M. Eberts, William White, William Powell, Corwell Pyre and Nathaniel Perry.—No. 52, Laws of 1838. App. Jan. 12, 1838.

⁷ Route: "From Sheboygan in Sheboygan County, on the most direct and practicable route, by the county seat of Dodge county, to Madison." Commissioners: Albert S. Story, Uriel S. Wadsworth and Major Platt.—P. 45, Laws of 1845. App. Feb. 22, 1845.

⁸ Route: "From Sheboygan, by the most direct and practicable route, to Fond du Lac. Commissioners: Albert S. Story, David Giddings and Theodore Conkey. P. 45 Laws of 1845. App. Feb. 22, 1845.

⁹ Route: "From the mouth of the Sheboygan river, on the north side of said river, to the town of Manchester on Lake Winnebago." Commissioners: Benjamin H. Moors, Randal Abner, and Charles D. Cole. No. 32, Laws of 1840-41. App. Feb. 19, 1841.

¹⁰ Route: "From the Mission House in the Stockbridge settlement in Calumet County, to the mouth of the Sheboygan river in Sheboygan county." Commissioners: William Farnsworth, Albert G. Ellis, and John W. Quinney, No. 32, Laws of 1840-41. App. Feb. 19, 1841.

¹¹ No. 20, Laws of 1838. App. Jan. 3, 1838.

survey, mark and record the road. These roads were neither built nor financed by the territorial government, as the name might suggest. In fact, the act specifically provided that they were to be opened and worked by the counties through which they passed, in the same manner as county roads; even the expense of surveying and laying them out was borne by the counties. They were through roads, usually extending for long distances between the larger centers of population. They were the proposed trunk highways of the day, the purpose of the law apparently being to see to it that the important routes of travel in the state were built along the shortest and most practicable courses, and not as local influences might dictate. Each town naturally tried to attract roads through it, regardless of any general plan. When a territorial road was located and established, it became and forever remained a public highway, the act declared.

County roads were what later came to be known as town roads. During the time when the county system of government was in effect, the authority to build and maintain public roads was vested in the county; but in 1849 when it was superseded by the combination town and county form, the responsibility for roads was by law transferred to the towns; and it was under their jurisdiction, rather than of the county, that our system of roads attained its greatest development.

When a new road was wanted, application had to be made to the town board; it was the judge of the necessity for it, and determined its location. The board also created road districts and appointed supervisors or overseers for road building and repair. The imperative need of roads is shown by the large amount of space devoted to the subject in the recorded proceedings of the town boards of the time. Road work was an important activity of life. All male inhabitants between the ages of twenty-one and fifty were subject to be called to labor on the roads two days a year. If they did not work themselves, they could do so by substitute, or be subject to a penalty. Practically everyone chose to "work out his road tax," as the expression was, rather than pay the tax in money. Road work was done early in spring when it was still too wet to cultivate the fields. All the able-bodied men in a district congregated at the call of the overseer, or pathmaster, as he was commonly called, appearing ready for work at the appointed place with such tools, implements and draught-animals as the overseer had requested, some with grub hoes, shovels, axes, picks and crow bars and others with plows, wagons, horses and oxen. Anyone who fur-

nished a plow or wagon, with a team of horses or oxen, received extra credit for work so performed. By such co-operative effort of the farmers in each road district, trees and underbrush were cut away, stones and stumps removed, holes filled, road beds made, ditches dug, grades levelled, curves straightened, low places corduroyed, bridges built, gravel hauled, and the roads gradually improved from year to year. These gatherings were semi-social in nature, like the logging bees, stumping bees, and raising bees of the day, being the occasion for much good-natured banter and the exchange of news and views by those present as they plied their tasks or paused for rest and refreshment.

Although in vogue for many years, the road district system was notoriously inefficient. Appointments to the position of overseer were often made for political reasons rather than for ability. The overseer was usually as unskilled in the art of road building as his neighbors whom he was chosen to superintend. Legally he could enforce compliance with his directions on pain of penalty. But in practice his authority rested lightly upon his subordinates. True to the traditional independence of the pioneers, every man had his own ideas of how the work should be done, especially as to the places where the road should be improved; and this not infrequently happened to be right in front of one's own premises or on the section of road most used by him. Disregard of the authority of the overseer, and petty jealousies and disputes, were not uncommon; and to preserve peace and harmony in the community, and not to lose the good-will and respect of his fellows, he usually let his neighbors do pretty much as they pleased. Despite its disadvantages the road district plan prevailed until 1907, when the advent of the automobile created a demand for an improved highway system in the state.¹²

Sheboygan County roads, on the whole, have always been better than the average, due mainly to the great natural deposits of gravel in the "kettles" in the western part. Gravel is an ideal road building material. It is cheap, firm, smooth, dry and durable. Easily dug by hand labor and conveyed in dump-board wagons, it merely had to be hauled to the spots where needed and dumped there for passing traffic to pack down. In the eastern section of the county, however, but little gravel is to be found, and sand and pebbles from the nearby Lake Michigan beach were utilized instead. But it

¹² Wisconsin Highways, by M. W. Torkelson, Wis. Blue Book, 1931, pp. 9-29. Major changes in the state highway laws are contained in the Laws of 1907, 1911, 1917, 1923 and 1925.

proved to be inferior road building material. The sand crystals, worn round and smooth by the action of the waves, do not pack down firmly like the sharp-edged grains from the kettle moraine hills, so that the winds soon blew the sand away, and left only the loose, uneven pebbles, over which travel was difficult. Some of the principal roads had names, adopted by popular usage, as for instance, the Sauk Trail, Milwaukee, Manitowoc, Calumet, Howards Mill, Madison, Yankee and Dye roads.

Early roads naturally offered little encouragement for travel. Few journeys were made merely for pleasure. Travel at first was on horseback, the rider carrying his personal belongings in saddlebags; freight was carried on pack animals. Sometimes two men would form a partnership, traveling with one horse. One would ride awhile, dismount, tie the horse by the trail, and start walking, the other, catching up, would get on the horse and ride ahead, and so they alternated. Later, as the roads became gradually widened and improved, two-wheeled carts and four-wheeled wagons came into general use, ordinarily drawn by yokes of oxen; and as the roads became further improved the slow-plodding oxen were supplanted by faster-moving horses. Mules were never popular in the county. Long journeys were infrequent. Most trips were made to the nearest village, to church, to do trading, or to sell grain at the local elevator. It was usually only once or twice a year that a longer journey was made to the county seat or other larger trading centers. The hardship of early travel was probably the chief reason for the scattering of villages at short and convenient intervals of four or five miles throughout the county.

Public transportation, before the coming of the railroads, was exclusively by steamboat and stagecoach. With daily service to Milwaukee, Chicago and Green Bay, and semi-weekly and weekly service to points East, Sheboygan's water communication with the world at large was excellent. Passenger boats of the time were a comfortable and popular means of traveling. Veritable floating palaces, they rivalled in magnificence and splendor the famed riverboats of the Ohio and the Mississippi. In the heyday of stagecoach travel, Sheboygan was the hub of four stage and mail routes: one north to Manitowoc and Two Rivers; one west to Fond du Lac; one southwest to Cascade and Mayville and beyond; and one south to Milwaukee and Chicago. All were owned by the Wisconsin Stage Company, which operated lines throughout most of the state.¹³

¹³ Wisconsin Gazetter (1853) by John W. Hunt.

Of these, the most important was the route from Sheboygan to Fond du Lac. In 1854, according to an advertisement in the *Sheboygan Lake Journal*, the stage left the Warren House on Pennsylvania avenue after the arrival of the steamboat in the evening, and reached Fond du Lac next morning. It also left Sheboygan every morning at eight o'clock, and connected with the steamboat on Lake Winnebago running to Oshkosh, Menasha and Green Bay.¹⁴ The same year, an advertisement reproduced in the *Wisconsin Historical Society Proceedings*, 1914,¹⁵ announced that the stage coach left the general stage office, at No. 13 Wisconsin St., in Milwaukee, for Sheboygan via Mequon, Hamburg, Saukville, Port Washington and Sheboygan Falls. In 1858 the *Evergreen City Times* advertised daily coach service to Two Rivers via Howards Grove and Manitowoc.¹⁶ Coaches used on these routes were the heavy, lumbering Troy and Concord varieties, with three or four seats on the inside intended to accommodate eight or nine passengers, although more were often squeezed in. One passenger sat outside with the driver. Instead of springs to make riding easier, the bodies of the vehicles were suspended by stout leather straps.

On the Sheboygan and Fond du Lac stage route there were eighteen four-horse teams in service, except in winter when four sufficed. Stage coaches adhered to as regular schedules as road and weather conditions permitted. They stopped wherever passengers wanted to get on or off; but there were certain stations where they regularly stopped, for relaxation, refreshment, meals, repairs, and watering or changing horses. On the way to Fond du Lac there were the Warren House, at Sheboygan, Samuel McComas', at Sheboygan Falls, James Little's, about half-way between Sheboygan Falls and Plymouth, John W. Taylor's Cold Spring House, and later the Quitquioc House, at Plymouth, Henry Giffin's Valley House, two miles west of Plymouth, Russell and Miller's tavern, a half mile east of Greenbush, Sylvanus Wade's Half Way House, at Greenbush, John Ehle's tavern,¹⁷ one-fourth of a mile east of the

¹⁴ Oct. 18, 1854.

¹⁵ P. 132.

¹⁶ July 3, 1858.

¹⁷ The Ehle tavern is one of the best known of the early hostelries in the county, chiefly on account of a tragic fire which not only consumed the building, but destroyed the lives of the entire family occupying it. The fire occurred on Feb. 16, 1886, after the structure had been converted from a tavern into a private dwelling house. Occupants of the house at the time of the tragedy were the owner, an elderly man, named Abram Ehle, and his son James A. Ehle, and the latter's wife and three small children. How the fire started is not definitely known, as it happened in the early morning, and only one person, a young man, escaped from the burning building; and he was unable to

county line, and Newton Kellogg's tavern, twelve miles east of Fond du Lac. Discharging many functions, taverns and tavern-keepers played an important part in the early life of the community. Taverns not only dispensed food, drink and shelter, but were gathering places for dances, concerts, shows, lectures, secret societies, caucuses, conventions, town meetings, and the like. The number of taverns during the golden age of their existence was surprisingly large. To name all of even the more prominent would make a formidable list. Commonly designated by such descriptive names as Half Way House, Four Mile House, Farmers Home, Travelers Rest, they were found about every four or five miles along the main-traveled roads.¹⁸

One of the commonest sights in early days were the long processions of wagons crawling along the uncertain highways leading to lake ports like Sheboygan. Before railroads came the only way to transport goods between the lake shore and inland areas was by wagon. Farmers had to get their surpluses of wheat to market, and frequently drove their grain wagons over a hundred miles to reach the nearest shipping point. To cut the cost of the trip, instead of returning home empty, they usually took on a return load of merchandise, brought that far by boat, for some coun-

tell much about what had taken place. An interesting lawsuit grew out of the event, which was carried to the Supreme Court of Wisconsin, and is still cited in legal literature as a leading case in the United States upon the question of law involved. The suit was between the nearest blood relatives of Abram and James Ehle, and the heirs at law of Mrs. James Ehle and the three children, as to who were the rightful inheritors of the property. The answer to the question depended upon the order of the deaths of the victims of the fire. There being no eye-witnesses, the court had to determine this delicate and difficult question largely from facts and circumstances as they appeared after the fire. From the facts available the court concluded that the blaze originated in the old man's room in the northwest corner of the house, probably caused by the curtains taking fire from a lighted candle in his hands, while he was helping himself to some medicine in the closet. A strong wind was blowing from the northwest at the time, which would naturally have driven the fire toward the sleeping room of James next adjoining, and from there to the bed room where Mrs. Ehle and the children slept, which was the most remote from the place of origin of the fire. From the construction of the building, the direction of the wind, the arrangement of rooms, and the position of the charred bodies after the fire, the court held that the first to die was Abram, the next James, and lastly the mother and children; and adjudged the property to go to Mr. and Mrs. James W. Taylor of Plymouth, the parents of Mrs. Ehle and the grandparents of the children.—*Wisconsin Supreme Court Reports* Vol. 73, p. 445.

¹⁸ Stagecoach and Tavern Tales of the Old Northwest, (1930), by Harry E. Cole; The Taverns and Stages of Early Wisconsin, by J. H. A. Lacher, *Wis. Hist. Soc. Proc.* 1914, pp. 118-167; The Old Inns of Wisconsin, by J. H. A. Lacher, *Milw. Free Press*, Sept. 5, 1915; Transportation and Travel on Wisconsin Wagon Roads 1848-1860, *Univ. of Wis. B. A. Degree Thesis*, 1919, by Ella J. Hadley.

try storekeeper, or supplies and provisions for an isolated lumber camp. Another class of haulers made freighting their regular business. They were the professional teamsters, who hauled goods for hire, usually at a fixed rate per hundred pounds for given distances. Considerable feeling naturally existed between the regular and the occasional hauler. Drivers preferred to travel in caravans for mutual assistance in cases of accident or emergency. They were the bosses of the road, to whom every other vehicle had to yield, attempting even to prevent stagecoaches from overtaking and passing them on the narrow way. They cooked their meals over camp fires, and carried their own bedding, sleeping on the ground under their wagons or on the bar-room floor in a tavern where they halted for the night.

A point of pride with every driver was his whip and his skill in its use. A murderous instrument with a stock two or three feet long and a braided leather lash some eight feet long, the driver's object was to crack the whip with as loud a report and as closely to his oxen's ears as possible without actually striking an ear. Great rivalry existed between drivers to see who could wield his whip the most expertly. On still evenings settlers living over a mile from the road could hear the cracks of whips as passing teamsters swung them over the heads of their toiling oxen. Every type of wagon was used—from clumsy, home-made contraptions built by the owners themselves, with wheels made by sawing off a "cut" from a log, to huge, majestic Conestoga covered wagons. The number of wagons out of Sheboygan alone at the height of the freighting season, especially to the west, was almost incredible. When the railroads came they vanished.

CHAPTER 12

PLANK ROADS

THE brief period of 1848 to 1855 marks the era of plank road promotion in Sheboygan County.¹ Because public funds were inadequate to build roads as fast as the needs of the rapidly developing community demanded, private companies began to construct them, depending upon the right to collect tolls for their returns upon their investment. It was a method commonly followed in new sections in early days to speed up the process of "pulling the country out of the mud." No fewer than nine plank roads were contemplated in the county,² but only two were actually built—the

¹ The first plank road in the United States was built in 1845 between Syracuse, and Oneida Lakes, New York, a distance of about 14 miles.

² Sheboygan and Fond du Lac.—Route: Sheboygan to Fond du Lac, with right to continue from Fond du Lac by way of Maysville and the iron ore beds in Dodge county to the town of Hustis' Ford on the Rock river, and to extend a branch from Fond du Lac to the town of Taycheedah, Commissioners: H. C. Hobart, Charles D. Cole, John W. Taylor (Taylor), Elias R. Chase, Moses S. Gibson, A. P. Lyman, J. T. Kirtland (J. F. Kirkland), John A. Eastman, John Bannister. Company organized in 1848. T. 193, Laws of 1848

Sheboygan and Mayville Plank Road.—Route: From some eligible point in the town of Sheboygan or Sheboygan Falls through the village of Cascade to Mayville in Dodge county. Commissioners: Huntington Lyman, Samuel B. Ormsbee, A. G. Dye, Reed C. Brazleton, Anson Hutchinson, John Muzzey, Alvin Foster, Joseph Mallory, S. G. Pickett, A. P. Lyman, J. C. Shadbolt, James Preston, Patrick Donaher. Company organized in 1850. Chap. 201, Laws of 1850.

Sheboygan and Calumet Plank Road.—Route: Sheboygan to point on Lake Winnebago in town of Manchester, Calumet county, where the Plymouth and Manchester state road terminates. Commissioners: Warren Smith, Henry L. Anable, Amos Adams, E. Fox Cook, A. P. Lyman, Charles E. Morris, ----- Ellis, Charles Greening, William Poulson, William Fowler, Alonzo D. Dick, James Crammond. Company organized in 1851. Chap. 331, P. & L. Laws of 1851. In 1854 following names were added as commissioners: William W. King, Henry Stocks, August Post (Pott), Peter Schweihoofen (Schweighofen), John Marygold, Samuel Goodell, Chap. 305, P. & L. Laws of 1854. In 1855 the following were appointed in place of former commissioners: William Kastner, Cyrus P. Hiller, Charles Zaegel, Henry Bodensstab, Henry Dryer, Rudolph Krause, Jacob Schneider, Samuel Goodell, John Marygold, Chap. 10, P. & L. Laws of 1855.

Calumet Village and Sheboygan Plank Road.—Route: From pier of Augustus Huyssen, near Calumet village, to intersect Sheboygan and Fond du Lac plank road at point the commissioners deem proper. Commissioners: Augustus Huyssen, Edmond Deany, George White, Michael Rothman, Querin Lohn, Lewis Rollman, James Cramond (Crammond). Company organized in 1852. Chap. 281, P. & L. Laws of 1852.

Plymouth and Saukville Plank and Turnpike Road.—Route: Plymouth to Saukville. Commissioners: William R. Ellis, F. W. Horn, A. Lamberson, Oran Rogers, E. M. McIntosh, John W. Taylor, William D. Lisse, LaFayette East-

Sheboygan and Fond du Lac, and the Sheboygan and Calumet. Laid on a heavily traveled natural trade route, the Sheboygan and Fond du Lac Plank road was the more important of the two and the first to be constructed. Extending westward almost in a straight line from Sheboygan to the head of Lake Winnebago, it was the logical outlet to Lake Michigan for a vast land-locked area in central Wisconsin. In those days a road to the west was more essential than one to the south or north. Nehemiah King, the government surveyor, before settlement, and when the way was as yet only a rude Indian trail snaking through the wilderness, recognized its potentialities as a strategic artery of commerce. Jotting down in his notebook in 1835 he predicted, "From the mouth of this River (Sheboygan) an important intercourse with the south end of Lake Winnebago and to the west of that place will be established at no very distant day. The ground is favourable for building a road. At that place (The Fond du Lac) it will intersect with the road from Milwaukee, Green Bay and the Portage between the Fox and Wisconsin Rivers."³

man, William Payne, J. Feischbien, George C. Daniels, William Hudson. Company organized in 1852. Chap. 366, P. & L. Laws of 1852.

Plymouth and Charleston Plank Road.—Route: Commencing at Sheboygan and Fond du Lac Plank Road, near Quitquioc House in the town of Plymouth, thence on east side of Elkhart Lake to village of Stantonville in the town of Charleston in Calumet county, with power to extend road to Menasha in Winnebago county or to connect it with Manitowoc and Menasha Plank Road. Commissioners: J. L. Moore, J. R. Hawkins, John Marygold, R. H. Hotchkiss, M. M. Flint, H. N. Smith, P. Drucher, James Robins, William Poulson, Leroy Graves. Company organized in 1853. Chap. 25, P. & L. Laws of 1853.

Plymouth and Waupun Plank Road.—Route: From such point on Fond du Lac road in the town of Plymouth to such point in the town of Waupun as the stockholders shall determine. Commissioners: H. N. Smith, R. H. Hotchkiss, Enos Eastman, George Barnard, James Cleavland, William D. Moore, Allen Castle, Samuel Rathbone, R. Wilson, John Whitney, Samuel Riely, Leander Mayhern, L. C. Rapelge, C. L. Gage, David Bissell, Freeman Fay, Edwin Hellyer, N. M. Donaldson, Seymour Wilcox, S. B. Dodge, Josiah Drummond, A. L. Allis, George N. Bly. Company organized in 1853. Chap. 190, P. & L. Laws of 1853.

Plymouth and West Bend Plank Road.—Route: From Village of Quitquioc to village of West Bend, Washington county. Commissioners: Robert H. Hotchkiss, M. M. Flint, H. N. Smith, Henry Averill, James Preston, Reed C. Brazelton. Company organized in 1854. Chap. 197, P. & L. Laws of 1854.

Sheboygan Lake Turnpike and Bridge Road.—Across swamp and marsh on border of Sheboygan Lake in Sheboygan county on or near section line between sections 14-15, 22-23, 26-27, 34-35 in town 16, range 20, with suitable bridge across Sheboygan river. Commissioners: Erastus Keach, Sylvanus Wade, Henry Dochstader, Joseph Syron, Daniel D. Hosford, Charles H. Robinson, Eli Adams, Solomon Lombard, George W. Hersey, Thomas Lockhart, John Hansel, Michael Byrn, Walter Clovis. Company organized in 1855. Chap. 51, P. & L. Laws of 1855.

³ Mar. 1, 1835.

Before it became a plank road, the United States government in 1838 designated it a post road;⁴ and in 1845 the war department established it as a military road, connecting the Green Bay and Prairie du Chien military road at Fond du Lac with the Green Bay and Chicago military road at Sheboygan Falls, and with Lake Michigan at Sheboygan. Congress appropriated \$3000 for the purpose. The work of construction, which consisted mainly of clearing away timber, ditching, and building bridges, culverts and corduroy, with little or no surfacing, was in charge of Lieut. Joseph Dana Webster, of the United States army, under the superintendence of Capt. John McClelland. In his annual report for 1845 to his chief, Col. J. J. Abert, Capt. McClelland, of the Topographical Engineers, says of the project, "This road may be divided into two sections. The first being nearly due west from Sheboygan, is 30 mi. in length. The first 10 miles from Sheboygan passes through a thinly wooded sandy country. The appropriation being small, it was deemed best to expend most of it on the first section, it presenting the most difficulties and requiring improvement the most. The first nine miles of this section passes through a thickly settled country, is now in good passable order, the labor has therefore been directed to the remaining 21 miles of the section, which require opening, ditching, bridging, etc. The work was begun early in July . . . This is a very important road, it gives access from Lake Michigan to a most fertile country west of it which is now being settled rapidly, and opens by a direct route a market at Sheboygan, which hitherto has been approached by circuitous and almost impassable roads."⁵

Owing to the lack of surfacing, the extremely heavy traffic kept this road continuously in a wretched condition before it was planked. H. S. Anable says of it, "The year before (1845) Uncle Sam had cut a road thro' the forest to Fond du Lac. There were more stumps than road, but a team *could* get through in dry weather if not too heavily laden. I have since seen worse roads but it was among the Rocky and Sierra Nevada mountains."⁶ Dr. J. J. Brown describes a personal experience on it while on a trip to Fond du Lac in 1846 as follows, "While admiring the fine timbered land through which we were going it began to rain, and the hind wheel of our buggy ran into a deep hole among the roots of the trees and twisted off the end of the axle with the wheel. This was a bad fix—in the woods miles away from anybody, broke down and raining hard. While pondering over the situation and what to do,

⁴ 5 U. S. Stats. at Large, chap. 172.

⁵ National Archives, Washington, D. C.

⁶ Sheb. Times, Feb. 8, 1873.

we could faintly hear far away the welcome strokes of an axe. My comrade hurried away, found a pioneer, got an axe and small auger. With the axe a part of a young maple was made to take the place of the broken end of the axle. The auger made the hole for the linch pin and those to pin the pieces together, and just as we were planning to use some surplus straps of the harness to bind the two pieces more securely together a load of merchandise from Sheboygan for Fond du Lac came along and luckily had a lot of bed cord, just the thing for our use, a piece of which we used, and then our buggy was all right and took us safely on our way.”⁷

The *Green Bay Advocate* draws this interesting picture of the road: “The only avenue we know of from ‘all Northern Wisconsin’ to Sheboygan is famed far and wide as among the worst of the bad ’uns. Those who have been doomed to make the passage from Fox River to that place, give dire accounts of sad mishaps, of swamps where no soundings were

ever yet found—of rocks not laid down in any chart, and among which a snake could not wind without getting a cracked head—and of wrecks of vehicles which strew the tortuous channel. We once made the passage in *pro. per.*, and sure enough got through. The only ‘immigration’ we saw on the way consisted of a man with a plank-wheel cart and two oxen. He had



struck a snag somewhere among the ‘Kettles’ and carried away the starboard wheel. Never saw we more horror depicted upon human countenance than upon the captain of that craft, as he pulled out an axe and began the long work of making another wheel.”⁸ Sarah J. Bayley writes of a passage she made over the thoroughfare, “It was a wet season and I will not attempt to describe the hardships of a trip to Waupun and back in the lumbering stage through forests, mud and ruts, threatening to upset the stage. But those who went to Neenah fared worse, being obliged to leave a similar stage fast in the mud.”⁹

When Davis & Moore put the first line of stagecoaches on this road in 1848, the first trip from Fond du Lac to Sheboygan was

⁷ Sheb. Herald, Sept. 14, 1895.

⁸ Quoted in Sheb. Mercury, May 6, 1848.

⁹ “Sheboygan in ’51,” by Sarah J. Bayley, clipping from Milw. Sentinel, no date.

so perilous that the agent for the company, M. D. Henry, of Fond du Lac, who was himself a passenger, found it advisable not to return in the vehicle, but committed it on the return passage to the tender mercies of the driver and any chance passenger, who might be rash or ignorant enough to embark. A particularly bad mud hole was to be found near the log shanty of Hiram Smith. The ordinary journey from Plymouth to Sheboygan and return took two days.

The Sheboygan and Fond du Lac plank road company was incorporated in 1848 with an authorized capital of \$150,000, but work was not commenced on the road until 1851. In the latter year the charter was amended permitting the road to be extended from Fond du Lac by way of Rosendale, to some point on the Fox river north of Green Lake and south of Green Lake. Officers elected were H. H. Conklin, president, B. Williams, secretary, and Augustus L. McCrea, treasurer. By November 1851, the road was completed from Sheboygan to Plymouth, and by July 1852 to Fond du Lac. Upon completion of the road to Quitquioc, a celebration was held at the Merchants' Hotel, Sheboygan, on November 13, 1851. Some of the first meetings of the company were held at Wade's Half Way House in Greenbush.

Between Sheboygan and Sheboygan Falls the plank road had two branches, commonly known as the Upper road and the Lower road. The Upper road started at the corner of North Eighth street and Michigan avenue, and derived its name from the fact that it began at the upper end of town, and that its course lay along an elevation bordering the river valley. The Lower road commenced at the present intersection of South Eighth street and Indiana avenue, and was so called because it began at the lower end of the town and closely followed the banks of the river, crossing it at Ashby bridge. Entering Sheboygan Falls this branch passed over the lower bridge, extended north on Broadway, passed over the upper bridge, and then swung left up the incline until it formed a junction with the Upper road about one mile west of the village. The Upper road did not enter the town, but skirted the north end.¹⁰

¹⁰ Channing Mather in Sheb. Press. Nov. 28, 1927.

Apparently the lower branch of the plank road was constructed by a separate company named the Sheboygan River Plank Road Company, organized at Sheboygan Falls, Sept. 4, 1852, J. F. Seeley, president, S. B. Ormsbee, secretary, and John Keller, treasurer. (J. O. Thayer in Hist. Atlas of Sheb. Co. 1875). But there is no record of the incorporation of this company; and it probably sold out to the Sheboygan & Fond du Lac Plank Road Company at an early date.

How a plank road was built is a bit of long-forgotten but interesting information. Not the entire width of the roadway was covered with planks, as might be supposed, but only half of it—the half on which the heaviest traffic ordinarily proceeded. On the Sheboygan and Fond du Lac plank road this was the south side, as most of the loaded teams headed eastward toward Sheboygan, and usually returned in the opposite direction empty. The other half of the roadbed was constructed of plain dirt, or grade as it was called, and served mainly as a turn-out when two teams passed each other. East-bound vehicles, whether loaded or unloaded, had the right of way; all others had to turn out on the dirt track. This was the rule of the road.

The traveled track was 16 feet wide—8 feet of planking and 8 feet of dirt—somewhat elevated above the natural surface of the ground, and flanked on either side by ditches to enable water to run off. The planks were sawed on a portable sawmill which was moved from place to place as the work progressed. Three inches in thickness, the planks were laid crosswise on wooden stringers imbedded in the earth. These stringers were 4" x 4" or 3" x 6", and 13 or 14 feet long, and laid end to end parallel with the road. They were imbedded by carefully jamming the dirt around them with the blade of a shovel, in such a manner that the top surface of the stringer was level with the surface of the earth. Strangely enough, the planks were not spiked down or otherwise fastened to the stringers, but rested evenly upon the ground and the stringers, wedged tightly together with a crow bar. The planks further were laid on a slight slope from the center to the side, so that water would readily drain off. Plank roads proved to be a disappointment, especially under weather conditions in Wisconsin. The planks all too soon became rotten, warped, twisted and broken; the sharp iron shoes of the oxen and horses wore them down; and in a few years they became entirely unfit for use. The life of a plank road was only about five years. Repairing was usually done by filling in dirt rather than replacing worn-out planks with new ones. Including the Lower road from Sheboygan to Sheboygan Falls, the total length of plank roadway was 51 miles. Its construction cost \$1200 to \$1400 a mile. The location of only two tollgates is definitely known—both on the Upper road—one near Sheboygan on the east line of section 21, and the other midway to Sheboygan Falls.

A marked improvement over the old muddy, rutted track, the Sheboygan and Fond du Lac plank road was the artery for stage-

coach, and grain, freight and emigrant wagon traffic from far and wide. It became one of the leading corridors of commerce in the state. Strangest of all the cargoes carried over it were two engines—the *Winnebago* and the *Fountain City*—shipped from down east by boat as far as Sheboygan, and hauled across country to Fond du Lac, for service on the Rock River Valley Union railroad. To prevent the first machine from damaging the plank roadway the wheels were covered with wooden felloes and run on makeshift rails of long timbers laid lengthwise on the planks. Strings of as many as forty horses and oxen were hitched to the engine with ropes and chains, and with much urging and straining pulled it forward. As may be imagined, spectators along the way, especially the Indians, were struck with awe at the curious spectacle. Despite precautions, the heavy engine did considerable damage to the roadway, and when the second engine was about to be similarly transported, the road owners objected. It was claimed by the railroad, however, that it could not legally be denied the use of the road for the purpose, pointing out that under the road's charter any ox drawn or horse drawn vehicle had the right of passage; and in order to establish that the engine was a vehicle, several men rode on it as passengers. Apparently convinced by this ingenious but specious contention, the road officials permitted the engine to proceed, but it caused great damage to the highway, which it was never possible to fully repair.¹¹

The end of the Sheboygan & Fond du Lac plank road—or of most of it, at least—was signaled by the building of the Sheboygan and Mississippi railroad as far as Glenbeulah in 1860. In its entirety the road lasted only about nine years. It was the universal story that when railroads appeared, plank roads had to go out of existence finally. In March 1861 the state legislature passed a special act declaring the portion of the road from the county line to Taycheedah in Fond du Lac county a public highway, on the ground that it had been abandoned by the plank road company.¹² This was followed, in April 1863, by a general law which provided that whenever any part of a plank road was abandoned by failure to make repairs or collect tolls for a period of sixty days, it was deemed to be a public highway.¹³

Then, on August 1, 1863, the company leased the upper plank road between Sheboygan and Sheboygan Falls under a ninety-nine

¹¹ Three Pioneer Taverns, by W. A. Titus, Wis. Mag. of Hist., vol. 17, p. 179; Sheb. Lake Journal, Oct. 25, 1854.

¹² Chap. 142, Laws of 1861.

¹³ Chap. 253, Laws of 1863.

year lease to the superintendent of the road, Thomas M. Blackstock,¹⁴ and permitted all the rest of the road to become a public highway under the existing law. Mr. Blackstock in turn assigned his lease to others. From 1863 to 1902 there was quite a succession of lessees and operators of this remnant, the last of whom was Charles Goerlitz.¹⁵ Mr. Goerlitz finally disposed of his interest to the public on Feb. 26, 1902 for \$1600, and it has ever since been a public highway. His revenue from the road in 1901 had been only \$300. A special committee of the county board, favoring the purchase, reported, "Toll roads have outlived their usefulness, if they ever served a public utility, and in this enlightened age there ought to be no room for their existence."¹⁶

¹⁴ Mr. Blackstock was one of the outstanding citizens and community builders of Sheboygan. He came to America from Ireland in 1848 as a lad of 14 years, and settled in Sheboygan the following year. After being employed for a time in a hotel, he became a clerk in the drug store of Dr. J. J. Brown. About 1856, requiring outdoor employment for the sake of his health, he accepted the position of superintendent of the Sheboygan & Fond du Lac plank road. When the road was abandoned in 1863, he took charge of the pier located at the mouth of the Pigeon river. This pier was owned by A. L. McCrea, the president of the plank road, and was used for shipping cordwood, lumber and brick to Milwaukee and Chicago. The existence of this pier is unknown to the present generation, but remains of the pier, and of a small settlement adjacent, are still visible. It was at this time that he bought the 174 acre farm just north of the Pigeon commonly known as the Blackstock, and now the Denn, farm.

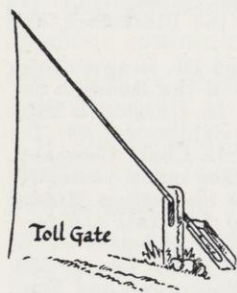
In 1866 Mr. Blackstock, with Dr. Carl Muth, purchased Dr. Brown's drug store. Within a few years he bought Dr. Muth's interest in the business and conducted the store alone until 1876. About 1875, when the Crocker & Bliss chair factory was destroyed by fire, in order to create employment for the workers deprived of a livelihood, he organized the Phoenix Chair Company, of which he was the principal stockholder and president for many years. He was also one of the organizers and first president of the Sheboygan Mutual Savings Loan and Building Association, an institution to facilitate the payments for homes, and largely responsible for the large number of homes owned by the workmen themselves.—Portrait & Biog. Rec. of Sheb. Co., p. 658.

¹⁵ August 1, 1863, the President and Directors of the Sheboygan and Fond du Lac Plank Road Company, by A. L. McCrea, President, and Geo. C. Cole, Secretary, for a "valuable consideration", (amount not stated), gave to Thomas Blackstock a 99 year lease of that part of the plank road between its eastern terminus in Sheboygan and the five-mile post on the road in Sheboygan Falls. February 28, 1864, Mr. Blackstock conveyed a half interest in the lease to Charles L. Moore for \$350.00. Thereafter the following successive assignments of the lease were made: May 31, 1866, Thomas Blackstock and Charles L. Moore to Geo. W. Weeden and John A. Bentley for \$3,000.00; January 3, 1868, Geo. W. Weeden, half interest to John A. Bentley for \$2,500.00; July 12, 1869, John A. Bentley to John Parker for \$6,000.00; June 2, 1870, John Parker to James Lampman for \$6,000.00; May 23, 1876, James Lampman to Charles and Fritz Goerlitz for \$3,000.00; and May 18, 1889, Fred Goerlitz, half interest to Charles Goerlitz. February 26, 1902, Charles Goerlitz sold the road, conveying to the city and town of Sheboygan, and the village and town of Sheboygan Falls respectively for \$1600.00, the portions lying in their municipalities, for repair, maintenance and use as a public highway. (Information taken from original records filed in office of city clerk of Sheboygan).

¹⁶ Proc. of Sheb. Co. Bd. of Supervisors, 1900-1901.

It was nearly three years after the Sheboygan and Fond du Lac was completed before the Sheboygan and Calumet plank road was begun. This road extended from the intersection of N. 8th street and Michigan avenue in the city of Sheboygan, west to N. 13th street, then north to Superior avenue, and thence north-westerly along the route of the present state trunk highway No. 32, through Howards Grove and Millhome, to the village of Kiel, in Manitowoc county, a total distance of about twenty miles. Incorporated in 1851, the project for some reason was not actually started until 1855, when it came into the control of a group of Germans, who carried it to completion as far as Howards Grove in 1856, and Kiel in 1859. Running up into northern Sheboygan and southern Manitowoc counties, it tapped a large territory not served by any railroad and settled almost exclusively by Germans, and made this section tributary to Sheboygan.

Fortunately our information concerning the Sheboygan and Calumet plank road is fairly complete. The original minutes of the stockholders' and directors' meetings of the company from 1855 to its dissolution in 1900 have been preserved, largely through the care and foresight of August Frome Jr., of Howards Grove, the last secretary of the company, who appreciated their great historical value. Most of the facts about the road given here are gleaned from these minute books.



At the first meeting of stockholders, held July 23, 1855, they elected Adolph Rosenthal, William Kastner, Jacob Schneider, Peter Schweighofen and A. L. McCrea directors, and the next day the directors elected A. L. McCrea, president, Charles Zaegel, secretary, and David Taylor, treasurer. Thomas M. Foy was employed to survey part of the road, and E. Fox Cook was appointed the company attorney.

The road was divided into four sections or districts, for supervision and maintenance, each being in charge of an overseer or superintendent. These districts were: No. 1, from the Sheboygan city limits to Pigeon river; No. 2, from Pigeon river to the Green Bay road; No. 3, from Green Bay road to the town of Schleswig; No. 4, from this point to the end of the road. Four tollgates were maintained on the route, each in charge of a keeper: near the intersections of the Mill road, Johnsonville road, Green Bay road, and at Millhome. Tollgate keepers' salaries varied from \$50 to \$200 a

year. Annual revenue from the road varied from \$4,000 to \$5,000, and averaged slightly over \$4,500 throughout the company's history. Never a profitable investment, dividends on stock varied from 2% to 6% a year, but were paid only about one-half the time. Prices of the time are interesting. Wages of men working on the road were 70 cents per day. Sound 3" oak planks cost \$11 to \$12 per M; logs \$8 per M. The interest rate on money borrowed was 12% per annum. Municipal bonds paid 8% interest.

Stockholders were of two classes. First, private individuals with a direct interest in having the road, such as farmers living along the way, who needed it in order to get to town, and merchants who wanted to attract the trade of the farmers. The other stockholders were some of the localities especially benefitted by the road. These were the city of Sheboygan, owning \$10,000 of stock; town of Herman, \$10,000; town of Schleswig, \$6,000. The monetary aid given by these municipalities in the construction of the road took a form favored in that day and generation, known as "lending credit" to the road. More money was required to finance the venture than could be raised by local subscription. Private capital in the east was skeptical of all western promotional schemes, which had so often proved of a "wildcat" character, and refused to invest in them; but it did accept the municipal bonds of progressive communities in which these improvements were located. Accordingly, the governing bodies of Sheboygan, Herman, Schleswig and Kiel, after voting bond issues against their respective municipalities, purchased stock in the plank road company with the bonds, and the company disposed of the bonds in eastern financial circles for the needed cash.

Stock in the company was not a good investment. Dividends were small and irregular, and the principal was never repaid. However, by individuals and municipalities contributing the necessary capital the road was constructed and that section of the country developed much sooner than would otherwise have been the case. As the years went by, the whole idea of toll roads became more and more out of tune with the spirit of the times. The Sheboygan County Board in 1897 declared them to be "a relic of pioneer days and not in harmony with modern ideas." In 1892 the Sheboygan Advancement Association started a movement to abolish the road as a toll road. In 1897 the company conveyed the portion of the road lying in Kiel to that village. In 1899 and 1900 the various municipalities interested voted to voluntarily relinquish their stock

in the company. On Sept. 15, 1900, the company by action of its stockholders, formally opened the road as a free public highway. And on Dec. 6, 1900, the company was dissolved. The Sheboygan and Calumet plank road lasted as long as it did because it was so located as not to be in direct competition with any railroad, as was the case with the Sheboygan and Fond du Lac plank road.

Plank road companies, like all corporations in early days, were created by special acts of the legislature, rather than under general incorporation statutes as at present. While the various charters differed somewhat in their details, yet they were strikingly similar in most respects. Each charter gave the name, and amount of capital stock, and the number and value of the shares of stock, of the company, designated the general route of the road, and named the persons to act as commissioners. It was the duty of the commissioners to open the stock books of the company and receive subscriptions to stock, and then when the required amount had been subscribed and paid for, call the first stockholders meeting for the purpose of electing directors.

Charters fixed the maximum tolls that could be collected. Tolls allowed on the Sheboygan and Fond du Lac plank road, for instance, were: Two cents per mile for every vehicle drawn by two animals; one cent per mile for every horse and rider, and every vehicle drawn by one animal; one-half cent per mile for every horse, mule or neat cattle, and half-score of sheep or swine, driven loose. The actual charge according to Channing Mather, was a penny a mile.¹⁷

Plank road companies were semi-public in their nature, and were granted certain privileges not accorded to ordinary private corporations. Among their powers was the right of eminent domain,—the right, if unable to purchase land for road purposes from the owners, to acquire it by condemnation proceedings upon payment of adequate compensation for it. Although having this power, the plank road companies seldom exercised it, as they were able to acquire nearly all their right of way by agreement or gift from the landowners, who naturally welcomed the road. The companies also had the right to enter private lands in order to survey and locate the route of the road, and to take from any lands adjoining the road gravel, stone or earth for the purpose of constructing or repairing it. Any person who deliberately passed through

¹⁷ Sheb. Press, Nov. 28, 1927.

a tollgate without paying toll, or detoured around the gate to avoid payment of toll, was liable to a penalty payable to the company. Offenses of this nature, as well as embezzlements by tollgate keepers of company moneys, were not infrequent. No toll was payable by anyone going to or from a religious meeting on Sunday, a funeral, or a military gathering where one's presence was required. All in all, plank roads were an interesting feature of our early history.

CHAPTER 13

THE ADVENT OF RAILROADS

AS EARLY as 1845, men visualized the possibility of a great transcontinental railroad system extending from Sheboygan on Lake Michigan westward to the Mississippi, and eventually beyond that point, across prairies and foothills and mountains, to the far shores of the Pacific. Such a line was to be the connecting link uniting two great water systems—the Great Lakes and the upper Mississippi. Rev. Huntington Lyman, minister of the gospel and land speculator *par excellence*, in a series of articles published in the Sheboygan Gazette in 1845, when Sheboygan was as yet only a backwoods village of not over two hundred people, was probably the first to paint this alluring picture. Even the more conservative recognized the feasibility of such a line as the most accessible outlet for the rich territory west of Fond du Lac and east of the Wisconsin river, known as the Marquette region and commonly regarded as the Eden of the state. The Sheboygan Times declared, "Sheboygan has every natural facility for the erection of elevators and warehouses, and for being the lake terminus of a great railway system that Milwaukee has, and in the saving of distance in transportation has an advantage in location of 110 miles."¹

The first project for a railroad to awaken the interest of the citizens of Sheboygan was the Sheboygan and Fond du Lac Rail Road Company, incorporated by a special act of the territorial legislature in 1847.² As its name indicated, the route of the road was to be from Sheboygan to Fond du Lac. The commissioners named were M. C. Darling, N. P. Tallmadge, William Farnsworth, R. P. Harriman, Henry Conklin, John A. Eastman and Moses Gibson. The act providing that the company charter would be forfeited if construction was not begun within five years, and nothing having been done by the promoters during that time to push the building of the line, a new group took over the project in 1852 and re-incorporated it as the Sheboygan and Mississippi Rail Road Com-

General Reference: The Sheboygan and Mississippi, 1852-1869; M. A. Thesis (1929), by Winifred C. Howe, University Library, Madison.

¹ Dec. 2, 1871.

² Chap. 23, Laws of 1847.

pany. Planned on a more ambitious scale than the first company, the route of the proposed road was enlarged to extend from Sheboygan to the Mississippi river by way of Fond du Lac, and the capital was increased from \$450,000 to \$3,000,000. Commissioners named were Asahel P. Lyman, Henry H. Conklin, William W. King, Charles D. Cole, Horatio N. Smith, John Bannister, A. B. Hamilton, Samuel W. Beall, John P. Sherwood, Robert Jenkinson, Benjamin F. Moore, Thomas B. Stoddard and James McM. Shafter.³ The next year Joseph F. Kirkland and Harrison C. Hobart were added as commissioners.⁴ Failure of the original incorporators to press the commencement of the road was due to the fact that it had fallen into the hands of hostile parties, like John B. Macy and his associate, Robert J. Walker, who had no intention of building it, because they were interested in the Rock River Valley Union, a rival railroad to Fond du Lac. Mr. Kirkland, however, succeeded in some way in acquiring all the franchises and privileges of the road, for a price, it is said, of \$800, invested \$20,000 in the project, and became its most active promoter.⁵ As Sheboygan's leading grain and commission merchant, he saw the importance of a railroad toward the west, not only in the prosperity of his own business, but in the development of the town. Construction, however, did not actually begin until 1856.

Sentiment for the line was by no means unanimous. Opposition to it sprang up, and obstacles were placed in its way, that not only handicapped but finally succeeded in substantially defeating the project. First, there was the usual skepticism regarding anything new. As late as 1851 there were only twenty-five miles of railroad in all Wisconsin, and many settlers had never seen a railroad. Some curious notions were entertained about the innovation. Objection was that trains would not stop and take on loads anywhere along the line, but that loads would have to be hauled to the stopping places. Trains would scare farm animals, sparks from the locomotives would set fire to nearby fields and buildings, and the smoke would blacken the wool of sheep. Storm and snow would make the road impassable in winter. Rails would snap from the cold as the trains passed over them. Locomotives would never pull trains up the steep grades in rolling country like this; the wheels would merely spin on the rails. And so on.

³ Chap. 98, Laws of 1852.

⁴ Chap. 3, Laws of 1853.

⁵ "Sheboygan's Start," in Sheb. Co. News, Dec. 4, 1889.

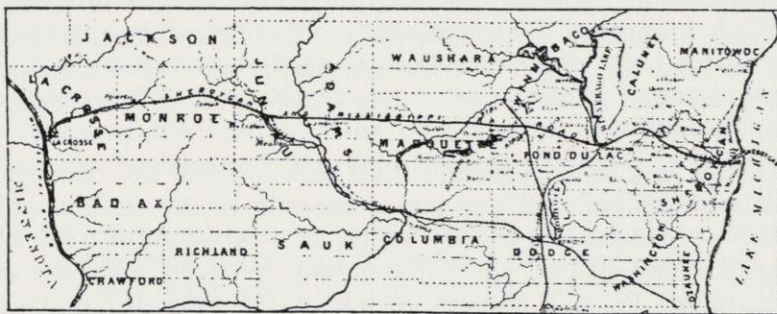
Better founded opposition came from plank road and stage-coach companies, livery stable keepers, teamsters, village tradesmen, and others more or less dependent on animal-drawn vehicles for their livelihood, who saw in the railroad a threat to their business and indeed their existence. A current slogan was that plank roads were literally the farmers' railroads, with the advantage over steam railroads that every man could use his own vehicle. One enthusiast had this to say in favor of stagecoach against railroad travel: "In railroad cars a passenger who embarks without having previously attached himself to a party would be as much alone as if he had the whole car to himself, and would probably not have a sociable or kind word addressed to him in the course of 500 miles travel; whereas in post coaches on plank roads the whole inside party of nine—whether they are total strangers to each other or not—are at once, from the admitted etiquette in stage coaches, on a par for the time being, and sociability takes the place of stiffness, and agreeable conversation is at once elicited."⁶

Sufficient funds for building the Sheboygan and Mississippi railroad were difficult to obtain. Ready capital in this new, undeveloped country was lacking. Few individuals had any money to invest. The bulk of the funds had to be raised by contributions from communities that would be specially benefitted by the road. The method adopted was the familiar one, suggested by plank road financing, of localities loaning their credit to the project by issuing bonds for the purchase of stock of the company, and the company then raising the cash by disposing of the bonds in the open market, usually at a considerable discount. Of the total of \$855,000 stock subscribed by 1857, according to the annual stockholders report that year, \$80,000 were personal cash subscriptions; \$25,000, city subscriptions payable in cash; \$300,000, city and county subscriptions payable in bonds; \$450,000, contractors' subscriptions payable in work and material. Included in these subscriptions were \$200,000 voted by the city of Sheboygan, \$10,000 by the village of Sheboygan Falls, \$10,000 by Plymouth, and \$100,000 by the county of Sheboygan. When the county's contribution was submitted to a referendum of the electors in 1854, it carried by a majority of only 400 votes, the rural sections voting heavily against the loan, but Sheboygan voting overwhelmingly for it. At the time, these aids were regarded as good investments, but they were never paid back, the only returns ever realized thereon being the incidental and indi-

⁶ Quoted from New York Panorama, in Sheb. Mercury, Jan. 3, 1852.

rect benefits resulting from the existence of the railroad. In 1865, for instance, the total receipts of the company were only \$22,394.63, and expenditures were \$20,439.10.⁷

By all odds the most serious obstacle the Sheboygan and Mississippi railroad encountered was the unexpected opposition of the city of Fond du Lac, upon whose financial assistance it had depended. Although it was authorized by a special act of the state legislature in 1854 to lend its aid to the road to the extent of \$200,000, Fond du Lac time after time refused to vote any aid whatever. The city had ambitions in other directions. Its citizens



From an old letterhead

Sheboygan W. Co. Jan 17 1860

were all wrapped up in the proposed Rock River Valley Union railroad from Fond du Lac to Chicago, by way of Watertown and Janesville, and in the much-heralded improvement of the Fox-Wisconsin waterway, especially the thirty-five mile course of the lower Fox river between Lake Winnebago and Green Bay. This stretch, with its 170 foot descent, was fitted with locks, dams and canals, so that small, shallow-draft river craft were able to make the journey up and down, giving promise that some day full-sized, lake-going vessels would be traversing the route. Situated at the head of Lake Winnebago, in the heart of a vast inland empire, and with a direct water channel to the Great Lakes, Fond du Lac pictured itself as a coming lake and rail terminus as advantageously situated as if set on the very shores of Lake Michigan itself. Under these circumstances, the city showed but little enthusiasm for a railroad to Sheboygan, and repeatedly turned down all appeals for its aid. Editorializing on Fond du Lac's attitude, the Sheboygan Mercury declared, "The Fox and Wisconsin River improvement is at present a hobby for the people of Fond du Lac, and serves as an

⁷ Evergreen City Times, May 19, 1854, Feb. 2, 1856, Feb. 7, 1857, Apr. 18, 1857, Mar. 10, 1866.

excuse when asked to aid in any improvement between this and that place, but time will show whether a greater proportion of the business of Fond du Lac is to be done through that channel, or whether it will seek the natural and cheapest route, which every reasonable man who will look at things as they are will admit is through this place."⁸ Referring to Fond du Lac, The Sheboygan Lake Journal observed, "She proved herself indeed an unwilling bride."⁹

Other efforts failing, a large railroad meeting was held at Fairwater on Dec. 13, 1856, to arouse sentiment for the line in the area west of Fond du Lac,¹⁰ but despite resolutions of endorsement and pledges of subscriptions, the project continued to languish without the support of the city itself, which did not finally awaken to the importance of the road to her until fully a decade later.

In the face of all the difficulties encountered, the Sheboygan and Mississippi railroad was completed only as far as Glenbeulah by 1860—a distance of twenty miles. It was not until 1869 that it reached Fond du Lac. Later it was built to Ripon, and later still to Princeton. From Princeton it was to be extended to Grand Rapids and beyond. But it never got that far; its western terminus rested permanently at Princeton.¹¹ Sheboygan started out to beat Milwaukee to the Mississippi. When the Sheboygan and Mississippi railroad was organized in 1852, Milwaukee had only a short 25 mile line—which ran to Waukesha, and was opened for traffic February 25, 1851; but by 1860, when Sheboygan's pet railroad project had only succeeded in getting to Glenbeulah, Milwaukee not only had sent three lines toward the west, two of which had already reached the Mississippi, but it had tapped and pre-empted territory that Sheboygan regarded as being legitimately tributary to her. If the Sheboygan and Mississippi had been ready by the fall of 1857, as originally planned, it is not improbable that Sheboygan, rather than Milwaukee, would have become the metropolis of Wisconsin. In tracing the development of cities it is sometimes hard to determine why one outgrows another having seemingly equal advantages and opportunities. With respect to harbor facilities, rich, wide *hinterland*, and accessibility to market, Milwaukee and Sheboygan were practically upon an equal footing at the out-

⁸ Nov. 17, 1849; Evergreen City Times, Dec. 6, 1856.

⁹ Jan. 30, 1855.

¹⁰ Evergreen City Times, Jan. 3, 1857; Sheb. Lake Journal, Jan. 1, 1857.

¹¹ Sheb. Herald, Mar. 2, 1877.

set. Probably Milwaukee's ability to command the needed capital, and at the right time, was the determining factor in the race for supremacy between the two cities. Milwaukee was also accused of questionable practices, as subsidizing the legislature, influencing elections, detraction and duplicity, in attaining ascendancy over its rival to the north.¹²

Largely supported by local capital and backed by local business men, Sheboygan's railroad was regarded as a civic undertaking in which every inhabitant took pride. It was the first big thing in the life of the town, auguring greater things for the future. September 6, 1852, a railroad meeting was held at Sheboygan to consider the building of a lake shore road to Milwaukee and Chicago, but nothing came of it, as nearly everyone favored a railroad to the west at that time. Naturally, so important an event as the construction of the road was the occasion for a public celebration, which the Sheboygan Times interestingly described as follows:

"On Wednesday last, our citizens indulged in a little 'glorification' by way of celebrating the breaking of ground on the Sheboygan and Mississippi Railroad, an event which has been long talked of, and labored for, and which is now an actuality. About 10 o'clock A. M., the German Rifle Company, Hook & Ladder and Engine Companies, and the German Turners, in their respective uniforms, assembled in front of the National Hotel, and under the direction of George Troup, as marshal, marched in procession to the Public Square, where the citizens were provided with carriages and coaches, and the whole went in procession to the spot where the contractor intends to commence grading, near Curtis' mill.

"Having arrived on the ground, a large circle was formed around the spot where the 'breaking' was to be done, and at the call of the assembly Hon. David Taylor stepped forward and congratulated the audience on the fact that they had met to commemorate one of the most important events in the history of Sheboygan. We have heretofore been in a measure isolated from the country west of us, but we are now commencing an enterprise that will bring to our doors the vast riches that are seeking an outlet from that region, and this enterprise merits, and should receive, the hearty cooperation of the citizens of this county in money as well as good will. Mr. Taylor's remarks were brief but to the point, and he closed by introducing Messrs. William Farnsworth, Stephen Wolverton and Henry Otten, to whom were assigned the honor of breaking the first ground in the enterprise, the first two being the oldest inhabitants of our city. Mr. Farnsworth then assumed the pick, Mr. Wolverton the shovel, and Mr. Otten en-

¹² Evergreen City Times, March 5, 1859.

gineered the barrow amid the repeated cheers of the assembly, whose enthusiasm augured well for the ultimate completion of the work then being commenced.

"B. Williams, Esq. was then called out, and spoke briefly. We were unable from our position, to catch but an occasional remark, but we understood him to say that we as a State were more favored than any other, and that Sheboygan, from its location, was more favored than most other portions of the state, and all we have to do is to seize upon and convert to our uses these advantages. By so doing we shall open an avenue to a country of unexcelled riches back of us, and through which these riches will flow in upon us in a continually increasing stream. This will not be a work of spasmodic action, but one which will continue till it greets the Mississippi. At the conclusion of his remarks he called for three cheers for Edward Appleton, the contractor, which were given with a will. Mr. A. P. Lyman having been called for, said he had thought as he came along to this place, and the thought had impressed him quite forcibly, that we are on our way either to the burial or the resurrection of Sheboygan. If this enterprise were suffered to sleep on our hands from this time, this day would prove its burial. If, on the contrary, it were prosecuted with that vigor which we now have the means of doing, it would be the precursor of a most brilliant resurrection. We should not let that pick and shovel rest until the road is finished.

"Mr. Appleton, in answer to a call, said his interests were now so far identified with our interests, that he could truly call himself our fellow-citizen. Although at first somewhat doubtful as to whether the Sheboygan and Mississippi Rail Road would prove a paying road at present, he was daily more convinced from a residence here, and the knowledge acquired from a recent visit into the interior, that it would yet become one of the best paying roads in the state. He was no public speaker, being better calculated to act than to speak, but he would say for the encouragement of those present, that he had last night received notice of the shipment of a load of materials, tools, and hands to work them, which would probably be here within two weeks, when the grading would be commenced in earnest, and prosecuted with vigor. A. Marschner addressed the Germans present. Three times three were given for the road, and the assembly repaired to the woods nearby, where refreshments were served up."¹³

Starting out at Sheboygan in June 1856, the road was completed and opened for traffic to Sheboygan Falls in January 1859, to Plymouth in June 1859, and to Glenbeulah in March 1860. The delay in reaching Sheboygan Falls was due in part to the monetary panic of 1857, which interrupted business activity everywhere.

¹³ June 7, 1856.

On January 17, 1859, the opening of the road to Sheboygan Falls was celebrated by a grand free railroad excursion to that place. Four trains, carrying 500 to 800 passengers each, made the trip during the day. Sheboygan Falls citizens joined in the festivities. H. Gaylord was the engineer, and B. Hinckley the conductor. Thereafter three trains went over this section of the line daily. Passenger fare to the Falls was 20¢, and to Plymouth, later, 60¢¹⁴

When the road reached Plymouth in June 1859, the event was celebrated by an excursion of the members of Sheboygan Deluge Fire Company No. 2 to that village as the special guests of Mr. Appleton, the railroad contractor. Marching to the depot on Indiana Avenue in full uniform and regalia, to the music of the German Band, and the fife and drum corps, they placed their engine on board a platform car, boarded the train and moved gaily out of the station. At Plymouth they were welcomed by a large delegation of citizens; and R. H. Hotchkiss furnished a pair of horses to haul the engine through the streets, although the men would have preferred to draw it by hand. "On arriving at the Quitquioc House," says a journal of the time, "Foreman Brown gave the word, the Delugers seized the ropes, and in about two minutes were playing with great force on the flouring mill of Hotchkiss & Puhlmann some 15 rods distant, getting their suction from the mill pond. A powerful stream was thrown, through 150 feet of hose, and a 1¼ inch nozzle, entirely over the mill, three stories high and about 50 feet across." Then, after partaking of a banquet in Concert Hall prepared by the ladies of Quitquioc, came the toasts, sentiments, speeches, &c., &c. "At 5 o'clock the company gave three times three and a 'tiger' for their entertainers, and then marched back to the depot to the exhilarating music of their bands, and in due time were again home, having enjoyed their excursion to its full extent with a *rational* enjoyment, entirely free from the evil effects of all *spiritual* influences, with which no fellowship whatever was held."¹⁵

Inauguration of the railroad to Glenbeulah was celebrated on March 28, 1860. In the morning the first passenger train went through to Glenbeulah. On its return a large number of residents



¹⁴ Evergreen City Times, Jan. 22, 1859.

¹⁵ Evergreen City Times, June 25, 1859.

of Glenbeulah came to Sheboygan, returning on the afternoon train with many Sheboygan citizens desiring to make their first trip through the Kettles by daylight. At 6 P. M. a special train left Sheboygan fairly filled with a large and jovial company. At Glenbeulah, meantime, ample preparations were made to receive and entertain the guests. The ladies' waiting room of the depot was used as a reception room, the gentlemen's waiting room as a dining hall. The floor and tracks in the engine house were covered with a temporary dancing floor, capable of accommodating five or six "cotillion sets" at one time. Dancing stopped at 1:30 A. M., and then the merry-makers started for home, after giving three cheers for Glenbeulah and the Sheboygan and Mississippi railroad. Tickets were \$1 per person, including train fare.¹⁶

The road's original rolling stock consisted of two 22-ton locomotives, named the "Sheboygan" and the "Cape Cod", two 8-wheel passenger cars, fifteen 8-wheel platform cars, five 8-wheel box cars, and two 4-wheel construction cars. The locomotives burned wood. Whole sticks of cordwood were heaved lengthwise into the firebox. Piles of wood were maintained at every station. Farmers added to their income by bringing in loads of firewood properly cut and split. The depot in Sheboygan was located on the south side of the river near the lake shore, and was built by A. L. Weeks. Close by were the round house, and the wood and machine shops of the road, which were destroyed by fire on May 5, 1873, but were rebuilt through a cash loan of \$15,000 made by the city. At the junction of the Sheboygan and Fond du Lac and the Lake Shore railroads, near the intersection of Indiana Avenue and S. 13th street, freight and baggage was transferred from the former line to the latter down a long chute.¹⁷

When the builders of the railroad found that they could not push their line beyond Glenbeulah to Fond du Lac, they began to seek opportunities for extension in other directions. Such opportunities, they believed, were to be found in the territories to the north and south of the district west of Fond du Lac. In 1855 the Sheboygan and Appleton Railroad Company was formed by special act of the legislature to construct a line from Sheboygan to Appleton, and thence to some point on Lake Superior.¹⁸ Commonly referred to as the northern branch of the Sheboygan and Mississippi, the road was intended to penetrate into the heart of the virgin

¹⁶ Evergreen City Times, Mar. 31, 1860.

¹⁷ Evergreen City Times, Mar. 5, 1859; Sheb. Press, Apr. 23, 1926.

¹⁸ Chap. 260, P. & L. Laws of 1855.

lumbering and mining regions of the state, not so much for transporting timber, and iron and copper ore, to a lake port as to supply the numerous lumber and mining camps in this vast area with supplies and provisions. Enthusiastically endorsing the project, the Appleton Crescent declared, "With a railroad to Sheboygan, Appleton would become the center of one of the richest sections of our State, and with the certain extension to the rich mineral region of Lake Superior no road would pay better."¹⁹ Glenbeulah was to be the junction point of the two roads.

Van Eps Young, a director of the Sheboygan and Mississippi, and vice president of the Bank of Sheboygan, succeeded in obtaining pledges of corporate aid of over \$600,000 to finance the northern branch of the road, from Outagamie and Calumet counties, the village of Appleton, and various towns along the proposed route. It was also hoped to get the benefit of a rich land grant from the federal government as an aid in the construction of the line. This grant, however, finally went to the Wisconsin Central railroad, now a part of the Soo system; and the Sheboygan and Mississippi's plans for a northern branch came to naught.²⁰ Another branch—the southern—intended to lead from Sheboygan by way of Sheboygan Falls to Horicon in Dodge county, and named the Sheboygan and Horicon Railroad—was in contemplation in 1857. But the Milwaukee and Horicon line had already gained such headway in this direction that the project was abandoned.²¹

Limited by force of circumstances, for nearly a decade, to a length of only twenty miles, the Sheboygan and Mississippi of necessity was not a paying road. Default occurring in the payment of interest on its bonded indebtedness, the bondholders early foreclosed the mortgage securing the bonds and obtained the appointment of a receiver to operate the road pending the foreclosure. Harrison Barrett, of Sheboygan, was appointed receiver by the court. On March 2, 1861, the bondholders organized a new company, which they named the Sheboygan and Fond du Lac Railroad Company, to take over all the assets of the old. The effect of these proceedings was to eliminate the original stockholders entirely, and to put the ownership and management of the company in the hands of the bondholders. Among the incorporators of the new company were J. F. Kirkland, Harrison Barrett, Edward Appleton and J. O. Thayer. Shortly after the Civil War, S. M. Barrett, of Cincinnati,

¹⁹ Quoted in *Evergreen City Times*, Aug. 18, 1855.

²⁰ *Evergreen City Times*, Jan. 17, and 31, Feb. 7, 1857.

²¹ Chap. 156, P. & L. Laws of 1857.

a brother of Harrison Barrett, came to Sheboygan, and was largely responsible, at long last, for extending the road from Glenbeulah to Fond du Lac. It was reached in 1869, the first regular train going through to that city Jan. 14, 1869.²² The achievement was signalized by a celebration held in Sheboygan which was written up by a reporter of the Fond du Lac Commonwealth in this breezy style:

"Plymouth, delegation from Sheboygan met us, good time, introduced to its German Mayor . . . end of journey. Carriages waiting, ride to Beekman House . . . Cast lots for beds, and bed mates . . . Supper, music, oysters, beef, lobsters, fish, game, cabbages, onions, turkey, salad, pickles, pie, cake, coffee, oranges, Johnny cake, honey, tea, bread and milk, raisins, hash, dried apples, coconuts, beans, corn dodgers, pineapples, &c., &c., everything, anything, and more 2. Welcome speech by Bentley, was glad to see us, glad R. R. was built, mutual interests, Fond du Lac and Sheboygan great promise in future, make ourselves at home, hospitalities of city, &c., &c. Kretz took it up . . . Sheboygan a well meaning, modest maiden with a slight German accent, for 20 years she had been waiting and longing to be embraced by Fond du Lac, and now she was very happy. Responded to by Priest who was glad R. R. was built and was ready to embrace that modest maiden from the word "go." (More speeches).

"The proceedings in the dining hall were about closing by an elegant march, executed by one of the finest bands in the state, when the master of ceremonies announced that if the party would remain seated a part of the programme which had been omitted would be brought in. Your reporter could not imagine of any earthly thing that had been omitted at that repast. We certainly *could not* eat any more, we *ought not* drink any more, and had already smoked ourselves to death. What next? sure enough!! a common step ladder 10 feet high is placed in the center of the room . . . and in a twinkling, a huge *bona fide* black bear bounded into the room and up that ladder. Mighty Caesar!! . . . Supper over . . . tried in many ways to spend money, couldn't get rid of a cent!! all the rest of the party in the same fix!! All hands passed evening pleasantly, some of them too much so. Morning after breakfast, carriages ordered, ride all over the city, Cathedral, Museum, Court House, Woolen factory, High Schools, City Hall, Brick yard, Ship dock, jail, &c., &c. . . At 12 o'clock a dinner was served equal in all things to the supper the evening before. The first dishes had been served . . . when in walked a tall, six foot, full dressed Indian . . . Dinner over, Mayor Meyer said the hour for departure had come . . . The party while on their way home were seized at Plymouth, . . . taken bodily in a dozen sleighs, drawn all over the town, to the town Hall and

²² Evergreen City Times, Jan. 31, 1863, Jan. 16, 1869.

there seated down to a table covered with the very best the land affords. To say this unexpected *denouement* "took them down" don't half tell it. The party returned safe and sound, feeling in their hearts, "It was a goodly thing to go out into the lands of the Sheboyganders."²³

Two weeks later the Fond du Lac'ers returned the compliment by staging a similar celebration in their city. About eighty Sheboygan citizens journeyed thence by train drawn by the engine "Cape Cod", gaily decked with flags, its bell and whistle merrily sounding. Arrived at their destination, carriages were in waiting at the depot to convey them to the Patty House, where they sat down to a sumptuous banquet with their genial hosts. The spirit of the occasion was reflected in the subject of one of the toasts, "The Sheboygan and Fond du Lac Railroad 30 Years Hence—Through Tickets to Omaha, San Francisco, Alaska, Pekin, St. Petersburg and Paris—without change of cars."²⁴

In 1871 occurred an event that for a time seemed destined to work a revolutionary change in the fortunes of the Sheboygan and Fond du Lac railroad. That year the controlling interest in the company was purchased by the Michigan Central railroad, the purpose being to complete the line to St. Paul, and there to connect it with the Northern Pacific railroad. It was to form the Wisconsin link in a great transcontinental railway system stretching all the way from the Atlantic to the Pacific—250 miles shorter than any other similar road. The Fond du Lac Journal said of it, "We do not wish to be exuberantly sanguine, but we must say that to us the prospect is a glorious one."²⁵ Rev. Huntington Lyman's dream of a quarter of a century before appeared about to be realized. For some reason, however, not now known, the whole idea of making this line a portion of a through or general system was dropped, and it has ever since remained a road of secondary importance. On April 3, 1880, it was again sold in pursuance of a mortgage foreclosure judgment—this time to a new corporation known as the Sheboygan and Western Railway Company; and on March 19, 1881, it was consolidated with the Chicago, Milwaukee and Northwestern Railway, the predecessor of the Chicago and North Western Railway, of whose network it is now a part.²⁶

Altogether there were three railroads completed in Sheboygan County; and as many as seven others were planned but never con-

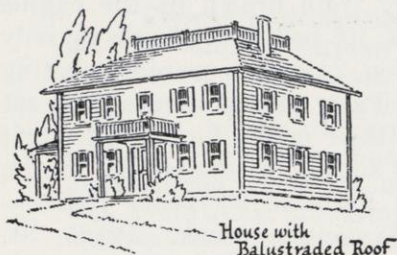
²³ March 3, 1869.

²⁴ Fond du Lac Commonwealth, March 17, 1869.

²⁵ Sheb. Times, Jan. 7 and 28, 1871.

²⁶ Railroad Records, office of Secretary of State, Madison.

summed. Besides the Sheboygan and Fond du Lac railway, the Milwaukee, Lake Shore and Western, commonly known as the Lake Shore road, and the Milwaukee and Northern line, were constructed across the county, both of which were destined to eclipse the earlier road in importance, although not in popular interest. The Milwaukee, Lake Shore and Western Railroad Company was



House with
Balustraded Roof

incorporated as the Milwaukee, Manitowoc and Green Bay Railroad Company in 1870,²⁷ but changed its name on June 1, 1872. The road was completed as far as Sheboygan in 1872, and the event was celebrated by an excursion of about fifty Sheboygan business men and public officials to Milwaukee on Nov. 21, 1872, which was

climaxed by a reception and dinner at the Newhall House in Milwaukee.²⁸ The first regular train was run from Sheboygan to Milwaukee January 2, 1873. It was a mixed train, the run requiring 3½ hours, and the fare being \$2.00.²⁹ On December 10, 1875, the road was sold under foreclosure and reorganized under the name of Milwaukee, Lake Shore and Western Railway Company; and on August 19, 1893, it was sold to the Chicago and North Western Railway Company.³⁰ The Milwaukee and Northern Railway, incorporated in 1870, was completed across the county, through Plymouth, in 1872.³¹ The first regular passenger trains ran to Plymouth in March 1872. On November 8, 1873, it was leased to the Wisconsin Central Railroad Company; and on June 26, 1893, it was sold to the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway Company.³²

²⁷ Chap. 242, P. & L. Laws of 1870.

²⁸ Sheb. Times, Nov. 23, 1872. Sheboygan in 1871 issued bonds to the amount of \$80,000 to aid this road.

²⁹ Sheb. Times, Jan. 4, 1873.

³⁰ The Lake Shore Road was laid along the proposed route of the former Milwaukee and Superior Railroad projected as early as 1856. At that time a preliminary survey was made, and some grading was done, but the plan was abandoned because the people were then more interested in a railroad to the west. The city of Sheboygan contributed \$1,000 to the cost of the survey in 1855.—J. O. Thayer in Hist. Atlas of Sheb. Co. (1875).

³¹ The town of Sherman voted \$12,000 of bonds to aid the road, Lyndon \$15,000, Plymouth \$25,000.

³² Railroad Records, Office of Sec. of State, Madison.

A name prominently identified with Sheboygan County railroad history was that of Jerry Donohue, of Sheboygan. Coming to Sheboygan Falls as a youth with his parents in 1857, he sawed wood at Glenbeulah, when he was 15 years old, for the engines on the Sheboygan & Mississippi railroad. At the

The prospective railway lines in the county, never completed, besides the Sheboygan and Appleton, and Sheboygan and Horicon, already mentioned, were:³³

The Cascade and Lake Michigan Railroad. Company organized in 1852, with an authorized capital of \$25,000 by E. Fox Cook, an attorney at Sheboygan, and to consist of himself "and such other person or persons as may become associated with him." Route of proposed road: From Cascade straight east along the north line of section 27 in each township to Wilson's pier on Lake Michigan in the town of Wilson.

The Sheboygan and Southwestern Railroad. Company organized Aug. 12, 1889, authorized capital \$100,000. Proposed route, from Sheboygan to Waldo. Directors: Jos. G. End, James Mallmann, Arthur F. Winter, Paul T. Krez, Martin A. Bodenstein.

The Sheboygan and St. Paul Railway. Company organized Apr. 21, 1894, authorized capital \$250,000. Proposed route, from Sheboygan to a point at or near Waldo. Directors: J. Donohue, Theo. Dieckmann, Frank L. Roenitz, James Mallmann, J. M. Braun.

The Sheboygan, St. Paul and Central Railroad. Company organized Apr. 23, 1894, authorized capital \$250,000. Proposed route: from Sheboygan to Schleisingsville in Washington county. Directors, all Chicago and Milwaukee persons. The city of Sheboygan subscribed for \$35,000 of stock in this company, agreeing to pay therefor in bonds of the city.

The Sheboygan, St. Paul and Western Railway. Company organized Sept. 25, 1896, authorized capital \$350,000. Proposed route, from Sheboygan to a point on the C. M. & St. P. Rly. at or near Random Lake. Directors: F. Geele, F. L. Roenitz, A. F. Winter, James Mallmann, Paul Krez. Remnants of the grading done on this line may still be seen today between Hingham and Random Lake.

age of 16 he was made station agent at Glenbeulah, and was successively fireman, baggage-master, grain buyer, conductor of construction train, and yardmaster at Fond du Lac. In 1871 he became employed by the Milwaukee, Lake Shore & Western railroad in charge of construction of the line between Sheboygan and Milwaukee, and later between Sheboygan and Manitowoc. He ran the first train from Milwaukee, into Sheboygan, in November 1872. Later he became Road-master of the company's lines, Superintendent of the road, Superintendent of tracks, buildings and bridges, and assistant general manager and purchasing agent. Mr. Donohue continued with the Lake Shore railroad until 1893, when it became absorbed by the C. & N. W. Rly. Co.—Portrait and Biog. Record of Sheb. Co., p. 715.

³³ Railroad Records, Office of Sec. of State, Madison; City Council Proceedings, Sheboygan.

The first telegraph line into Sheboygan was put into operation in 1851—the outgrowth of a public meeting held in the city May 15, 1849. At the meeting a committee was appointed to solicit subscriptions of stock from the public. The line ran between Milwaukee and Sheboygan. Not proving a profitable investment, the line was sold for taxes, and dismantled by the purchaser. In 1865 the United States Telegraph Co. erected a line from Milwaukee to Green Bay, which was purchased by the Western Union Telegraph Co. in 1866. James L. Mallory was the manager of the first telegraph office here.³⁴

Besides steam railroads, the county was exceptionally well served by electric railroads. The first street railway in Sheboygan was a mule line, the franchise for which was granted to H. G. Northrop in September 1885. It was on Nov. 27, 1895, that electric cars were first run on the line. In the beginning the tracks only extended along 8th street between Michigan and Indiana avenues, Pennsylvania avenue from 8th street to the C. & N. W. Rly. depot, and Michigan avenue from 8th street to Born's Park. In summer the street car company operated a horse-drawn bus between Born's park and Wildwood Cemetery. Six cars comprised the original rolling equipment. As the city grew the system was extended to some of the more outlying sections. The Sheboygan electric railway was built only seven years after the first electric street railway line was started in Richmond, Virginia, in 1888. The novelty of this form of transportation is illustrated by an entry made by a prominent citizen in his diary, "Rode home on a street car today." In 1899 the road in Sheboygan was extended to Sheboygan Falls, and in 1903 to Plymouth. In 1909 the line that had been built by Dr. George Brickbauer between Plymouth and Elkhart Lake, was taken over and added to the system. The Milwaukee Northern interurban line, from Milwaukee to Sheboygan, was placed in operation in Sept. 1908. Never profitable, all electric railroads in the county have been discontinued and their tracks removed. They enjoyed only a brief existence.³⁵

³⁴ J. O. Thayer in *Hist. Atlas of Sheb. Co.*, 1875; *Sheb. Mercury*, May 19, 1849.

³⁵ *Sheb. Press-Telegram*, May 29, 1925.

CHAPTER 14

SHEBOYGAN HARBOR

IN THE early days when water transportation was the all-important means of trade and commerce, Sheboygan had high hopes of becoming a leading, if not *the* leading, commercial and maritime center on the west shore of Lake Michigan. No one dreamed that shipping would some day be driven off the lakes by the competition of the railroads. Judging from newspaper accounts of the times, the rivalry between Sheboygan and other lake ports, especially Milwaukee and Green Bay, was most keen. But Sheboygan had abiding faith in its future. Milwaukee, as the metropolis of the state, took the attitude of ridiculing and ignoring the pretensions of all its Wisconsin rivals. One of its newspapers boasted in 1857, "Milwaukee has the *only* harbor on Lake Michigan north of Chicago." Local newspapers naturally retaliated, pointing out that Sheboygan lay sixty miles nearer the eastern markets than Milwaukee on the great waterway to the Atlantic seaboard, and asserting, "The emporium of Wisconsin is to be a northern port. Sheboygan harbor is in better condition than the Milwaukee harbor, and we do not pretend that ours is more than half as good as it is capable of being made."¹ "Sheboygan is the natural focus for the collection of products to the west and northwest of us. Nature has made it such. We will have as good a harbor as Milwaukee and with less money. There is no larger place on either side near enough to compete with and deplete our trade. The products raised west and northwest of us will never seek market at either Milwaukee or Chicago."²

Green Bay's bid for recognition as a promising lake port was that when locks were built around the rapids in the Fox river between Green Bay and Lake Winnebago, that place would serve as the gateway for a vast expanse of territory in the interior of the state. But, as the Sheboygan newspapers pointed out, the rapids in the Fox had a fall of 170 feet, and it would be many years before locks were built. Besides, the class of boats that could traverse the locks would be unsuitable for navigation on the exposed waters of the lakes, and would make transshipment of goods at Green Bay

¹ Sheb. Journal, Sept. 10, 1857.

² Sheb. Journal, Jan. 29, 1857.

necessary. That port, because of its inland position, was also away from the main route of commerce along Lake Michigan, and it was claimed that boats would not run there in connection with other places, but only when destined directly for that point. Furthermore, Green Bay was ice-covered in winter, effectually closing navigation some five months in the year. On the other hand, vessels could run to Sheboygan, it was asserted, up to Jan. 10th in ordinary seasons—six weeks later than the close of navigation at the Bay, and resume about March 15th, four or five weeks earlier than there. Then, too, shipments could always be made directly to the east in the same bottom without having to be transferred.³

The possibilities and advantages of the Sheboygan harbor are included in various accounts and reports of early date. Probably the first account was that of the government surveyor, Nehemiah H. King, who surveyed the town of Sheboygan. In his field notes, under date of Dec. 12, 1835, he jotted down these observations:

“From the location of this township it will, I think, possess advantages over every other place on the western shore of the Lake (two or three excepted). The River is larger than Chicago—nearly the same bigness as Milwaukee—and what distinguishes it from the latter river is that there is no Marsh about its mouth. The banks are sufficiently elevated and dry—affording a beautiful site for a Town . . . In Addition to the foregoing remarks I will add that the mouth of the (river) is easily and at no great expense, made into a good harbour. By compressing or narrowing the current by Piers such is the quantity of Water and strength of current that there will be very little danger of sand depositing so as to obstruct ingress into the River. Proceeding from the shore into the Lake the Water gradually deepens to the debth of fourteen feet in the distance of about twenty-seven rods. On the Bar at the mouth it varies from three to five feet. After passing the bar a distance of a few rods into the river, the Water becomes of from fourteen to twenty feet deep and holds of that debth, it is believed, up to nearly the center of Section twenty-eight.”

In 1836 officers of the government were employed in sounding and making a chart of the river and bay. The result of their labors was presented to the United States War Department in an official report by Col. Abert, of the Bureau of Topographical Engineers, dated Feb. 6, 1838, but nothing further was done for some years.⁴ In 1845 the Legislative Assembly of Wisconsin Territory adopted a resolution asking Congress for an appropriation for the construc-

³ Sheb. Mercury, Apr. 28, July 7, July 14, 1849.

⁴ Sheb. Mercury, July 28, 1849.

tion of a harbor here, the resolution setting forth that "the interests of a large portion of the Territory extending westerly to Lake Winnebago and the Fox river and thence westerly to the Wisconsin river, as well as the safety of navigation on Lake Michigan, imperiously demand the early construction of a harbor at the mouth of the Sheboygan river."⁵ Henry Dodge, territorial delegate from Wisconsin, was requested to urge upon Congress the making of the appropriation; but it was not until 1846 that Morgan L. Martin, then the territorial delegate to Congress, called the attention of the committee on commerce of the United States Senate to the importance of the project, and requested an appropriation of \$10,000. After referring to the earlier recommendation of the territorial legislature, Mr. Martin declared,

"This port would also afford convenient entrance for emigrants to the northern part of Wisconsin, the settlement of which has hitherto been retarded in consequence of the difficulties of access to it. Lake Michigan is 300 miles in length, and all the works heretofore authorized by Congress are within 110 miles of its southern extremity, leaving 180 miles of coast south of the entrance to Green Bay unprovided with a single roadstead. The proposed harbor at Sheboygan will be 55 miles north of Milwaukee, 125 south of the inlet to Green Bay, and about 100 southwest of the Manitou islands. A wise policy would seem to dictate the selection of this point, so remote from others, as a place needed for shelter and security from the sudden storms on that extended coast."⁶

Col. Abert made the following report to the United States Senate on harbor improvements on Lake Michigan in Dec. 1847:

"These are the only harbors, namely, Chicago, Southport, Racine and Milwaukee, on the western shore of Lake Michigan, upon which the government has made expenditures. But from Milwaukee to the entrance of Green Bay, about 150 miles, there are no harbors, except such as nature has made. In this distance, however, there are two positions admirably adapted for improvement, and capable of being made harbors for first-class lake steamers. The first of these is Sheboygan, 50 miles north of Milwaukee, with about four feet of water over its bar. The second is Manitowoc, 25 miles north of Sheboygan, with about five feet of water over its bar. Both of these places have a capacious and deep water way, after passing their obstructing bars. Nothing has been done at either but to make surveys, plans, and estimates. These harbors are extremely essen-

⁵ Laws of Wis. Terr. 1845, p. 119.

⁶ Sheb. Telegram, May 26, 1923. Original letter in Wis. State Hist. Library, Madison.

tial to the commerce of the lakes, as steamboats after leaving the Manitou Islands, make for the western shore of the lake, but at present find no harbor or port of refuge short of Milwaukee, 160 miles from the Islands, by the shortest line.”⁷

Harbors as places of refuge were of more importance in those days than now. The early craft, both steam and sail, that plied the lakes were frail affairs that had to seek shelter in some convenient port upon the approach of the slightest storm. Shipwrecks, collisions, boiler explosions and fires were common, frequently resulting in terrible loss of lives.

In a report, dated Aug. 2, 1864, Col. Thomas J. Cram, of the United States Corps of Engineers, reports in reference to the Sheboygan harbor that North point serves in a degree as a good cover to the harbor in times of northerly storms, and that the prevailing winds, being from the northeast, attack the shore in the vicinity of the point, and sweep the sand along the rock platform, lodging it against the north pier and shoaling the water. He also states, “The plateau upon which the city is built is high above the lake, extending for miles northwest—presenting one of the best sites, with other natural advantages, for a large commercial town, upon any of our great lakes.”

Awake to the need of an improved harbor at the mouth of the Sheboygan river, and realizing its benefits not only to the city but also to the county at large, the inhabitants of the city and county labored long and persistently to raise the necessary funds. A committee of citizens, consisting of Huntington Lyman, William Farnsworth, A. P. Lyman, Harrison C. Hobart and Amos Adams, at the request of Col. Abert, in 1849 prepared a statement of facts and statistics showing the importance of Sheboygan as a shipping center and the necessity for a harbor, for presentation to Congress.⁸ The first public meeting in regard to harbor improvements was held at Sheboygan Jan. 5, 1852, W. R. Gorsline presiding, at which it was decided to call a delegate convention to consider the question; and the people accordingly met in every town and appointed delegates to a county convention. The convention met at Sheboygan Jan. 22, 1852, with 131 delegates present from all parts of the county. Col. Silas Stedman was elected president, and the delegates voted to recommend an appropriation of \$60,000 for harbor improvement, the money to be raised: federal government, \$30,000; county, \$20,000; city of Sheboygan, \$10,000. On Jan. 31, 1852, the

⁷ Quoted in Sheb. Mercury, Mar. 4, 1848.

⁸ Sheb. Mercury, July 28, 1849.

state legislature appointed A. P. Lyman, Henry Stocks, C. D. Cole, J. F. Seeley, A. G. Dye, Reed C. Brazelton and John Grove, of Sheboygan, harbor commissioners to construct the harbor, and authorized them to borrow \$20,000 on the credit of the county, and \$10,000 on the credit of the city, to help finance the project. The contract for the construction was awarded Feb. 20, 1852, to Capt. Hawley, and the work commenced shortly afterward. Improvements continued to be made from time to time after that, until by 1871 there had been expended on the harbor: by the federal government \$105,488.91; county, \$42,796.41; city, \$26,700. By 1875 the aggregate had reached \$221,095.32.⁹

The first improvements made at the port of Sheboygan were two piers extending out into the lake on each side of the river mouth. Privately owned, these piers served both as wharves where vessels tied up and as locations for storage, forwarding and commission warehouses, from which shipments were loaded directly onto the lake carriers moored alongside. The first one erected was the North pier, built by Col. John Maynard and Henry H. Conklin—the second to be built on the entire west shore of Lake Michigan.¹⁰ It is not known just when this pier was constructed, but it was early acquired by William Farnsworth and Joseph F. Kirkland, who did business under the name of the North Pier Co.

In 1849 Kirkland severed his connection with this company and established a competitive business on the South Pier.¹¹ The firm name was Kirkland & Newberry. Farnsworth continued to operate the North pier, until he apparently sold out to R. Gay, who maintained two warehouses on that location. When Kirkland purchased the South pier a large warehouse seems to have already been built on the shore at its foot; but he proceeded to put up another warehouse there, connecting it with the old one. The new structure was 50 x 150 feet, 3 stories high, and had a capacity of 75–100,000 bu. of wheat and 20,000 bbls. of flour. He also extended the pier for a total length of 1,400 feet, to a point where the water was 15 feet deep, as compared to a depth of 11 feet at the harbor entrance, enabling ships to load and unload on both sides.¹² In addition to the South pier and warehouses, Kirkland also owned another warehouse on the north bank of the river 500–600 feet west

⁹ Appendix, Proc. Sheb. Co. Bd. 1871, by J. O. Thayer; Sheb. Mercury, May 15, 1852; History of Sheboygan County, by J. O. Thayer, Sheb. Co. Atlas, 1875

¹⁰ Sheb. Times, Mar. 21, 1874.

¹¹ Sheb. Mercury, Aug. 4, 11, 25, 1849.

¹² Evergreen City Times, June 27, 1857.

of the first Gay warehouse.¹³ As the piers were owned privately, a charge was made to shippers for their use. According to newspaper reports, numerous complaints arose in 1849 that the pierage charges were exorbitant, causing shipping to avoid Sheboygan, and injuriously affecting local business in general. For instance, the rate for transporting wheat to Buffalo was 4¢ a bu., and the pierage charge 4¢; the rate for salt from Buffalo was one shilling, and the pierage charge one shilling. A committee of nine citizens was therefore appointed to secure fair rates, who succeeded in obtaining a satisfactory voluntary reduction.¹⁴

These private piers—the North and South—must not be confused with the government piers that were later built out into the lake on each side of the harbor entrance. An almost forgotten fact is that the entrance of the harbor was originally located at quite a different place than today. Up until the early 1850's, the Sheboygan river, at a place close to its mouth, made a sharp turn to the north and discharged into the lake at the foot of Center street instead of south of Pennsylvania avenue as now. Between this abrupt bend and the outlet was a narrow, sandy, thumb-shaped projection of land known as Kirkland's Point. In 1836, Lieuts. A. J. Center and E. Rose, the government agents who charted the river, drew a map showing the location where they thought piers should be built, picturing a pier extending into the lake 1055 feet on the north side of the river entrance, and another on the south side from the tip of the peninsula lakeward 875 feet. The North pier, built later by Messrs. Maynard and Conklin, was constructed at the location indicated by Lieuts. Center and Rose in 1836; but their suggestions in regard to the situation of the South pier were never carried out.

A map of Sheboygan in 1856, made by Thomas M. Foy, a local surveyor, showing both piers, indicates the North pier at the place described, but reveals the South pier angling off from the lake shore in a southeasterly direction a short distance south of the present harbor entrance. This map also depicts two warehouses built right on the North pier some distance from shore, and a warehouse on the shore at the foot of the South pier, but none on the pier itself.¹⁵

A bird's-eye view of Sheboygan as sketched in 1867 from atop the south side hill shows the South pier projecting into the lake,

¹³ Evergreen City Times, Jan. 12, 1856; Sheb. Journal, Feb. 19, 1857.

¹⁴ Sheb. Mercury, July 21, 1849, Feb. 2, 1850.

¹⁵ The maps referred to in the text are preserved in the Sheboygan County Historical Museum in the court house.

with a steamer unloading at a long, low warehouse near the pier's outer end.

The first public improvement of the harbor consisted of cutting a channel the width and depth of the river directly through Kirkland's Point, so as to straighten out the harbor entrance, and filling up the original channel. The cut was made through a low spot in the Point where the river overflowed when the water was high. This work—truly a monumental task—was performed sometime between 1852 and 1856, as the entrance is delineated on the Foy map. The work was done by means of a steam dredge, purchased by the city at a cost of \$6,500. The government piers were not built until a much later time, and were subsequently removed when the present breakwater was constructed.

Under J. F. Kirkland's able direction, the business of the South pier grew tremendously, completely overshadowing that of his competitors. Of a daring and speculative nature, that reflected the optimistic spirit of the times, he was Sheboygan's original town booster. The city owed much of its early progress to his unbounded enthusiasm and efforts. Every enterprise and movement that would promote the interests of the struggling and ambitious community was sure to receive his active support. But despite Kirkland's prominence and leadership, remarkably little is known about him at this late day. Where he came from, and when he arrived, the records do not indicate. In 1847 he was elected president of the village of Sheboygan; he was director of the Bank of Sheboygan. He lived in a spacious mansion perched on a tall clay bank, called Kirkland's Bluff, on the point just south of the harbor entrance. But the building of the piers affected the action of the waves upon the shore line at this spot, so as to cause the eminence on which the house stood to be gradually washed away, forcing Mr. Kirkland to abandon his lofty habitation. He then built another pretentious house on the elevation to the north of the river on the east side of 4th street near the foot of New York avenue. Immigrants coming into the harbor were wont to marvel at the splendor of the house and the beauty of the grounds. His old home atop the clay bank finally slid into the lake. Reed & Hinckley started a brickyard on the site and eventually obliterated all traces of the bank.

In connection with his warehouse and forwarding business, Mr. Kirkland owned a number of lake vessels, one of them the new propellor *Fountain City*, which was one of the largest propellers on the lakes. It ran between Sheboygan and Grand Haven as a

connecting link between the Detroit & Grand Haven and Sheboygan & Mississippi railroads.¹⁶ Another of his steamers was the *Union*. When the latter railroad was begun, Kirkland was one of its most active supporters, later becoming a director and president of the company. While he was president of the road, the track, incidentally, was laid so that the cars could run into his warehouse. In 1856 the Evergreen City Times congratulated him on his "good fortune in having the freight depot so near his warehouse and pier."¹⁷ About 1857 Kirkland must have suffered financial reverses, for some of his property was advertised that year for sale upon mortgage foreclosure.¹⁸ Apparently leaving Sheboygan shortly after, he returned at a later time, but left again permanently in 1874 for Winona, Minnesota, where his subsequent career is not known. Charles H. Windt, a visitor from Janesville, wrote of Mr. Kirkland in 1855, "Among the most enterprising business men of the city, Mr. J. F. Kirkland stands first—he being the owner of the Pier and Warehouses at which most of the commercial business of the place is transacted. He has two large warehouses, but it seems that they are not enough for the wants of the rapidly growing place. To meet these wants, he is now engaged in building one much larger than either of the others. And he is also constructing a large Pier out into the Lake."¹⁹ In its issue of Apr. 11, 1874, the Sheboygan Times says of him, "J. F. Kirkland during his first residence here of 12 or 15 years stamped the impress of his business energy and ability upon the town in the shape of improvements that are yet prominent features in the city. His efforts in building the Sheboygan & Mississippi Railroad were not as cordially seconded or unitedly supported by the business and proprietary interests of the town as should have been." When Kirkland moved away from Sheboygan, his warehouse was acquired by the Sheboygan & Mississippi railroad, which leased it to Hinckley & Elwell. It was later known as the Curtis warehouse. In 1870 the Sheboygan & Fond du Lac Railroad Co., the Goodrich Transportation Co., and Lewis Curtis, of Sheboygan, made a contract in which Curtis agreed to build the South pier to such a distance into the lake that freight could be discharged from it to the Goodrich Company boats. The railroad company was to build railroad tracks on the pier and deliver to the Goodrich Company, for a period of ten

¹⁶ Evergreen City Times, Aug. 29, 1857.

¹⁷ June 28, 1856.

¹⁸ Evergreen City Times, Feb. 20, 1857.

¹⁹ Sheb. Lake Journal, Jan. 23, 1855.

years, all freight not otherwise consigned; and the latter agreed not to accept freight from any other dock during the period covered by the contract.²⁰

Besides the warehouses on the North and South piers, there was a warehouse at the foot of 6th street owned by Christian Raab, a prominent grain and produce dealer and shipowner; and a warehouse, elevator and flouring mill at the foot of 8th street bridge built by George Benson, who had formerly been engaged in the milling business in Buffalo, N. Y.²¹ The mill was a first-class one, 40 x 80 feet, three stories high, and had five run of stone. It was named the Western Star Steam Flouring Mill, and cost over \$20,000 to build.²² Mr. Benson sold his business to John Bertschy in October 1858.²³ On Apr. 6, 1874, an unusual event occurred when the entire river side of the Bertschy elevator burst open from dry rot while the schooner *Stampede* was loading grain, and precipitated 20,000 bushels of wheat into the river, causing a loss of \$12,000. The Sheboygan Times relates that a gang of men was set to work shoveling up the portion out of water, and that the rest was scooped up with wire cloth sacks attached to long handles and carried away to be dried.²⁴ In April 1878²⁵ the mill, elevator and warehouse were completely destroyed by fire. The fire department was able to render no assistance except to save the bridge and adjoining buildings, the Sheboygan Herald declaring, "The steamer did not work well, partly because it is not good for much except to ornament a Fourth of July procession."²⁶ Another elevator was the Holstein elevator, built on the present Sheboygan Coal Co. site by the Merchants Association, an organization of business men, to aid farmers in obtaining more equitable prices for their grain.²⁷ It eventually failed. The introduction of the elevator system represented a signal achievement, making feasible the shipment of grain in bulk. Before that it was handled in bags—an expensive and cumbersome method.

Up to the 50's the exports from Sheboygan were principally shingles, fish, potash, wool and lumber, rather than farm products, because, as the Sheboygan Mercury of July 25, 1849 states, "The

²⁰ Contract in files of Security Nat. Bank, Sheboygan.

²¹ Sheb. Times, Apr. 18, 1874.

²² Sheb. Journal, Sept. 3, 1857.

²³ Ev. City Times, Sept. 6, 1856, Oct. 1, 1857.

²⁴ Ibid. Oct. 16, 1858.

²⁵ Apr. 11, 1871.

²⁶ Apr. 12, 1878.

²⁷ Sheb. Times, Apr. 18, 1874.

ratio of immigration compared with our agricultural population has been so great as to require nearly all the fruits of the soil for home consumption." In the 50's, however, the exports of agricultural products, and especially wheat, increased greatly from year to year as the farmers were able to raise more and more surpluses for outside markets. According to deputy collector Michael Lynch's report, the total value of the exports at Sheboygan in 1854 was \$663,168.99.²⁸ In 1855 the exports consisted of 311,091 bu. of wheat, 20,029 bbls. of flour and 4,686 half bbls. of fish, besides quantities of potatoes, barley, oats, wool, lumber, wood, lath, shingles, staves, tubs, pails, empty barrels, hubs, spokes, cedar posts, pot and pearl ashes, and hoop poles.²⁹

The flour trade was closely identified with the wheat trade. Besides the Western Star Mill, another, named the Evergreen City Steam Flouring Mill, was located at the corner of 7th street and Center Avenue.³⁰ A news item in the *Evergreen City Times* also mentions the Suffolk Mills.³¹ In 1851 Dean & Crossett built a grist mill on the south side of the river near the mouth. Grinding the first grain Dec. 29, 1851, this mill was the first manufacturing enterprise in the city to use power.³² Ranking next to sawmills in number and importance, flour and grist mills were to be found in practically every village and hamlet in the county.

For many years the port of Sheboygan was a busy, colorful place, its docks and wharves lined with strings of vessels taking on and discharging their cargoes of freight and passengers. Even before any harbor improvements had been made, the number of lake craft of all kinds that touched here was surprisingly large. In 1845 there were 75 arrivals and departures of steamboats; in 1847, 423; in 1848, 525; causing the editor of the *Sheboygan Mercury* to rhapsodise, "To those of us who have resided in Sheboygan for the last four years, the growth of our village seems almost magical . . . If there be any necessity for a harbor at Milwaukee or Chicago, there exists the same for one here, for nearly every steamboat or propellor which enters either of these ports, stops at our pier whenever the weather will permit."³³ In 1854 the *Evergreen City Times* reported no less than 14 sailing vessels in the river at one time, 13 of which were discharging or taking on

²⁸ Sheb. Lake Journal, Jan. 2, 1855.

²⁹ Ev. City Times, Jan. 12, 1856.

³⁰ Ibid. Mar. 5, 1859.

³¹ Nov. 11, 1854.

³² Hist. of Sheb. Co., by J. O. Thayer, Sheb. Co. Atlas, 1875.

³³ July 7, 1849, July 21, 1849.

cargoes. At the same time one propeller was unloading at the pier, and several vessels were visible in the offing, "the whole presenting a sight to gladden the heart of enterprise."³⁴ The same year advertisements in the Sheboygan Lake Journal disclosed that the steamer *Troy* left Sheboygan every Saturday for Sault Ste Marie, returning on Wednesday. The steamer *Queen City* left Sheboygan for Sault Ste Marie every Tuesday, returning on Wednesday. The steam packet *Lady Elgin*, plying between Chicago and Buffalo once a week, touched regularly at Sheboygan. And the Clement's Line steamers left Sheboygan for Chicago every evening at 9 P. M.³⁵ In 1858, 312 steamers, 164 propellers and 288 sail vessels called at Sheboygan.³⁶ The Evergreen City Times in 1867 reported 6 steam vessels in the river at one time.³⁷ On Oct. 31, 1863, over 50 sail vessels and 4 steamers were counted in sight of this port.³⁸

Many of the sail vessels navigating the lakes were Sheboygan-owned. It would be impossible in the space available to list them all, much less tell the interesting stories behind them. Among the earlier ones were the *Lucy Raab*, *Mariner*, *Clipper City*, *C. North*, *Denmark*, *Albany*, *Gazelle*, *Industry*, *Pilot*, *Fair Play*, *Harvest*, *Kossuth*, *Mary Jane*, *Henry Norton*, *Twin Brothers*, *Sandusky*, *Fanny & Floy*, *Nichols*, *Fish Hawk*, *Sea Witch*, *Young America*, *Western Star*, *Buena Vista*, *Rover*, *Defiance*, *J. S. Harvey*, *Charlotte*, *Mary Ann*, *Sheboygan Clipper*, *J. O. Thayer*, and *Ruby*—ships whose picturesque names and adventurous voyages cast a glamor and romance over the hey-day of their glory which have long since been lost. The leading vessel owners—the ship princes of their day—were A. P. Lyman,³⁹ John Bertschy, Christian Raab,

³⁴ Aug. 8, 1854.

³⁵ Oct. 18, 1854.

³⁶ Ev. City Times, Mar. 5, 1859.

³⁷ Oct. 19, 1867.

³⁸ Sheb. Press, Apr. 23, 1926.

³⁹ Asahel P. Lyman was born in Brookfield, Madison county, New York, Jan. 23, 1814. His brother George N. Lyman preceded him to Sheboygan County, coming to Sheboygan Falls and opening a store there in 1845. The next year A. P. Lyman joined his brother. Together they established branch stores at Sheboygan, Fond du Lac, Calumet and Berlin. The store at Sheboygan was begun in 1848. They first rented a small storeroom, but in 1847 they erected a large storehouse at 721 Pennsylvania Ave., where they received goods and distributed them to their other stores. Barter was the common method of trade of the time. In exchange for goods, they received nearly everything that had a market value: shingles, hoops, staves, lumber, grain, and the like. A. P. Lyman later put his means largely into the shipping business. He owned a number of sailing vessels that plied the Great Lakes. His first ship, the *Morning Star*, went to the bottom, heavily laden with wheat, on its maiden voyage. Other vessels he owned at various times were the *Express*, *Black Hawk*, *Magnolia*, *Monitor*, *C. North*, *Lem Higby*, *Dickerson*, *Homer* and *Cortland*—some of them Sheboygan-built. On June 20, 1868 the

J. F. Kirkland and A. L. McCrea. A number of ships were owned and operated by the captains that commanded them.⁴⁰ Quite a few went into winter quarters here every year, laying up at some dock or shipyard for repairs and refitting for a new season of business when navigation would open in spring.⁴¹

In the harbor—nearly forgotten memories to-day—were three shipyards, owned by A. C. Stokes, B. B. Locklin and Peter Beaupre. Other shipyard owners mentioned in the press from time to time were Blinn & Sonson, Mr. Gillson, Pangman & Horner, Dennis Beaupre, Stoakes & Locklin, Neville & Co., B. B. Jones, Olson Bros., A. P. Lyman, Rieboldt & Wolters, and Sheboygan Vessel Building Association; but these undoubtedly represent changes in ownership of the shipyards mentioned, as it does not appear that Sheboygan ever had more than three such yards. The statistical report of Sheboygan published in 1858 gives the following information regarding sail vessels that year: owned here, 17; lost while owned here, 7; recently owned here, but now sold, 6; built for non-resident owners, 4. Eighteen of these ships were built in Sheboygan.⁴²

Four bridges at one time spanned the river in Sheboygan—at 7th street, at 8th street, at Pennsylvania avenue, and at Wisconsin avenue. All had draws for ships, including the 7th street, which was a float bridge. When ships wanted to pass through, a section of the bridge had to be drawn aside. The 8th street and Pennsyl-

Cortland, a clipper built bark, capable of carrying 50,000 bu. of grain, collided with the Ward line passenger steamer *Morning Star*, on Lake Erie near Cleveland, Ohio, causing the loss of 300 lives. Mr. Lyman had to pay \$85,000 damages as a result of the accident, which, together with the competition of the railroads, ultimately caused him to abandon the shipping business.

A. P. Lyman was closely identified with the promotion of transportation facilities. He was one of the commissioners and promoters of the Sheboygan & Fond du Lac, the Sheboygan & Mayville, and the Sheboygan & Calumet plank road companies; one of the commissioners and directors of the Sheboygan & Mississippi Railroad Company; and a commissioner of the Green Bay, Milwaukee & Chicago Railroad Company, the Sheboygan harbor, and the proposed Sheboygan & Appleton Railroad Company. Mr. Lyman was also a farmer and land dealer. Lyman's Addition to Sheboygan and Lyman Addition in Sheboygan Falls, subdivided by him, bear his name to this day. Upon his retirement from business he built a house and barn in the flats west of Sheboygan on the former site of extensive Indian cornfields, which became known as Lyman flats, where he spent his last days. He died Jan. 29, 1904, having lost most of his fortune. His wife, Cynthia Higby Lyman, whom he had married in Otsego county, Oct. 25, 1837, died Jan. 21, 1889; and his brother George died at Minneapolis about 1900. Portrait & Biog. Record of Sheb. Co. (1894) p. 454; Sheb. Herald, Oct. 16, 1897, Jan. 28, 1899; Milw. Free Press, June 24, 1915.

⁴⁰ Ev. City Times, Mar. 20, 1858, Mar. 5, 1859; Sheb. Times, Aug. 29, 1874.

⁴¹ Sheb. Lake Journal, Dec. 25, 1856.

⁴² Ev. City Times, Apr. 14, 1854, June 23, 1854, Feb. 10, 1855, Mar. 5, 1859.

vania avenue bridges were draw-bridges, operated by hand and in charge of the same tender. When a vessel was towed by a tug the passage through a draw was accomplished in only a few minutes; but many resorted to the method of working their own way up the river by means of their sails and by successively making a rope fast to a dock or tree and then winding it up on a windlass on board the ship. The trip upstream depended somewhat on the wind, but on the average it required about half a day. The charge for tug service being only about \$5, here is an illustration of what ship-owners would do to keep down expenses. The inconvenience to the public, and especially the strain on the tempers of the unfortunate individuals rushing to catch a train at the depot located at S. 7th and S. Water streets, when one of these snail-paced craft was passing through a bridge, is more easily imagined than described.⁴³ Ships of the largest class went up to Wisconsin avenue bridge to take on cord wood. All steam vessels in those days were wood-burning. The Pennsylvania avenue bridge was popularly known as the Shanghai bridge, on account of its high elevation on piles. The 7th street bridge was also referred to as the New Jersey avenue bridge. The first 8th street bridge was built in 1845, the territorial legislature that year having passed a law authorizing the county commissioners to levy a tax of \$200 to erect a free bridge at that location "to correspond with the county road leading to the house of B. L. Gibbs and known as the Gibbs road."⁴⁴ The small island just north of Pennsylvania avenue bridge was named Melon Island.

With an excellent harbor, Sheboygan became one of the most prominent wholesale, jobbing and distributing points in Wisconsin. Even before the railroads, the city enjoyed a lucrative commerce by wagon with a wide territory, extending as far west as Waupun and as far north as Oshkosh and Stevens Point.⁴⁵ The *Evergreen City Times* records in 1854 that 260 loads of wheat were counted in one day in the vicinity of Kirkland's warehouse, and that at the Suffolk Mills unloading of grain did not cease day or night from Wednesday night to Friday evening.⁴⁶ Again in 1855 the *Times* reported, "The teaming business between this city and Fond du Lac is enormous. Our streets in the vicinity of the piers

⁴³ Thomas F. Lynch, in *Sheb. Press*, Apr. 23, 1926.

⁴⁴ *Ev. City Times*, Sept. 19, 1857, July 21, 1858, July 24, 1858; *Laws of 1845*, p. 86.

⁴⁵ *Sheb. Mercury*, July 14, 1849; *Sheb. Lake Jour.*, Oct. 25, 1854; *Ev. City Times*, June 23, 1855.

⁴⁶ Nov. 11, 1854.

and warehouses are almost continually a literal blockade. Every team coming in with grain, or loading out with goods, is registered at the warehouses on its arrival, and must take its turn in discharging and loading, and oftentimes is compelled to wait from 12-48 hours before its turn comes. There are now between 400 and 500 teams engaged on this route, and produce accumulates here faster than vessels can be found to take it away."⁴⁷ And in 1856 that journal observed, "Freight is accumulating at this port, awaiting shipment to the Lower Lakes, and no vessels to take it."⁴⁸

But merchants and dealers were not content merely to gather agricultural and forest products for export. Settlers needed groceries, clothing, hardware and machinery; and merchants imported large quantities of these goods manufactured or produced in the east. Wherever they drew products for export, they also sold merchandise, the teams bringing in grain usually returning home with a load of other goods. In 1856 the Times complained, "Freight is beginning to accumulate at this port for want of teams to carry it to Fond du Lac."⁴⁹ The advantages of a lake town over an inland town in those days of primitive transportation are readily apparent.

Sheboygan's importance as an immigration center was likewise outstanding. Most of the immigrants to this section of the state, especially those from Europe, came here by way of the lakes, swelling the activity of the harbor and town. The flood of newcomers is indicated by the fact that, according to deputy collector Lynch's annual report, 20,914 passengers debarked at Sheboygan in 1854,⁵⁰ and 65,381 in 1855.⁵¹ The motley throngs of eager home-seekers, land agents, transients, teamsters, farmers, that swarmed the streets and crowded the places of business, gave the place much the appearance of a bustling western mining camp.

When the railroads came, Sheboygan's prominence as a shipping center, which was probably at its peak in the 1870's, began to dwindle. There is no exact date for the event, because it was a gradual process; but it continued steadily until the early 1900's, when the inroads of overland transportation upon lake commerce in general were practically complete. Several factors were responsible. The lakes were closed by ice more than one-third of the year, during which time shipments had to be suspended entirely

⁴⁷ Oct. 27, 1855.

⁴⁸ Nov. 22, 1856.

⁴⁹ May 24, 1856.

⁵⁰ Sheb. Lake Jour., Jan. 2, 1855.

⁵¹ Ev. City Times, Jan. 12, 1856.

or sent by rail. Rail shipments were more prompt, not only on account of the greater speed of trains, but because the railroad routes were shorter; the long water route around the peninsula of lower Michigan, and through the Erie canal, was indirect and wasteful. The necessity of transferring goods twice on the way to the Atlantic coast, first at the port of origin, and then at Buffalo and other lower lake ports, was burdensome and expensive. Then too, the opportunity of usually carrying full cargoes only one way—that is, from west to east—was uneconomical. Notwithstanding the supposed cheapness of water transportation, it had many disadvantages over its more modern rival—the railroads—that eventually sounded its death knell, and, except for a few specialized purposes, closed its career forever.

Sheboygan's pre-eminence as a fishing port is not to be overlooked. From this and various points along the lake shore south of the city the professional fishermen fared forth since earliest times to set and lift their nets. Here was one of the greatest virgin fresh water fishing grounds on the continent, the waters teeming with white fish, lake trout and sturgeon. It had long been a favorite fishing place of the Indians, attracting them from afar. Sheboygan, Amsterdam, and the dunes region of the town of Wilson, were the centers of the fishing industry. Fish were among the first commercial products shipped from this area. As early as 1845, it is recorded, four extensive fisheries were in operation at Sheboygan and vicinity, although their identity is unknown. H. S. Anable records that in 1846 "a few white fish and shingles were the only exports."⁵²

Most of the early fishermen were from Ohio, probably because the older fishing grounds of Lake Erie were becoming depleted as compared with the virgin grounds of Lake Michigan. Horace Rublee writes of these men, "Along the lake shore, during the summer, there were a number of fishermen, mostly from Ohio, a rough, hard-drinking set of fellows, who left the country as soon as cold, stormy weather came on in the fall."⁵³ The abundance of fish, and the size of the fishermen's hauls, in those early times is almost unbelievable. Peter Daane wrote in 1892, "In 1846 the Smith family settled on the lake shore near the mouth of Bark Creek, where they were engaged in fishing and hunting. Fishing then was carried on with seines from 80 to 100 rods long brought out from three-fourths of a mile to one mile in the lake, and hauled inshore with

⁵² Sheb. Times, Feb. 8, 1873.

⁵³ Early Times in Sheboygan County, Wis. Hist. Coll. iv, 340.

a windlass. The lake then was full of fish, mostly large white fish, very few trout being caught. Many a time they caught more fish in one haul than they could take care of during the day . . . The writer has helped to haul in the seine when it became necessary to let many of the fish escape before it could be hauled on the sand."⁵⁴ The *Evergreen City Times* reported in 1854, "J. Dillon caught 17 barrels of white fish in one haul with a seine."⁵⁵ The late Herbert Smith, a son of Gilbert H. Smith, recounted that fish were so plentiful that they fed them to the pigs at times, and that he has seen white fish piled on the shore like cordwood and rotting in the sun.⁵⁶ Hooks strung on setlines, pound-nets, drag-nets hauled in by teams or hand windlasses, and subsequently, gill-nets, set two to six miles from shore, were the means employed to catch the fish. The area between the point south of Sheboygan and Amsterdam was, and still is today, a favored spot for pound-net fishing; between 30 and 40 such nets were kept there in 1874.⁵⁷ In the beginning fishing operations were carried on in shoal water only a short distance from shore, by wading into the water or by means of row boats; but later, as the fish retreated into deeper water, the fishermen had to go farther and farther out into the lake, employing sail boats and steam tugs for the purpose. The catches, at first, were packed in salt and shipped to Cleveland, Detroit and Chicago; but after daily transportation service from Sheboygan was inaugurated, they were put in ice and shipped fresh.

White fish principally were caught. Sturgeon were plentiful, visible by the thousands; but for some reason, probably because it is a bottom-feeder, it was not popular as a food-fish, regarded in the same class as carp and suckers today. There was little demand for sturgeon. A specimen six to eight feet long, and weighing 200 pounds or more, could be bought for twenty-five or thirty cents. They greatly annoyed the fishermen by tearing their nets. Having little commercial value, they were usually knocked on the head and thrown away. Boys were prone to cut off the proboscis-like nose and use it for a rubber ball. Herbert Smith was fond of telling how his father would confine them behind the bar in Bar Creek, to be disposed of during seasons when other fish were scarce, and how the boys used to ride on their backs in the shallow water. It was not until many years later that the meat of the sturgeon began to be esteemed for its edible qualities, and to command a fair price.

⁵⁴ Sheb. Herald, Jan. 23, 1892.

⁵⁵ July 14, 1854.

⁵⁶ Personal interview by author.

⁵⁷ Sheb. Times, July 25, 1874.

Then, owing to the destructive methods in vogue for many years, the species had vastly decreased in numbers, until today it is nearly extinct and its capture prohibited by law.

But few records of the earliest fishermen now remain. The History of Northern Wisconsin, published in 1881, asserts, "At Sheboygan F. Koehn Sr. is the oldest fisherman who has regularly followed the business, beginning in a small way, with hooks, in 1853." (p. 981).⁵⁸ In this volume are listed four fishermen in business in Sheboygan in 1881: Feagan & Fairchild, E. Sonnemann & Co., Adam Schraut, and Ole M. Ellison. The Sheboygan Times gives the following fishing firms in 1874; J. Haug, Lutz & Stone, Wilson Bros., Feagan & Fairchild, E. Fairchild, F. Koehn & Son.⁵⁹ Some of the leaders in the fishing industry in the town of Wilson were David Wilson, who settled in section 11 in 1840; James and Leonard Osgood, who settled in section 14 in 1849; and Joseph Fairchild, who settled in section 14 in 1850. At Amsterdam, in the town of Holland, Gilbert H. Smith,⁶⁰ a native of New York, established a fishery in 1847. Quite a colony of fishermen from Ohio were also settled there at the time.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Frederick Koehn, a native of Germany, came to Sheboygan in 1853, determined to try his fortune as a fisherman. By sawing wood and working at whatever he could find to do, he made enough money to buy twine for his nets. These he made by night, working by a scanty fire until he got so cold that he would have to go to bed. With the small net thus constructed, he commenced to fish in the Sheboygan river. In 1861 he began to smoke fish for the market, and his was the first product of the kind ever offered for sale in the county. He also put the first smoked white fish on the Chicago, Cincinnati and Pittsburgh markets. Until 1873 he used only a sail boat in his fishing business, but in that year he built the little tug *Hoffnung*. Later he purchased the *Fred Koehn*. In 1890 he built another tug, called the *Hoffnung Bro.* Selling this a year later, he built another tug-boat in 1892, which he christened the *Frederick Koehn*. The same year he organized the F. Koehn Sr. Fish Company with his grandsons, employing about 45 men and two steam tugs.—Condensed and adapted from Portrait & Biog. Record of Sheb. Co. (1894), p. 718.

⁵⁹ July 18, 1874.

⁶⁰ Gilbert H. Smith came to the town of Holland in 1847 at the age of 20. Here, at Amsterdam, he acquired a tract of government land, and established a fishing business, which he continued to operate until his death. Having partially cleared and improved his first piece of land, he kept on buying additional tracts until at one time he owned some 900 acres. In 1852 he platted the village of Amsterdam, of which he was the "proprietor and owner." Accumulating a snug fortune, he was considered one of the wealthiest men in the township. In addition to his fishing business, and the sale of town lots, he operated a lumber yard at Amsterdam, a town which once boasted of several hundred inhabitants. In 1874, after the coming of the railroad to nearby Cedar Grove, he put up a warehouse at that point for a general storage business, dealing in fish, produce, plaster, ground feed, salt and similar products. Mr. Smith died July 23, 1892. He was the father of the founders of the present Smith Brothers Fish Company at Port Washington, Wis.—Portrait & Biog. Rec. of Sheb. Co., p. 463; Sheb. Times, Aug. 1, 1874; Plat Book, Reg. of Deeds office, Sheboygan.

⁶¹ Sheb. Press. Apr. 29, 1927; Zillier, Hist. of Sheb. Co., p. 249.

CHAPTER 15

SHEBOYGAN

THE natural landscape near the outlet of the Sheboygan river impressed even the early-day traders and travelers as an ideal site for a future town. Here was a broad, elevated plateau, set rather high above the lake, and cut by a winding valley, through which the river meandered in wide, sweeping curves like a spacious capital S. This stream, furnishing over a mile of navigable water, divided the later city into "the North Side" and "the South Side."

The high land to the north was not an unbroken tableland, but consisted of two parallel, north and south ridges that jutted close to the river, leaving a narrow strip of marsh along the north and east bank of the river all the way from its mouth to the present 14th street bridge. The smaller of these ridges adjoined the lake beach and extended from Center to Wisconsin avenues; the larger lay a short distance to the west. Between these ridges was an irregular shallow slough filled with water and overgrown with cat-tails and alder bushes. Situated in the present vicinity of North 4th and 5th streets, it ran nearly as far back as St. Clair avenue. People living east of the slough were compelled to cross a foot-bridge north of Washington Court in order to get uptown. The slopes of these two ridges were broken here and there by deep transverse ravines that discharged into the adjoining swamps to the east and west. North 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th streets were built along the top of the principal ridge.

South of the river the swampy ground stretched unbrokenly in a much broader expanse to the south, southwest and west, in some places fully half a mile. Nearly the whole of the present 4th ward to the foot of the south side hill was one vast, tangled area of marshland. "Frog pond" was what the people called it. Men and boys used to thread their way through its mazes in rowboats catching frogs. A corduroy road crossed it, leading southwesterly to the Gibbs or Milwaukee road. The sidewalks along Indiana avenue were built on stilts several feet above the ground. After heavy rains the water stood in the streets, washing away the planks laid at crossings, and furnishing the children with a delightful watery playground. In 1874 John Bertschy, who had gained quite a reputation attempting to drain the Sheboygan marsh, as related in an-

other chapter, undertook the task of draining the swamp on the south side of the city. He performed the draining by means of a sewer pipe made of two-inch planks, with a square conducting space inside 13 inches in diameter. This pipe he laid four feet below the surface of the ground, the bottom of it four inches below the level of the water in the river. He commenced the laying Sept. 2, 1874, at 8th street bridge, and extended it south along the west side of Griffith (now S. 8th) street, to the bottom of the hill.¹ To make the area habitable, besides draining, it had to be filled with earth to a depth of 5 to 7 feet. The earliest inhabitants were mainly Norwegians, mostly sailors. In the lowlands on the west side, a small stream known as Fox creek once flowed northeasterly into the river just south of Pennsylvania avenue.

When the first settlers came, the high land north of the river was covered by a dense growth of pines, of which the pine trees growing in Evergreen Park (now Fountain Park) long remained a relic. The earliest buildings in the town were put up on the north side, in the beginning clustered mainly on Jefferson, Pennsylvania and Center streets, and spreading gradually northward as the place grew. Evergreen Park, although set apart as a public square in 1847, was for many years considered out in the country. The succession of hills and valleys on the north side required considerable grading for building sites and streets; and large sums of money were expended for this purpose. The hills had to be cut down and the earth filled into the adjacent marshlands—a stupendous undertaking that took years to complete. The public records are filled with ordinances relating to such grading. The foot of the north and south streets, from 4th to 8th, and most of the avenues east of 6th and west of 9th streets had to be graded. It is recorded that during grading operations in the vicinity of the power house near 8th street bridge a team of horses was once mired in the marsh. Most of the work was done with simple tools, road machinery not being then available. Ox teams in 1847 were paid \$1.75, and horse teams \$2.50 a day. In 1848 the village trustees authorized the street commission to procure “four good substantial dirt wheelbarrows” at a cost of \$10.

As the years passed, the north side became the principal business and residence section of the town; and the lowlands or flats

¹ Sheb. Times, Sept. 5, 1874. The statement by some writers that Mr. Bertschy's success in draining Sheboygan's south side encouraged him to try the project of draining Sheboygan marsh, is incorrect, as he drained Sheboygan marsh first.

on either side of the river, the main industrial section, given over largely to railroad tracks, warehouses, elevators, coal, wood and lumber yards, and manufacturing establishments.

In 1846 Sheboygan became incorporated as a village, and on Feb. 9th that year the first election was held. Henry H. Conklin was elected the first village president. Eighty votes were cast.² By 1853 the town had grown to such a size that it felt big enough to become a city. The first election was held Apr. 5, 1853. Mr. Conklin was chosen the first mayor. A total of 427 votes was cast. The new municipality had two wards—the 1st and 2nd.

Life in early Sheboygan was primitive at best. In 1847 H. Lyman and others petitioned the board of trustees "to take some measures to preserve the peace of the village from being disturbed night and day by the Indians."³ J. Berry in 1852 presented a bill for 50¢ to the village trustees for removing a dead hog from the street.⁴ In 1856 the common council appointed two night watchmen, at a wage of \$1 per night, whose orders were to cry every hour of the night at each corner passed.⁵ The Evergreen City Times, in 1857, complained that the public square was a pasture for ringless-nosed hogs. And in 1875 the Sheboygan Times reported, "Cows are again becoming a destructive nuisance in the vicinity of 6th, 7th, St. Clair and Michigan streets."⁶

Early buildings were all wooden structures, creating a fire hazard, which, in case a conflagration started in one of them, might easily destroy the whole town. Fire companies were started to avert the danger. In 1849 a fire engine company and a hook and ladder company were organized, and others came into existence later. Some of their names, as they have come down to us, were Deluge, Sherman, Waterwitch, Union and Protection companies—all volunteer organizations. While their main purpose was to fight fires, they were social clubs as well, and doubtless also wielded considerable influence in local politics. Members of these associations, as well as military companies, were exempt from poll tax, now an obsolete form of taxation. Every young man's ambition was to join one of these companies. A fire station served both to house the fire apparatus and as a club house for the members. The

² The first trustees of the village of Sheboygan were Warren Smith, Joseph L. Moore, William Farnsworth and Rufus P. Harriman. Clerk, Donald W. Harrington.

³ Proc. Vill. Trustees, July 10, 1847.

⁴ Proc. Vill. Trustees, Apr. 12, 1852.

⁵ Ibid. Jan. 8, 1856.

⁶ July 24, 1875.

machines, and particularly the engines, were gayly colored, and liberally ornamented with brass, highly polished and glittering. Not the least of the equipment were the beautifully chased silver speaking trumpets, with red tassels, used by the captains to direct their men. These trumpets were gifts from fire insurance agents and grateful owners whose buildings had been saved from destruction by the fire fighters. Complete equipment comprised an engine or pump, operated in the beginning by hand, and later by steam, a hook and ladder truck, and a hose cart, with other lesser paraphernalia such as heavy leather helmets, rubber boots, raincoats, nozzles, poleaxes, ropes and buckets, all of which was kept in a constant state of neatness and repair.

Great rivalry existed between the various crews, especially to be the first at a fire, and to do the best work in putting out the flames. When the fire bell rang, the members instantly dropped their task at hand, or in the dead of night, sprang out of bed, and ran in the direction of the fire house, grabbing for a place on the rope by means of which the vehicle was drawn, and yelling and dashing at full speed for the scene of the blaze. The captain in full regalia was perched commandingly atop the swaying machine urging his men on. A fire was usually great fun for everybody except the unfortunate owners or occupants of the threatened buildings.

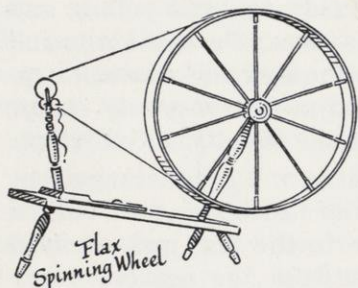
Later on the machines were horse-drawn. By an arrangement with the city council, whoever got to the fire house first with a team had the right to draw the vehicle to the fire, and received pay for it. Strong rivalry prevailed between the nearest livery stables for this business, several teams racing up the street at the same time to be the first to hitch on; but on one occasion, so the story goes, a teamster who happened to be passing when the fire alarm sounded broke the livery stable monopoly. The Sheboygan Times in 1874 reported that a hose tower 56 feet high was being built on the rear end of the fire engine house, to dry the hose, and to enable the location of the fire to be more readily determined.⁷

From 1875 to 1887 water for fire purposes was supplied from a series of cisterns sunk in the ground on 8th street at every cross street from Evergreen (now Fountain) Park to and along Pennsylvania avenue. About 14 feet square and 20 feet deep, each had a capacity of 800 barrels. The artesian well in the park was completed in 1875; and was the source of the water, the cisterns being connected with it and each other by a pipe line. When the first

⁷ Sept. 19, 1874.

cistern was filled, the water overflowed into the next, until at the end of the line the surplus was discharged into the river at Pennsylvania avenue. The system undoubtedly would have worked well, except that it was soon discovered that the mineral properties of the water corroded and damaged the fire engines and pumps. In 1887 the waterworks system, and the pump house and standpipe at North Point, were completed, and the old fire cisterns were then discontinued and filled with earth. A map of Sheboygan in 1887, published by the Sanborn Map & Publishing Co., reveals that the city, then a place of 11,500 inhabitants, had 12 public cisterns, and a paid fire department consisting of 2 steam fire engines, 2 hose carts, and 1 hook and ladder truck.⁸ The paid fire department was inaugurated in February 1875.

Sheboygan's most famous fire was that which destroyed the Otten Block early on Sunday morning, Jan. 1, 1860. A brick structure situated on the corner of 8th street and Center avenue, 90 x 90 feet in size, 3 stories high, and costing \$22,000, it was the finest building in the city. Besides stores on the ground floor, it housed the court room and the county offices on the 2nd and 3rd floors. According to a current newspaper report of the event, the fire companies were immediately on the job, "but nothing could be accomplished with the engine on account of the cylinders being solidly frozen." The building was a



mass of ruins in less than two hours, and for a time it seemed inevitable that the largest portion of the business district must burn. An adjacent harness shop, occupied by L. Diestelhorst, was razed to the ground to keep the fire from spreading, but this afterwards proved to have been unnecessary.⁹ This fire was particularly memorable because all the county records were destroyed in it, except those in the Register of Deeds office.

The artesian well in Fountain Park has always aroused considerable interest on account of the water being strongly impregnated with minerals, creating visions of the city becoming famous as a mineral bath and health resort. The water, it was claimed, was similar to that of Kissingen and Kreutznach in Germany. It was while drilling for water for fire protection purposes in 1875

⁸ Map in Sheb. Co. Hist. Museum, court house, Sheboygan.

⁹ Sheb. Journal, Jan. 5, 1860.

that the presence of mineral water in this locality was discovered. It was discovered at a depth of 1475 feet, and found to have a pressure of 421½ pounds to an inch, sufficient to raise the water to a height of 96 feet above the surface of the ground. The well was bored by John Dobyn (or Dobyms) under a contract with the city, at a cost of \$5,000. Peculiarly, in the beginning the public was permitted to take water only between the hours of 6 and 8 o'clock A. M., and 6 and 8 o'clock P. M. During the rest of the time a private concern, the Sheboygan Mineral Water Company, was given the exclusive right to the water, the company, which consisted of John Bertschy and J. O. Thayer, paying a monthly royalty for the privilege. For many years, bottled Sheboygan mineral water enjoyed a nation-wide reputation and market, but it is no longer sold.¹⁰

Lacking water power, and forced to use steam as the motive power in its factories, Sheboygan was slow in getting started as a manufacturing city. Wood—the best selling for \$2 to \$2.50 a cord—was the chief industrial fuel. According to the Statistical Report of Sheboygan for the year 1858, there were then only these manufacturing plants in the town: the Western Star and Evergreen City steam flouring mills; Benson & Locklin's steam planing and siding mill; Wm. N. Shafter & Co.'s Globe Foundry & Machine Shop; J. Keller's Sheboygan Foundry; W. S. Lathrop's fanning mill factory; 1 steam saw mill; 2 brick yards; 3 ship yards; and 13 cooper shops, 10 of which, employing 75 men, were operated by S. Wilgus.¹¹

Most of the industries began on a modest scale, and built up gradually. Very few of the owners inherited their wealth. Nearly all of them started at the foot of the ladder and worked themselves to the top. Some of them worked beside their employees. They understood the perplexities and problems of the working classes, and had their interests sincerely at heart. Instead of exploiting their workers, they gave them sympathy, advice, and often financial assistance. Very little friction between employers and employed ever developed. The presence of so many skilled artisans and mechanics in the population, especially among the Germans, was also an important element in the growth of factories.

Among employers engaged in the crafts, the apprenticeship system was common. A boy wishing to learn a trade, with the consent of his father, agreed to enter the service of an employer for a

¹⁰ Sheb. Herald, May 10, 1878.

¹¹ Evergreen City Times, Mar. 5, 1859.

specified time, in return for instruction and training in his intended vocation. He usually lived in his master's home during his apprenticeship term as a regular member of the family, and was perhaps given a few cents a week for spending money. He became apprenticed, ordinarily, at about the age of fourteen, after his completion of the parochial school and confirmation in church. The apprenticeship system prevailed especially in the wagon-making, brick-making, cigar-making, tanning, brewing, carpenter and mason trades. While the employer undoubtedly profited well by the arrangement, when the apprentice was ready to become a journeyman, he was really a thoroughly trained and skilled workman.

The Sanborn map of 1887 exhibits the following leading industries in the city at that time: American Mfg. Co.; Crocker Chair Co., "A" and "B"; Dillingham & Co.; C. B. Freyberg & Bro., lumber yard; Frost's Veneer Seating Co.; Garton & Griffith Toy Factory, east side of 8th street near bridge; L. Gutsch Brewery; Halsted & Whiffen Mfg. Co., west side of 8th street near bridge; C. Heyer Tannery, S. Water st. and Pennsylvania ave.; Jenkins Machine Co.; Kohler, Hayssen & Stehn Mfg. Co.; Mattoon Mfg. Co.; Meyer & Schrage Globe Foundry; Phoenix Chair Co.; C. T. Roenitz & Sons Tannery; K. Schreier Brewery; Sheboygan Mfg. Co., Indiana and Chestnut streets; Sheboygan Mineral Water Co.; Sheboygan Roller Mills; Wm. Elwell & Sons; Geo. Spratt Rake Factory; J. Vollrath Mfg. Co.; Wolf, Jung Shoe Co.; and Theo. Zschetzsche & Sons Tannery.

Wages in Sheboygan were low compared to present-day standards. Thomas M. Blackstock, president of the Phoenix Chair Co., is authority for the statement that in 1880 the average wages per day in woodworking factories was 90 cents, which by 1904 had been raised to \$1.25 to \$1.30. Mr. Blackstock also stated, "Between 1860 and 1880 Sheboygan grew the least, was the poorest, most poverty-stricken, dilapidated place in the state. Able-bodied men worked ten hours a day on the public streets for the city at 60 cents a day, and as there was no money in the city treasury, they were glad to get store-pay from city treasurer Henry Sonntag, who kept a small store on 8th street."¹² A common source of inexpensive help, among German employers especially, grew out of the practice of sending funds to relatives or friends in the Old Country too poor to pay their own way to America, and requiring them to work out their passage money in their employ. How men managed

¹² Sheb. Herald, Apr. 23, 1904.

to support themselves and their usually large families on the prevailing low wages, is difficult for us to understand today; but they did manage not merely to exist, but in many cases to acquire homes of their own and even to put money in the bank. Despite these low wages, Sheboygan has long had a reputation for the high proportion of home owners in its working population. The ability to get along under such adverse conditions is explained by the low standards of living of the time, the cheapness of the essentials of life, and the economical nature of the people.

In 1891 the Sheboygan Times enumerated 41 manufacturing plants in the city, 35 in full operation, and giving steady employment to nearly 5000 persons; 5 chair factories, 1 furniture factory, 1 of veneer seating, 1 of church and hall seating, 1 of toy chairs, wagons, sleds &c., 1 of wardrobes and provision safes, 1 of extension table slides and leaf supports, 1 of toy chairs, hand rakes and grain cradle fingers, 1 of desks and book cases, 1 of provision refrigerators, wooden measures, cheese rims &c., 2 of agricultural implements, 2 iron foundries and machine shops, 2 of enameled iron hollow ware, 1 a general line of iron bolts and nuts, 3 tanneries, 1 of boots and shoes, 2 of wagons and carriages, 1 of land plaster, 1 of laundry and other soaps, 2 breweries, 1 mineral water bottling plant, 1 of excelsior bottle-packing wrappers, and 5 brick yards.¹³

As one reviews the long list of Sheboygan's industrial and commercial enterprises from earliest times to the present day, he cannot fail to be impressed by the many changes that time has wrought. Many of them have disappeared entirely, their very existence forgotten. Who today has ever heard, for instance, of the O. P. Wheeler ladder, the E. A. Hill children's carriage and sled, the E. Weed candle-making, the Rietz hub and spoke, the Ely, Langraff & Rakow stave and cooperage, or the Look, Waechter & Co. box factories? Others, more fortunate, have succeeded in keeping abreast of the march of time, but in most cases, only by substantial and repeated changes in ownership and management. All of which indicates the uncertainties and hazards of business. As history proves, it is the rare business undertaking that achieves permanent success. "From shirt sleeves to shirt sleeves in three generations or less", is much more likely to be the case.

To sketch the careers of the individual business men who contributed largely to the commercial and industrial growth of

¹³ Dec. 5, 1891.

Sheboygan would unduly expand this record, and in the end doubtless prove somewhat tiresome. These men as a class were all hard-headed, practical, substantial, God-fearing citizens—the backbone of the community—universally respected, and exercising a dominating influence on the life of the time. They were the pillars of the churches, the mainstays of civic movements and charities, and the exponents of law, order and good government. Being self-made men, they believed in, and themselves practiced, the homely philosophy of hard work, thrift, economy and honorable dealing as the only road to self-respect and success. Typical of this class—to choose two of their number for special mention—were Jacob J. Vollrath and George B. Mattoon.

Born in Germany, the son of a manufacturer of fine cloths and linens, Jacob J. Vollrath, emigrated to America as a young man and settled with his mother and stepfather on a farm in Washington county. He was a moulder by trade. After working five years in Milwaukee, he spent four years in business in Chicago; and in 1853 came to Sheboygan, where for two years he was in partnership with Boehmer & Marling, engaged in the manufacture of agricultural implements. Thereafter he was active in building steam engines in company with others, including the Globe Foundry, on Pennsylvania avenue, a firm consisting of W. S. Lathrop, Alfred Newell and himself. Then he began to establish himself alone in business, and later became a member of the firm of Vollrath, Blocki & Co., proprietors of the Northwestern Iron Foundry & Machine Shop, at 9th street and Center avenue, on the present site of the city hall, manufacturers of farm implements. Selling



out his interest, he went to Germany to visit steel factories there. While on the trip he stopped at New Haven, Connecticut, and made the acquaintance of Henry Kolbe, an expert metallurgist and former employee in the mammoth Krupp Steel Works in Prussia, whom he induced to come to Sheboygan. With Mr. Kolbe as a partner, he started the Union Steel & Iron Foundry in June

1871 at the corner of 9th street and St. Clair avenue, making steel plows. In the fall of 1871 Mr. Kolbe returned to New Haven, and Mr. Vollrath continued the business with his son, Andrew, who had charge of the moulding and casting. Besides plows, he made an improved railroad frog for various railroad lines, and small

castings of his own invention for rocking chairs, and revolving stools and office chairs. He supplied most of the Sheboygan chair manufacturers with these accessories.

In 1873 Mr. Vollrath sold the Union Steel & Iron Foundry to Kohler & Silberzahn. He then conceived the idea of making porcelain-lined or enameled hollow ware, of which he had acquired some information while in Germany. There were only three or four of such plants then in this country, and the field appeared promising. In the winter of 1873-74 Andrew Vollrath, a skilled moulder and foundryman, spent several months in a large establishment of the kind in Germany to gain practical knowledge of the art. Working as a common laborer until he had gained the secret of enameling, he returned to America, only to find that he had missed some important element of the process; whereupon he went back to Germany again and pursued his search until the long-sought knowledge was at last his. Once the secret was acquired and a market for the product developed, the new business, after many discouragements and hardships, eventually became established on a firm basis. It was named the Sheboygan Cast Steel Company; but in 1884 it was renamed the Jacob J. Vollrath Manufacturing Company. Experiencing a steady expansion and growth, it occupied nearly a square block of land bounded by 5th and 6th streets, and Michigan and Huron avenues. The first building on this location was completed in 1874.

Mr. Vollrath died in 1898. His two sons, Andrew and Carl, continued to operate the business until 1907, when they segregated their interests. Andrew, with his sons, started the Porcelain Enameling Association of America, afterward named the Polar Ware Company, on a large tract of land in the northwestern part of the city; and Carl a little later built the Vollrath Company at the west end of Michigan avenue. Both engaged in the manufacture of various types of enamelware. The site of the old plant has since been converted into a residence block.¹⁴

George B. Mattoon was a man of varied interests and experiences:—merchant, manufacturer, real estate promoter, saw mill and timber land owner, hotel proprietor, factory builder, public utility magnate, and town booster. He founded the Mattoon Manufacturing Company, (later the Northern Furniture Company), of which he was the president, and was also interested in the Halsted

¹⁴ Port. & Biog. Rec. of Sheb. Co., pp. 250, 612; Sheb. Times, Mar. 2, 1872, Feb. 15, 1873, July 5, 1873, Aug. 15, 1874, May 29, 1875; Sheb. Press, Apr. 23, 1926.

Mfg. Co., Sheboygan Novelty Co., Sheboygan Electric Railway & Light Co., and numerous other enterprises. Responsible for many industrial establishments getting started in Sheboygan, his record as a builder of the community has not been duplicated.

Mr. Mattoon was born at Troy, New York, in 1847. In 1865 he came to Sheboygan Falls and worked as a day laborer in the chair factory of his brother Obed. After three years, he bought his brother's furniture store, which he expanded into three stores—located at Sheboygan Falls, Plymouth and Sheboygan. In company with Obed he also engaged in the manufacture of chair spindles in the Stedman mill at the Falls. In 1871 he disposed of the Sheboygan Falls and Plymouth stores and moved to Sheboygan, where he continued in the furniture store business over ten years. In 1881 Obed and he leased a part of the Freyberg flour and grist mill, that had previously been occupied by Bodenstab & Joch as a sash, door and blind factory, and started a table factory. In 1883 he sold the retail store to Hanchett Bros., and purchased the factory grounds, then but a swamp, on the west side of the river, on which he erected a new three-story factory building. Starting with only 35 employees, the business grew and the factory was enlarged until there were 1,000 men employed. The Mattoon Manufacturing Co. was incorporated in 1886. Mr. Mattoon died in 1904.¹⁵

Early Sheboygan was the seat of scores of hotels, big and little, located chiefly on Center and Pennsylvania avenues, and later on 8th street. In the main they sprang up to accommodate the multitudes of immigrants and travelers passing through the town during the days when the country was filling up with settlers. Practically all of them sold liquor, most of them being hardly more than taverns, with only a few rooms to let. Deacon Daniel Brown operated a hotel where no liquor was sold, which was known as Brown's Temperance House. In 1850 there were eleven hotels on Center avenue alone, extending all the way up from the lake. To name all the hotels in town would be impossible at this late date. Among them were the Green Mountain House, Jefferson House, Blocki's Hotel, Sheboygan House, Farmers Home, St. Clair House, Warren House and Merchants' Hotel. There was also the Wisconsin House; the Kossuth House, named after the Hungarian patriot then at the zenith of his fame; the St. Charles Hotel on the present site of the Foeste Hotel; the Beekman House built by Beekman Cole; and the Park Hotel built and operated by John Pfeiler. A

¹⁵ Portrait & Biog. Record of Sheb. Co., p. 315; Sheb. Press, Apr. 23, 1926.

large 100 room hotel was erected on Pennsylvania by Louis Gurry, but he went broke building it, and died by his own hand. Later the structure was converted into a chair factory by the Crockers, and in 1875 was consumed by fire. When the stream of immigration ceased, most of the early hotels gradually went out of existence.¹⁶

Retail stores of early days presented a number of interesting features. Many of them had unlovely, flat, false fronts, common in frontier towns all over the west. These fronts were built entirely across the gable-end of the buildings and extended higher than the roof-tops, evidently to make the structure look larger than it really was. Several buildings of this type can still be seen in the vicinity of Jefferson avenue east of 8th street. Above the sidewalk in front of each store stretched a wooden canopy, much like an awning, except that it was a permanent fixture. At the edge of the sidewalk was a wooden railing or a line of hitching posts for tying horses and oxen. In the beginning, old-timers state, the proportion of oxen to horses was about ten to one. At some of the street corners were convenient watering-troughs for thirsty animals. Streets were unpaved, being morasses of mud in wet and deep in dust in dry weather. Sidewalks were made of plank.

None of the stores were built on a level with the sidewalk as now, but two or three steps above the sidewalk level. Often the tinkling of a small bell attached to the front door announced the entry of customers, calling the proprietor from the back room. The second story was usually occupied by the storekeeper and his family for living quarters. Open every evening until nine o'clock, the stores were popular hang-outs for groups of town worthies who gathered around the stove and engaged in endless discussions on every variety of subject. Grocery and tobacco stores kept "poor-boxes" handy, where customers could help themselves to pipefuls of free tobacco and matches. Saloons attracted patrons by serving free lunches. For the price of a glass of beer one could, if so inclined, eat enough free lunch to equal a substantial meal. Many saloons catering to the country trade maintained "Ausspannungs" in their backyards, where the farmers could put up and feed their teams while in town.

Barber shops, or tonsorial parlors as they were called, had racks on the walls, with tiers of compartments containing the individual shaving mugs of the regular patrons, each inscribed in old English script with the name and often the lodge insignia of its

¹⁶ Sheb. Press, Mar. 26, 1934.

owner. Most men wore beards, the variety of styles being truly astonishing; mustache cups were used by the adult males of the family at every meal. Besides their regular accomplishments, some barbers practiced the ancient art of "schroepfen", that is, cupping or blood-letting. The red and white striped barber poles, displayed by barbers even today to advertise their trade, symbolize the winding of a ribbon around the arm preparatory to blood-letting.

Merchants identified their stores by recognized emblems. In front of tobacco shops stood elaborately carved and painted wooden Indians, holding in one hand a bundle of cigars and in the other an upraised tomahawk. On posts before jewelry shops were



mounted giant, gilded wooden watches, and before drug stores, large wooden mortars and pestles. In the doorways of harnessmakers' shops stood life-sized wooden horses fully harnessed, and in front of shoemakers' shops large boots. Some of these figures were set on a wooden base and moved in and out of the shop on casters. Hardware stores would show large wooden padlocks; cutlery shops, large wooden scissors; oculist shops, large painted spectacles; and bookstores, large open books. Some tobacco shops had huge German pipes, with a curved stem and covered bowl, and some shoemaker shops a wooden boot, hung

above the doorway. The show windows of drug stores invariably contained two or three large glass globes filled with mysterious red, blue and green liquids.

It was customary for early days storekeepers to give their customers long credit, many families settling up only once or twice a year. They recorded charge purchases in a small book which the customer retained. Few merchants paid cash for farm produce, but issued "due bills", against which the customer traded. Advertising by window displays was not thought of. Advertisements in newspapers were simply announcements of the name and location of the store and the kind of goods sold, and sometimes of the arrival of a fresh shipment of goods, but never gave any detailed description of goods, or prices. Peddlers from house to house announced their approach by characteristic sounds. Butchers rang a hand bell; bakers blew a shrill whistle; and fishmen sounded a long tin horn. Milkmen hauled their product in large tin cans, and dipped it directly from the can into the customer's own container. Housewives met the peddlers at the street curb. Streets were lighted with gas. Every evening the lamp-lighter made the rounds

lighting the lamps, and in the morning turning them off. Later when electricity was introduced a man went around every morning renewing the carbon sticks in the corner arc lamps.

Probably the most interesting phase of life in Sheboygan was the attitude of its two largest population elements—the Yankees and the Germans—toward each other. It was a phenomenon common wherever foreign-born and native-born persons settled in considerable numbers in the same community. Although the Yankees were the first to settle in Sheboygan, and commanded a position of prestige which they did not quickly lose, already as early as 1860, according to the census, the Germans outnumbered the native-born inhabitants 2725 to 2540. Springing from entirely different stocks, with widely divergent backgrounds and environments, it was only natural that a certain amount of misunderstanding and friction should develop between the two groups. Bred and reared for several generations under American conditions, and thoroughly American in their outlook and ways, the Yankees looked upon the unsophisticated and ignorant foreigners fresh from the Old World as their social inferiors. In social graces, in education and culture, and in the refinements of life, they were as far apart as the poles. The Germans in the main were from the peasant class in Europe, where they had been suppressed by adverse economic and social conditions, and had not achieved the spiritual and cultural development which they were destined to ultimately reach under the stimulus of their new-found freedom.

The great bulk of the Germans did not speak or read English, and were slow and reluctant to learn the language. They were class conscious, living their own group life, and associating but little with other nationalities. They formed their own social organizations, read only German language newspapers, and listened only to German sermons. They sent their children to parochial schools where German was taught exclusively. They were almost universally referred to as "Dutchmen." It was not until later that the term "Dutch" began to mean Hollanders or persons of Holland descent.

Yankees as a class were straight-laced and strict in their ideas of social conduct. The Puritan ideals of old New England still prevailed quite generally among them. They took their pleasures moderately, and one might almost say, solemnly. Church socials, donation parties, lyceums, public lectures, represented about the extent of their social relaxations. Card-playing, smoking, drinking, dancing and theatre-going were taboo in the most select circles. Church

services, Bible meetings, choir practice, were regularly attended. The Sabbath was strictly observed as a day of rest and worship, no amusements were indulged in. It is small wonder that the Yankees were horrified and shocked at some of the gay and care-free German customs, especially beer-drinking, dancing, card-playing, and Sunday amusements. Wherever Germans gathered together there was music, song and general jollification. It was mainly they who patronized the saloons, beer gardens and dance halls. They introduced round dances, like the waltz and polka, and card games, like skat, schafskopf and pinochle, which the Yankees denounced as wicked. They organized Turnvereins, and Gesangvereins, such as the Concordia Singing Society, for example, chiefly for the sociability these organizations afforded. In Plymouth, the volunteer fire department, formed in 1867, consisted entirely of Germans. That city also had a German Musical Society, a German Lyceum, and a Turnverein. In Sheboygan, besides the Turnverein and Gesangverein, there was a military company known as the German Rifle Company, which was in evidence in all street parades. It was a period in the nation at large when the temperance cause, and the agitation against foreigners, the latter known as the Know-Nothing movement, was at its height. But this spirit of narrowness and intolerance, once rampant, has long since gone. It is difficult today to distinguish persons of German from individuals of English descent. All are Americans in every sense of the word.¹⁷

¹⁷ The Yankee and the Teuton in Wisconsin, by Joseph Schafer, Wis. Mag. of Hist., Vol. 6, pp. 125, 261, 387; Vol. 7, pp. 3, 148; The German Element in Wisconsin, by J. H. A. Lacher (1925), pamphlet 60 pp.; How Wisconsin Came By Its Large German Element, by Kate A. Everest, Wis. Hist. Coll. 12; 299-334; How Germans Became Americans, by Ernst Bruncken, Wis. Hist. Soc. Proc., 1897, p. 101.

CHAPTER 16

SHEBOYGAN FALLS

DURING the first decade or so of its existence the available facts about the Falls are of a most fragmentary nature, and throw but little light on the early progress of the community. Mention has already been made of the construction in 1836 of the Stedman sawmill and the log cabin housing the mill-workers, and the platting of the town the following year. The first frame dwelling, it seems, was built in 1837 on the hill adjacent to the sawmill. It was occupied originally by John McNish, and in later years by Col. Stedman, and later still by John E. Thomas. The second frame structure to be built was for many years known as the old Temperance House, but it was used in the beginning as a dwelling. The third frame dwelling was at first occupied by Charles D. Cole, and subsequently, for many years, by Dr. Guy Shepard. In 1842 there were four houses in the village. These were the residences of Col. Stedman; the so-called mill house (probably the Temperance House), where twelve people lived; and the home of Charles D. Cole, occupied by twelve persons. All of these were on the east side of the river. The fourth house was across the river, on the corner of Broadway and Pine, and occupied by David Giddings. In 1841 the two sides of the stream were connected by a bridge, built by the county commissioners, at a cost of \$200. In 1847 there were about thirty houses in the town.¹

It is not until 1848, when the village had attained quite a good size, that our information about the place begins to be fairly comprehensive and authentic. In 1848 the editor of the Sheboygan Mercury writes:

“At Sheboygan Falls, which at this time contains some 4 or 500 inhabitants and is daily as we may say increasing, as well as other portions of the county, many valuable improvements have been made during the past year, which have tended to advance the common interest of the inhabitants and those that stand most prominent we will mention. There are at this time complete and in successful operation three saw-mills, one of which was erected the past summer by Messrs.

¹ Hist. of Sheb. Falls, by J. H. Denison, in Hist. Atlas of Sheb. Co., 1875; Sheboygan Falls, by Frank H. Denison, in jubilee edition of National Demokrat, Apr. 1907; letter of Dr. Elisha Knowles, ante.

A. P. & G. N. Lyman. One grist-mill, although small, was at the time it was erected, of sufficient size to meet the wants of the few; quite an extensive Iron Foundry is also owned by Messrs. Trowbridge; Messrs. Burhans & Richardson have a Sash and Chair manufacturing establishment, and every variety of turning is also done by them . . . There are also a goodly number of men of the different professions, viz: lawyers, doctors, &c. &c. There are several large stocks of merchandise, 4 blacksmith shops, 1 wagon shop, several cabinet shops, tailoring establishments, boot and shoe manufacturers, &c. There are also two large hotels, and if we mistake not, both are conducted upon strict temperance principles, and while we have in mind the subject of temperance we would say, that there is probably no village in the territory containing the same or even a greater number of inhabitants that has so many strong advocates of temperance as Sheboygan Falls. A Division of the Sons of Temperance was instituted there but a short time since, whose members already number about 70.

"The foregoing statements, although brief, will in a measure show the enterprise of the inhabitants, and when we state that this village is located on one of the best water powers in Northern Wisconsin, and surrounded by a healthy and fine agricultural country it cannot but be admitted that it bids fair to become a place of considerable importance, and eventually quite a manufacturing town. About three miles from the Falls, Messrs. Scribner & Sweet have erected a sawmill on the Mullett, a fine stream which empties into the Sheboygan river."²

The amount of temperance sentiment in Sheboygan Falls is indicated by an incident recounted by Frank H. Denison:

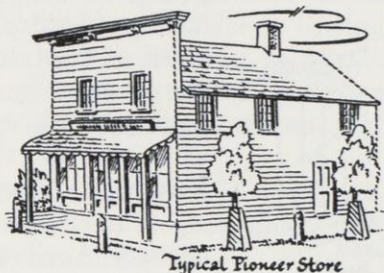
"It is related that one evening, as Horace Rublee, George C. Cole and several other youngsters were on their way home they discovered what they believed to be a barrel of whiskey upon a wagon belonging to one John Keller. Procuring a gimlet they bored holes in the barrel, permitting the liquid to escape. Their ardent temperance views would not permit them to verify their suspicions by tasting the liquid. Somewhat to their consternation Mr. Keller continued to sell whiskey during the winter, apparently having an abundant supply. The following spring they heard that Mr. Keller had lost a barrel of pork by reason of the brine having escaped."³

The leading spirit in the local temperance movement was Charles D. Cole. The Good Templars lodge he organized in the Falls, Sept. 30, 1847, is credited with being the first one started in

² Feb. 26, 1848.

³ Jubilee edition, National Demokrat, Apr. 1907.

Wisconsin, and in Iowa, Missouri and the territories beyond the Mississippi and Missouri rivers. Cole is said to have walked to Green Bay and back for the sole purpose of being initiated into the mysteries of the order.⁴ Agitation for temperance was at its height throughout the nation about the middle of the century. On the whole the aim of the society was temperance and not total abstinence. Local lodges were also formed in other parts of the county, as Plymouth, Hingham and Cascade. The lodge in the Falls was named the Sons of Temperance No. 1, its charter obtained from New York. Its name was later changed to Sheboygan Falls Lodge of Good Templars No. 1, and after that it was changed again to Alliance Lodge of Good Templars.⁵



In 1849 the Sheboygan Mercury says of Sheboygan Falls, then containing about 700 inhabitants:

“Although we have from time to time noted the improvements of this place, we find we have fallen short of keeping pace with the rapid and valuable improvements, and healthy growth of this part of our county, which promises to be a large and flourishing inland town . . . The water power at the Falls is second to none in Northern Wisconsin, and there is already three good sawmills in active operation, cutting out large quantities of pine lumber, which is abundant in the vicinity of the place, together with a large amount of lath, manufactured at each of these mills. Pine shingles are also a staple article, and many thousands are shipped every year to Milwaukee and other ports south of here.”⁶

The same article lists the following business enterprises at the Falls in 1849: two flouring mills, one of them owned by A. P. and G. N. Lyman, built in 1848, at a cost of \$18,000,⁷ and capable

⁴ Co. J. A. Watrous, quoted in Zillier, Hist. of Sheb. Co., p. 132.

⁵ Sheb. Press, Apr. 29, 1927.

⁶ June 30, 1849

⁷ The Lyman flour mill, which was named the Rock Mills, was located near what is known as the second dam, on the west side of the river. Three different mills had the rights to this water power. A flimsy wagon bridge was built across the river at this dam, leading from the mills up the incline to the main traveled road on top of the hill. The Rock Mills was damaged by fire and rebuilt a number of times. It was customary in those days to refer to a single mill as “mills”. Bray, Robinson & Co., a firm consisting of Hale P. Bray and John P. Robinson later acquired it, and in 1874 or 1875 it was sold to Benjamin F. Heald and Bernhard H. Riebel. Heald had located at Onion River

of turning out several hundred barrels a day; an iron foundry, owned by Messrs. Trowbridge;⁸ the Mechanics Block, owned by John Keller, Fordyce Trowbridge and Truman Parker, containing three stores; general stores owned by G. N. Lyman and L. P. Hill; hardware store owned by John and Mose Keller; block of two stores owned by Andrew Payne; drug store owned by Messrs. Marsh; fanning mill manufactory of Sibley & Prentice; saleratus manufactory of P. Graves; three doctors; two lawyers; three or four public houses.



Candle
Mold

The village charter was granted by the state legislature April 1, 1854,⁹ and the first election held May 1, 1854, at which time 47 votes were cast. The following officers were elected—the first under the new charter: John Keller, president; George Trumbull, Archibald Skinner, John E. Thomas, and William D. Kirkland, trustees; and H. S. Marsh, treasurer. At this election Col. Stedman was defeated for president, but he succeeded in gaining the office at the next annual election held April 10, 1855.¹⁰

In 1857 there were as many as eight sawmills in the village and township of Sheboygan Falls:—two in the village, owned by A. P. Lyman and Chas. D. Cole, adjoining their flouring mills; one on the Sheboygan river about three-fourths of a mile below the

in 1863, where for four years he operated a flour mill in company with Mark Martin. Coming to the Falls in 1868, he became a partner of George Brickner in the Sheboygan Falls Woolen Mills. After giving up the woolen business he went back to the flour business, going in company with Mr. Riebel. They operated the Rock Mills until 1880, when Riebel retired, and John H. Reysen came into the concern. Its name was then Heald, Reysen & Co. Successive owners thereafter were Augustus E. Henry, Manning McKinnon, R. H. Thomas, William O. Dassow and Ernst Gonzenbach, the latter of whom changed the name to Falls Rolling Mills. In 1926 the Wisconsin Power & Light Co. acquired the property and converted it into an automatic hydro-electric station.—Hist. of Nor. Wis., p. 1003; Sheb. Press, Apr. 29, 1927.

⁸ In 1846 Messrs. Trowbridge, one of whom was Horace Trowbridge, built a foundry on the north side of Bridge street at the west approach to the bridge. This was not only the first foundry in Sheboygan Falls, but for many years the only one in the territory between Milwaukee and Green Bay. The early frame structure was destroyed by fire in 1850 and replaced by a brick building. When business was resumed after the fire, the new firm was known as Trowbridge, Rogers & Co., and adopted the name of Phoenix Iron Works. George I. Rogers afterward sold out his interest to Lewis Pierce, and the concern was then known as Trowbridge & Co. Pierce remained in the business only 18 months, when he traded his interest for a farm. In 1875 B. E. Sanford bought the foundry, manufacturing water wheels and turbines principally. After the enterprise went out of existence, the building was occupied as a warehouse by the Brickner Woolen Mills.—Sheb. Press. Apr. 29, 1927.

⁹ Priv. & Local Laws, 1854, ch. 280.

¹⁰ City Clerk's records, Sheb. Falls.

village, owned by Jonathan Leighton;¹¹ two a mile or so above the village, one of them on the Sheboygan river, owned by Brainard and Scott, and one on the Mullett, owned by J. Richardson.¹² The other three mills—owned by H. Gerrels, George Howard, and a Mr. Culver—were farther up on the Sheboygan river.¹³ During the peak of milling activities at the Falls, according to W. P. Bryant, logs covered the river from bank to bank all the way from Sheboygan Falls to the junction of the Mullett, a distance of several miles.¹⁴

Manufactories in the village in 1857 are given as D. J. George, wooden suction pumps and clothes reels; J. E. Thomas, chair stuff and cabinet furniture; William H. Prentice, fanning mills; Jackson and Zufelt, carriages; Phoenix Iron Works (Trowbridge & Co.), plow share castings and steam engines; Latham & Lavine, sashes, doors and blinds. There were four hub and spoke factories—Hills & Clark, George Trowbridge, Mr. Goldsmith, and H. H. Lewis. The latter also made sashes, doors and blinds.¹⁵



Manufacturers reported in 1865 were Bray, Robinson & Co., flour; J. W. Skinner, hubs, felloes, spokes, sleds and wheelbarrows; Little & Rolfe, pumps, milk-safes, flax wheels; Hills & Clark, spokes, hubs, felloes; Trowbridge & Co., agricultural implements; Obed Mattoon, Windsor chairs, sewing and arm rockers, dining room and office arm chairs, Jenny Lind and Cottage

¹¹ In 1844, Jonathan Leighton, commonly known as "Jock" Leighton, in company with his father-in-law, Aurin Z. Littlefield, built a double sawmill on the west side of the river on the site later occupied by the Brickner Woolen Mills. It was known as the Littlefield & Leighton mill. This mill was erected on a wager made about July 1st with a Racine firm for a barrel of flour that they would be able to saw lumber by the 1st of September, a bet which the local firm won. The last use made of the old sawmill was by Mose Guyett, proprietor of the celebrated Guyett House, as a manufactory of clothes pins and other wood products. After Mr. Leighton, in 1855, moved to the farm east of the Falls on Highway 28, now the Walter J. Kohler estate, he erected the sawmill there mentioned in the text and operated it until the supply of logs gave out, when he dismantled it.—Portrait & Biog. Rec. of Sheb. Co., p. 394; Sheb. Press, Apr. 29, 1927; Sheb. Co. News, Oct. 16, 1915.

¹² Joseph Richardson located at Sheboygan Falls in 1845; and about 1850, with his sons, William H. and Egbert, he started a sawmill on the Mullett river west of the town, under the name of J. Richardson & Sons. Besides doing custom sawing and planing, they made cheese boxes, patent farm gates and woodwork of all kinds. After 1876 the business was operated by the two sons under the name of Richardson Bros. Joseph Richardson was also a nurseryman. His advertisements of fruit trees and the like appear in the newspapers of the time.—Hist. of Nor. Wis., p. 1005; Sheb. Press, Apr. 29, 1927.

¹³ Ev. City Times, Feb. 7, 1857.

¹⁴ Sheb. Press, Apr. 29, 1927.

¹⁵ Ev. City Times, Mar. 7, 1857.

bedsteads;¹⁶ Dennett & Co., and Jos. Osthelder,¹⁷ beer; Bond, Field & Zufelt,¹⁸ Field's patent cultivators; Skinner & Zufelt, hubs, spokes, sleds; W. Servis, buggies, carriages, cutters;¹⁹ James R. Cole, sashes, doors, blinds; E. Quinlan, rakes;²⁰ Kastner & Mueller, tanning; Mose Guyett, pumps, milk-safes, fanning mills; George Cole, lumber; F. O. Cheeseman & Bro., brooms; W. D. Kirkland, butter tubs and barrels; W. W. Prentice, woolen mill.²¹

Industries in 1877 are listed as two woolen mills—the Riverside, owned by O. Treadwell & Co., and the Sheboygan Falls, owned by George Brickner;²² three carriage and wagon shops, of

¹⁶ Obed and George Mattoon had their factory in the Stedman mill, and after George moved to Sheboygan, Obed started a retail furniture business in the Falls.

¹⁷ Brewery started by Carl Osthelder in 1853; he died in 1863. Business carried on by his son, Joseph; discontinued in 1874.

¹⁸ E. F. Bond, J. J. Zufelt.

¹⁹ William Servis began manufacturing carriages and wagons in 1854. He steadily enlarged the business and replaced the original frame structure with a brick block. After his death the property lay idle for a few years, and then it was used by M. McKinnon & Son for making curd agitators and other cheese factory equipment. After a few years, McKinnon sold his patents to Stoelting Bros. of Kiel, and closed the factory. It is now owned by the city and occupied by city offices and the fire department.—Sheb. Press, Apr. 29, 1927.

²⁰ Edmund Quinlan came to Sheboygan Falls in 1851, and engaged in the chair turning business with H. W. Clark for about 5 years, and in the manufacture of spokes and axe handles for two years. In 1859 he began the manufacture of rakes in a section of the Stedman sawmill. George W. Arnold was associated with him for a short time. In 1871 George W. Spratt bought out Quinlan and carried on the business until the mill was swept away in the 1883 flood. In 1884 Mr. Spratt moved his factory to Sheboygan. After 1878 Quinlan engaged in the making of a patent rake of his own invention.—Hist. of Nor. Wis., p. 1005; Portrait & Biog. Rec. of Sheboygan Co., p. 570; Sheb. Press, Apr. 29, 1927.

²¹ Ibid Jan. 13, 1866, July 23, 1864.

²² The Brickner Woolen Mills, incorporated in 1887, was an outgrowth of these two mills. The Sheboygan Falls Woolen Mills was housed in a frame building on the north side of Monroe street about half a block east of the bridge. It was started in 1861 by William H. Prentice, who for many years had been engaged in the manufacture of fanning mills at the Falls. It was the first woolen mill in the county. In 1862 he formed a partnership with N. C. Farnsworth, known as Prentice & Farnsworth. Later he entered into a new partnership with Benjamin F. Heald, called Prentice & Heald. In 1868 George H. Brickner bought Prentice's half interest in the mill, after which the firm was named Brickner & Heald. Mr. Brickner bought out Mr. Heald's interest in 1872, and was the sole owner from then until 1887, when the Brickner Woolen Mills Co. was organized. In 1879 the main section of the present four-story brick building was begun. Completed in 1880, the machinery was moved from the original building on the east side of the river and installed in the new mill. Mr. Brickner originally settled at Cascade, where he opened a general store in 1855. Later he moved to Sheboygan Falls and operated a flour and grist mill on the east side of the river, apparently the old Chas. D. Cole mill, just below the Stedman sawmill. In 1888 Mr. Brickner was elected a member of Congress from this district.

In 1865, four years after the Sheboygan Falls Woolen Mills was begun, the Riverside Woolen Mills was established by Hills & Clark, who had pre-

William Servis, Benedict & Schuman, and E. T. Bond; chair factory, of Bemis & Bro.; pump and fanning mill factory, of Johann & Meier;²³ cutlery, garden rake and post auger factory, of Mark Brainard; 1 sash, door and blind factory; 1 hand rake factory; 2 flouring mills, 1 tannery;²⁴ 1 foundry; 1 brewery; and 4 cooper shops.²⁶

Two of the outstanding citizens of Sheboygan Falls were Charles D. Cole and David Giddings. As typical products of their day and generation, some particulars about them will prove of interest.

CHARLES D. COLE was born in Schenectady, N. Y. He attended the public schools until the age of 16 years, and then became captain of a canal boat on the Erie canal, pursuing this occupation during the running season, and working in the warehouse of a Mr. Winslow in winter. In 1830 he migrated to Cleveland, Ohio, where he became the owner of a line of canal boats plying between Cleveland and Portsmouth on the Ohio river, Aug. 22, 1831. At Ithaca, N. Y., he was married to Sarah W. Trowbridge, a daughter of Deacon William Trowbridge. Mr. Cole's removal from Cleveland in 1836 after disposing of his canal boat interests there, and his

viously conducted a hub and spoke factory. They carried on the business until 1875, when the property was taken over by the German Bank, of Sheboygan. O. Treadwell & Co. became the new owners, but subsequently the bank placed George H. Brickner in charge. Then William C. Brickner, son of George H. Brickner, bought the bank's interest and became the sole owner. Both the Sheboygan Falls and the Riverside mills operated largely as custom mills, accepting wool the farmers brought in and exchanging it for finished cloth, cash or other commodities. In 1887 George and William Brickner combined their interests by forming the Brickner Woolen Mills Co., of which George Brickner became the president and William Brickner the treasurer. They made woolen shawls, coatings, suitings and dress goods. Orrin Treadwell, mentioned in this footnote, settled in Plymouth in 1851, where he was a farmer and grain dealer. He returned there after his venture in the Falls ended.—Portrait & Biog. Rec. of Sheb. Co., p. 521; Sheb. Press, Apr. 29, 1927; Hist. of Nor. Wis. p. 1005, 1006.

²³ Joachim Johann settled in Sheboygan Falls in 1863, and after being employed in the wooden pump factory of A. M. Little & Co. for 5 years, bought an interest in the firm in 1868. About the same time, August F. Meier, another employee of the factory, bought into the company. They carried on the business until 1876, when Little withdrew, and from then until 1881 the firm was Johann & Meier.—Hist. of Nor. Wis., p. 1004.

²⁴ This tannery was built in 1855 by J. D. Gould on the west side of the river north of the lower dam. In 1864 he sold it to Charles A. Mueller, of Port Washington, and a Mr. Kaestner. In 1866 Charles S. Weisse bought out Kaestner's interest, and in 1872 he purchased the interest of Mueller, and thereafter was the sole proprietor. Weisse died in 1897, and was succeeded by his sons, Charles H., Otto B. and Louis A. Charles H. Weisse was killed Oct. 8, 1919, when a portion of the brick wall fell upon him after the tannery had been destroyed by fire. It was rebuilt by Louis A. Weisse, and carried on by him and his sons until 1925, when it was closed for a number of years. Sheb. Press, Apr. 17, 1916, Apr. 29, 1927.

²⁵ Sheb. Herald, May 25, 1877.

subsequent life in Sheboygan from 1836 to 1838, are related in another chapter. At Sheboygan Falls, which became his permanent home after he left Sheboygan in 1838, he engaged in a variety of activities.

He established a store there, and a short time later, Jan. 11, 1840, was named postmaster. He was also appointed receiver of the United States land office at Green Bay, his district comprising nearly half of the territory of Wisconsin. As receiver he handled many thousands of dollars for the government, most of it in silver and gold coin. To deposit the funds he collected he was obliged to transport the treasure to Green Bay along Indian trails through the forest. There was not a single house on the way, and not a white person liable to be met. Bears, wolves, lynx and wildcats infested the wilderness. Indian camps were scattered at various points along the route, and the danger of being waylaid by thieving, murderous Indians was ever-present. Often Mr. Cole, with bags of silver and gold strapped on his saddle, would make the long, hazardous trip alone. On other occasions he deputized a neighbor to accompany him. They never went into camp or stopped to sleep on the journey, which required a day and a night, for fear of robbery. One night while enroute to Green Bay, when he stopped to take a lunch, he heard an unearthly sound close by. His first thought was that he was about to fall in the hands of Indians, but it turned out to be an owl in a tree just over his head. He omitted the lunch, reached Green Bay, deposited the funds, returned home, and resigned his position. It was too much for his nerves.

In his private capacity Mr. Cole was a land agent, engaged in the business of buying and selling government lands and financing settlers in the purchase of lands. In 1848 he built a sawmill on the Pigeon river in the town of Sheboygan, which he operated for a time with his brother John Beekman Cole. Later he bought the water power at Sheboygan Falls, where he owned and operated a sawmill and grist mill. Much of the lumber he manufactured he rafted down the river to Sheboygan for sale there or to be loaded onto sailing vessels for trans-shipment to other points. At the same time he carried on farming. He was aided in these occupations by his sons. Upon the organization of Sheboygan County in 1838 he was chosen the first Register of Deeds, and made a transcript of the records at Green Bay pertaining to the new county. In 1840 he was clerk of the board of county commissioners. He was also one of the organizers of the Sheboygan & Fond du Lac Plank Road Company, and of the Sheboygan & Mississippi Railroad Company.

Mr. Cole had six children—two daughters, Charlotte and Hattie; and four sons, George T., who married Emeline Rublee, a sister of Horace Rublee; William H., who married Helen Brainard, noted Civil War nurse from Sheboygan County; James R.; and Nathan C. Of his sons three served in the Union army as volunteers. William died in service from disease Oct. 2, 1862. James lost his health. Nathan, then a lieutenant in Co. K, 20th Wis. Inf., was seriously wounded at Prairie Grove, Ark.

A human interest story is told of a visit Mr. Cole made to his son, Nathan, who was reported dangerously sick in a military hospital in the South during his first enlistment. He went to Washington, hoping to be permitted to see his son; but the provost marshal and adjutant general refused to grant him a pass because of important military movements in contemplation. He decided to call on Secretary of War Stanton. At the war department, however, he found a long line of men ahead of him, many of them high-ranking military and government officers. Gray-haired and nervous, and looking the distress he felt, he remained in line until Stanton caught sight of him. The great secretary had a reputation for being a man of iron, but now and then he gave proof that his heart was not always cold and hard. He ordered a messenger to go down the line and conduct "that old, gray-haired man to the front." When Mr. Cole appeared before Stanton's desk, ahead of the waiting throng, the latter said, "My good man, what can I do for you?" With tears in his eyes, Mr. Cole told of the sickness of his boy in the hospital, and that he had come all the way from Wisconsin to see and care for him. The pass was forthcoming at once, with permission, if the soldier was able to travel, to take him home. It was never safe after that for anyone to criticize Secretary Stanton in Mr. Cole's presence. Politically he was a Whig, and then a Republican.

His brother, John Beekman Cole, kept the Beekman House, in its day the leading hotel in Sheboygan. Another brother, George C. Cole, came to Sheboygan in 1842, accompanied by his mother, and three sisters, Mary, Sarah and Clara. George C. Cole became president of the German Bank at Sheboygan. Mary became the wife of James L. Trowbridge, son of Deacon William Trowbridge. Clara married John E. Thomas, president of the Dairymen's Bank at Sheboygan Falls, lawyer, state senator, and publisher of the Sheboygan County News.

Charles D. Cole was liberal in contributing toward the support of churches, but never became associated with any church. He was

an ardent temperance advocate, and organized the first Good Templars society in Wisconsin at Sheboygan Falls. Mrs. Cole was one of the founders of the Baptist church at Sheboygan in 1838. Before 1840 Mrs. Cole taught a little school for a few months in the front room of her house at the Falls. Mr. Cole died Mar. 19, 1867; and Mrs. Cole died Mar. 24, 1887.²⁶

DAVID GIDDINGS was born at Ipswich, Mass., July 24, 1806. At the age of 19 he embarked in the mercantile business at Ipswich, but sold out his interest in 1835. On Apr. 23rd that year he started out for the west, taking passage on a stage-coach for Troy, N. Y., and from there by canal boat to Buffalo, where he arrived about May 1st. From Buffalo he shipped aboard the brig *Indiana* and arrived in Chicago after a trip of about two weeks. Chicago at that time was a rough frontier village, with only three hotels, all crowded with emigrants. It was his intention to go to Peoria, Ill., but learning that it was unhealthful, and its inhabitants sallow, and shaking with fever and ague, he changed his mind. Hearing of a place to the north called Milwaukee, he decided to go there. He formed the acquaintance of a carpenter, who suggested that they build a skiff and sail up the lake. The boat completed and rigged with a blanket for a sail, the two men, along with three others, launched their vessel. They encountered a gale, which drove them ashore at Grosse Point, where they camped for the night. The next morning they faced the alternative of either waiting until the wind abated or towing their boat along the shore. Adopting the latter course, they took the boat as far as Waukegan, pulled it on shore, and turned it upside down to shelter them from a beating rain. Here they camped until they had consumed their supply of provisions, which consisted of crackers, cheese and smoked meats. They knew that somewhere on the present site of Racine there lived a settler, and two of them started on foot to locate him, while the others were left to tow the boat along the lakeshore. After a weary search for the settler's cabin and just as they were about to give up in despair, the tinkle of a cow-bell was heard. Following this sound, they came to the home of the settler, who furnished them with provisions for the remainder of the trip. After spending the night in his shanty, they proceeded on their journey, and

²⁶ Portrait & Biog. Record of Sheb. Co., pp. 695, 656, 498; Hist. of Sheb. Co., by Carl Zillier, pp. 85, 131-2; Sheb. Co. Herald, Apr. 15, 1899; Col. J. A. Watrous, in Milw. Sentinel, date unknown; records of Sheboygan Falls Baptist Church; Pioneer Settlement of Sheb. Co., by John E. Thomas, Wis. Hist. Coll. ix, 392; Early Times in Sheb. Co., by Horace Rublee, Wis. Hist. Coll. iv, 335; Col. J. A. Watrous, in Sheb. Press, Feb. 21, 1910.

entered the Milwaukee river during the night. For several hours they rowed, trying to find a place to land. By the sound of a cow-bell they were finally led to the home of Solomon Juneau, who received them hospitably, and fed and lodged them in a log school house which he had built for his children. Impressed with Mr. Giddings, Juneau tried to persuade him to remain there, but after a few days' rest he started on foot northward along the lake shore with a companion named Eaton.

Giddings arrived at the mouth of the Sheboygan river June 25, 1835, and made his way up the river to the Farnsworth saw-mill, where he staid overnight. On July 4th he reached Green Bay, his entire worldly possessions consisting of his clothes and \$5 in money. His first employment there was building a fence for Gen. Albert G. Ellis at \$20 per month. Gen. Ellis had a contract to survey the town of Astor, entrusting the work to Giddings, who had learned civil engineering in the east. Gen. Ellis, with Joshua Hathaway, of Milwaukee, also had a contract to survey twelve townships in the southeast corner of the state in the present counties of Racine and Kenosha, and Ellis employed Giddings to do his part of the work, in partial payment for which Giddings was to receive an advance of \$200 to enable him to purchase 160 acres of land in Sheboygan county. In company with Mr. Hathaway, and John Banister, of Fond du Lac, about the middle of November 1835, Giddings left Green Bay with two horses packed with blankets and clothing. The snow was about ten inches deep and the weather cold. On their way they stopped at Sheboygan, of which Mr. Giddings says, "The only buildings there at that time were the mill and a log house just below, and another log house which Mr. Payne had put up on the north side of the river as a claim to the land on that side of the river; Mr. Harrison having claimed the south side by putting up his shanty there."

At the mill they made what was called a "jumper," a contrivance for hauling goods on which they placed part of their equipment, and resumed their journey to Milwaukee. There they purchased their provisions and engaged a crew of ten men for the surveying expedition, and hired a team to take them to their destination. The survey was commenced about the middle of December and completed the 1st of March following. Then the party returned to Milwaukee, where Giddings set sail on a schooner going to Sheboygan for lumber. The night after he landed there was a terrific thunder storm. The rain came down in torrents, and in the morning the river overflowed its banks. The dam of the Farnsworth mill

was washed out, and the mill was nearly carried away. Giddings also found the people greatly frightened over rumors of an impending Indian attack, the story of which is given in another chapter. "After waiting several days," writes Mr. Giddings, "I ascertained that two Indians were going to the Bay with their ponies to carry some furs and sugar to sell. I bargained with them to take the mail which for some cause had been left at the mill, giving them \$5 to take this and a small pack which I had. After waiting three or four days longer, they concluded it would do to start; so we left early one morning, but the water was yet so high that at the first crossing of the Pigeon river, it was over the ponies' backs, so that three or four loaves of bread which I had provided to feed us during the journey, (along with a large piece of pork), was thoroughly soaked, and when we camped that night, they ate it all and most of the pork. We camped about three miles this side of the Manitowoc river. The Indians had two or three untanned buckskins which they spread upon the ground. A small fire was built and we lay down on the skins, myself on the center skin and an Indian on each side. I had to continue my journey to the Bay without my breakfast. In a short time we reached the Manitowoc river which was still running high, but the Indians came over in canoes and took us, and the ponies swam. By signs and some Indian words, I made the Indians understand that it was very essential that we have something to eat during the rest of our journey. They went to a neighboring sugar bush and procured a small cake of sugar and two dried suckers. This is all we had for the next two days; as it rained again and the water in the streams was so high we were all that time in reaching the Bay, only about 40 miles."

In 1836 Mr. Giddings superintended the building of the Stedman sawmill at Sheboygan Falls, and was employed to survey twelve townships on the headwaters of the Rock river, south and west of Fond du Lac. In 1837 he located in Sheboygan and started a store on a lot he purchased on Pennsylvania avenue. This was during the financial panic, when Sheboygan was caught in the grip of depression, and his venture met with failure. Consequently, in 1838 he removed to Sheboygan Falls, to which most of the inhabitants of Sheboygan migrated after they had lost faith in the future of their former home. At Sheboygan Falls he bought a half interest in the Stedman mill, and in about 400 acres of land, including the village plat, from Lieut. Marcy. He took charge of the mill in the spring of 1838, as Col. Stedman had left temporarily for his old home in Massachusetts. "At that time," says Mr. Giddings, "the

only farms being improved were Father Trowbridge's, two miles west of the Falls, A. G. Dye's, Benj. Ferman's (Farmin) and D. Hoffman's, four miles southwest, and J. L. and J. D. Gibbs, about the same distance south." Here Mr. Giddings also went into the lumber, real estate, and loan business, working hard to build up the community and the surrounding country, selling farms to the new settlers, and lumber to build their homes, often on credit. It was his practice to have so-called "sale days" at his house. On these occasions purchasers would come, bringing their money, and he would have their deeds, duly executed and ready for delivery.

On the Onion river about two miles south of the Falls, and a short distance north of the present site of Ourtown, he built two sawmills and a flouring mill. The place was known as Giddings Mills. He also erected a sawmill at Hingham, and one on the Sheboygan river three miles above the Falls. In company with A. Z. Littlefield he built a double sawmill at the Falls, on the south side of the river, where the Brickner woolen mills was located later. He is credited with having purchased the first shingle mill introduced in Wisconsin, probably one of the mills mentioned. In 1841 he built the first frame house in the town of Holland on Section 25, which was occupied by one of his employees, a Mr. Ellsworth.

Besides his various business enterprises, Giddings kept up his activities as a surveyor. In 1838 he surveyed the country between Lake Winnebago and the Wolf river; and in 1842 he did surveying on the west side of Green Bay. He surveyed none of the public lands in Sheboygan County. Upon the organization of Sheboygan and Manitowoc counties, he was elected county judge, which office he held two years. In 1840 he was elected to the territorial legislature, in which he served two years as a member of the House of Representatives. While in the legislature, Mr. Giddings was the author of the law permitting the county offices to be held at Sheboygan Falls. In 1846 he was chosen a member of the first constitutional convention for the drafting of a state constitution.

Mr. Giddings was appointed in 1845 one of the three commissioners to lay out the territorial road from Sheboygan to Fond du Lac. As early as 1839 he surveyed this road as a military road and built the first bridge across the Sheboygan river at the Falls for the United States government. He was one of the owners and directors of the Sheboygan and Fond du Lac Plank road, and was instrumental in having the United States road from Chicago to Green Bay laid through Sheboygan Falls instead of Sheboygan. In order to secure it for that village he surveyed the road from

Manitowoc to Port Washington without compensation. When Sheboygan County appropriated \$100,000 to help build the Sheboygan & Mississippi railroad he was named one of the three commissioners to see that the money was properly distributed.

Mr. Giddings was married June 7, 1842, to Dorothy C. Trowbridge. An account of the wedding appears in another chapter. They had three children—Harvard, Clara and George. When the Greenback party sprang up, he became identified with it, and in 1878 was a candidate for Congress on that ticket, but he failed of election. In 1863 he purchased the celebrated 577 acre farm of John B. Macy, promoter of the Rock River Valley Union railroad, near Fond du Lac, and in 1874 went there to live. He died Oct. 26, 1900, age 94 years.²⁷

²⁷ Sheb. Co. News, Oct. 31, 1900, July 2, 1884; Sheb. Press, Apr. 29, 1927; Hist. of Sheb. Co., by Carl Zillier, (1912) p. 88; Portrait & Biog. Record of Sheb. Co. (1894) p. 696; Wis. Blue Book, 1907, p. 925; Laws of 1845, p. 45.

CHAPTER 17

PLYMOUTH

PLYMOUTH first enters the annals of Sheboygan County in 1845—nine years after the infant settlements at Sheboygan and Sheboygan Falls had their beginnings. On May 8th that year, Isaac Thorpe, his two sons, John and Rensellaer Thorpe, and his son-in-law, William Bowen, emigrants from Tioga county, Pennsylvania, in search of a place to settle, camped at night within the present limits of the city just below where the house of H. N. Smith was afterward built, after having traveled all day from Sheboygan Falls with wagons and lumber. The trip from the Falls had been a strenuous one. As far as Deacon Trowbridge's place they encountered no difficulty, but from there on the road was so obstructed with underbrush and trees that they had to do considerable chopping and clearing in order to get through with their heavily laden, ox-drawn conveyances. Having previously heard of the "cold springs" in the vicinity from some of the infrequent travelers who occasionally passed through the region on their journeys between Sheboygan and Fond du Lac, next morning they sought out these waters; but finding the neighboring land too stony to suit them, they turned back to a spot in section 23 about two miles to the east, where Isaac Thorpe decided to locate. The land all along the banks of the Mullett river up to the present depot grounds, they found, was low and swampy, and covered with alder thickets; and on the higher ground, especially on Prospect Hill, grew immense patches of wild blackberry bushes. There were two falls in the river at this place.

Not the least of the attractions of Thorpe's chosen location in the town of Plymouth was a spring brook that flowed nearby, as settlers were inclined to build their cabins close to springs to avoid the digging of wells. Rensellaer Thorpe, then a young man, began that same day to cut down the first tree for the house. For four days the men worked cutting and piling up logs for the structure—the first in the whole township. By May 12th the rude dwelling was enclosed and a temporary roof made by laying boards across the top, but there was no floor or chimney.

Just as the four men were preparing for their first night under shelter, three wagons loaded with immigrants—men, women and

children—stopped at the door. The guests were heartily welcomed, and soon provided with supper and extemporized sleeping arrangements. A little later two horsemen, proving to be Lieut. Webster, of the United States army,¹ who superintended the building of the military road along the same route later that year, and J. L. Moore, a merchant at Sheboygan, came riding through the woods and joined the party in the new cabin. A fire was built, from which the smoke escaped through the apertures in the roof. The evening was pleasantly spent, enlivened by exchanges of experiences, stories and jests.

Four days later, May 16th, Mr. Thorpe's wife and daughter arrived. The work of clearing near the cabin went vigorously on; and in a few weeks potatoes, corn, buckwheat and vegetables were in the ground. That fall Rensselaer Thorpe cleared four acres of land on what was later known as the Reuben Clark farm, and



Cold Spring House
from an old print

sowed the first winter wheat in the town, which, when harvested, yielded 44 bu. to the acre. While Thorpe was the first actual settler in the town of Plymouth, the first to own land there on which he settled was Cyrus Johnson, who located a short distance east of the junction of highways 23 and 57. His entry

bears date June 7, 1845, but he did not remove there until the fall of 1845. By the end of the year, some twenty families, or heads of families preparing for the coming of their wives and children, were located in the town.

In July 1845, Henry I. Davidson and his eldest son Thomas, who hailed from Hartford, Connecticut, came to Plymouth and were the first to settle within the limits of the present city. Believing the location a good one for a tavern, they built one on the land near the "cold springs", on what is now Milwaukee street, and named it the Cold Spring House. It was a rectangular, two-story log structure common in those days. Due to scarcity of help in the vicinity, Mr. Davidson was obliged to import men from Sheboygan Falls to roll the logs together for the establishment, but he succeeded in getting it ready for his wife and family early in the fall. On first thought there would seem to have been little justification for erecting a tavern so far away in the midst of the wilderness

¹ This was Joseph Dana Webster, a surveyor, and later a general in the Civil War.

at such an early date. But the surrounding country was rapidly filling with settlers; there was no other settlement nearer than Sheboygan Falls, ten miles to the east; and the United States road from Sheboygan to Fond du Lac, under the direction of Lieut. Webster, was in the course of construction. Passing directly in front of his door, this thoroughfare, when completed, was bound to be crowded with homeseekers, land agents and travelers of all kinds, to minister to whose needs a tavern at this spot would be ideally situated. His faith in the future of the location soon proved to be amply justified.

Mr. Davidson wanted to give the name of Springfield to the new place, after the springs close by; but his son Thomas insisted on having it called Plymouth—not after the town of that name in Massachusetts, as is commonly supposed—but in memory of the town of Plymouth in Connecticut, where his early sweetheart had died and lay buried.

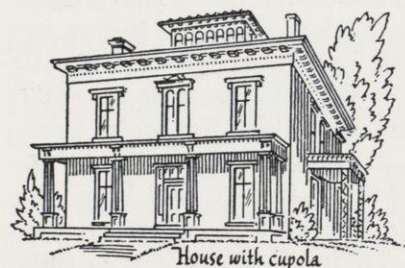
In August 1846, Davidson disposed of the tavern to John W. Taylor, who rebuilt and greatly enlarged it, and made it one of the best hostelries in the entire distance between Sheboygan and Fond du Lac. He built a larger two-story log addition which he joined to the original structure by a connecting hall. It was one of the principal stopping places for the stage coaches on that route, as well as for the numerous ox teams and horse teams that passed through on their way to and from the market. Relays of horses for the stage coaches were kept in a large barn near where the railroad now crosses Elizabeth street. The tavern was quite a center of literary and social activity, supplying a place for social functions, political conventions, caucuses, traveling lecturers and itinerant showmen. In 1847 the first debating society met here, the members seated around a carpenter's bench; and the same year the first election was held in it. Mr. Taylor first set foot in Sheboygan County in 1836. After a brief stay, he returned to his home in New York state, but came back here again in May 1846 and settled at Plymouth.

During the summer of 1847, John W. Taylor and Horatio N. Smith, as the owners of the land in the western part of the town, employed H. J. Cowan, the county surveyor, to lay out the village of Plymouth. The plat is dated June 10, 1848.² Smith street was named after H. N. Smith; Stafford street, after Mr. Smith's only son, who died at an early age; Caroline street, after Mrs. Taylor;

² Book of Plats, Reg. of Deeds, Sheboygan, vol. 1, p. 7.

and Elizabeth street, after Mrs. Taylor's sister. In 1851 Martin M. Flint, a brother-in-law of H. N. Smith, engaged a surveyor, Edmund Bixby, to plat another town, which he named Quitquioc. This was a separate town on the east side of the present city, lying adjacent to the plat of Plymouth and immediately west of the mill pond and the Mullett river. The plat of Quitquioc bears date June 23, 1851.³ Division street owes its name to the fact that it lies on the dividing line between the two tracts. On the plat of Quitquioc, Division is designated as Union street.

Out of the platting of these two towns there grew a most singular event—a bloodless but wordy battle that has gone down in history as the Quitquioc War. At this late date much of the local background and color of the strife is lacking. No adequate contemporary accounts of it appear to have been preserved. The community had no newspaper at the time. Basically the fight was one for advantage between rival townsite promoters; and revolved about the name to be given to the two towns, one party wanting the name Plymouth, and the other Quitquioc. Plymouth it was in the beginning; but its antagonists had a bill introduced in the state legislature to change it to Quitquioc. A petition signed by 67 citizens, including R. H. Hotchkiss, H. N. Smith, M. M. Flint and P. H. Smith, was filed in that body Feb. 10, 1851, asking for the



House with cupola

change on the ground that there were three organized towns in this state by the name of Plymouth, and that the people of the community were being put to great inconvenience thereby. Striving to please, the legislature accommodat-ingly passed the law.⁴ In the meantime, however, there must have been considerable contention over the question back home, because the original petition shows on its face that four of the signers cancelled their signatures on it, and another suggested name for the town—Tahanta—had been crossed out, and Quitquioc substituted for it. Besides, when the legislature passed the law, through a mistake, the name adopted was Quitquire.

At the next session of the legislature, in 1852, the outraged Plymouth party got busy and in the spirit of “—but change the

³ Book of Plats, Reg. of Deeds, Sheboygan, vol. 1, p. 14.

⁴ Chap. 10, Laws of 1851.

name of Arkansaw, —NEVER!" demanded a law restoring the old name. The senate committee on town and county organization, to whom the bill was referred, made a report, however, opposing a further change, stating:

"The bill proposes to change the name to Plymouth. This your Committee deem quite objectionable, on the ground that the number of towns bearing this name is already very great. Your committee do not deem it any disrespect to Plymouth—the original seat of this vast empire, the very rocks of which are recognized as classic ground—that another name, perhaps equally suggestive of rare exploits in its aboriginal signification, should be substituted therefor. Much patriotic discussion has been elicited as to the signification of "Quitquioc"; yet your committee has been unable to define the term satisfactorily to themselves, and are of the opinion that Mr. Locke had this word in view when he says "though *defining* be thought the proper way to make known the proper signification, yet there are some words that will not be defined", and to this class Quitquioc undoubtedly belongs . . . Your Committee believe that the people of that town have attached too much importance to this subject, and overrated the advantages of a name; for Shakespeare says, "What's in a name? that which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet." Therefore your committee are of the opinion that the name should remain unchanged, and believe that time and proper investigation will demonstrate that the aborigines discovered something which rendered the name peculiarly appropriate."

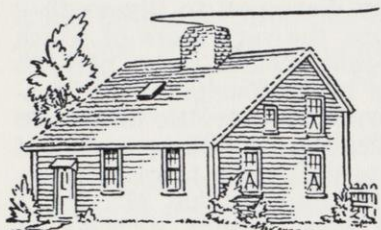
But despite the committee's adverse report, the 1852 legislature, after considerable debate, reversed the action of its predecessor, and voted Plymouth its former name.⁵

Ta-quit-qui-oc was the name the Indians had given to the stream through the town, meaning "crooked river". The controversy over the name of the town appears to have been a feud principally between H. N. Smith, a staunch Democrat, and John W. Taylor, an ardent Republican, once business associates, but later competitors and rivals. It continued until Mr. Smith was appointed warden of the state prison and moved away. An idea of the harsh things said and done by the warring factions may be gained from the fact that, as the story goes, the inhabitants had their mail addressed according to the name they favored, but after the old name was given back the postmaster picked out the mail directed to Plymouth and threw the rest back into the bag, remarking, "There's no such place as Quitquioc." For years each section

⁵ Chap. 259, Laws of 1852.

of the town had its own school; and every time there was a meeting to discuss the merging of the two districts, the fight broke out anew. Finally, in 1866 the schools were consolidated and the new building appropriately named the Union school.⁶

Probably the most authentic source of information concerning the early history of Plymouth is a series of articles by Mrs.



Salt Box House

H. N. Smith published in the Plymouth Reporter, beginning December 10, 1872, and continuing weekly until June 5, 1873.⁷ Mr. and Mrs. Smith came to Sheboygan in 1847; and after remaining there three years, they removed to Plymouth, where they resided for 25 years. Mrs. Smith was a talented, cultured lady, and a writer of more than

ordinary ability. Her account of early times is particularly valuable because of her contemporary knowledge of the happenings which she records. Much of the data of Plymouth and vicinity presented in this chapter is taken from her writings.⁸ Her husband, Horatio Nelson Smith, was one of Plymouth's earliest merchants and outstanding men.⁹

⁶ Evergreen City Times, Feb. 22, 1868; Sheb. Herald, Apr. 3, 1897; Mrs. H. N. Smith in Sheb. Press, June 16 and 23, 1913.

⁷ Reprinted in Sheb. Press in weekly installments beginning June 9, 1913.

⁸ Other accounts of Plymouth are by Capt. C. Schlaich, an early settler in the city, and Historical Souvenir of Plymouth, a booklet published by Mary L. Clark in 1905. Miss Clark states that most of her data is taken from Mrs. H. N. Smith's history, but that some was furnished her by Misses Franc and Mary Taylor.

⁹ Mrs. H. N. Smith, whose maiden name was Laura A. Chase, was born in Randolph, Vt., in 1827. She was the granddaughter of Philander Chase, the first Episcopal bishop in the northwest, and the founder of Kenyon and Jubilee colleges. Bishop Chase was an uncle of Salmon P. Chase, secretary of the treasury under Lincoln, and later chief justice of the United States supreme court. A graduate of Royalton Academy in Vermont, Mrs. Smith was the author of a book entitled, "The Life of Philander Chase, First Bishop of Ohio and Illinois, etc., by his granddaughter, Laura Chase Smith." In 1844, when 17 years of age, Laura Chase married Horatio Nelson Smith, then 24 years old. Two years later they left their home in Bethel, Vt., and migrated to Sheboygan County, where they arrived about July 1, 1847. On the boat one of their fellow passengers was Horace Greeley, famous editor of the New York Tribune, who was on his way to visit the Spring Farm Phalanx, a Fourierite settlement in the town of Mitchell. Their party consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Smith, one child, Anna, 14 mos. old, Mrs. Smith's mother, Mrs. Eliza Chase, Mr. Smith's sister, Miss Charlotte Smith, afterward Mrs. Samuel B. Ormsbee, and Mr. Smith's brother, Patrick Henry Smith. This was H. N. Smith's second trip to the county. The preceding February he had visited his brother-in-law, Martin M. Flint, who had settled at Plymouth in the fall of 1846 and built the first frame house in the town. Containing a kitchen, sitting

H. N. Smith's general store at Plymouth was a typical pioneer trading place. It was 18 x 30 and two stories high. It was neither painted nor plastered, and had no chimney, but was filled with a \$2,500 stock of merchandise. Included in the stock were 200 bbls. of pork and 1,700 lbs. of butter imported from Chicago by steamer to Sheboygan. Probably most of the trading was done by barter. Such things as maple sugar, shingles, baskets, eggs, beeswax and axe helves, were exchanged for articles the settlers wanted, as coffee, tea, whiskey, tobacco, shoes, meal, flour and butter. Coffee was sold for 12¢ and tea for 75¢ a lb., whiskey for 10¢ a qt., tobacco for 25¢ a lb., shoes for \$1 a pair, and flour for 21½¢ and butter for 11¢ a lb. A fair average of the purchases of a settler's family was \$25 a year. The Indians were frequent customers, bringing in moccasins, bear and buck skins, and raccoon, mink and muskrat pelts. Mink skins were worth from 25 to 30 cents each; raccoon

room, two bedrooms and a pantry, though constructed of rude boards and girded by the forest, it was a veritable palace for those days. Favorably impressed with the prospects of the county during his first visit, he decided to remove here as soon as possible, and went back to Vermont for his family. Upon landing at Sheboygan, he took his family to Flint's house, and then returned to Sheboygan and opened a store there, his family following him in a few weeks.

In February 1848, H. N. Smith commenced building another store in Plymouth and placed it in charge of his younger brother, P. H. Smith, as head clerk and manager. On Sept. 15, 1848, P. H. Smith became a partner of H. N. Smith in this store. In the fall of 1850, H. N. Smith removed his family and transferred his entire business to Plymouth. The firm then was known as P. H. Smith & Co., and so continued until 1860, when P. H. Smith's brother-in-law, William Elwell, succeeded to the interest of H. N. Smith. Besides the store, P. H. Smith & Co. owned an ashery just east of the Hotchkiss mill, built in 1850.

In the fall of 1848, H. N. Smith was elected to the Assembly from Sheboygan, and in 1852 was elected state senator from the first senatorial district. His greatest contribution to his day and generation was as a promoter of the Milwaukee & Northern railroad, extending from Milwaukee through Plymouth to Green Bay. He worked untiringly, spending much time and money in getting people interested. He was often in Milwaukee to get men of means to help finance the project. After repeated efforts and disappointments a company was organized, backed largely by Milwaukee capital.

Mr. Smith was made president of the railroad, and was closely identified with its management in various capacities until the road was leased to the Wisconsin Central railroad. In 1874 he was appointed warden of the Wisconsin state prison at Waupun. Six years later he left Waupun and lived a part of the time in Milwaukee and a part in California. In 1880 he took charge of the northern extension of the railroad from Ontonagon south. During the course of his life Mr. Smith participated in many other activities. He was president of the village of Sheboygan in 1848; president of the Sheboygan County Agricultural Society; one of the founders of the Sheboygan & Mississippi railroad; and a promoter of various plank road projects in the county. One of his chief interests was the advancement of agriculture, and in that connection he frequently imported improved breeds of sheep, horses and cattle from the east and disposed of them to the farmers. He died in August 1886, and Mrs. Smith died Jan. 18, 1913.—In addition to Mrs. Smith's series of articles, see *Portrait & Biog. Rec. of Sheb. Co.*, pp. 603, 610; *Milw. Free Press*, June 15, 1913; *Sheb. Press*, June 9, 1913; *Plym. Rev.*, Jan. 22, 1913.

25¢; muskrat \$5 per dozen; bear \$3.50 to \$5 a skin; buck skin \$1.50. The Indians would accept nothing but hard cash for their goods, but would immediately purchase other articles with it. The store kept a "barter book," which Mrs. Smith preserved, containing all these transactions.

The Sheboygan Mercury of April 1, 1848, contains this write-up of Plymouth at that time:

"Plymouth. This place, located 16 miles west of this village, on the Fond du Lac road, we consider worthy of notice. Two years ago, as will be recollected by those who traveled this road, this place was a wilderness, and if we mistake not, only one family resided there. In the short time that has intervened a change has taken place which can hardly be realized, even by those acquainted with the facts. The land which is now surveyed into a village plat was originally purchased of the government by Mr. H. I. Davidson and who subsequently sold to J. W. Taylor, Esq., who has erected a large Public House and made many other improvements. Thomas I. Davidson has for about a year past been engaged in the mercantile business . . . The county has been rapidly filling up during this time with an industrious class of farmers who have made large improvements and who will soon be able to give good encouragement to merchants, mechanics, &c., who may locate in this place. A store of suitable size for the business of the place has recently been completed and filled by H. N. Smith, Esq., of this village.¹⁰

"There are already shoe shops, cabinet shops, blacksmiths, &c., and as we are informed by Mr. Taylor many lots have been sold to mechanics of different kinds who have bound themselves to have buildings completed on or before the first of June next. Mr. H. I. Davidson, the original owner of the property, has purchased the water power on the Mullett in the immediate vicinity of this place and is making preparations to erect a saw mill¹¹ . . . Taking a view of the past, and

¹⁰ When H. N. Smith disposed of his interest in P. H. Smith & Co. in 1860 to William Elwell, the firm name was changed to Smith & Elwell. Mr. Elwell retired from the firm in 1867, and in 1868 Henry H. Huson, then a clerk in the store, became associated with P. H. Smith, under the firm name of Smith & Huson. In 1873, Gustav W. Zerler, a clerk in the store, bought an interest in the business, and from then until 1880 the firm was known as Smith, Huson & Zerler. During the latter year P. H. Smith sold his interest in the store to his associates and retired, and the firm title was changed to Huson & Zerler, by which it was known for many years.—Portrait & Biog. Rec. of Sheb. Co., pp. 347, 610, 620.

¹¹ Besides operating the Cold Spring House, John W. Taylor conducted an extensive land agency at Plymouth. In June, 1847, he and Davidson were appointed commissioners to lay out the first important road leading out of Plymouth, which ran from the corner of Main and Milwaukee streets north and south to the county lines. On Nov. 5, 1849, Mr. Taylor became postmaster. His eldest daughter, Helen, married James A. Ehle, both of whom, with their children, perished in the celebrated fire that destroyed the Ehle

present, we can safely say that Plymouth bids fair to become quite a business town."

The Sheboygan Mercury¹² says of Plymouth in 1849, which then contained about 15 families:

"This is a fine growing village, containing at this time the large public house, two stores, one saw-mill, and a boot and shoe store. There are also Land Agents, one Doctor, and mechanics of all kinds. About a mile west of Plymouth is Cleveland's Cottage for the accommodation of travelers."¹³

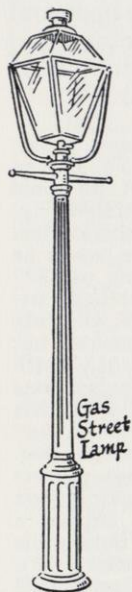
tavern in the town of Greenbush, Feb. 16, 1886. Henry I. Davidson's son, Thomas, married Elizabeth Coleman, the sister of Mrs. J. W. Taylor, on Christmas day, 1847. The day also marked the formal opening of the Cold Spring House under Mr. Taylor's management. Thomas was appointed Plymouth's first postmaster, Sept. 2, 1846, and kept the post office in the kitchen of his father's tavern until Mr. Taylor took possession of the place, when he moved it to the kitchen of a new log structure he built in the spring of 1847 across the street south of the brewery, which he used for the combined purposes of a dwelling and general store. It was Plymouth's first store. On July 1, 1848, Henry P. Davidson succeeded Thomas I. Davidson as postmaster but held the office less than a month, or until July 25, 1848, when P. H. Smith received the appointment. According to some accounts, Henry P. Davidson was the *father* of Thomas; but this is incorrect; he was Thomas' brother. His father was Henry I. Davidson, who had two sons, Thomas and Henry, and two daughters, Julia and Susan. Henry I. Davidson never was postmaster. Thomas' career as a merchant must have been brief, as Mrs. Smith reports that on Mar. 11, 1848, he returned to her husband the goods remaining on his hands from the previous year. H. I. Davidson, in July 1848, started a sawmill across the river from the flour mill he began that year. Both mills were served by the same water power. In 1866, Hotchkiss & Puhlmann, then the owners of the two mills, tore down the sawmill and built a plaster mill on its site. H. P. Davidson in 1851, bought the Quitquioc House from its builder Martin M. Flint, and was its first landlord; but he conveyed it in 1853 to his father. It was later named the Commercial House. Thomas died of a lingering illness on Nov. 28, 1855. Henry P. was killed in the Civil War and is buried in a nameless southern grave. Henry I. outlived both of his sons. He later conducted a small resort at Elkhart Lake known as Davidson's resort. Thomas I. is often erroneously referred to in the writings as Thomas P. Davidson.—Portrait & Biog. Rec. of Sheb. Co., p. 516; Plym. Rep., beg. Dec. 10, 1872; Sheb. Press, beg. June 9, 1913; Sheb. Press, Apr. 29, 1927; Julius A. Laack in Sheb. Press, Jan. 27, 1941.

¹² July 21, 1849.

¹³ The first flour mill in Plymouth was not completed until 1850. It was started by H. I. Davidson in 1848, at the foot of Mill street adjoining the river, and was given the name of Quit-qui-Oc Mills. In 1849 Robert H. Hotchkiss, of Milwaukee, through the efforts of J. W. Taylor, brought milling machinery with him, and entered into a partnership with Davidson; but it was March 27, 1850, before the wheels turned. Next day, Mar. 28th, Davidson sold his interest to H. N. Smith and the firm name was changed to Smith & Hotchkiss. So little grain was brought to the mill that it could not run more than one-fourth of the time, and the firm did not open books until August. Later Rudolph Puhlmann purchased Smith's interest, and the name of the firm was changed to Hotchkiss & Puhlmann. In 1866 Capt. Otto Puhlmann bought his brother's interest. Hotchkiss died in 1878, after which the mill was operated by Otto Puhlmann until 1887, when it was sold to William Schwartz, who had owned the Central Flour Mills. In 1901 Gottlieb Pfeiffer bought the mill and named it the Plymouth Roller Mills.

Plymouth's second flour mill, the Central Flour Mills, was built in 1867 by William Schwartz on the present site of the waterworks plant. The mill

Plymouth's most significant organization probably was the literary society known as the Hub Club, started Jan. 21, 1870. With a membership consisting of about twenty of the leading public-spirited men and women of the town, one of its main objects was to establish a free public library. In order to raise money for this purpose they gave regular amateur dramatic performances, presenting popular plays of the day, among them "Our American Cousin", "East Lynne" and "Ten Nights in a Bar Room." Between 1870 and 1897, thirty-three plays were staged, netting the club \$4,465.71, which was all spent for books. As early as 1871, \$100 worth of books were purchased, to form the nucleus of the library. One of the charter members was G. W. Zerler, who became its first secretary and treasurer, and served in that capacity during the life of the organization. The first books were kept in the home of P. H. Smith, where people called for them. Mrs. Smith was the first librarian. In 1872 they were transferred to the Smith, Huson & Zerler store, Mr. Zerler acting as the librarian. Mar. 28, 1900, the Woman's Relief Corps started the first free public reading room in the city. Oct. 4, 1901, the first public library board was created under the state law, and Nov. 20, 1901, the Plymouth Public Library and Reading-Room were opened, to which the old Hub Club turned over its collection of books. In 1915 the present public library building was completed, \$10,000 for its construction being obtained from the An-



pond covered considerable of the lower part of town. When the city purchased the millsite, in 1900, the mill building was moved across the street. Robert Oberreich leased the mill of Mr. Schwartz in 1879 and purchased it in 1881.

In 1850, H. N. Smith bought 80 acres of land in section 27 about two miles south of Plymouth at a place later called Paris, believing that it had possibilities for a good water power. William Schwartz, in 1856, built a flour mill there, and soon after took Mr. Smith in as a partner, but Mr. Schwartz later became sole owner again. Brickbauer & Klumb were also at one time the owners of this mill, which they called South Plymouth Mills. Vollier Wattier, who platted Paris in 1869, was the owner of the mill there then.

In 1878 William Schwartz, in company with Robert Preussler, erected a two-story frame building directly south of the Central Mills, in which they started a furniture factory. A small island parted the waters of the Mullett at this point, the Central Mills being on one side of the island and the furniture factory on the other. Previously the site had been the location of a sawmill erected by George Barker, which was destroyed by fire. In 1881 Mr. Schwartz sold out to his partner, who then took his brother, Adolph Preussler into business with him. They operated under the name of Preussler Bros. Mfg. Co. until 1890 when they sold their interest and removed to Sheboygan, and started the Sheboygan Novelty Co., manufacturers of combined book-cases and writing desks. Its new owners changed the name of the old Preussler

drew Carnegie fund, and the balance of \$3,000 raised by popular subscription, largely through the efforts of the Plymouth Woman's Club.

Plymouth was incorporated as a city in 1877, and its first election was held April 3rd that year.¹⁴ Strangely enough, it attained the status of a city without having passed through the usual intermediate stage of an incorporated village. Prior to 1877 it was politically a part of the town of Plymouth. Its first newspaper, the Plymouth Reporter, was started in 1872. Situated almost in the exact geographical center of the county, Plymouth is also appropriately called the Hub City. It is a convenient trading point for a good-sized territory surrounding it, and is also considerable of a manufacturing seat.

It is as a center of the cheese industry, however, that it has gained its widest reputation. Although a city of fewer than 5,000 people, it is the cheese capital of the world. Sales of cheese on the Wisconsin Cheese Exchange situated here affect prices of the product all over the country. During World War II the United States government purchased practically all the cheese offered on the exchange. The town's most distinctive feature is the section on the south side where most of the prominent cheese houses are clustered. Here are the warehouses, cold storage plants, and railroad facilities where the cheese is collected, stored, cured, graded, packed and shipped. Popularly known as "Cheeseville", it is literally the Wall Street of cheese. A second and smaller "Cheeseville" is located in the northwestern part of the city. About 1,000 of Plymouth's 4,400 citizens find employment in the cheese business.

factory to Plymouth Furniture Co. In 1891 Schwartz started the William Schwartz Mfg. Co., makers of kitchen safes, sinks, book-cases and wardrobes. In 1867 Carl and John Schwartz and Fred Thurmman built a foundry, machine shop, and hub and spoke factory on Stafford street, known as the Schwartz Co. Mr. Thurmman withdrew from the firm about three years later, and for 18 years engaged in blacksmithing. In 1885 another foundry was started by G. A. Albrecht, Chas. Fuchs and Charles Knauer. Knauer sold out in 1886 to William Thurmman, son of Fred Thurmman; and Fuchs sold to Thurmman and Albrecht. The company was later known as F. Thurmman & Co., and today as the Plymouth Foundry & Machine Co. In 1866 Hugh Jones built a woolen mill on the Mullett at Mankato above Plymouth.—Port. & Biog. Rec. of Sheb. Co., pp. 197, 301, 340, 705, 709; Ply. Rep., beg. Dec. 10, 1872; Sheb. Press, beg. June 9, 1913; Sheb. Press, April 29, 1927; Hist. of Nor. Wis., pp. 1007, 1010.

¹⁴ The first officers elected were Otto Puhlman, mayor; Lester Bishop, clerk; E. A. Dow, treasurer; Carl Schwartz, assessor.

CHAPTER 18

TOWNS AND VILLAGES

AS SETTLEMENT of the county progressed, many small towns naturally sprang up to serve as trading centers for the surrounding countryside. The Sheboygan Mercury reported in 1848, "Villages in the territory spring into existence with a rapidity almost rivaling Jonah's Gourd."¹ The condition of the roads and the difficulties of early travel kept settlers close to home; a journey of 15 to 25 miles to the county seat or the larger trading centers was a venture not ordinarily undertaken oftener than once or twice a year. Scattered at convenient intervals of four or five miles, early villages thus served the needs of their respective neighborhoods as modern facilities of communication and travel no longer permit them to do.

Some of these towns were located on the former sites of Indian villages, attesting to the sagacity of the redmen in selecting favored places of habitation. A water power or dam site on a stream, or the intersection of two or more main-traveled roads, or a likely spot along a railroad, was almost sure to attract a settlement. Wherever conditions seemed right for a future town, some enterprising speculator usually came along to give it a name, and have it surveyed and laid out in lots, and sold to whoever could be induced to buy. A flour and grist mill, a grain warehouse, a general store, a blacksmith shop, and a tavern, which served as boarding house, hostelry and drink dispensary all in one, were soon built, followed in due time by a church, a school, and other establishments common in new and growing communities.

That is the story of the typical early town, if it grew and thrived. But most of these speculations failed to fulfill the sanguine hopes of their founders. Some, like Amsterdam and Mankato, for example, have disappeared entirely, leaving scarcely a trace of their former existence, their very names forgotten. The fate of others was determined by the routes the railroads took. In general, however, the villages in Sheboygan County have held their own, or grown and prospered, through the years.

¹ Mar. 25, 1848.

GREENBUSH

The story of the beginnings of Greenbush is best told in an article entitled, "The Early History of Greenbush", by Aaron Bender, published in the Sheboygan Herald, Mar. 22, 1878. Mr. Bender obtained his information from C. C. Colman, one of the pioneers of the town, who, while in attendance at the state legislature at Madison in 1851, heard it from Mr. Townsend. The latter told how another man and he were traveling on horseback on the old Indian trail from Fond du Lac, east, in 1843. He stated:

"When we came to the Mullett river we were weary and put up for the night on the west bank of the river. During the night we heard the rushing of water, as if there were rapids near by. We came to the conclusion that there was a mill privilege not far off. At sunrise we examined the stream, up and down, and found to our surprise that we were not mistaken in our conjectures. I took a description of the four acres and pre-empted it the same year. A short time afterward I sold my claim to Sylvanus Wade, of Joliet, Illinois, for \$150."

Sylvanus Wade was the first settler at Greenbush and its founder. His son Andrew gave Mr. Bender the following account of the family's adventures there:

"My father left Joliet, with his family and two teams, early in the spring of 1844. There were 11 children in the family, we buried one child on the way here. We came along the lake shore. We struck the Sheboygan and Fond du Lac trail at Sheboygan Falls. On our way to the Mullett River we spent some time in cutting a road.² We arrived at our destination on the 28th day of April. My father and I immediately began to cut logs to build a house, while one of the teams commenced breaking the prairie, near where the grave yard now is. We were hard up for help to raise our house but we planned to make the horses draw up the logs. We at times felt lonesome, for our nearest neighbors were the Kelloggs, 10 miles west of us. In order to pass away the time, I and my sisters would sit on an old log across the road in front of the house and sing notes from the singing book. For some years we were very hard up for a road to drive up to the prairie for a distance of half a mile, giving us a distance of nearly a mile. Father brought with him a large bull-dog, to guard the house and to keep off wild animals. We had a calf across the river in a pen. One dark night we heard the wolves howling near the pen. We sent the dog over to drive them off. I went over

² In view of Andrew Wade's statement, the assertion often made that Sylvanus Wade drove with team and wagon from Taycheedah near Fond du Lac, is incorrect.

the next morning and found that the wolves had devoured the calf except the head. The lonesomeness did not last long. The road in after years was traveled so much that we often had a customer to each plank in the house."

The Sheboygan Mercury, April 1, 1848, has this to say about Greenbush at that early date:

"GREENBUSH, Located six miles west of Plymouth and half way between this place and Fond du Lac, already begins to have the appearance of a business place. Mr. Wade, who was the first settler, purchased about four years since a Pre-emption claim to the property he now owns, and soon after moved his family on to the same. His nearest neighbor east was Rev. Wm. Trowbridge, a distance of sixteen miles, and west Col. Conklin, a distance of nearly twenty miles. As in other places in the west many improvements have been made here which show an enterprising spirit and a determination to vie with their neighbors. The lands are all taken by actual settlers, and farms with large improvements are visible on every hand. Mr. Wade has, since his residence at this place, kept a public house . . . Mr. Chas. Robinson has in operation at this place a saw-mill on a branch of the Sheboygan river . . . Several mechanics have located here, among which are blacksmiths, shoemakers, chair manufacturers, &c; as yet no merchant has been induced to locate here . . . Mr. Wade has for some months past kept a small stock of merchandise comprising the leading articles called for in a new country. A second public house is being fitted up in this place by Mr. J. S. Farnsworth."

In 1849 the Sheboygan Mercury said of the growing community:

"GREENBUSH contains at this time, two good public houses, one saw-mill, one store, one ashery, blacksmiths, wagon makers, chair manufacturers, shoe makers, lawyers, Doctors, and a number of mechanics who are actively employed."³

Aaron Bender in his Early History of Greenbush records his impressions of the place in these words:

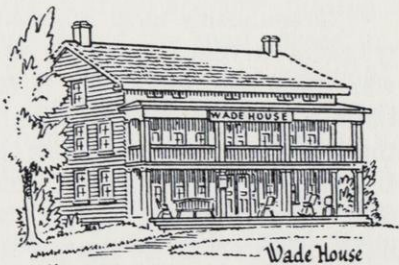
"I came to the village of Greenbush, July 15, 1850. The United States road was finished from Sheboygan to Fond du Lac. This thoroughfare was lined with teams and footmen. A daily stage was established which carried the mails and passengers. The central depot was at Mr. Wade's where teams were changed and passengers took refreshments. There was also a line of telegraphs, with an office in the village. There was also strong talk of making it a county seat in '52 and '53. Mr. McCroy (A. L. McCrea), of Milwaukee, built his plank road through to Fond du Lac.

³ July 21, 1849.

In the winter of 1857 there was an Indian murder committed on the west end of the school section, at the head of a running spring. One Indian shot another Indian's squaw and her husband immediately shot down the Indian. They were both buried on the north bank of the river. In the year 1852, Mr. Bolton's youngest son was kid-napped by the Indians, between his house and a spring in the southwest corner of the town of Rhine and has not since been heard of.

In the year 1853 the state road from Manitowoc to Madison was laid out through the village of Greenbush on the same route of the old Indian trail. It will thus be seen that nature located this village as a central point. I will here say that the day will come, (for it is only a matter of time) when there will be a solid block of buildings, standing from Greenbush to Glenbeulah. It will then be called upper and lower Greenbush. I will further say, that the day is not far distant when there will be a direct railroad built from Madison to Manitowoc, by the way of Greenbush, for the savage Indians, hundreds of years ago, saw the necessity of having a trail leading from that point southwest."⁴

A man of initiative and enterprise, Sylvanus Wade was the leading spirit in the upbuilding of Greenbush. He built a log house near the present Wade House in the village, and started a blacksmith shop, where he worked at his trade. During his first year he plowed ten acres of prairie, and opened a hotel, known as the Half Way House, because situated about midway between Sheboygan and Fond du Lac. Originally a log cabin, the present structure was built in 1849, and opened to the public in 1850. This hotel, an unusually large and pretentious one for its day, became a famous landmark, and is mentioned in all the accounts of early inns and stage lines in the state. Not only did it serve as a relay station for stage coaches, but as the stopping-place for emigrants, settlers and travelers of all kinds. Its rooms were filled to capacity practically every night. It is said that as many as 200 people sought shelter there at a time, but only a portion could be accommodated. A fine example of colonial architecture, and well preserved and imposing, it remains to this day a picturesque and historic feature beside the



⁴ Sheb. Herald, Mar. 22, 1878.

main highway running through the town, attracting the attention of all who pass by.⁵

There was no road cut through to Fond du Lac at the beginning. In 1848 Mr. Wade was appointed one of the commissioners to lay out a territorial road along the route, and during the same year meetings were held at his place for the construction of a plank road, which was completed in 1852.⁶ Of direct benefit to himself as well as the community, he was an enthusiastic advocate of the road. He was also one of the promoters of the Sheboygan Lake Turnpike & Bridge Co., formed in 1855 to build a toll road, north and south, across Sheboygan marsh and a bridge over the Sheboygan river, but this project never materialized.⁷ Visualizing a bright future for the place, Mr. Wade platted the town in 1848, and re-platted it in 1850. Three additions to the village were also platted—Allen D. Lamb's in 1850, Charles H. Robinson's in 1851, and Charles B. Colman's in 1856. Streets were named Center, Water, Spence, Cedar, South, Spring, East, Sheboygan, Main, Mill and Washington streets. In 1850, the United States census shows, the village had 180 inhabitants.⁸

Besides his other interests, Sylvanus Wade was a justice of the peace, the first postmaster, and the first town chairman. He became postmaster July 1, 1846. At the first town meeting, held in 1845, the name of Green Bush was given to the town. It was suggested by Charles H. Robinson, the builder of the first saw mill in the village, and so called after a town in Massachusetts. Later the name was combined into one word—Greenbush.

Greenbush's most momentous, and at the same time its most tragic occurrence, from the effects of which it has never recovered, was when the Sheboygan & Mississippi railroad passed it by and built its line instead to Glenbeulah two miles away. Situated on the bee-line to Fond du Lac, and directly on the natural route of travel, everybody thought, and unquestionably had been assured, that the line would be laid through Greenbush. However, the inhabitants were to be sharply disappointed. When they learned that the railroad was likely to run to Glenbeulah, then but an isolated mill site surrounded by the raw wilderness, instead of to their prosperous and growing community, they were thrown into consternation verging on panic.

⁵ Three Pioneer Taverns, by W. A. Titus, Wis. Mag. of Hist. vol. 17, p. 179.

⁶ Sheb. Mercury, Mar. 25, July 1, July 15, Dec. 30, 1848.

⁷ Chap. 51, P. & L. Laws, 1855.

⁸ Sheb. Mercury, Sept. 14, 1850.

On July 10, 1856, a mass meeting of citizens was held at Greenbush, and a committee of three, consisting of Sylvanus Wade, E. W. Stannard and S. Lombard, was appointed "to confer with the directors and with Mr. Appleton, the contractor, and to ascertain the most reasonable conditions upon which they will agree to build said road through the village of Greenbush." The indignation of the people is best exemplified by the resolution adopted at the meeting:

*"Resolved, That we have recently learned with unfeigned regret that said company have declared their intention to run said road along the south shore of Sheboygan Lake and river, leaving the village of Greenbush more than two miles distant therefrom, contrary to the continued and positive assurances of the Directors of said company and the general understanding between the people of this town and said Directors, when the vote was taken to loan the credit of the county to said company, for the purpose of building said road; and we would consider such a course as a gross violation of that good faith that ought to characterize business transactions of this nature, and in which the people of this town have ever acted toward said company . . . Therefore Resolved—That we can reasonably ask for the construction of said road through our village, that the interests of our town, mechanical, agricultural and commercial, may not be exposed to the blighting influence to which a contrary course would subject them . . . We are willing to meet the railroad company upon fair and honorable ground, where both parties can stand without a sacrifice of interests."*⁹

Details of Greenbush's fight for the railroad are now missing; but it was a losing fight. Tradition has it that the road passed up the town on account of the exorbitant price that a prominent Greenbush land owner demanded for the right of way across his property. But it is likely that the change of route was more a matter of topography. It was easier and less expensive to build the line along the Mullett river bottoms from Plymouth to Glenbeulah, and thence westward along the low edge of Sheboygan marsh, than to surmount the considerable range of hills east of Greenbush. Then too, the railroad promoters doubtless were lured by the prospect of establishing an entirely new town site at Glenbeulah, and making some money on the side through the sale of lots. Some years later the Fond du Lac Commonwealth commented, "The village of Greenbush is stricken with blight, owing to the fact that the travel with teams from Sheboygan to Fond du Lac is almost

⁹ Sheb. Times, July 26, 1856.

entirely dispensed with, and to the building up of a rival town in Glenbeulah two miles below, where the railroad at present terminates."¹⁰

GLENBEULAH

This once thriving community achieved early prominence chiefly by being made the western terminus of the Sheboygan & Mississippi railroad. Donden Ferguson built the first house there in 1848. In 1850 Hazael P. Clark, of Rhode Island, settled on a 320 acre farm in section 1 of the town of Greenbush. Part of this farm became the present site of the village. The same year, Mr. Clark, together with William Pool, acquired the water-power site from

DILLINGHAM & CO.,

Manufacturers of

Hubs, Spokes, Felloes,

Flour Barrel Staves and Headings,

BENT MEASURES,

Broom Handles, Cheese Boxes, Scive and Riddle Rims,

GLENBEULAH, - WISCONSIN.

C. Conger and built a saw-mill, which was known as Clark's Mill. No one thought of developing a village at this place until 1856, when the prospect of a railroad started it upon a more ambitious career. In 1857 the Sheboygan Journal pre-

dicted, "All things considered, Glen Beulah promises to be the largest interior village in Sheboygan County."¹¹ In 1856, Edward Appleton, the contractor engaged in building the railroad, with a small group of other investors, acquired a tract of land in the locality for a town site, which they platted into village lots in 1859. Associated with Mr. Appleton were Amos Otis, Stephen Dillingham, Joseph Swift, Harrison Barrett, Samuel P. Benson, Isaac Orvis, Theodore Atkinson and Van Eps Young. They called themselves the Glenbeulah Land Company. Of these men, Appleton, Barrett, Atkinson and Young were connected with the railroad; while Swift and Dillingham were interested in setting up in business at the new location.

The name of Glen Beulah was given to the town by Mr. Appleton, after his mother, whose first name was Beulah. Beulah also means land of rest or flowery land. To this he prefixed the word *glen* because of its situation in a narrow valley in the picturesque kettle hills. Mr. Barrett is said to have assisted in the choice

¹⁰ Quoted in Evergreen City Times, July 7, 1866.

¹¹ May 28, 1857.

of the name. Later the two words were combined into one—Glenbeulah.

Dividing the town plat into two parts, Division No. 1 and Division No. 2, the owners named the dividing street Main street, and the others Barrett, Benson, Akin, Young, Appleton, Dillingham, Swift, Otis and Clark streets, most of them after the town proprietors. Besides the town site at Glenbeulah, Appleton, Barrett, Atkinson and Young, with John O. Thayer, in 1859, platted Appleton's Addition in Plymouth.

Even before the railroad reached Glenbeulah or the town was platted, Capt. Joseph Swift, a New England owner and captain of clipper ships, with his two sons-in-law, James T. Dillingham and Edwin Slade, and Stephen Dillingham, father of James, in 1857 formed the firm of Swift, Dillingham & Co., to do a store, flour mill and saw mill business there. Stephen Dillingham built the Glen House in 1857 as a boarding house for the men employed at the mills; but it was opened as a public house in 1858, with Gilbert Stannard as the first landlord. In 1863 the firm took in C. D. Gordon, and expanded their business by beginning to manufacture broom handles and racks, barrel staves and covers, cheese and butter boxes, hubs, spokes and felloes, and wooden measures, under the name of Dillingham, Gordon & Co.; but the flour mill, and saw mill and store operated under the name of Dillingham & Co. In 1866 Dillingham & Co. dissolved, Mr. Slade taking over the store alone, which he conducted until 1891, and Mr. Dillingham keeping the mills and factory.

The Evergreen City Times gives the following statistical record of Glenbeulah in 1866: 1 woodenware factory, 1 saw mill, 1 flour mill, 3 blacksmith shops, 2 harness shops, 1 wagon shop, 1 tin shop, 2 shoemaker shops, 1 tailor shop, 1 cabinet shop, 1 butcher shop, 3 stores, 3 hotels and taverns, sundry saloons, and Reed & Hinckley's elevator.¹²

The population of Glenbeulah in 1860 was 111. During the time when the village was the terminal of the Sheboygan & Mississippi railroad, from 1860 to 1869, a line of stage coaches, owned by Scott & Co., carrying passengers and mail, operated between it and Fond du Lac, contributing considerably to the life and activity of the town; but when the railroad was built through to Fond du Lac, this traffic ceased, as coach fare was \$2, and rail fare only 48 cents. The first post office was established at Glenbeulah Feb. 15, 1860, Elias O. Taylor, postmaster.

¹² Mar. 10, 1866.

In 1884 A. D. Barrows, for many years superintendent of the woodenware factory, became a member of Dillingham & Co. The same year, because of the growing shortage of timber in the vicinity, and to secure a more favorable location, the company moved its entire factory to Sheboygan, retaining, however, its saw mill property at Glenbeulah, and one at St. Cloud. The saw mill at St. Cloud was operated under the name of Dillingham & Barrows. Employing 60 men, and responsible in great part for Glenbeulah's prosperity, the loss of the Dillingham company was a serious blow to the hopes of the town. From early days the educational and cultural standards of the community have been at a high level. In 1862 it started a graded school, and in 1877 a high school. As early as 1872 a Lyceum hall was built, which for many years has served as a community center.¹³

ELKHART LAKE

Nestled on the shore of the lake from which it took its name, Elkhart Lake is primarily a summer resort rather than an agricultural village. The first government land in the vicinity was taken as far back as 1847, but the earliest settlers saw no special attraction in the virgin body of water; their only interest was farming. Few lakes anywhere have a lovelier setting. Lying in the heart of the kettle moraine region of the county, and of glacial origin, Elkhart Lake is practically surrounded on all four sides by high bluffs thickly grown with trees. It looks as if a giant hand had scooped out a great hole in the earth and pumped it full of clear blue water. It has no inlet, being replenished by springs bubbling up from the bottom; but it has an outlet that flows into the Sheboygan marsh. In fact, geologists tell that in ages past the lake was a part of the original Sheboygan Lake. From the top of nearby Grasshopper hill, a gravelly knob barren of trees, and towering above the surrounding countryside, there is a commanding view of the lake's irregular square mile of surface. It is said to be 113.2 feet deep at its deepest point. Nehemiah King, the government surveyor, gave it the name "Great Elk Heart Lake" in 1835, and named Little Elkhart, "Little Elk Heart Lake."

Before the introduction of modern means of transportation, Elkhart Lake was remote, unknown and difficult to reach. It was situated in the "northern Wisconsin" of early days, far removed from the centers of population. The first visitors were people who

¹³ Sheb. Herald, Mar. 13, 1885; Hist. of Sheb. Co., by Carl Zillier, vol. 1, p. 252; Portrait & Biog. Rec. of Sheb. Co., pp 327, 433, 691, 708; Plat Book, Reg. of Deeds office, Sheboygan.

came with horses and carriages and camped out on its wooded shores. When the Sheboygan & Mississippi railroad was completed to Glenbeulah in 1860, and to Fond du Lac in 1869, many took the train to Glenbeulah and drove over from there. And when the Milwaukee & Northern railroad was pushed northward in 1872, added throngs came from far and wide, especially Milwaukee, Chicago, St. Louis, and the southern states. As the popularity of the place as a vacation spot grew, owners of lake property converted their homes into cottages for the accommodation of summer guests. Among these were Peter Sharpe's farm house, Eric Talmadge's Rural Home, J. W. Taylor's Rustic Home, Edward N. Marsh's Swiss Cottage, Setas E. Stewart's farm house, the E. Carver house, and Henry I. Davidson's resort. The earliest of these probably was that of Peter Sharpe, who came there in 1855, and purchased 80 acres of land. All these cottages were small and unpretentious.

The first hotel was not built until 1867, and was put up by Terret C. Sharpe, the son of Peter Sharpe. The second hotel to be erected was by William Schwartz, in 1872; and the fourth by Otto Osthoff in 1885. The third to be established—Pine Point Resort—presents an interesting story. It was founded by Chauncey V. Pettibone, of Fond du Lac, who was the head of a chain of fourteen dry goods stores in Wisconsin, known as C. V. Pettibone & Co. He erected a little log cabin for himself and his family on a tract of land he acquired on the lake in 1871, and was in the habit of spending a few weeks there every summer. Besieged with requests from other people for accommodations, he built one cottage after another, until, without any intention of going into the hotel or resort business, he eventually found himself the owner of a group of cottages sufficient for 250 persons.

The village of Elkhart was laid out and platted by William Schwartz in 1875. He named the streets Maple, Pine, Spring, West, Lake and East streets. Some sort of a settlement, however, possibly only a general store, must have existed at the place for quite a space of years before this, as the first postoffice of Elkhart was established April 1, 1857, Frederick D. Spalding, postmaster.

Mark R. Harrison, the landscape painter, erected a cottage on the lake in 1871. But the most celebrated structure on it was the Villa Gottfried, built in 1890 by Wilhelm Gottfried, a retired millionaire brewer from Chicago, who is said to have spent \$200,000 on his place. Mr. Gottfried made his fortune out of a patented iron rim bunghole for beer barrels and a barrel pitching machine. Part of his estate, which consisted of 400 acres, was devoted to a stock

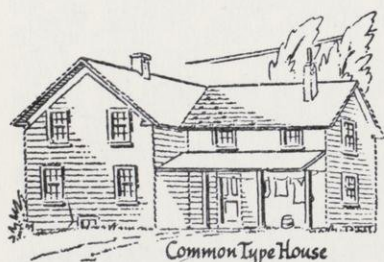
farm, where he kept blooded horses and cattle. Near the house was a park, in which a herd of deer and elk, and eight or ten bronchos, were enclosed. Anchored in front of the place was a floating cottage, and a floating pavilion, where meals were often served in warm weather. On the lake he had both a steam and a sail yacht, and on the grounds a green house and palm house, where every kind of flower was kept, and a well equipped theatre where performances were given twice a week by some of the best German actors in the country. Elkhart Lake was a favorite place of resort principally for people of German extraction.

Today, besides at Elkhart Lake, numerous summer cottages are to be found clustered on Crystal, Little Elkhart and Random Lakes, Lake Ellen, and especially along the shore of Lake Michigan from Black river south to the county line. Sheboygan County has attained quite a name as a recreation land.¹¹

OOSTBURG

One of the newest villages in the county, Oostburg owes its existence to the railroad passing through it, and to the business sagacity and judgment of its leading citizen, Peter Daane, who is properly regarded as the founder of the town. When the Lake Shore railroad was completed from Milwaukee in 1873, there was no settlement of any kind on the present site of Oostburg, nor was the first depot situated at that point. The original station, consisting of the body of an old box car resting on the ground, was located about one and a half miles further south on what is known as the Laarmann farm.

Mr. Daane at this time was operating a store, erected by him in 1867, at a small settlement situated on the present highway 141, about two miles southeast of the village. Advised that the railroad company and the landowner were unable to agree upon a satisfactory price for a permanent depot site, and realizing that with the railroad laid fully a mile to the west the future of his own business was jeopardized, Mr. Daane promised to see to it that a new depot was built



Common Type House

and given to the railroad *gratis*, provided the company would move the station to the crossing one and a half miles further north.

¹¹ Sheb. Press, Apr. 29, 1927; Sheb. Herald, July 28, 1894, from Milw. Sentinel.

With the aid of others similarly interested, he built the depot, containing a freight room, passenger room and telegraph office, and presented it to the railroad. In the meantime, taking full advantage of the opportunities thus created, Mr. Daane proceeded to build a grain and produce warehouse close to the track and a general store near the crossing, and soon became remarkably successful in business. The place was called Oostburg after a town of that name in the Netherlands.

On March 21, 1874, the Sheboygan Times said of the new village:

"On the same side of the railroad track (as the depot), but across the street, is a grain and produce warehouse . . . The grain is stored in bins in the second story, and conveyed by spouts to the cars in bulk. The building is owned by Daane & Ernisse, who buy all kinds of grain and produce for shipment. On the street a few rods from the crossing the Messrs. Daane & Ernisse have also a dry goods and grocery store . . . Mr. Samuel Ernisse, junior of the firm, has a dwelling house nearly enclosed opposite the store. Other new buildings are soon to be erected there, for some of which the timber is already on the ground. Among these are a warehouse 40 by 60 feet, for pressing, storing and shipping hay, and a building 20 by 60 feet, for a store, dwelling and saloon, both by Henry Huibrigtsen, a dwelling house and shoe shop by M. Lemahieu; and a dwelling house by Henry Marion, station and express agent and telegraph operator. Two or three farm houses are also in the immediate vicinity of the station, with a fine farming country around in all directions. Oostburg thus bids fair to become the principal town on the road between Sheboygan and Port Washington."

Later the same year, Oct. 31, 1874, the Times notes these additional improvements; a new wing to their store by Daane & Ernisse; a blacksmith shop by John P. Brill; and a wagon and blacksmith shop by Peter and Matt. Ernisse. "The John Orlebeke farm house across the railroad track from the station accommodates travelers."

Before the present village was named Oostburg, the name was applied to the little settlement on Highway 141, where Mr. Daane had had his store; but after that the settlement was called East Oostburg. Mr. Daane was made postmaster of Oostburg, Dec. 20, 1869.

When Mr. Daane removed from East Oostburg he sold his store there to A. J. Riemes. In its heyday the place consisted of 2

churches, 2 stores, 1 blacksmith shop, 1 cheese factory and a school; but today traffic speeds by, little realizing that it was once a small hamlet.

WALDO

The history of Waldo is a tale of two towns that eventually became one. Until the incorporation of the village in 1923, the east end was known as Onion River, which antedates the west end of the present village a good many years. The first homeseeker to settle there was Dr. Joseph Mallory, who came in 1844, undoubtedly visualizing the adjacent water power as the focus of a flourishing community. He gave the name of Joppa to the place, but this was later changed to Onion River, after the stream on which it is located.

It was not until 1871, when the Milwaukee & Northern railroad went through half a mile to the west, that the section of the town next to the railroad was built up. Trains began running on the road in the fall of 1871, and that same year, Norman C. Harmon and his son-in-law, Eugene McIntyre, bought 80 acres of land on both sides of the track from Martin Tenus Friear, and, according to Mrs. Henry Harling, named it Lora. The streets designated on the plat, from south to north, are 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th streets; and from east to west, are Lawson, Lyndon, Harmon, Depot, Cascade and Plymouth streets. Later the railroad company named it Lyndon Station after the township; but as this became confused with another Lyndon Station in Juneau county, the company changed the name to Waldo, after O. H. Waldo, its president. Harmon and McIntyre started an elevator and lumber yard near the railroad.

The post office was established at Onion River on Sept. 2, 1850, with William G. Mallory as the first postmaster. It was moved to Waldo on Feb. 26, 1877. Robert W. Lawson, who built a general store there, operating under the name of Whitney & Lawson, became the first postmaster at the new location; but the people of Onion River, loathe to yield the palm to their rising rival to the west, insisted for a long time on having their mail carried down and distributed from the old post office boxes in the Whiffen store. Although postal receipts in the ordinary small town postoffices were exceedingly small, storekeepers nevertheless were always anxious to obtain postmasterships as an aid to their trade.

Brought into being by the railroad, Waldo became a shipping center for livestock and grain, and the trading center of a produc-

tive farming area. The Sheboygan Times in 1874, reported, "Waldo is growing . . . The place is good enough for a two year old."¹⁵ In 1889, and again in 1894, it looked for a time that the village would boom by becoming a junction point on a railroad linking the C. M. & St. P. line with Sheboygan; but both these projects fell through. When the village was incorporated in 1923, the name of Waldo was adopted, and the name of Onion River is falling into disuse.¹⁶

HINGHAM

Hingham was platted as a village Sept. 5, 1850, by Edward Hobart. He acquired the land from Mrs. David Giddings, of Sheboygan Falls, who had bought it from the government four years before. Lemuel Tibbitts, a deputy county surveyor, and an inhabitant of Hingham, was employed to do the platting. The streets named on the plat were Water, Center, South, Spring and Main streets. According to one account, various names were suggested for the village—Millford, Hobartville and Tibbittsville—but the name finally adopted was Hingham, after the city in Massachusetts, upon the suggestion of Charles Rogers, a merchant in the town. Credence is given to this version by the fact that the town platters, Hobart and Tibbitts, both came from Maine, whereas Rogers was a native of the Bay State.

Owing its origin to the Giddings mill on the Onion that flowed through it, Hingham became a sizeable and enterprising community. The local correspondent of the Sheboygan Times lists the following business places in the village and vicinity, in the heyday of its development, in 1873:

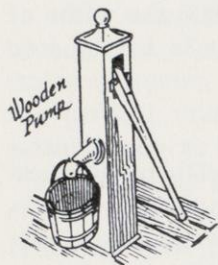
1 postoffice, 1 printing office, 1 hotel, 2 general stores, 1 drug, book and grocery store, 1 tailor shop, 1 barber shop, 1 milliner and dress maker, 1 blacksmith shop, 1 tin shop, 3 shoe shops, 1 harness shop, 2 wagon shops, 2 paint shops, 1 cooper, 1 pump factory, 1 churn factory, 1 cheese factory, 2 grist mills, 1 saw mill, 1 boarding house, 1 school house, 1 church (Methodist), 1 minister, 1 physician, 1 mill wright, 4 carpenters and joiners, 1 stone mason, 2 justices of the peace, 3 sewing machine agencies, and 1 rag gatherer and peddler.¹⁷

¹⁵ Apr. 18, 1874.

¹⁶ The late Mrs. Henry (Mabel) Harling, of Waldo, wrote an excellent article entitled, "History of Waldo, Beginning With The Early Onion River Settlement", published in the Sheboygan Pioneer, a monthly supplement to the Sheboygan Press, and also printed in booklet form, from which much of the information about the community stated in the text is taken.

¹⁷ Feb. 1, 1873.

The first post office was established at Hingham Oct. 31, 1857, Lemuel Tibbitts, postmaster. On Dec. 28, 1872, the Farmers Club of Hingham was organized, which flourished a number of years; and in 1875 the town had a small weekly newspaper, published by F. A. Balch, called the Ready Pay Trader. Mention is also made of a weekly paper called the Village News, printed by Loren and Rellie Balch. The Hobart's—Frank, Edward, Hiram and Aaron—were an early family of millers, owning a mill in section 32 three-fourths of a mile east of Hingham, another several miles south near a place called Hoard, and one in the village. S. D. Hyde owned an egg depot there, where eggs were pickled in large vats and



shipped to eastern markets. More eggs, it is said, were collected and shipped from Hingham in those days than any other place in the state, there being as many as ten carloads at one time.

The construction of the Milwaukee & Northern railroad nearly two miles west of Hingham sealed the fate of the growing town. Some residents place the blame for the loss of the road upon the county surveyor, "who thought it would damage his farm by cutting through it"; but it is probable that the natural obstacles presented by the adjacent hills and the easier terrain further westward, actually dictated the route.¹⁸

WINOOSKI

Winooski, in the northern part of the town of Lyndon, in section 4, is another example of a promising settlement that dwindled away because the railroad saw fit to ignore it. The postoffice there, established Jan. 20, 1853, and discontinued July 31, 1903, has been credited with being the earliest in the town of Lyndon; but the postoffice at Cascade was started July 14, 1849, and the one at Onion River, Sept. 2, 1850. James Stone was the first postmaster, and Oliva M. Jewett the last.

The naming of Winooski is singularly connected with the name of the Onion river, on whose banks it was built. According to popular tradition, the Onion was so named by the government surveyors because of the abundance of wild onions they found grow-

¹⁸ Paper by Mrs. Jennie Cobb Busher and Miss Mae E. Gardner, of Hingham; Sheb. Times, Jan. 11, 1873, Aug. 14, 1875; Sheb. Herald, Jan. 13, 1900, June 6, 1908; Port. & Biog. Rec. of Sheb. Co., pp. 349, 364, 402, 436; Sheb Press, Apr. 29, 1927.

ing along its course; and this tradition appears to be well-founded. The original surveyors' notes show that the name was bestowed as early as 1835. Now it happened that James Stone and the other early settlers in the locality came from Vermont, where there likewise was an Onion river, and a town named Winooski located on it; and so they called the new town on the Onion river Winooski also.

James Stone and his wife, Lucinda, settled at Winooski in 1846. Their first home, according to a short biography of Mrs. Stone published many years later, was a log cabin, 16 x 20 ft., the floor of rough hewn logs, and with a hole in the roof through which the smoke escaped. Ninety families of Indians lived near by. During the first winter, their daughter Helen kept school in the district of Samuel Reed in section 3. Home on a visit one week-end, she was overtaken by a snow storm on her return, and was unable to see the blaze-marks on the trees. She became completely lost and wandered helplessly until dusk, when she saw a faint light in the distance. Following it she came at last to Mr. Reed's cabin where she had boarded the week before.

An almost forgotten fact about Winooski is that it was once the site of the Sheboygan County insane asylum, and, also the scene of a terrible tragedy. Glanville S. Jewett, the superintendent, had erected a commodious wooden structure at this place to house the county's wards, under a contract with the county board of supervisors. On Feb. 20, 1878, a fire broke out in the building, causing 4 of the 17 inmates to burn to death, and nearly destroying the lives of others. The old building completely destroyed, Mr. Jewett was engaged in putting up a new one to fulfill his unexpired contract, when he died in April that year.¹⁹

AMSTERDAM

Once a thriving settlement on the lake shore east of Cedar Grove in the town of Holland, Amsterdam was the only fishing village in the county. Today but few traces of the town remain. It was for many years the center of an extensive pound-net fishing industry, the lake bed in the vicinity being especially suited for this

¹⁹ Sheboygan County, by Dr. A. Gerend, Wis. Arch., vol. 19, No. 3, p. 182; Sheb. Herald, Feb. 22 and Apr. 26, 1878, Oct. 4, 1902. Mr. Jewett made his contract for the care of the inmates in 1876. Before that they were kept in the county jail at Sheboygan. In July 1878, C. W. Prescott as the legal representative of the late Mr. Jewett made a new contract to keep these unfortunates at a cost of \$2.75 per week each. On June 7, 1882, the insane asylum at Sheboygan was completed and the inmates removed to that place. Proc. of Sheb. Co. Board of Supervisors.

type of fishing; and it was also quite a shipping point for lumber and cordwood as well as fish. Gilbert H. Smith platted it in 1855 and named its streets Lake, Holland, Cedar, Smith, Maine, and Muller streets. A pier extended into the lake at the foot of Maine Street, large enough so that vessels tied up here to load and unload. The business directory of Amsterdam shown on the Randall & Palmer map of Sheboygan County, published in 1862, lists these business men: Van de Ott, merchant; J. Rosencranz, blacksmith; D. Donles, cooper. At its height, the village had 4 stores, 3 saloons, 1 blacksmith shop, 1 barrel factory, and a schoolhouse. Its leading establishment was a "department store" owned by the Holland Trading Company, a firm consisting of Messrs. Tilberg, Walvoord, Stokdyk and Hoyt, which also was engaged in the shipping business. Henry Walvoord is said to have given the place its name after the city in the Netherlands. The dwindling of the fish and timber supply, the disappearance of lake shipping, and the construction of the railroad through Cedar Grove, all contributed to doom the town to ultimate extinction. The 75th anniversary of its founding was celebrated by a picnic held on the site August 27, 1927.²⁰

CASCADE

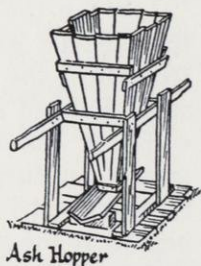
Cascade is unique among the smaller communities of the county in having retained its prestige through the years notwithstanding that it has never had a railroad. It owes this distinction to its geographical position. It is the natural trading center for large portions of the towns of Mitchell, Scott, Lyndon and Sherman that have but a few trading centers of their own. A number of important highways converge in the town. The village was founded in 1847 by James Preston and Rev. Huntington Lyman, who saw in the spot a desirable location for a water power and town site. The watercourse here is the north branch of the Milwaukee river—called *Kishkaupee* by the Indians. Preston and Lyman platted the village in 1848, naming the streets Cedar, East Water, West Water and Lake streets, and Francis, Madison, Milwaukee and Huntington avenues, and denominating a small island in the river Grand Isle. The name of the place was probably suggested by the presence of falls or rapids in the stream at this point. These rapids were large enough to create power for two mills—an upper and a lower. The earliest account of the town appears in the *Sheboygan Mercury*, Feb. 26, 1848:

²⁰ Sheb. Press, Apr. 23, 1926; Aug. 29, 1927.

"Twelve miles from the Falls we found ourselves on the Milwaukee river, at a place called Cascade, where there is another fine water power, on which is to be erected a saw-mill, which will be in operation early the coming summer, by Mr. Jas. Preston. Although Mr. Preston only located at this point about a year since, he has already surveyed into village lots the land adjoining the water power, and there is no good reason why a village of some importance will not spring up at this point. Not to exceed a half a mile from this place is Lake Ellen."

The Preston mill was a crude affair, with a roof supported on crotched poles set in the ground, and a floor made of rough slabs. It was operated by William Fisher. In 1852 Edward McIntosh and Benjamin F. Newland acquired the site and replaced the saw mill with a grist mill. In 1854 Joseph R. Bear, who also conducted a general store in the village, purchased the mill; and in 1877 he sold it to Arent J. Lammers. Known as the Cascade Mill, it was operated for many years by Mr. Lammers.

After he disposed of the upper mill, Mr. McIntosh, in company with Andrew J. and George H. Brickner, who did business as A. J. Brickner & Co., purchased the water power below it, and started another grist mill there known as the Forest Mill. This was in 1857. A unique and picturesque feature of the landscape for many years was the mill pond in the very heart of the town, immediately adjacent to the main street. Previously serving as a village commons, the space was made into a pond to furnish power for the lower mill. When John Schlenter acquired both mills in 1913, he did away with the pond and obtained his flow of water through a large iron pipe leading directly from the upper pond. Changing hands many times, probably the best known of the various owners of the mill was William Imm, who first had an interest in it in 1860, and terminated his connection in 1901. George H. Brickner, one of the early owners, also operated a general store in the village, but in 1868 he left Cascade and purchased a half interest in the woolen mills at Sheboygan Falls which later became the Brickner Woolen Mills. In 1853 John C. Shadbolt, who did business as Shadbolt & Co., built a steam saw mill at the north end of the village near the Bear grist mill, in connection with which he also operated a hub and spoke factory. At one time employing as many as thirty men, he failed



Ash Hopper

in business during the panic of 1857. About 1866 a destructive fire practically wiped out the business district of the town. When the Madison road was built as a territorial road through Cascade in 1846, it was the first public highway constructed in that section of the county, and in order to help the project along men from Cascade and New Cassel cut the trees for the right of way between those two points.²¹ The Cascade postoffice was established July 14, 1849. William G. Mallory was the first postmaster.

The business directory on the Randall & Palmer map of Sheboygan County (1862), names the following business men in Cascade at that time: J. R. Bear, proprietor of grist mill and carding machine and merchant; Timm & Zuckow, grist mill; O. Rogers, saw mill.

In 1872 the Plymouth Reporter wrote of the town:

"Cascade is a pretty inland village in the midst of a fine farming section, and has quite a number of thrifty and substantial business men. It has 2 flouring mills, 1 saw mill, 2 dry goods stores, 2 groceries, 1 hardware store, 3 boot and shoe stores, 2 blacksmith shops, 1 wagon shop, 1 harness shop, 2 cooper shops, a livery stable, 1 hotel, and several minor establishments. There are two churches, the United Brethren in Christ and the Roman Catholic."

RANDOM LAKE

When the railroad first came to what is now Random Lake, the officials gave the place the name of Greenleaf, after E. D. Greenleaf, the financial agent of the company; but the name was soon changed so as to conform to that of the lake on the edge of which it was laid out. Strangely enough, despite the fact that the spot is a natural site for a flourishing village, no settlement sprang up there until the railroad quickened one into being. The lake was named by the government surveyors who made the original government survey of that section of the county in 1835. "Running a random line" is a surveying expression; and it probably was while the surveyors were running such a line through the thick woods in the course of their work that they accidentally came upon the lake, and named it after the event.

John P. Carroll is said to have been the first settler in the vicinity, coming there in 1848. Later he was the proprietor of a lumber yard and of the American House. The town was platted in

²¹ Land records, Reg. of Deeds office, Sheboygan; Plymouth Reporter, Nov. 5, 1872; Sheb. Press, Apr. 29, 1927.

1872 by Guido Pfister, trustee; and the first addition was laid out in 1874 by Heliodore J. Hilbert. Names assigned to streets in the original plat and addition were First, Second, Third, Fourth, Allen, Carroll, Butler, Bentert and Lake streets. The first postoffice was established there on Sept. 16, 1872, with Matthias Knell as postmaster. For many years the lake has attracted summer resorters in large numbers, their cottages crowding the shore. It has also long been the center of an extensive ice-harvesting industry. Ice from the lake is stored in huge ice-houses on the banks and shipped largely to Milwaukee.

CEDAR GROVE

Although one of the oldest villages in the county, comparatively little has been recorded about Cedar Grove's origin and growth. Land records indicate that the site of the present town was acquired from the government by Gerthinderk Ta Kolste as far back as Nov. 3, 1846. The first post office was established Jan. 27, 1849. Sweezy Burr was the first postmaster, and kept the office in his home, a crude log cabin. The name of Cedar Grove was derived from an extensive growth of cedar trees in the immediate vicinity. Prior to the coming of the railroad, Amsterdam on the shore of the lake probably outstripped it in importance. In 1875 Peter Huisheere, Sr., made and recorded a crude plat of the town. A scattered village, when the railroad was built a lively controversy sprang up between the north and south ends as to where the depot should be located. The south-enders won out. The center of a level, fertile agricultural area, Cedar Grove is a prominent trading and manufacturing center, and one of the most enterprising of our communities.

MANKATO

Mankato, once a small settlement situated on the Mullett river in section 8 of the town of Plymouth, enjoyed only a temporary existence, and nothing is now left to mark its former location except the dirt embankment of an old mill dam. Land records in the county courthouse show that the site was acquired in 1859 by Caroline Preussler, wife of Ernst Preussler, and that she planned and platted it as a town in 1866. On Oct. 9, 1866, Mrs. Preussler deeded the water power to Hugh Jones, who constructed the dam and put up a saw mill. Deaf and in feeble health, Mr. Jones placed his son George in charge of the mill. Besides the saw mill, there

sprang up on the spot a carding mill, blacksmith shop, wagon shop and school, but by the late 1870's the saw mill fell into disuse and the settlement came to an end. The Jones heirs held the property until 1901 when they conveyed it to William Schwartz, of Plymouth. The school in the vicinity is still known as the Mankato school.

ADELL

Adell is another village which owes its start to the railroad. Christian Gersmehl was the owner of 160 acres of land here which he had held since 1853; and in 1873, a year after the railroad came through, he laid out a part of it in town lots, giving the place the name of Sherman, after the township in which it is located. The streets he named State, Main and Sherman. When the railroad was built, the town was named Sherman Station, and later was given the name Adell. A long forgotten fact is that beginning as far back as 1851, there was a post office known as Adell at this location, probably kept in a small country cross-roads store and in charge of the storekeeper. It was not until some years after 1873 that the post office and the town were called by the same name. The origin of the word Adell is unknown.²²

KOHLER

Kohler is the newest and largest village—and the only industrial village—in the county. Unlike most villages it is not a marketing or trading center for the surrounding farming territory. Its retail section is relatively unimportant. Built in accordance with a carefully considered plan, it is widely known as a model village. Thousands of visitors go there each year to view its attractive homes, its well-kept lawns, its pleasant, shaded streets, and its general aspect of cleanliness and artistic beauty.

The Kohler Company, of which it is the home, is the county's largest manufacturing establishment, and one of Wisconsin's important industries. Ever since it was founded in 1873, the company has been an iron-working concern, starting as a foundry and

²² The following were the early postmasters of Adell: Eliada Baldwin, Dec. 3, 1851; Edward Gilkey, June 4, 1854; Reuben Abbott, Apr. 18, 1855; James Herington, May 27, 1857; Edward Gilkey, May 21, 1858; Geo. M. Bradley, July 14, 1859; Bernard McElvry, Aug. 23, 1859; Julius Scholz, Apr. 17, 1865; James Allen, Jr., Apr. 20, 1874; John Rahskopf, July 7, 1876; Burghard Dangers, Jan. 12, 1881; John Marshall, Feb. 12, 1883; Gottfried Zuengler, July 8, 1885; Noah Saemann, Apr. 19, 1889; Lewis C. Ziegler, June 22, 1893. Records of Post Office Department, Washington, D. C.

machine shop, but later engaging in the manufacture of enameled plumbing ware, plumbers' brass fittings, sanitary pottery, heating systems, and automatic electric lighting plants.

The industry had its beginning in Sheboygan, founded by John M. Kohler, who was a native of Austria, born Nov. 3, 1844, in Schnepfen, a province of the Tyrol. He emigrated to the United States with his father when he was ten years old. In 1871 he moved to Sheboygan; and in 1873, in company with a man named Silberzahn, he bought the Union Steel & Iron Foundry, located at the corner of 9th street and St. Clair avenue, from Jacob J. Vollrath. For ten years Mr. Kohler engaged in making agricultural implements, and in 1883 he added the manufacture of enameled iron products to his line. In 1888 he organized the Kohler, Hayssen & Stehn Manufacturing Company. This was located at the corner of 7th street and Jefferson avenue, and was devoted largely to the production of enameled bath tubs and cooking utensils. From this location the plant was moved in 1899 to a site out in the country, four miles from Sheboygan, on land which up to that time had been open farm land. The same year Nic J. Balkins, a farmer living in the vicinity, platted the tract immediately west of the manufacturing plant, and named it River Side on account of its position overlooking the Sheboygan river. In 1901 the name of the company was changed from Kohler, Hayssen & Stehn Manufacturing Company to J. M. Kohler Sons Company, and in 1912 the name of Kohler Company was adopted. In 1912, also, the community was incorporated as a village and named Kohler. J. M. Kohler died in 1901. A few months after his death, the plant was destroyed by fire, but it was rebuilt within a year. Following the death of two brothers, Walter J. Kohler became the head of the growing company; and under his direction the business continued to grow steadily to its present proportions and position. The trade-name of its products—Kohler of Kohler—is a mark of quality, known in all parts of the world.

Kohler village was built by the Kohler Company to provide neat, healthful, pleasant living conditions for its workers. The houses are constructed by a building corporation, and sold to people in the organization at cost. Families are assisted in their purchases by a plan of monthly payments which are but little larger than rent would be, thus enabling persons of modest incomes to own their homes. Almost without exception the homes are owned by those living in them. Kohler is an unusual industrial community, planned by town planners, architects and landscape

gardeners, and presenting a striking contrast to the average industrial town with its rows of cheap, hideous houses. In Kohler most of the homes are built in Colonial and modern English styles, with a pleasing variety of design, surrounded by spacious lawns and yards, and touched off with the pleasant greenery and coloring of vines, shrubs, and flowers. The town-plan is established by public ordinance. Separate areas are set apart for industrial, commercial and residential sections. Streets are all paved, tree-lined, lighted with ornamental lights, and picturesquely landscaped, and follow the natural contour of the land. Breathing and play spaces are plentiful. Natural wooded areas within the village are retained. Everything is in harmonious keeping with its surroundings. As a "garden village", Kohler is distinctive among American communities.²³

²³ Portrait & Biog. Rec. of Sheb. Co., p. 676; Sheb. Press, Apr. 23, 1926, Apr. 29, 1927.

CHAPTER 19

THE CHEESE INDUSTRY

SINCE early times, Sheboygan County has been synonymous with cheese—and particularly the variety known as American or Cheddar cheese. Today the producing of milk and its conversion into cheese is the county's basic agricultural industry. Nearly 25 years were to pass since the county was first settled, before farmers began gradually to turn from grain raising to milk production. Like many successful undertakings, the new agriculture evolved from small and discouraging beginnings, and its progress at first was slow.

The origin of the cheese industry in the county is fairly well authenticated. The first man to make cheese upon a commercial basis at a central place was John J. Smith, who owned a farm on the north side of the Sheboygan and Fond du Lac road about 2½ miles west of Sheboygan Falls. He was one of four brothers—Paxton, John J., Hiram and Joseph A. Smith¹—who emigrated to Wisconsin from Lowville, Lewis County, New York. Cheese making in the United States originated in Herkimer County, New York, about 1810; and Jesse Williams started the first cheese factory at Rome, New York, in 1851.

John and Hiram Smith must have gained some knowledge of the process of cheese making back East. In 1858 John went out gathering curd from neighboring farmers and pressed it, together with some of his own make, into cheese in his farm home. This was called the Ohio plan. He and his brother Hiram, who lived just across the road, had the two largest herds in the neighborhood, each owning 10 or 12 cows. Previous to engaging in farming, John Smith had been a blacksmith at Sheboygan Falls, where he carried on his trade after his arrival in the county in 1844. He was the first to ship cheese to market outside the county. J. O. Thayer, writing in the Historical Atlas of Sheboygan County in 1875, records the event as follows:

"In the autumn of 1858, Mr. Smith barreled up fifty-eight cheese, boxes not being obtainable, and took them to Chicago for

¹ In 1853 Joseph A. Smith started the *Free Press*, an anti-slavery journal, the first newspaper in Sheboygan Falls. A year later he removed his plant to Fond du Lac, where he founded the Commonwealth.

sale. Leaving his cheese at the warehouse, he called on the dealers, and endeavored to effect a sale. On asking if they would like to purchase, he was met with the inquiry, "Where were your cheese made?"

"In Sheboygan.

"Where is that?"

"In Wisconsin.

"We don't want any Wisconsin cheese; can't sell anything but New York cheese, and don't want anything else in our store.

"After several attempts to effect a sale, he asked one dealer to look at his cheese, but was told it was no use to spend his time. Mr. Smith then asked how much his time was worth, and offered the dealer one dollar as a compensation for half an hour's time in examining his cheese. As the result of his examination, a sale was effected of the fifty-eight Wisconsin cheese, at eight cents the pound."

Mr. Thayer's account is corroborated by Edward McGlachlin, a veteran newspaper man of Stevens Point, who as a youth in 1857-58 was employed as a hired man on Hiram Smith's farm. Mr. McGlachlin writes, "After he returned home (from Chicago) I heard him tell his brother, Hiram, that he had difficulty in selling the cheese. The dealers, he said, told him they did not care for western cheese, they wanted eastern cheese."²

Smith's venture in cheese making proved to be only partially successful—his product was often of inferior quality and lacking in uniformity. After a year or so he gave up the business. Hiram Smith said of his brother's experience, "The farmers soon learned to leave so much whey in the curd that it drove the profit out of the enterprise, and it was abandoned."³ Others, however, were encouraged by his example to enter the field. The first of these were Hiram Smith and Ira N. Strong, who began to make cheese in 1859 on their farms; and in 1861 they began to collect milk from their neighbors, instead of curd, performing the entire process of manufacture themselves.⁴

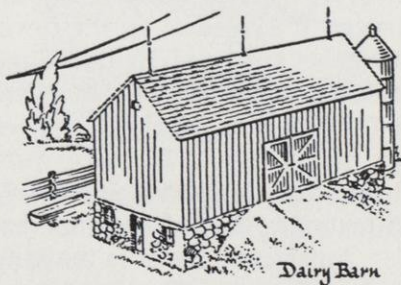
Several years afterward—the exact date unknown—Hiram Conover, a brother-in-law of Hiram Smith, and the owner of a farm west of the Smith place, began to receive milk and make

² Sheboygan Press, July 30, 1927.

³ "The History of the Dairy Interest in Wisconsin," a paper read by W. D. Board at 7th annual meeting of the Wisconsin Dairymen's Ass'n, Jan. 22-23, 1879.

⁴ Ibid.

cheese, using a new woodshed in his yard for a factory. He bought his vat and other equipment from A. P. Lyman, the Sheboygan merchant, who had originally purchased it in Little Falls, New York, for the purpose of starting a cheese factory, but had given up the idea. Conover's son, Seth H., later a prominent cheese buyer, was the cheese maker in his father's factory. He was sent by his father to Utica, New York, to learn scientific cheese making there. Subsequently, Hiram Conover built a factory in Plymouth, which grew to be one of the largest in the county. In 1864 Truman Strong started to take in milk and make cheese on his farm on the Dye road in the town of Lima. The same year, Ambrose D. De Land, or A. D. De Land, as he was familiarly known, a native of New York, settled on a farm in section 3 of the town of Lima about 2½ miles southwest of Sheboygan Falls; and in 1865 he installed a cheese making outfit in a space set off for the purpose in his new barn. His farm was one of the finest in the county. A firm believer in high-grade stock, he regularly kept a herd of about 30 Holstein cows. For 27 years he engaged in the manufacture of cheese, and had the distinction of taking more premiums on dairy products than any other man in the state. In 1876 he was awarded a bronze medal at the Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia for a giant cheese weighing 300 pounds. He made the hoop out of staves cut in the woods, and pressed the cheese in a cider press. In 1885, as assistant superintendent of Wisconsin dairy products at the World's Exposition at New Orleans, he built a model cheese factory out of 1200 full cream cheeses, and won a premium of \$200.



Mr. De Land was one of the organizers of the Sheboygan Falls Board of Trade in 1873; and was chosen president of the Wisconsin Dairymen's Association in 1877. In 1891 he removed to Sheboygan, where he was active in business as a cheese dealer until his death. He had a state-wide reputation as an ardent promoter of the dairy interest. In his early life he was a school teacher, and had been principal of schools at Two Rivers and at Manitowoc.⁵

Mr. De Land describes his first attempt at cheese making: "In 1865 I left the Manitowoc school and embarked in dairying

⁵ Portrait and Biog. Rec. of Sheboygan Co., page 701.

and cheese making in Sheboygan County, where there were about six cheese factories in operation . . . I bought a vat and made a self-acting press myself. I had never made a cheese nor seen one made. I was told by a lady who had made dairy cheese on the farm, to use the liquor made by soaking rennets in water. This I did using the rennet and its contents. The day for opening the factory arrived. I weighed in the milk that was delivered, some in pails, some in wash boilers and a few in milk cans; put in the color made from annatto, soaked and cut with lye; also put in my rennet which had no desired effect, and continued adding the rennet soakage till all was used and then rubbed and pulled the rennet till more was extracted, which when added to the milk, caused it to coagulate. My first day's experience with cheese was the most tiresome for mind and body I ever experienced . . . Our cheese were pressed in 20-inch hoops and weighed from 70 to 100 lbs. . . . The price received by factories then was 12 to 17¢ and 3¢ was paid for making."⁶

Once started, the trend toward dairying gradually gained headway until, by 1871, A. D. De Land, secretary of the Sheboygan County Dairymen's Association, reported 20 cheese factories in the county.⁷ As listed by Mr. De Land, the owners were: Hiram Smith, A. D. De Land, Holden Bros., Ira N. Strong, D. Kuentz, Hiram Conover, Robert Wood, and Mr. Habighorst, in the town of Sheboygan Falls; A. E. Stoddard and John A. Smith in the town of Greenbush; C. B. Briggs in the town of Mitchell; S. W. Mead, William Sherman and Robert Blair in the town of Lyndon; A. G. Dye, W. C. Wheeler and Mrs. T. Strong, in the town of Lima; George W. Weeden, in the town of Wilson; Ira Bliss, in the town of Sheboygan; and Henry Gilman in the town of Plymouth. These factories operated 4 to 8 months during the year, and produced 500,000 pounds of cheese; cheese prices averaged 10¼¢ to 12½¢ per pound. By 1875 there were 45 factories in the county, producing over 2,000,000 pounds of cheese. Today the county has about 65 factories, and at one time had approximately 116.

American cheese is made in various styles to suit the preferences of buyers—Cheddars, twins, daisies, longhorns, squares, loafs and Young Americas. Most factories are independently and privately owned, usually by the cheesemaker. He seldom buys the milk outright from the farmers, but usually agrees to convert the raw

⁶ Thirty-Three Years' Experience With Cheese, by A. D. De Land, 26th Annual Report of Wisconsin Dairymen's Association (1898).

⁷ Sheboygan Times, April 19, 1873.

milk into cheese at a stipulated monthly salary or an agreed rate per pound. Each factory has from 15 to 35 patrons, and they exercise considerable influence in the conduct of factory affairs. They decide the amount of the cheesemaker's compensation, the style of cheese to be made, to whom it is to be sold, who is to do the selling, and like questions. The title to the product is in the patrons and not the cheesemaker. Patrons take turns hauling the cheese to market.

Wisconsin has a cheese shrine, situated in Fond du Lac county. There, at Ladoga, 12 miles west of Fond du Lac, on April 28, 1864, Chester Hazen erected a factory and started making cheese from milk delivered by surrounding farmers. To commemorate the event, the Wisconsin Dairymen's Association, in 1927, unveiled a bronze memorial plate on the site of the Chester Hazen factory, dedicating it as the first cheese factory built in the state. Many persons in cheese circles dispute Fond du Lac county's right to the distinction, claiming that Sheboygan County is rightfully entitled to it. They point out that the Smith brothers—John and Hiram—and Ira N. Strong, started their operations in this county several years before Chester Hazen opened his factory at Ladoga. But they operated their plants on their own farms and in their own homes. While the question is not free of difficulty, depending upon the definition of the term "cheese factory," it does appear that the Hazen factory was the first in Wisconsin to be built especially and used exclusively for the production of cheese. The first factory in Sheboygan County conducted independently of any farm and erected solely for making cheese was not built until 1867. It was erected by L. P. Fischer and his brother-in-law, Manning McKinnon, and located on the Sheboygan and Fond du Lac road, near the farm and factory of Hiram Smith, to whom they sold out after two years of operation.⁸



As John Smith's experience in 1858 showed, the successful marketing of cheese was a difficult problem. Wisconsin cheese was unknown, or doubtfully regarded, in the big market centers of the country; eastern cheese, and especially the New York product, was

⁸ As far back as 1877 Hiram Smith declared, "The exact locality where the first cheese was made in this state is, perhaps, not more definitely known than is the birthplace of Columbus."

everywhere the favorite. New to dairying, in comparison with their eastern competitors, farmers and cheese makers alike had much to learn about the business. It had not been reduced to the fine art it was eventually to become. Rich, palatable tame grasses were only gradually introduced. Livestock was allowed to wander unrestrained to eat the dubious wild vegetation in the woods and swamps. Especially in spring the milk was apt to have a "leeky" flavor, produced by the wild onions common in the forest. During the winter the cattle were inadequately protected from inclement weather and insufficiently fed on coarse dry cornstalks and marsh hay. It was a common thing for cows to die of starvation and exposure; and in spring they were often so weak and emaciated that they had to be raised to their feet, or pulled out of some swamp-hole in which they became mired while in search of the first tender new grass in the bottom lands.

It took some time to get farmers generally to understand the secrets of successful dairying. Cheese makers were inexperienced. Cheese making equipment and methods were primitive and inefficient. Cheese was all too often strong and sharp, if not actually rancid, and full of "pin-holes." All these factors naturally affected not only the quality, but the demand for the product. Commission men, in the beginning, instructed Wisconsin cheese makers not to put any marks on their cheese indicating where it was made, as that would injuriously affect its sale; and they marked all their poorest cheese, eastern as well as western, *Western or Western Reserve*, which obviously did not contribute to the reputation of the western output. On the other hand, the dealers sold the best western cheese as *New York Factory*.⁹ It took time and effort to build up a high reputation for Wisconsin cheese; but it gradually grew in quality and popularity until it has long outsold that of other states, and given to Wisconsin the well-deserved name it bears today of the leading cheese state of the nation, and America's Dairyland.

Early cheese making was a haphazard and uncertain process. Before factories came into being, it was made in the homes of the individual farmers, and principally by the women of the family. It was one of the ordinary household arts. There was little science or skill in the manufacture of the product. Everything was done more or less by guess. Methods and utensils were crude and inadequate. The output varied greatly in quality, and on the whole was

⁹ President's addresses, by Hiram Smith, at 4th and 5th Annual meetings of Wisconsin Dairymen's Ass'n, December 1875 and Jan. 1877.

of an inferior grade. Cheese had no regular cash value or market. Most of it was consumed in the home, and the remainder disposed of to itinerant peddlers in exchange for their wares or traded to country storekeepers for household necessities. It was usually stored in the cellar all summer and sold in the fall. The average price was $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 6¢ a pound. The first Sheboygan County cheese ever to be awarded a premium was a home-made product manufactured by N. C. Harmon of the town of Lyndon and exhibited at the first annual fair of the Sheboygan County Agricultural Society held at Sheboygan Falls on September 24–25, 1857.¹⁰

One of the difficulties encountered by the early cheese makers was in heating the milk. This was done, according to old accounts, by putting it in a large kettle set in a larger vessel of hot water, warming it first to 85° Fahrenheit, and then increasing the heat fast enough to bring it up to 100° in 40 minutes, stirring it all the while with the hand. The degree of heat was in many cases simply guessed at from contact of the hand with the milk; a thermometer was seldom used.

The greatest difficulty, however, was in curdling the milk. Commercial rennet, used today for this purpose, was then unknown. The coagulating agent employed was the gastric juice found in the inner linings of the stomachs of young calves.¹¹ These stomachs were commonly referred to as *rennets*. There is more literature on the subject of preparing rennet in the publications of the period than on any other topic of the dairy. A. L. Fish, a prominent New York cheesemaker, gives an interesting description of the process in reports to the New York State Agricultural Society in 1846 and 1871. Rennet was prepared, he stated, by removing the stomach from a sucking calf when it was six days old or more, as soon as it was slaughtered, and twelve hours after its last meal. After the stomach was cut open, emptied of its contents, and thoroughly cleaned, it was rubbed well with dry salt, stretched out on small sticks like a leaf, and hung up to dry. When perfectly dried, it was kept tightly packed with others in a jar for a whole year. When used, a single stomach was taken and soaked in a little whey or water, rubbed often for 24 hours, and pressed to get all the strength out of the membrane. The liquor thus obtained was then ready for use in setting the milk. Salt, and sometimes lemons, cloves, cinnamon and common sage, were added to the liquor to

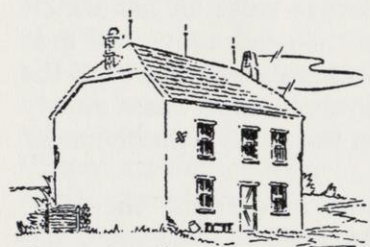
¹⁰ J. O. Thayer in Historical Atlas of Sheboygan County (1875).

¹¹ A plentiful supply of calf stomachs was obtainable from local butchers, who shipped calves to market, leaving the hides on but removing the insides.

preserve its flavor and quicken its action. When thus prepared, Mr. Fish assured, rennet would keep sweet any length of time desired, if kept cool in a stone jar.¹²

For coloring, cheesemakers used a tropical vegetable compound known as *annatto*. Curd was worked in home-made tubs and pressed in clumsy upright presses commonly operated by a simple lever and weight, or by the action of a screw. Cheeses were compressed in a form made of wooden staves or the hollowed section of a log; metal hoops were a later development. They had no protection or covering, with not even a bandage on the outside. The mould formed on cheeses during the curing process was re-

moved by washing, and the surface covered with a dressing of grease; but about 1900 the method of paraffining cheese before shipment was discovered. Cheese at first was shipped in long rough casks, in which four to six cheeses were placed, one on top of the other. Later, the shorter, round cheese box, made of thin elm veneer, was developed. Ze-



German Style House

bina Holden and James Slyfield were among the first to make cheese boxes, fashioning them by hand with a draw shave and steaming the wood in hot water to facilitate bending.

Until Dr. Stephen M. Babcock, of the state university, in 1891, invented the famous test that carries his name, there were no standards for determining the value of milk, and farmers were paid by weight or measure instead of the butterfat content of their product.

In the beginning professional buyers went around from factory to factory purchasing the output. But, as the factories too often got the worst of the bargain, the system early fell into disfavor; and led to the formation of dairy boards of trade, where prices were equalized through the bids and offers of buyers and sellers in groups meeting on common ground. There were several of such cheese boards in this section of the state, including Sheboygan, Sheboygan Falls, Plymouth, Manitowoc, Brillion, Chilton, Fond du Lac and Watertown. Factories brought samples to the

¹² Appendix No. 9 to Ex. Doc. No. 59, Annual Report of the Com'r of Patents for 1848; Jour. of N. Y. State Agric. Soc., Vol. 21, No. 5 (1871); Transactions of N. Y. State Agric. Soc., Vol. 5, p. 128 (1846).

meetings, which were held at regular intervals—weekly or bi-weekly from May to December—and offered their output to the highest bidders. Prices at each board naturally influenced prices at all the others, and tended to stabilize the market throughout the country. There was a cheese meeting somewhere nearly every day in the week, and many buyers made the rounds regularly with horse and buggy like circuit riders. As the quality and value of Wisconsin cheese gradually became generally recognized, it was eagerly sought not only in Milwaukee, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia and Boston markets, but as far away as Montreal, London, Liverpool and Glasgow. Quite a number of outside wholesale and commission houses maintained permanent agents constantly in the field to keep their needs supplied. Local firms of dealers also sprang up in places like Plymouth and Sheboygan, who handled cheese on their own accounts. Some of the leading business men in the county were cheese dealers.

Transacting business on a dairy board of trade was a simple process. W. C. Thomas, secretary of the board at Sheboygan Falls, gives a description of the system followed there, which was typical, although there doubtless were some variations in minor details between different boards, as each board had its own set of rules. In the board room where the buyers and sellers assembled was a large blackboard on which the names of the various factories were listed, Mr. Thomas states. Opposite the name of a factory the secretary entered the number of boxes of each style of cheese it had for sale. After all the cheese was thus listed, the total quantity of each style offered was footed up, and bids were solicited, first for the whole lot, and then for single lots. At the farther end of the blackboard were three columns, one headed "bid", the second "sold", and the third "buyer." Upon receiving a bid it was recorded, together with the buyer's initials, in the proper columns. When the bidding was completed, the secretary called each factoryman and marked down the selling price if he sold, or a check mark if he refused to sell or passed the bid. In this way the cheese was virtually auctioned off to the highest bidder, and the whole transaction of disposing of an offering of 1,000 to 5,000 boxes of cheese usually did not consume more than half an hour.¹³

Boards of trade were not without their problems and troubles. The practice gradually grew of sales being made outside the board

¹³ Boards of Trade, by Will Thomas, 28th Ann. Rep. of Wis. Dairymen's Assn. 1900.

room, in saloons or on street corners, before and after board meetings, instead of openly on the board, the buyers agreeing to pay the highest price on the board, or a slight advance over board prices. As factorymen fell more and more into contracting or promising their cheese to certain buyers, and refusing to sell to anyone else, the incentive of buyers naturally was to keep board prices down lower than conditions warranted; and thus the very object of the board was defeated. Efforts of boards to check this abuse, as for instance, by requiring the prompt registering of all offerings in order that everyone might see how much was for sale, met with the active opposition of many factories and dealers, and even caused them to boycott the stricter boards in favor of the more lenient ones.

Several writers on the local cheese industry assert that the first dairy board of trade in Sheboygan County was organized at Plymouth in 1872 by the Sheboygan County Horticulture Society, but this is incorrect. The first dairy board of trade in this county was opened at Sheboygan Falls, on May 22, 1873, as an adjunct of the Sheboygan County Dairymen's Association, and was known as the Sheboygan Falls Dairy Board of Trade.¹⁴ This was two years after the formation of the country's oldest dairy board of trade at Little Falls, New York, on March 6, 1871, and a year after the second oldest at Elgin, Illinois. The Plymouth Dairy Board of Trade was not organized until May 27, 1879.¹⁵ On March 31, 1882, at a mass meeting of dairymen held at the court house in Sheboygan, the Sheboygan Falls and Plymouth boards were merged into one and named the Sheboygan County Dairy Board of Trade.¹⁶ But in 1887, the Plymouth Dairy Board of Trade severed its connection with the board at Sheboygan Falls and again became an

¹⁴ The resolution creating the Sheboygan Falls Dairy Board of Trade was introduced by A. G. Dye, Apr. 19, 1873; and the committee appointed to frame rules for its government consisted of Hiram Smith, A. D. DeLand, A. G. Dye, G. W. Weeden and J. H. Denison. Hiram Smith was president, A. D. DeLand, secretary, and B. Holden treasurer. Only 310 boxes of cheese, from 5 factories were offered at the first meeting. Davis Bros., of Chicago, the sole buyers present, bought 150 boxes, at 11½ cents. At subsequent meetings, however, the business of the board increased rapidly. Sheb. Times, Apr. 26, May 24, 1873; Ply. Rep., May 29, 1873.

¹⁵ Stephen Litchfield was elected the first president, A. F. Warden, secretary, H. J. Bamford, treasurer. Ply. Reporter, May 29, 1879.

¹⁶ The first officers of the Sheboygan County Board of Trade were: President, Enos Eastman, Plymouth; Vice-President, Chester Hazen, Brandon; Secretary, W. C. Thomas, Sheboygan Falls; Treasurer, F. A. Streblow, Plymouth; Directors, S. Hollensteiner, Rhine, Carl Reich, Wilson, Hiram Smith, Sheboygan Falls. Tenth Annual Report, Wisconsin Dairymen's Association (1882) page 130; Sheb. Co. News, Apr. 5, 1882.

independent organization.¹⁷ The Falls board continued to be known as the Sheboygan County Dairy Board of Trade, but finally went out of existence on May 13, 1891.¹⁸ On April 16, 1891, a dairy board of trade was organized at Sheboygan.¹⁹ It continued until November 4, 1918.²⁰ A new dairy board of trade was also formed at Sheboygan Falls on March 21, 1899,²¹ and lasted until April 11, 1906.²² After operating a number of years, the name of the board at Plymouth was changed to Plymouth Central Call Board, and on April 3, 1918, it was changed to the Wisconsin Cheese Exchange the title which it still bears today. On May 17, 1921, another cheese board, the Farmers' Call Board, was organized at Plymouth, which continued in existence until May 9, 1941, when it was disbanded.²³ The Wisconsin Cheese Exchange is the only cheese board now remaining in the nation. With Wisconsin producing more cheese than any other state in the Union, the exchange performs an important function in the cheese industry. Prices established on the board practically govern the value of cheese all over the country. The board does not set the price of cheese, but furnishes the machinery with which cheese men can do their buying and selling upon a basis that reflects the real value of the product.

In 1913 a different method of marketing cheese was introduced by the organization of the Sheboygan County Cheese Producers Federation, a cooperative marketing association. Henry Krumrey, a farmer near Plymouth, was the leader of the move-

¹⁷ The first meeting of the Plymouth Dairy Board of Trade was held on May 1, 1887. Between 300 and 400 boxes of flats and 80 cases of Young Americas, the product of about 20 factories, were offered for sale. The board was formed as the result of a meeting of dairymen in Plymouth on Feb. 25, 1887, when 37 factorymen signed an agreement to offer their cheese on the market exclusively through the new organization. The organization meeting in February was called to order by Alexander Lindsay. William Chaplin was named chairman; and A. F. Warden, secretary. Enos Eastman was elected president of the board, A. F. Warden, secretary, and John Frick, treasurer. Directors chosen were H. H. Huson, Val G. Pfeil and George Eldridge; and the committee on a code of rules consisted of Walter Griffin, A. F. Warden and H. J. Bamford. *Ply. Reporter*, Mar. 3, and Apr. 28, 1887.

¹⁸ *Sheb. Co. News*, May 13, 1891.

¹⁹ Jacobus De Smidt was elected the first president, and Jos. G. End the first secretary. *Sheb. Co. News*, Apr. 22, 1891.

²⁰ *Sheb. Co. News*, Nov. 6, 1918.

²¹ John Dasso was chosen the first president, B. McKinnon, vice president, W. C. Thomas, secretary and treasurer, C. W. Reinecke, Fred Boldt and R. A. Horton, directors, *Sheb. Co. News*, Mar. 22, 1899.

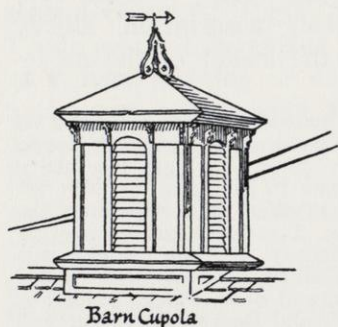
²² *Sheb. Co. News*, Apr. 11, 1906.

²³ The first officers of the Farmers' Call Board were: Charles Laack, president; Jacob Strub, vice president; Oscar Luedtke, treasurer; William W. Ford, secretary.

ment. Its inception is best told by Mr. Krumrey himself in the June 1916 issue of *Farm and Fireside*, a national agricultural journal:

"When I came to figure up the cost of producing the milk and compared it with the price I got for the cheese, and then what consumers were paying, I saw that, strange to say, these dealers got more for handling the cheese than I did for producing it. Something was wrong."

Convincing himself by investigation that the profits of the middlemen were excessive and unnecessary, and that cheese prices on the board were often arbitrarily fixed by combination and agreement among some of the dealers, irrespective of cheese supply and demand, he called a mass meeting at the fairgrounds in Plymouth on June 22, 1912, attended by over a thousand farmers, at which the feasibility of storing and marketing cheese by the farmers themselves rather than through dealers was discussed. The following Feb. 7th, at a second mass meeting of fifteen hundred farmers held in Plymouth, it was decided to organize a co-operative cheese association under Wisconsin's first co-operative law, which had been enacted in 1911. By Aug. 1, 1913, the new organization was ready to do business, but finding itself without facilities for storage and preparation of cheese for shipment, it had to build a



Barn Cupola

warehouse, and did not get fairly started until Apr. 1, 1914. The association began with a membership of 44 factories. Besides Mr. Krumrey, Messrs. Gus. Brickbauer, R. B. Melvin, and Frank G. Swoboda took a conspicuous part in the organization. In 1917 the name was changed to Wisconsin-, and in 1928 to National- Cheese Producers' Federation (Co-operative).

At its height the federation had a membership of 435 cheese factories, and handled one-tenth of the American cheese made in the state. Early in the 30's, however, the organization encountered financial difficulties, and in 1934 was re-organized under its old name of Wisconsin Cheese Producers' Federation (Co-operative), and operated upon a considerably reduced scale. Today it goes by the name of Wisconsin Cheese Producers' Co-operative, and has a membership of 80 to 90 factories.²⁴

²⁴ Blow at the Cheese Trust, by Henry Krumrey, *LaFollette's Mag.*, Jan. 14, 1913; The History and Accomplishments of the Wisconsin Cheese Producers' Federation, by William Kirsch, *Bull. of Wis. Dept. of Markets*, Nov. 15, 1925; *Country Gentleman*, Oct. 9, 1920; *Sheb. Press*, Oct. 17, 1927.

Hiram Smith, prominently mentioned in this chapter, was an influential exponent of dairying, and made a great and lasting contribution to agricultural development. One of the first men to understand that notwithstanding the apparently inexhaustible soil of this area, its fertility was bound to be depleted if the one-crop system of grain raising were to be continued indefinitely, he early saw the need of a new method of husbandry to protect the land from ultimate impoverishment. He became a student of dairying, and found the remedy in that industry. Repeated wheat crops had ruined the land to such an extent that eight bushels per acre became an average crop. Farmers everywhere were selling their farms for what they could get, and emigrating to Iowa and Minnesota, only to ruin other states by like methods. Smith devoted his life to preaching the doctrine of agricultural regeneration through the introduction of dairying. He addressed innumerable farmers' organizations and published frequent articles in farm journals and newspapers on his favorite theme. A successful farmer and dairyman himself, farmers listened to him because he was one of them. Although the early settlers were slow to change their farming habits, he persisted in his course until finally he had the satisfaction of seeing his ideas generally accepted. A contemporary of men like William D. Hoard, W. A. Henry, George C. Hill, Stephen Faville and George McKerrow, his name became a household word in the home of every intelligent farmer in the state.

Having settled in Sheboygan County in 1847, Hiram Smith told of his first year's experience as a dairyman in an address before the annual gathering of the Pioneers Association on Dec. 28, 1874. He began by buying a cow and calf imported from Illinois, he recounted. No grass was to be had, except here and there a bunch of coarse pony grass. Proving to be farrow, the cow soon dried up and strayed away. For want of anything better he resorted to bringing the calf up on basswood leaves, but it became so poor that he tried vainly to get rid of it. There were no butchers around in those days to whom he could sell it, and it would not run away. Finally it wandered off into the woods and was seen no more, probably becoming the victim of a hungry bear.²⁵

²⁵ Sheb. Times, Jan. 2, 1875.

Probably the first women cheesemakers in Sheboygan County were Katherine Feldmann, and her daughter, Dorothea Feldmann Weiskopf. In 1872 Helwig Feldmann, a farmer in the town of Rhine, built a cheese factory, the first in that town, and placed it in charge of his son, Jacob Feldmann, who had learned cheesemaking in the Hiram Conover factory. His services being needed on the farm, however, Jacob taught his mother and sister how to make cheese; and thereafter the two women operated the factory, while the men worked the farm.

Among his various activities, Mr. Smith served as president of the Sheboygan County Dairymen's Association in 1873, of the Wisconsin Dairymen's Association in 1876, and as a regent of the state university for 12 years. He was the first farmer ever to be appointed regent, and was chairman of the farm committee having charge of farmers' institutes and the agricultural experiment station. It was largely through his efforts and inspiration that the Dairy School, the first in the United States, was founded at Madison as a part of the College of Agriculture of the university. As a fitting tribute to his services in developing the dairy industry, the building was dedicated in his honor and named Hiram Smith Hall. He died May 15, 1890.

CHAPTER 20

EDUCATION AND SCHOOLS

SETTLERS coming to Sheboygan County were alive to the importance of education for their children, and the support of schools was a question of early concern to all local units of government. Even before settlement had progressed sufficiently to establish public schools, children were taught at home or in private schools. These private schools were held in some settler's cabin, and supported entirely by private subscriptions of the parents of the children in attendance. The teacher hired was likely to be someone in the neighborhood a little better versed in the three R's than the average settler, but whose qualifications for the position usually left much to be desired. It is said that the first school in Lima was held in the home of J. D. Gibbs; in Holland, in the house occupied by Mr. Ellsworth; in Herman, in the Charles Oetling home; and in the town of Plymouth, in the home of Reuben Clark. But undoubtedly the earliest school of this kind in the county was taught at Sheboygan during the winter of 1836-1837 by F. M. Rublee. At that time the place was a small settlement of only seventeen buildings.

As population increased, and the demand for better educational opportunities grew, public schools gradually came into existence. To describe their growth and spread through the country would unduly extend this account; but the story of the earliest one is typical of them all. On Oct. 20, 1840, the inhabitants of town 15 north, range 23 east (present town of Sheboygan), petitioned the board of county commissioners to set up a school district. As the records show, this petition was made pursuant to the third section of an act of the legislature, approved Jan. 13, 1840, entitled, "An act to provide for the support of common schools," which was the first public school law in the new territory. On Oct. 29th, seven legal electors met at the school house and voted unanimously in favor of organizing the district. It was designated School District No. 1 of the Town of Sheboygan. At the meeting, Benjamin H. Moore was elected clerk; Hugh M. Ritter, collector; and John Russell, Alva Rublee and Stephen Wolverton, trustees. The other voters present were S. H. Farnsworth and John Johnson. The sum of \$200 was voted to be raised by taxation for the sup-

port of the school. Although a public school, strictly speaking it was not a free public school, because it was decided that the resident patrons of the school were to pay about one-half the expenses of running it. Non-residents of the district had to pay the full tuition.

The school was not located on the present site of Sheboygan, but a quarter mile northwest of the Farnsworth saw mill and a half mile east of the present village of Kohler. This school probably did not remain in existence continuously. There were no meetings or transactions recorded again until 1845. Then the name of Cyrus Webster appears as having acknowledged receipt of \$45.50 in payment for thirteen weeks' service as a teacher. By 1847 it was necessary to hire a lady assistant to teach the younger children. Her name was Mary S. Calander. She was paid \$2 per week. Best known of the teachers was H. N. Ross, editor of the *Evergreen City Times*, who agreed in 1848 to teach for a four month term at \$26 a month.¹ A good idea of the marked growth of the community may be gained from the lists of children of school age, that is, between the ages of four and sixteen, in the district. There were 21 parents and patrons, and 46 children, in 1845; 104 children in 1846; 189 in 1847; 329 in 1848; and 371 in 1849. In the absence of a compulsory school attendance law in those days, it is certain that only a small proportion of children of school age attended school regularly.

Early schools usually had two terms—winter and summer. It was the custom for older children to attend school only during the winter term, for which a man teacher was commonly hired, on the principle that a man was likely to maintain better order and discipline than a woman. A woman teacher was usually hired for the summer term, when most of those in attendance were younger children. In 1846, the old school records show, a committee was appointed to ascertain from Messrs. Moore, Conklin and Farnsworth "whether the old house formerly occupied as a school house could be obtained for the use of the district." It appears that the first school house in Sheboygan was a small one-story frame structure, and situated on the east side of 8th street between Wisconsin and Niagara avenues. In 1874 it was moved to Wisconsin avenue,

¹ The teachers contract between John L. Sexton and School District No. 1 of the town of Russell, dated Nov. 22, 1856, provides a salary of \$18 per month for four months; and the contract between Harriet A. Parrish and School District No. 5 of the town of Sheboygan Falls states a salary of ten shillings per week for a three month term.—Original contracts in possession of Ethel Gilman, Plymouth.

west of 9th street, and used as a dwelling.² As the school house became overcrowded, a movement was started in 1849 to purchase a new site for a school in the block just north of the public square on 8th street, but nothing came of it. The same year the basement of the Baptist church, on the north side of Wisconsin avenue, between 7th and 8th streets, was rented as an additional school room. Then, in 1853, another move was begun to acquire a suitable school site, which culminated in 1856 in the erection of the school building, still in use, on Niagara avenue, between 7th and 8th streets. It was called the Union school, doubtless because it united all the public schools in the city under one roof. Up to 1884 the building was used for both elementary and high school purposes; in that year the high school and some of the elementary grades were moved into the adjoining newly built Second Ward school. The second common district school in the county was District No. 2 at Sheboygan Falls. The first Lutheran parochial school (Trinity) was established in 1852, and the first Catholic parochial school (St. Mary Magdalen, now Holy Name) was started in the winter of 1852-1853.

The first school houses in the county were practically all rude log structures, equipped in a most primitive way. In Joerns Bros.' Historical Atlas of Sheboygan County (1902), is a picture of such a school house, situated near Winooski. Around the room were boards which served as desks, laid on wooden pegs driven into the logs. The pupils sat on benches made of split logs with wooden pins for legs, and so arranged that the occupants faced the walls. In the center of the room was a large box stove, supplying heat during cold weather, around which the smaller children sat on low benches similar to those of the older pupils. Edwin J. Conger describes another old school house in Greenbush built in 1849. There was one seat next to the wall and extending around the room. In front of the seat was a long desk, used only by the larger pupils. This seat arrangement, he points out, was not particularly convenient, as one end of the seat and desk came flat against the wall; and whenever a pupil at the farther end of the seat wished to leave, all those seated near him had to stand or file out and let him pass. The first school in Greenbush was held in a log shanty that Sylvanus Wade had used as a sugar camp; but when winter came it had to be transferred to a warmer building. Mr. Conger, who obtained his information by interviewing old settlers, also de-

² Sheb. Press, Apr. 23, 1926.

scribes the methods of punishment then in vogue. Some of the refinements in the art were forcing a pupil to bend over and keep his finger on a nail head in the floor until he was released from his position; putting a split stick over the nose; and requiring a child to erase a chalk mark from the blackboard with his nose.³

From 1839 to 1848 the schools in each township were under the supervision of five persons, called inspectors of common schools, elected each year at the annual town meeting, whose duty it was to appoint teachers and visit each school at least quarterly. This system not proving satisfactory, it was supplanted in 1848 by the method of electing a single town superintendent of schools at the annual town meeting. This system was in vogue until 1861, when the present method of electing a county superintendent of schools by the people of the county at large was adopted. An idea of the cost of schools in early days may be gained from the fact that the town meeting of the Town of Sherman, held April 2, 1850, voted to raise \$500 by public taxation, \$150.00 thereof to be used for contingent expenses, \$50.00 for the support of the poor, \$200.00 for the building of roads and bridges, and \$100.00 for common schools. The minutes of the town meeting of the Town of Scott held on the same day, April 2, 1850, show that \$1.00 per scholar was raised for school money, and this amount was levied each year for a considerable time thereafter.

The large German element in the population presented a unique educational problem in the county. In 1872 E. A. Little, county superintendent of schools, reported that fully one-half of the children attending the district schools were of German parentage, and that many of the schools were composed wholly of this class of pupils. He complained of the lack of progress in learning the English language in districts heavily peopled by Germans, stating, "The German language is used in imparting instruction, and by the pupils in conversation among themselves, at school, and sometimes with the teacher, and of course, at home with their parents."⁴ Proud of their nationality and language, the Germans as a rule were bent on preserving their native tongue in the land of their adoption. In many school districts the question was a burning issue. Wherever they were strongly in the majority the Germans were apt to insist that their language be taught exclusively, despite a state law requiring the teaching of English. In other dis-

³ Greenbush School History, by Edwin J. Conger, Ply. Rep., Dec. 16, 1916.

⁴ Ply. Rep., Nov. 26, 1872.

tricts where there was a liberal admixture of Yankees, or the school board was made up mainly of English-speaking members, German was taught as a part-time subject. An entry in the school records of Sheboygan in 1857 reads, "No scholar shall receive instruction in the German language except they also receive instruction in the English at the same school." Parochial schools flourished during this period, many parents sending their children to them as much for instruction in German as for religious training. In the course of time, as English became the common language of daily intercourse, even among the Germans themselves, the demand for teaching German in the schools gradually disappeared, until today it is difficult to realize the importance that people at one time attached to the subject.

A number of ventures into the realm of higher education gained support in Sheboygan County at different times, with varying degrees of success. As early as 1851 the Sheboygan Educational Society was formed to establish a university "devoted to Christianity." It was to be conducted on a plan, common at that time, of enabling students to earn their way through school by working on a farm operated in connection with the institution. The organization went as far as to buy a tract of land, under a contract, four miles from Sheboygan on the Gibbsville road; but for reasons now unknown the project was abandoned at this stage.⁵ In 1853 the Sheboygan College was incorporated, its announced purpose being to "afford instruction in literature, the sciences and the arts, in the theory and practice of elementary instruction, and in any or all of the liberal professions." Named the Sheboygan Academy, it was governed by a board of 13 trustees, headed by A. P. Lyman. It opened in August 1853 with an enrollment of 68 students. Among its faculty were Fordyce Williams, principal; Dr. J. J. Brown, lecturer on chemistry; and Rev. L. W. Davis, lecturer on botany and geology. According to an advertisement in 1854, the tuition per quarter was: primaries \$2, common English branches \$3, higher English branches \$4, languages \$5. How long this school persisted is not known; but after the death of Mr. Williams, it gradually dwindled away.⁶ In 1859 a Catholic College was started in Sheboygan, founded by Rev. R. Smedding of St. Mary Magdalen Church, and built by private subscription. The *Evergreen City Times* describes it as a two-story edifice fronting south

⁵ Sheboygan Mercury, July 19 and Sept. 20, 1851.

⁶ Chap. 38, P. & L. Laws of 1853; Sheboygan Lake Journal, Oct. 18, 1854; Joerns Bros. Historical Atlas of Sheboygan County (1902).

on Superior street, with a wing extending some 30 feet in the rear. At the outset it was used for the instruction of both sexes, but it was intended ultimately for girls only, as the plan was to build another for boys the next year.⁷ The prospects of Sheboygan being chosen as the location of one of the State Normal Schools at one time appeared exceedingly bright. A law passed by the state legislature in 1865 authorized the board of normal school regents "to call for proposals of not less than \$10,000 cash or its equivalent in lands or buildings from any town or city that might desire to have the State Normal School." A committee of local citizens was appointed, who selected a proposed site of ten acres between 4th and 6th streets in Taylor and Feagan's addition. All the conditions of the law were met, and the local newspapers enthusiastically reported that the school was positively assured so far as Sheboygan was concerned, but for some unexplained reason it finally went to another city.⁸

In 1860, near Franklin, the Mission House was founded, which, although starting from small and unpropitious beginnings, was destined to achieve influence and prominence as an institution of higher learning. Springing up among the Lippers in the town of Herman, who were devout members of the German Reformed church, the school was established for the purpose of educating young men for the ministry. The Lippers organized their first church in Herman, the Immanuel Congregation, in 1848, a year after their settlement in the town, and built their first place of worship in 1850, but they had no permanent minister until 1854, when Dr. J. J. Bossard became their spiritual leader. During the intervening period the congregation had had no regular minister, but the members met regularly for religious discussion, singing and prayer, and on occasions to listen to some outside preacher who was passing through. Rev. C. Pleuse, of Sheboygan, had preached at Franklin once a month. To fill their needs the German Reformed churches appealed to the church authorities in Germany and Switzerland to send enough young ministers to America, but were advised to educate and train their own preachers. Accordingly, in 1855, the education of ministers was begun in the town of Herman in a small way. Without any school building, the students were given instruction in the parsonages of Immanuel and Saron congregations, the latter located in the town of Sheboygan Falls. Dr. Bossard was one of the teachers, and Rev. H. A. Winter

⁷ Evergreen City Times, July 23, 1859.

⁸ Chap. 536, Laws of 1865.

the other. This was the same Rev. Winter through whose influence, as told in another chapter, emigration from Lippe-Detmold to America was begun, and, who in 1855, became the pastor of Saron Congregation. He is regarded as the father of the Mission House movement.

Officially the institution did not begin until 1860. That year Messrs. Steffen and Reineking, two prominent members of the church, offered ten acres of land situated a half mile south of Immanuel church for the purposes of a school. The first building was completed in 1864 at a total cost in money of \$1,027.58, most of the labor and materials having been donated by individual church members. In 1865 the rest of Mr. Steffen's eighty acre farm was purchased; and in 1867 a second house was built. Dr. Bossard was the first head of the school. In 1865 he gave up his duties as preacher to devote all of his time to teaching. Education at the school was free to students who entered the ministry; but they had to sign an agreement that if they failed to serve the church ten years, they would pay the school \$100 a year for their instruction. Students were also allowed to meet their school expenses by working on the farm. With 18 students in 1866, 18 in 1867, and 22 in 1868, the Mission House,—now known as Mission House College—has had a gradual growth until its present normal enrollment is somewhat less than 200—still a small school, but offering a course on a par with that of other recognized small colleges.*

Another prominent educational institution, the Wisconsin Memorial Academy, was located at Cedar Grove. This school had its inception in April 1900, when Dr. G. J. Kollen, president of Hope College, at Holland, Michigan, presented to the Council of the college a plan for the establishment of an academy in eastern Wisconsin, in order to provide higher educational opportunities, closer home, for children of Holland families living in this section.

The Council reported, recommending the plan to the General Synod of the Reformed Church of America, following which the Classis of Wisconsin took favorable action on it at several successive sessions. The Particular Synod of Chicago also endorsed the project. In June, 1901, the General Synod recommended aid for the academy to the Board of Education, and it was largely through the assistance of this board that the institution was maintained. The choice of Cedar Grove as the site of the school was

* The Beginning and Early Years of the Mission House, by J. J. Schlicher, Wis. Mag. of Hist., XXV, p. 51; Sheb. Herald, Aug. 14 and 21, 1897.

determined at a conference between Dr. Kollen, four pastors and twenty consistory members, which was held at Gibbsville.

Locally the academy was promoted by Rev. J. J. Van Zanten, who was then pastor of the Reformed Church at Cedar Grove. In 1901 the school was incorporated and the corner stone of the first building laid. The structure, a roomy, square, two-story frame building, was dedicated in June 1902. While it was being built, instruction was given in the chapel of the church, under the supervision of the pastor, who had as his assistant Miss Cornelia Walvoord.

In 1909 the second floor of the school building was completed for class room use; and in 1925 a fine, new, three-story brick building, in an attractive Dutch style of architecture, was constructed. At its height the academy had a staff of five instructors and somewhat over a hundred students. On account of insufficient financial support, it was finally determined to close the institution, and in 1938 it was sold to Cedar Grove School District No. 1 for public high school purposes.¹⁰

¹⁰ Memorial, Year Book of Wis. Memorial Acad., 1929-1930.

CHAPTER 21

THE PEOPLE WHO CAME

THE YANKEES

SHEBOYGAN County is distinguished by the heterogeneous character of its people. As already told, the first settlers to come here were native-born Americans of English descent; and, oddly enough, the great majority of them came not from New England, as might be supposed, but from New York state. The census of 1860 reveals that 2,868 inhabitants of the county that year were from New York, and only 719 from all of New England combined. Nearly all those who entered government lands in the county bore Yankee names, but which of these were bona fide and permanent settlers, and which mere speculators who never located here, or staid here only long enough to sell their holdings again, cannot be determined. Some writers characterize the settlers from down east as riffraff who couldn't make a success in the older sections from which they came. But one cannot read the story of these people in Sheboygan County without being impressed by their solid, substantial traits of character. Far from being failures who merely wanted to get away from a society into which they did not fit, or second-rate individuals, they were among the best the east had to offer—hardy, intelligent, religious, self-reliant men and women, who scorned the east's easy ways and were bent on improving their position in life under conditions where they had more room to grow. The Yankee element who settled in Sheboygan County were ideally suited by outlook and ability to be the trail-blazers of civilization in this then new and undeveloped land.

THE GERMANS

The place of the first German settlement in Sheboygan County was the town of Sheboygan Falls; but the time is uncertain. Some local historians claim that the pioneer Germans in the county were George Thiermann, Diedrich Barthels, and N. Heide, who came here in the spring of 1845 under the auspices of the latter's brother, Henry G. Heide, of Milwaukee.¹ Others assert that the earliest Germans were Diedrich Logemann and George C. Quasius,

¹ Wis. Hist. Coll., iv, 341; "Sheboygan County," by J. O. Thayer, Appendix to Proc. of Bd. of Supervisors of Sheb. Co., 1872; Snyder, Van Vechten & Co. Hist. Atlas of Wis.

and that they settled in the town in 1843. No verification of either statement is any longer possible. Aside from a few advance guards like these, the big push of Germans did not occur until after the political troubles in Germany in 1848. Then the thin ranks of immigration rapidly took on the proportions of a vast army of occupation that took possession not only of a large portion of our county, but a sizeable area of the state at large.

A number of causes united to attract the march of German settlement to Wisconsin, chief among them being that it was open to and awaiting settlement at just the time when large scale German emigration was ready to set forth. Besides, the state had natural advantages in the way of climate, soil and cheap lands. The climate closely resembled that to which the newcomers were accustomed at home; and the products of the soil—wheat, rye, oats, barley and vegetables—were the same as they had raised for generations. The laws of the state were liberal toward immigrants. Originally, it was intended to form a German state here in Wisconsin, so that German customs and institutions could be perpetuated in the New World; but the plan failed decisively. Like other nationality groups, the Germans were disposed to settle in the same neighborhoods or communities for mutual aid and social contacts. Their areas of greatest concentration were in the two northern rows of towns and the two southwestern towns in the county, these sections becoming almost solidly German. Among the colonists were artisans and craftsmen of all kinds, as well as university graduates, and a few men of capital. These settled for the most part in Sheboygan and Plymouth, and in the villages, where they could pursue the vocations for which they were trained. But many were forced to take up lands and make a living from the soil, as there was little demand for their skill in a new country. In 1860 there were 10,284 German-born residents in the county, 2,724 of whom lived in Sheboygan. As a class they were distinguished for their industry, thrift and dependability.

THE HOLLANDERS

William Higby, a pioneer school teacher of Holland, writing in the Historical Atlas of Sheboygan County of 1875, erroneously states that the first Hollander settled in the county in 1846, and gives the distinction to G. H. Kolste. The earliest Dutch settlers actually came in 1845. They were Jan Zeeveld and a Mr. DeVos, (probably Leunis DeVos). According to Peter Daane, the two men

met in Milwaukee shortly after their arrival in this state and drove through the woods together to the town of Holland, where they settled first on section 24. Informed, however, that this section was reserved by the government as "salt spring land", because it was supposed to have a salt spring on it, and was not under the law open to settlement or purchase, they moved off after about a year.² Mr. Zeeveld then settled on sections 35 and 36; and Mr. DeVos on section 9 and later on section 7, range 23. Jacob De Smith (or De Smidt) also settled in Holland in 1845.³

In 1846 Gert Hendrik Kolste, with others of his countrymen, settled in the town. Among them were Apolonia Van Driest and her sons Peter, Daniel and William, and the families of Hendrik Vreiheid, Peter J. Leyser, Isaac Ver Duin, Jan Caljouw and Jan Pleyte. In the summer of 1847 four more Hollanders arrived under the leadership of Rev. Peter Zonne, expecting their families and followers to come later. An accident occurred when they landed, on a dark and stormy night, at the north pier in Sheboygan. In the darkness one of the men, a Mr. Venendaal, stepped off the pier and was drowned. His body washed ashore the next day and was buried in Sheboygan. On Nov. 21, 1847, occurred the great *Phoenix* disaster, described in another chapter, in which about 127 new colonists, nearing the end of their long journey from Holland, lost their lives when already within sight of their destination, and only 25 were saved. To name all those who arrived in 1847, and after, would unduly extend this account. The spelling of many of the original Dutch names presents some difficulties. They differ considerably in the various records. For example, Kolste is spelled TeKolste, TaKolst, TaKolste and TaKolstee; Vreiheid—Vryheid and Vreyheide; Zeeveld—Zeeweld, Zeefeld and Zaveld; Daane—Daan; Leyser—Lizer; and Van Driest—Van den Driest.

Rev. Peter Zonne, probably the most prominent Hollander in the history of the county, was the leader of his people, guiding them in temporal as well as spiritual matters. As the head of his flock, his position was similar to that of Rev. R. C. Van Raalte in Michigan, and Rev. H. P. Scholte in Iowa, who migrated to this country with their followers about the same time. Settling on section 23, Rev. Zonne built a church on his land about a mile north of Cedar Grove and gave it to his congregation in 1853. An unpretentious affair made of logs, it was the earliest Presbyterian church

² The existence of a salt spring proving unfounded, section 24 was settled by others in 1848.

³ Portrait & Biog. Rec. of Sheb. Co., p. 515.

in this region, with a membership of eighty families. In the course of time another Presbyterian church was built on the Sauk Trail road at East Oostburg, and Dutch Reformed churches at Cedar Grove and Oostburg. Subsequently the word *Dutch* was dropped in Dutch Reformed Church and the name Reformed Church in America adopted. Today there are Presbyterian churches at Cedar Grove and Sheboygan and two at Oostburg; Reformed churches in those places, as well as in Gibbsville, Hingham and Sheboygan Falls; and Christian Reformed churches in Cedar Grove, Oostburg and Sheboygan. Besides his duties as a pastor, Rev. Zonne was a substantial land owner and farmer, owning land in various sections of the town of Holland. In 1851 he exhibited a flock of 212 sheep—the largest in the county—at the first annual exhibition of the Sheboygan County Agricultural Society, held at Sheboygan Falls.⁴

Another influential figure among the Hollanders was Jacob Quintus, editor of the *Nieuwsbode*, a Dutch language newspaper published in Sheboygan, beginning in October 1849. It had the distinction of being the first Holland weekly published in the United States. The newspaper was devoted almost entirely to news of general rather than local interest. Few Hollanders then lived in the city of Sheboygan, but were massed principally in the town of Holland. In his columns Quintus was constantly endeavoring to make good American citizens out of his people. Each year, in the beginning of July, he would print the Declaration of Independence, and at appropriate times, the annual message of the President to Congress on the state of the Union, and the inaugural address of the governor of Wisconsin, all translated in full into the Holland language. He also took a strong stand against slavery, which was then beginning to loom as a national issue. The editor of the *Sheboygan Lake Journal* at one time characterized Quintus as "the very index of meanness and hypocrisy," but the *Sheboygan Mercury* warmly defended him. Quintus conducted his paper until May 1859.

Before the coming of the Dutch, several Yankee families had settled in Holland, chiefly in the sections along the lake shore, on account of the fishing there. Just who they were, it is impossible to tell today. The first house was built on section 25 in 1841 by David Giddings for a Mr. Ellsworth, whose family were the first whites to live in the town. In 1845, according to Peter Daane, the following Yankee families resided there: John Johnson, James

⁴ Sheboygan Mercury, Oct. 4, 1851.

Wood, a Mr. Shaw, Burnett, Eany, Owen, and Wilcox. As early as 1860, the United States census shows, 1,323 out of a total of 2,239 persons, or 60% of the population of the town, were born in the Netherlands; and today the greatest concentration of people of Dutch descent is still to be found there, although large numbers have spread into the neighboring towns of Lima, Wilson, Lyndon and Sherman. In 1860 there were only 367 inhabitants of Dutch birth in the entire county outside of Holland.⁵

The turn of the century (1900) marked another distinct in-pouring of Hollanders into the county; but instead of taking up farming like their predecessors of an earlier era, they settled in the northeastern section of the city of Sheboygan, where they live in a more or less compact neighborhood. They came principally from two towns in the old country, Nieuwdorp and Ierseke, and had been oyster fishermen by occupation.

In 1853 a company of Holland emigrants, finding themselves on board ship with a group of ten Belgian families also bound for America, almost got the little band to settle with them in Sheboygan County where they had relatives. These Belgians were from a single commune in the province of Brabant, Belgium. After landing at Milwaukee, they proceeded northward along the lake shore, and stopped at Sheboygan. Here, however, they found themselves among strange people speaking an unfamiliar language; and so, when a passing Canadian trapper told them about "La Baye Verte" and its French-speaking inhabitants, they bundled on board a little steamer and sailed for Green Bay. Xavier Martin, a son of one of their number, in an article entitled "The Belgians of Northeast Wisconsin," thus tells their story:

"Here they commenced prospecting for land, and had almost come to the conclusion to settle near that town, having found a suitable location; but as none of them could speak anything but French, and the Walloon (a Latinized *patois*, said to be a relic of the Roman Empire), they were considerably annoyed at not being able to communicate with the people of Sheboygan. At this juncture they met a gentleman who could speak French, and he informed them that at Green

⁵ The Dutch Settlements of Sheboygan County, by Sipko F. Rederus, Wis. Mag. of Hist., vol. 1, p. 256.

Communication by Rev. John Hoffman, Wis. Mag. of Hist., vol. 2, p. 464. History and Anecdotes of the Town of Holland, by Peter Daane, Sheb. Herald, Jan. 16, to Mar. 19, 1892.

Sheb. Herald, July 10, 1897.

The 50th Anniversary of the settlement of the town of Holland was celebrated in Blekkink's Grove, near Oostburg, July 5, 1897; between 5000 and 6000 persons were in attendance.

Bay nearly a half of the people spoke that language; and besides that the land, the water, the timber, and the climate were as good as in Sheboygan or anywhere else in the State of Wisconsin. Hence they at once determined to proceed to Green Bay, where they arrived the latter part of August. Here they found many French-Canadian families, who could speak their language, and so they decided to locate permanently in the neighborhood of these folk."⁶

THE IRISH

Remarkably little is known concerning the early Irish in Sheboygan County. Arriving in greatest numbers during the late 1840's and early 1850's, they settled for the most part in the town of Mitchell. By 1860, according to the United States census, approximately 100 of the 175 families to be found in that town were of Irish origin. Only a few scattering Irish went into other towns. Who the earliest Irish settlers in Mitchell were, and how they happened to select that location in preference to some other place, has never been recorded or handed down, so far as the author has been able to ascertain.

The Irish in this county were a segment of the unprecedented migration of more than a million and a quarter immigrants from the Emerald Isle who came to our shores in the decade from 1845 to 1855. As was the case with similar groups from other countries, they came here primarily to escape grinding poverty and repression, and to gain a better living. The immediate cause of the exodus was the potato famine in Ireland that started in 1846 and lasted several years. Potatoes were almost the sole crop and staple article of food of the Irish peasants, and when a succession of crop failures occurred, due to a plant disease, called the potato rot, the people were reduced to want and starvation.

Although the Irish were farmers on their native soil, when they landed in this country, they almost all crowded into the big cities like New York, Boston and Philadelphia. The majority were too poverty-stricken to move to farming communities, particularly out west. To many, also, farm life was too lonely and dull. They became the unskilled laboring class in our principal cities and towns, doing all the heavier forms of manual labor. This was an era of public works and internal improvements in the United

⁶ Wis. Hist. Coll. xiii, 375.

General References: *Who Built America*, by Carl Wittke, (1940), chap. 8; *Ireland and Irish Emigration to the New World*, by W. F. Adams, (1932).

States; and the large-scale construction of railroads, canals, roads and streets attracted the Irish in great numbers, who displaced the native Americans, as the Irish were later in turn displaced by the Italians and Slavs. An Irishman was nearly always pictured in those days with a pick and shovel, or a hod. Most of the Irish immigrants never got any farther than our larger population centers; but some of them, after working long enough on construction jobs to save a little money, took it and bought a farm. Doubtless it was individuals of this class who took up land in Mitchell. Nearly everyone at that time had the "Wisconsin fever." Even though they were penniless when they first set foot on American soil, the Irish were able in a year or two to finance the purchase of a farm. With land selling for as little as \$1.25 an acre, the acquiring of a farm did not require a great outlay of money.

The presence of so many Irish in Mitchell seems to indicate that they must have been a virtual colony, settling there as the result of an organized movement. However, it appears that they filtered into the town at different times, each family buying a farm as it was able to do so. It was natural for the Irish, like other nationalistic groups, to settle near each other, on account of their common religion, language, and background. By the time of their arrival, but little government land was left, and they had to buy their tracts largely from land speculators like Benjamin F. and George B. Fields, and Charles D. Cole, who held the choicest sections in that town.

When the county was divided into towns in 1849, Mitchell was made a part of Lyndon; and when it was detached from Lyndon not long afterward, it was first named Olio, an archaic word meaning a wide-mouthed earthen pot. The name was suggested by the peculiar bowl-like valleys in the "kettles" that cover a large part of the region. Later the name was changed to Mitchell, after the famous Irish revolutionist, John Mitchel.

An adaptable people, no other nationality adjusted itself so rapidly to the conditions of American life as the Irish. By nature and temperament they were gregarious, congenial, cheerful, generous, convivial, hospitable,—sometimes to a fault—always willing to help their neighbors in distress, and loving the country of their adoption, but sighing in their souls for the Green Isle across the sea. Along with these traits, they were possessed of a fund of common sense, shrewdness, and ready wit, and the ability to read human nature and character, and to be leaders of men.

Prominent among the Irish in Mitchell were James E. Rathbun, who settled in section 4 in 1848, and established the post office of Rathbun; and Thomas F. Heraty, farmer, justice of the peace, notary public, fire insurance agent, and local newspaper correspondent, who established the post office of Pius. Mr. Heraty kept an interesting diary, in which he recorded the daily events of his life in Mitchell for the entire period from 1874 to 1918.⁷

THE LIPPERS

The story of the Lippers, a colony of Germans, who moved into the town of Herman, is typical of that of settlers coming to America directly from Europe. They were one of a number of similar groups that migrated from the principality of Lippe-Detmold in 1847. Members of the German Reformed Church, a young minister, Rev. H. A. Winter, was chiefly responsible for their exodus to this country. In March 1846, in company with about a dozen others, he left Lippe-Detmold and landed at New Orleans, intending to go to Texas; but they changed their minds and went instead upriver to St. Louis, where they arrived about May 1st. There they separated, some going to Iowa, and others to Illinois. Three of them, including young Winter, staid behind in St. Louis. Corresponding with his brother in Germany, he told him of the advantages offered homeseekers in the United States. The information contained in his letters was widely disseminated among the people, with the result that in the spring of 1847 a large contingent of about 300 colonists reached St. Louis to begin life over in the New World. Some remained at that place, but most of them pushed on to Iowa and Illinois. At about the same time the aggregation came that finally settled in Sheboygan County.

The vivid experiences of the Sheboygan County contingent are graphically described in a booklet written in German by Rev. Jerome C. Arpke, entitled, "Das Lippe-Detmolder Settlement in Wisconsin," published in 1895. Rev. Arpke obtained the information in his interesting narrative largely from his mother, who was one of the original Lipper colonists to make their home in the town of Herman.

Setting out from Bremen on May 4, 1847, the expedition consisted of 112 persons, comprising 24 families, 13 unmarried men, and 2 unmarried women. Their leader was Friedrich Reineking.

⁷ This diary is in the possession of Mr. Heraty's daughter, Mrs. Benno Wiffer, of Fond du Lac, Wis. For sketch of Mr. Heraty's life see Port. and Biog. Record of Sheb. Co., p. 580.

The small sailing vessel on which they embarked, the *Agnes*, was crowded with 400 passengers and grossly overloaded. The eight-week passage was attended by misery, suffering, sickness and death. There was no privacy. The young men had to sleep on the floor, so closely packed together that they could not turn over until the signal was given for all to change at the same time. Sanitary arrangements were deplorable and fresh drinking water scarce. Vermin infested the ship. For food they had ships biscuit made of coarse, black meal, and soup made out of lukewarm saltwater and a few beans. The voyage was a test of endurance that only the sturdiest could stand. Thirteen or fourteen of the passengers died on the way, three of them Lippers—and were buried at sea. The vessel was supposed to land at New York, but it carried more passengers than the regulations allowed, and it landed instead at Quebec, where the immigration authorities were less strict. From Quebec the party travelled by ship, canal boat and railroad to Buffalo. The train, it is said, was so slow that the young men had plenty of time to jump off and gather vegetables growing near the track; and whenever it came to an upgrade the men had to get out and help push.

When the party got to Buffalo they took a steamer as far as Milwaukee. Although their original destination was the open prairies of Iowa, at Milwaukee they fell into the hands of some land agents who told them of the cheap and fertile pine lands of Sheboygan County. These agents pictured to them the hardships of the long journey beyond the Mississippi, warned them of the high cost of getting started there, and assured them that land in Wisconsin was so cheap that anyone, no matter how poor, could acquire a tract, and make money from clearing his land and selling the timber as fuel, charcoal and lumber. Unable to agree upon their future course, the group finally divided, some continuing on to Iowa, while the greater number headed northward for Sheboygan, then a small fishing village surrounded by a dense pine forest and frequented by Indians. They took wagons and ox teams, furnished by the land agents, to Sheboygan Falls, and then proceeded north along the Green Bay road until they came to the center of section 15 in the town of Herman, where they brought their long and tiresome journey to an end. This was on July 25, 1847—eleven weeks after they left Bremen.

After making their selections of lands in the vicinity, each forty acres or more, they put up rough camps of brush and poles for temporary living quarters until they could provide more sub-

stantial homes. Having no neighbors familiar with American methods to show them how, instead of erecting the regular log cabins of the pioneers, which could be quickly constructed, they began at once laboriously to build large elaborate frame dwellings, made out of hewn and sawn lumber, and patterned after the German style of architecture. Putting up these houses with the few simple tools they had brought along was an arduous task. For sawing the big logs into boards they had only small hand saws, and for chopping down trees they had only light axes, with which they picked away at the trunks until they fell. Unable to 'do the chopping on but one side, the trees often fell in the wrong direction; and the stumps remaining looked as if they had been chewed by beavers. Many of these houses are standing today, with timbers two feet thick and boards 18 inches wide, attesting to the infinite patience, toil, and solidity of character of their builders.

Being all poor people, the Lippers were hard pressed to make a livelihood until they were fairly started. Many earned a little money by making shingles for the market. In the daytime they cut and hauled the logs in the woods, and in the evening they split the logs into shingles by the light of candles. Getting out the logs was quite a problem, especially for those who had no draft animals; they had to do the hauling with hand sleds. Transporting the shingles to market was another problem. Luckily, two settlers in the north end of the colony, S. Luhman and A. Nagel, owned a yoke of oxen, and two settlers in the south end, F. Reineking and S. Steffen, each owned a yoke; and these men helped out their less fortunate countrymen in this respect upon a basis of exchange of favors. During the first years many younger men and girls left home to work out for others. Most of the men went to Manitowoc, Two Rivers and Chicago, and others did canal building in Illinois. The girls mostly worked in Sheboygan as domestic help. Not only was pay meager, but money was scarce, and some had to accept their earnings in property other than cash. Some came home with an ox or two to show for their labor, one came with a wagon, and another with only an extra shirt, for which he had worked three months. In 1853 C. F. Arpke built a dam and saw mill at Franklin, which greatly improved the economic condition of the settlers by giving employment to many and furnishing a more accessible market for logs. In 1855-56 Mr. Arpke and Henry Dickhoff erected a flour mill at Franklin. During the 1850's quite a number of additional immigrants from Lippe-Detmold joined the original colony.

THE LUXEMBURGERS

The southeastern part of the county has witnessed the infiltration of a considerable number of immigrants from the province of Luxemburg. Their chief centers of population were in Ozaukee county, from which they gradually spilled, so to speak, over the line into Sheboygan County. The first arrivals of Luxemburgers settled in Port Washington in 1844. In 1845 a colony of 15 families, adopting the advice of Archbishop John Martin Henni, of Milwaukee, located at Holy Cross. During 1846 eight or ten families formed the Lake Church settlement. They also founded the Dacada settlement on the county line, which by 1848 numbered 80 families. The influx of people from Luxemburg, like that from Holland, Germany and Ireland, was the result of disturbed and untoward political and economic conditions rampant in Europe in the 1840's.*

THE JEWS

The first Jew to settle in Sheboygan probably was Aaron Zion, who came about the year 1885, and kept a small millinery store on N. 8th street. He was followed not long afterward by Sol. Rosenbaum, a clothing peddler, and Joseph Buntmann, a fruit merchant. Practically all Jewish immigrants in Sheboygan came from Russia, where they had lived and engaged in business in the commercial and industrial cities as small storekeepers, tailors, shoemakers, money lenders, and dealers in grain, cattle, furs and hides. Contrary to general belief, their migration to America was not so much the result of racial or religious persecution as a desire to improve their opportunities and economic status. They came to stay, and brought their families with them. When they got here a surprisingly large number began life as itinerant peddlers, some with packs on their backs, until they had accumulated sufficient funds to start a small business.

The progress of Jews in this country is aptly illustrated by the career of Herman J. Holman, who came to Sheboygan in 1890. Together with his uncles, Nachsun and Michael Holman, who preceded him a year, he first worked in local clothing stores as a tailor. He then opened his own tailoring, cleaning and pressing shop in a small building on N. 8th street; and several years after, he went into the junk peddling business on the south side. Later he erected a store building at S. 14th street and Broadway and entered the

* Settlement of Ozaukee County, by Beatrice M. Hoan, Bachelors Thesis, Univ. of Wis. 1930.

dry goods business, Mrs. Holman conducting the store, and M. Holman continuing to operate the junk business. In a little she adjoining his store he started a small factory, installed a cutting table and four sewing machines, and made pants, which he sold locally to retail stores. In 1902, with his brothers, Aaron and Harry, he started a factory for manufacturing overalls on Michigan avenue, but the firm dissolved after about a year. In 1906 Herman J. Holman sold his store and opened a factory on Calumet drive, under the name of H. J. Holman & Sons. There he remained until 1925, when the present large, modern factory at S. 14th street and Alabama avenue, the Lakeland Manufacturing Company, was built. Aaron Holman subsequently founded the Reliable Shirt & Overall Co. on N. 15th street, and Harry Holman began the Holman Mfg. Co. on N. 13th street.

Other early comers among the Jews were Solomon Holman, father of Herman, Aaron and Harry Holman, who came in 1890; Isaac Raffelson, who came in 1892, and his brother Max, who arrived some time later; Meyer Max, who came about 1890, and conducted a clothing store in the city for many years; the Marshak family, who arrived around 1897-1898; George Paykel, who came in 1894; and his father-in-law, Harry Waisman, who came about 1892. Mr. Paykel was a tailor by trade, but has for many years been engaged in the manufacture of brooms. Space does not permit mention of more.

Sheboygan Jews are known all over the United States for their strict orthodoxy in matters of religion. There has never been a reform Jewish element or movement in the city. Nearly all Jews are deeply religious, and cling tenaciously to the old doctrines, forms and practices. Orthodoxy is the tendency of the Russian Jews as contrasted with the reform leanings of the German Jews. Three temples or synagogues—Adas Israel, Ahavas Sholem, and Ohel Moshe—provide for the spiritual needs of the people. Adas Israel, the oldest Jewish congregation, was started in the home of Nachsun Holman, on N. 8th street near Bluff avenue, about 1890, by a group of ten Jews, the required number to form a quorum. The first church was a little house, and then a larger building, both situated on N. 8th street. In 1907 the building was moved to N. 13th street and Carl avenue, and is still used by the congregation as its place of worship. Ahavas Sholem began in a wooden building on Michigan avenue just east of N. 8th street, and was moved in 1903 to N. 13th street and Geele avenue, where it still serves

members. Ohel Moshe was founded in 1920, and has its temple on N. 15th street and Marie Court.

Like other groups, the Jews in Sheboygan have their quota of social and fraternal organizations. The oldest was a mutual benefit association, called Western Star, which existed for many years. Another is the Jewish Workmen's Circle, which was formed thirty years ago and still is in existence. There is also a lodge of the Independent Order of B'nai B'rith, the most influential of all the Jewish organizations of its kind in the United States. This lodge, named Davis Lodge, after Herman Davis, one of its founders, was formed in 1919. Finally, there is A. Z. A., a junior Jewish organization, formed in 1925 by the B'nai B'rith.

Most of the Jews live in a neighborhood group in the northwestern part of Sheboygan in the vicinity of Geele avenue. William Schaetzer, the owner of a subdivision in this section, originally encouraged them to settle there by selling them houses on favorable terms. At the peak there were approximately 175 Jewish families in Sheboygan; today there are about 150 families. The past decade or so has witnessed a considerable shift in the Jewish population, quite a few having moved to Milwaukee and northern Wisconsin, and some outsiders having settled here.⁹

THE VOLGA GERMANS

The Volga Germans, an immigrant group consisting of 600 to 700 families, make up a considerable proportion of Sheboygan's population. Although they came here from Russia, they are not Russians, but Germans, who made their home in Russia for several generations, and were influenced in their lives, customs and standards by their long residence in that country. Commonly called German-Russians, they prefer the name Volga Germans, after the region of their birth. The ancestors of these people were transplanted in large colonies from Germany to the Volga river valley in Russia, in 1764, by Catherine II, Empress of Russia, a German princess, who had married the Russian Tsar, Peter III. There, in one of the richest agricultural regions in the world, they settled down in little rural villages as tillers of the soil. The purpose of the colonization was to teach the Russian peasants how to farm. The land around these villages was owned by the community as a whole, and parceled out to the individual inhabitants for use. It

⁹ Information given largely by George Paykel, George Holman and David Rabinovitz.

was not owned privately. When a man died the plot allotted to him, instead of descending to his heirs, reverted to the village. Division and distribution of land was made by the village authorities at intervals among the male members of the community. As population grew, the parcels became smaller and smaller, increasing the pressure upon the means of livelihood, and affording the colonists only a bare subsistence. Moving to other parts of the world offered the easiest solution of the problem. Cancellation in 1866 by the Russian government of their exemption from military service guaranteed to them by Catherine II over a hundred years before, as an incentive for moving to Russia, was another cause of their migration.

The first newcomers from the Volga region to settle in Sheboygan were a group of seven, who came here in 1892. They were Gottlieb Mertz, and his wife and son, and two men named Henry Yurk, who were cousins, and their wives. They came from Reinwald, Russia, and landed in New York, April 7, 1892. Happening to meet a missionary of their church, named Wahlberg, in New York, they informed him that they were undecided where to go. The missionary told them that if they wanted to go where there were a lot of Germans, they should go to Sheboygan, Wisconsin, where he had a sister living. An amusing event occurred upon their arrival in Sheboygan three days later. When the missionary's sister was notified of their coming, she had an item published in a local German newspaper that a band of Russians would arrive in town by train. Hardly anyone here ever having seen a Russian, a large crowd of curious people gathered at the depot to see the strangers. Their disappointment when they saw only a few poverty-stricken, ordinary-looking, German-speaking peasants step off the train may well be imagined.

Peter Wiegand came to Sheboygan in June 1893. When he arrived he found that about 50 of his countrymen had already preceded him. The great tide of Volga German immigration took place in the period from 1908 to 1912. Despite their agricultural background, those who came to Sheboygan preferred to remain in the city, although Volga Germans in large numbers may be found on the land in Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, Minnesota, the Dakotas, and other places. Nearly all those in Sheboygan are Protestants, mostly members of the Lutheran church. The older people especially are inclined to be strict in their religious views. Their most important organization is a society known as Bêt Brüder (literally, prayer brothers), whose members meet reg-

ularly several times a week for Bible reading and discussion, prayer and singing. Sick and death benefit societies flourish among them. Among others, they have the Volga Aid and Ebenezer benefit societies, the Volga German Ladies' Society. The Volga Germans are steady, industrious and thrifty and have become loyal, useful citizens of their adopted country and city. On June 21, 1942, the 50th anniversary of the arrival of the first Volga Germans in Sheboygan was celebrated with a huge banquet and picnic, and appropriate ceremonies.¹⁰

THE JUGOSLAVS

Two groups of Yugoslavs have made Sheboygan their home—the Slovenians and the Croatians. They came from Jugoslavia, one of the countries carved out of the old Austria-Hungarian empire as a product of the first World War. Starting to come to the United States in the 1890's, they were part of the "new immigration," that stemmed from the lands of southern and eastern instead of northern and western Europe as formerly. There are probably about 2,500 Slovenians in Sheboygan. Of the Croatians, there were once probably 150 families here, but today there are only about 80 families. At present the Slovenians in the city outnumber the Croatians about seven or eight to one.

In their homeland the Yugoslavians were poor, and largely peasants, living in compact village communities, located a few miles apart, and tilling the land surrounding the village. Being less mountainous, the land in Croatia was more tillable and productive than in Slovenia. Few farmers owned the land they cultivated, but each family operated small tracts of four or five acres belonging to some large landed proprietor. They worked it either for wages or shares, the tenant receiving one-third and the landowner two-thirds of the crops, the landlord, however, doing the plowing and furnishing the seed. Primitive agricultural methods, overcrowding of the population, subdivision of land into parcels that were too small, the semi-feudal, oppressive system of land-holding, and the lure of better things in America, were the causes of their migration.

In this country, however, the Yugoslavs avoided the soil and became city dwellers. Not only did they lack the financial means to acquire a farm, but returns were too slow and meager. There-

¹⁰ Most of the above information concerning the Volga Germans was given by Gottlieb Weimann, Sheboygan.

fore, they became manual laborers in our mines, mills and factories, where immediate employment was obtainable, and wages were better. Nearly all Jugoslavs came to America without their women-folk or families, and made the trip wholly or in part on money borrowed from relatives or friends. It was a migration of males. Many of them had no intention of becoming citizens, but planned on remaining here only long enough to amass a sufficient fortune to return to their native village, buy a small farm, and settle down to a life of peace, influence, and economic security the rest of their days. Some did return to their old home after a space of time, but the great bulk decided to make this their permanent home, and sent for or went back after family or youthful sweetheart, took out naturalization papers, raised a family, and became part and parcel of our national and community life. Of Sheboygan's 2,500 people of Slovenian origin, over 1,400 are voters, and 95 per cent own their homes.

The Jugoslavs who settled in Sheboygan came here directly from the iron and copper mining regions of northern Minnesota and Michigan, where employment was irregular and uncertain. The earliest to come were Slovenians, and the first of these was Frank Debelack in 1891. Frank Schwartz states that when he arrived in 1893, he found that Frank Debelack, Frank Starich, Frank Barba, and John, Jacob and Joseph Sebanz, had preceded him, all having come from Tower, a mining town in Minnesota. Two years later, five new Slovenian settlers came here, from Soudan, Minnesota. They were Anton Starich Sr., Frank Kral, Frank Kotnik, John Oberman, and Joseph Mervar. Anton Starich, Jr. came here in 1896 with his mother and two sisters, when he was 14 years old, and became the thirteenth masculine member of the local Slovenian colony. Mrs. John Prisland, nee Marie Cherne, came here in 1906 at the age of fifteen. The first Slovenian woman to settle in Sheboygan was Anna Rojsek, in 1893. She married Frank Schwartz, and theirs was the first Slovenian wedding in the city. Once started, the wave of immigration kept swelling, and did not subside until the outbreak of the World War in 1914. Space does not permit mention of them all.

In point of time the Croatians followed the Slovenians to Sheboygan. Rok Juricek, one of the early Croatian settlers, related that when he came in 1903, there were about sixty of his fellow-countrymen here; and that the first to come were Vincent Vugrinovich and Steve Chvarak in 1901, and Math. Juricek and George Trson in 1902.

The Slovenian and Croatian languages are Slavic languages, closely related, but yet grammatically distinct. The two groups understand each other without much difficulty. Both groups are of the Roman Catholic faith, and attend the same church—the St. Cyril and Methodius Catholic Church, organized in 1910. Both also support the parochial school connected with their church, starting it in 1916. Jugoslavs are sociable people, and intensely musical. They have a rich treasure of folk songs, folk dances, legends and tales. Tamburitza instruments are favorites of the Croatians, and the accordion and harmonica, of the Slovenians. They are well organized into social, fraternal and protective societies, which are largely the centers of their social life. Altogether the Slovenians in Sheboygan have eleven of such societies, the oldest of which is *Ilirija* (Illyria), a sick benefit society formed in 1901. Another important organization is the local branch of the Slovenian Women's Union of America, started in 1926, and devoted to educational and social activities.

Besides a number of active and successful sick and death benefit societies, in 1924, the Croatians formed the Croatian Home, Inc., an organization which erected a large building on S. 8th street, called Croatian Hall, consisting of a hall, club room and meeting rooms. This building, constructed in 1927, serves as a civic and social center for the Croatian families in Sheboygan, and is devoted to keeping alive the traditions, folk music and folk dances of their homeland, as well as promoting sociability and fellowship among them. Both Slovenians and Croatians are steady, hard-working, thrifty people, and are intensely loyal to their adopted land and home community.¹¹

THE LITHUANIANS

The latter part of the 1890's witnessed the first arrival in Sheboygan of the Lithuanians, a blue-eyed, fair-haired race from the banks of the Nemunas (Niemen) and the shores of the Baltic in northern Europe. Once an independent kingdom, Lithuania, at the peak of its territorial expansion, stretched all the way from the Baltic to the Black Sea. Although the history of the Lithuanians is closely connected with that of the Poles, Germans and Russians, they belong to none of these nationalities, but constitute a separate and distinct racial stock, with a distinctive background and cul-

¹¹ Information concerning the Slovenians largely given by Mrs. John Prislant, and Anton Starich, Jr.; and information regarding the Croatians largely given by Rok Juricek, Stanley Japjec and Vincent Biskupic.

ture, and a language strikingly similar to the ancient but now extinct Sanskrit. In 1918 Lithuania declared its independence from Russia, of which it had been a part since 1795, and succeeded in maintaining it until 1939, when it was again annexed by Russia, and shortly afterward overrun by the Germans. What the fate and future of this hapless country will be is uncertain.

So far as is known the first Lithuanian to migrate to Sheboygan was Gutleba Gerulaitis, who came from East Prussia, probably in 1898 or 1899. After him came Anthony Leskauskas, from Liverpool, England, who was later joined by his friend, George Jankauskas, also from Liverpool. By 1900 the Lithuanians began arriving in Sheboygan in increasing numbers. In the spring of that year, Matt. Ringis, with his family, and a friend, Justas Buksnis, came here directly from Lithuania; and were followed by others who set out from England and the eastern states, as well as from Lithuania directly, until by the end of the year there were approximately 25 Lithuanian families and an equal number of single men in Sheboygan.

Today there are over 200 Lithuanian families in the county, most of them concentrated in Sheboygan; but about 25 families are dispersed on farms. The period of their greatest influx was from 1903 to 1914. In their homeland nearly all had been farmers, living in small agricultural villages or on scattered farms, and tilling tracts ranging in size from 25 to 200 acres, which they owned themselves or leased from large land owners. Economic and population pressure was not a cause of migration, as in other countries. Before the Russo-Japanese war in 1905 the Lithuanians migrated chiefly to escape Russian religious persecution and attempts to stamp out their language and culture; but after that, their treatment by the Russians having improved, they migrated mainly to enjoy the greater freedom and opportunities of America, about which they had heard so much from relatives and friends who had preceded them to this country. The bulk of those emigrating were young, single men, who married after they had become established in their new home.

Lithuanians are almost exclusively Roman Catholics. By 1903 enough of them had come to Sheboygan to enable them to form a separate congregation. Rev. Casimir Ambrozaitis was the first pastor. Beginning with a congregation of about 35 families and 50 individual members, there has been an increase in 40 years to about 180 families and over 112 single members. Their church is called the Immaculate Conception Church, and is situated on the

corner of N. 10th street and Erie avenue. The social life of the parish is fostered by a number of church societies, the oldest as well as the largest of which is the St. Joseph's Society, primarily a sick and death benefit society, organized in 1900, and having a present membership of about 100. Other similar societies are St. Casimir's, St. Ann's, and the Lithuanian Catholic Alliance of America. The Lithuanians are a sober, industrious and saving people. Most of them are manual laborers. Ninety per cent own their homes. Altogether there are about 650,000 in the United States, located principally in the industrial centers of the eastern and middle western states.¹²

¹² Information obtained from the 35th Year Jubilee Book of Immaculate Conception Parish, Sheboygan (1938), and Rev. James J. Shlikas, pastor of the congregation.

CHAPTER 22

SPRING FARM EXPERIMENT—SHEBOYGAN MARSH KETTLE MORAINÉ STATE FOREST

SPRING FARM EXPERIMENT

SHEBOYGAN County's most extraordinary settlement was a colony of Fourierites who located in the town of Mitchell in 1846. With its cheap lands, bountiful resources and unsettled conditions, the west was at that time the proving-ground of many social and religious reforms, prominent among which was a novel system of social organization and philosophy called Fourierism—so named after its founder, Charles Fourier, a celebrated French socialist. Introduced in the United States in 1842 by Albert Brisbane, the new idea spread rapidly, and resulted in the formation of a considerable number of communities to test its practical operation. The most notable of these was the famous Brook Farm in New England. Horace Greeley, the well known newspaper editor, was also in sympathy with the movement, and once visited the colony in Mitchell.

The first appearance of the experiment in Wisconsin was at Southport (Kenosha) in the winter of 1843-1844. From thence Warren Chase led a band of followers to Fond du Lac county and established a Fourierite community on the present site of Ripon, which they named Ceresco. Although the most successful co-operative colony in the state, it ran its course by 1849, and then dissolved.

The settlement in Mitchell had its inception at Sheboygan Falls, where a Dr. Cody, from Ohio, was its principal projector. Some writers give his name as Dr. Coela, and others as Dr. Cady; but Dr. Cody is the correct name. After many meetings and discussions, ten families agreed to join in founding a Fourierite community somewhere in Sheboygan County, but disagreement developed at the outset over the choice of location. Some favored a site on the shore of Lake Michigan, and others a spot twenty miles inland from the lake. Unable to reconcile their differences, the families divided, each group starting a colony of its own. The one on the lake shore was situated north of Sheboygan at the mouth of the Pigeon river a short distance east of the Bliss farm. Almost

nothing is known about it any more, except that it was exceedingly short-lived, and probably never really got started. Two of the families who settled there for a short time were those of Newton Goodell, of Sheboygan Falls, and of Williams Seaman, father of Judge William H. Seaman, who came there from Ceresco.

The other disciples, under the leadership of Benjamin C. Trowbridge, of Sheboygan Falls, moved to section 1 in the northeast corner of Mitchell in 1846, attracted to the locality by some excellent virgin springs, which are to be found there to this day. The first to arrive were the families of B. C. and James Trowbridge, John and Daniel Sanborn, Albert Rounseville and James O'Cain, who hailed from Ithaca, New York. They were followed the next September by the families of James Angus, John Hurn, John Smith, Ebenezer S. Adams, and Alfred Launsdale, who came from Sodus, New York. They called themselves the Spring Farm Association after the adjacent springs, and adopted the motto, "Union, Equal Rights, and Social Guarantees."

A Fourierite community, or *phalanx*, as it was called, when fully established, was to consist of 400 families or 1,800 persons, which number, the inventor of the system believed, was sufficiently large to include the whole circle of human capacities, and yet not too large for an adequate common life. These should eat at a common table, and live in one immense edifice, in the center of a large and highly cultivated domain, supplied with workshops, studios, and all the appliances of industry and art, as well as the means of amusement and pleasure. Life was to be arranged to suit everyone according to his preferences, but so that complete harmony and co-operation would prevail among the members. The property of the association was to be held in shares, and the combined product of their efforts was to be distributed by apportioning a very comfortable minimum to each member, and dividing the remainder into twelve parts, of which five parts were to go to labor, four to capital, and three to talent. In distributing the reward to labor, the usual method was to be reversed, in that necessary labor would be best paid, useful labor would come next, and pleasant labor would be worst paid. The poorest person in the organization was assured of comforts and pleasures greater than the existing order of society could give to princes and millionaires, and beyond anything he had ever dreamed of.

But like its sister colony on the lake shore, the Spring Farm Association was destined never to achieve its goal; it lasted only

three years, and then was dissolved. Its financial resources were small, only about \$1,000. A community house was apparently started, but remained unfinished. Their lands never became the possession of the society as a whole, but were bought and held by members individually. A mere thirty acres of prairie land were cultivated, and a small area cleared of timber. In 1847 they petitioned for a special charter incorporating it under the name of Spring Farm Phalanx, but the territorial legislature, under the leadership of Marshall M. Strong, of Racine, who was opposed to making Wisconsin "a breeding place for reformers," denied the request; and consequently, the organization disbanded and the members scattered to other localities.

A first-hand account of this unique social experiment has come down to us from one of its members:

"Mr. B. C. Trowbridge was generally looked up to as leader of the society. The land was bought of government by individual resident members. We had nothing to boast of in improvements; they were only anticipated. We obtained no aid from without; what we did not provide for ourselves, we went without. The frost cut off our crops the second year, and left us short of provisions. We were not troubled with dishonest management, and generally agreed in all our affairs. We dissolved by mutual agreement. The reasons of failure were poverty, diversity of habits and dispositions, and disappointments through failure of harvest. Though we failed in this attempt, yet it has left an indelible impression on the minds of one-half the members at least, that a harmonious association in some form is the way, and the only way, that the human mind can be fully and properly developed; and the general belief is, that community of property is the most practical form."¹

SHEBOYGAN MARSH

This marsh, covering an area of 15-1/5 square miles, or about 10,000 acres, situated in the northwestern corner of the county, is one of Wisconsin's scenic attractions. The vastness of its flat, level spaces, its solitude and seclusion, and its unusual bird, plant and

¹ Co-operative Communities in Wisconsin, by Montgomery E. McIntosh, Wis. Hist. Soc. Proc. 1903, p. 99; Wisconsin: Its History and Its People, by M. M. Quaife, vol. 1, p. 497; Hist. of Nor. Wis., p. 996; The Wisconsin Phalanx at Ceresco, by S. M. Pedrick, Wis. Hist. Soc. Proc., 1902, p. 190; Fourierism in Wisconsin, by Ruth Maurine Fuller, Bachelor's Thesis, Univ. of Wis., 1928; Laws of Territory of Wis., 1845, p. 70; unpublished letter from Judge William H. Seaman to Frank H. Denison, Oct. 29, 1914; Thos. F. Heraty, Hist. of Town Mitchell, Sheb. Herald, unidentified date; Deed records, Register of Deeds, Sheboygan.

animal life, stir the imagination. It has always had about it an air of mystery and romance.

As related in a previous chapter, it was once a favorite gathering-and hunting-place of the Indians. When the government surveyors traversed the region in 1835, they thought it was a lake, and called it Sheboygan Lake, after its Indian appellation. A shallow body of water, it was really only a widening of the Shebowegan or Sheboygan river, which flows through the swamp in a tortuous channel from the western to the eastern end. Nearly half of the area is covered with a growth of tamarack, located mostly around the outer edges; its central portion is barren of trees and covered with tall, rank marsh grass. The surface soil is a deposit of peat nine feet thick, beneath which is a layer of marl up to thirty feet in thickness, formed by disintegrated shells and other crustacea. At the eastern edge of the marsh is a limestone ledge, which forms a sort of dam that impeded the free outflow of water, and was the main cause of the existence of the swamp.

In order to correct the error of the government surveyors in 1835, who supposed the marsh to be a lake, Gen. Albert G. Ellis, in 1850, re-surveyed the area, abolishing the original meander lines of his predecessors, and subdividing the tract into sections of a square mile each, like ordinary land. Some accounts advance as the reason for Gen. Ellis' survey that the felling of timber by neighboring settlers to clear their lands for farming had lowered the water table in the soil to such an extent by 1850 that the lake bottom began to show in the high places. It is doubtful, however, whether land clearing in the vicinity had developed sufficiently in 15 years' time to greatly affect the water table. A more plausible explanation appears to be that the government surveyors viewed the scene in winter and early spring, when the surface was covered with ice and snow, or when the water was high from the spring rains, and mistakenly assumed that it was a lake. They made the same error at Bear Lake not far away. The immediate reason for the Ellis survey probably was to measure and subdivide the marsh area so that it could be included in the lands to be donated to the state by the federal government under the Swamp Land Act of 1850.

From earliest times the marsh has challenged human ingenuity to convert its natural resources to the uses of men. But the feat never met with any great degree of success. The first attempt to drain it was made in 1869 by John Bertschy, an enterprising business man who owned a flourishing flour mill and grain elevator at

Sheboygan. Foreseeing its possibilities for farming purposes, he purchased the major portion of the marsh from the state, which had acquired it under the Swamp Land Act. Although without any training as an engineer, Mr. Bertschy planned the work of reclamation himself. He first enlarged the channel through the limestone ledge near the outlet, to permit the freer outflow of water, and then dug a drainage ditch into the main part of the marsh to draw the water toward the channel. To enable him to dig the trench he inundated the marsh by means of a dam at the outlet, so that dredges could be floated. Mr. Bertschy's plan, according to engineers, was entirely feasible, but, for want of sufficient funds, he did not make the ditch or the outlet deep enough to adequately draw off the water. Fifty thousand dollars was spent upon the project, half of which was appropriated by the state legislature, and half furnished by Mr. Bertschy. The attempt ended in failure; creditors seized the property; and for many years the land lay in a wet, useless condition, fit only as a haven for aquatic wild fowl.

A little known fact is that John Bertschy originally built the dam at the marsh outlet, not to drain the swamp, but to protect the mill dams lower down on the river—at Miehlville, Kiel, Rockville and Muehlheim (Millhome)—from periodically being swept away by the flood waters of the marsh. The first of these mills, located nearly a mile below the outlet, was owned by John Miehl, and commonly referred to as Miehlville. Mr. Miehl sold his mill to John Bertschy, who in 1870 platted the place as Rhine Mills. The plat contains two streets, known as Mill street and High street.² The mill was apparently built by Jacob Rummel and Jacob Mathes in 1858. Seemingly, it was after Mr. Bertschy had built the protective dam at the outlet of the marsh that he conceived the idea of draining the swamp, with the two-fold object of creating new farm lands and preventing damage to lower dam sites.³

The next attempt to exploit the resources of the marsh was made between 1900 and 1905 by Albert G. and William Maurer, of Sheboygan. Believing that the marl would make a high quality of Portland cement when mixed with clay, they secured options on the best marl beds, and tried to interest capital in the undertaking. After three years, however, owing largely to the difficulty of obtaining the right kind of clay, they dropped the venture and turned their attention instead to the digging of peat in commercial quantities for use as fuel. But this project likewise proving unprofitable,

² 2 Plats, p. 3, Reg. of Deeds office, Sheboygan.

³ Oral statement of Reinhold La Budde, Crystal Lake, to author.

they abandoned it and allowed the marsh to return completely to a state of nature.

Several years later, interest in the marsh again became aroused, when a group of outsiders revived the early idea of draining it and selling the reclaimed land for farming purposes. In 1916 they organized a company known as the Sheboygan Valley Land and Lime Company to finance and promote the development. W. J. Hay, of Oshkosh, was its president. Jerry Donohue, a Sheboygan surveyor, had charge of the engineering. Bertschy's general drainage plan of over forty years before was followed. A temporary dam was first built at the outlet to hold back the water so as to float a huge dredge. With this dredge more than twenty miles of drainage ditches were dug, ranging in depth from six to twenty feet. During this time the company built a large lime kiln at Rhine Mills to manufacture lime from the limestone in the vicinity. Tamarack logs obtained in the marsh furnished cheap and convenient fuel for burning the limestone.

In order to conduct reclamation operations, the marsh was organized under the state law as a drainage district, subject to the direction of the Circuit Court of Sheboygan County. A prospectus of the company issued in 1916, to promote the sale of bonds, declared that, besides having open drains, 1,090 acres were to be tilled for truck lands and intensive gardening purposes, and 1,100 acres for farming. The soil was asserted to be better than the valuable truck lands between Milwaukee and Chicago, and worth \$300 an acre. Even a proposed village was platted in the marsh area.

It was not until 1921 that the work of ditching was completed and the water allowed to drain off; but by this time land prices, and the demand for land in general, which had risen sharply during the war years, began to slump, and the promoters eventually had to abandon their scheme of restoration. Again the marsh was allowed to revert to its natural state, but being partially drained, every fall it was the scene of great swamp fires, set by careless hunters, that seriously menaced neighboring farm buildings and crops. Burning deeply into the dry peat beds, these fires were difficult to extinguish or control. Gradually the idea grew and spread that the marsh was valuable only as a wild life refuge; and beginning as early as 1927 plans for reflooding and restoring it for this purpose were considered. Members of the Isaak Walton League were especially active in the movement. In 1933 a temporary dam was erected to flood the area sufficiently to prevent fires; but further progress in this direction was halted until the county could

take title to the marsh lands by tax deed for nonpayment of taxes. This was accomplished in 1937, and then in 1938 the work was carried to completion by the erection of a permanent dam of sufficient size to maintain the water constantly at its natural level. In the same year the county built a fine public park near the dam. Total cost of these projects was approximately \$170,000, of which \$40,000 was paid by the county, and \$130,000 by the Works Progress Administration of the federal government. Both the marsh and the park are under the supervision of a committee of the Sheboygan County Board. As a well-merited tribute to Charles E. Broughton, of Sheboygan, who was the moving spirit in the restoration of the marsh, it has been officially named the Broughton Sheboygan Marsh. It is one of the outstanding conservation projects in the state.⁴

KETTLE MORAINES STATE FOREST

A good-sized portion of the "kettles" area of Sheboygan County has been incorporated into the Kettle Moraine State Forest, one of the areas established by the state of Wisconsin as a part of its general program of forest restoration and outdoor recreation. Characterized by a succession of curiously rounded glacial hills and valleys, interspersed by numerous lakes, ponds, streams, swamps and woods, it is one of the world's finest natural laboratories for the study of glacial geology, and presents features not found in any of the other state forests or parks.

The kettle moraine region of Wisconsin is a narrow strip of territory, only a few miles wide, but stretching without substantial break almost 100 miles in length from a point south of Whitewater to Kewaunee county. It is divided into two units—the northern and southern, the area in Sheboygan County being included in the northern unit. Bordered on both sides by level, fertile farming land, its rough, irregular contour rises impressively above the surrounding country like an island projecting out of the sea.

For over twenty years men recognized the possibilities of the region as a vast public recreation ground, but it was not until 1934 that official notice was taken of its suitability for such a purpose. In 1934, and again in 1936, the Wisconsin State Planning Board

⁴ The Story of the Sheboygan Marsh, Atlas of Sheboygan County, 1941, Jerry Donohue Engineering Co.; Sheb. Press, Apr. 29 and Aug. 1, 1927; Wisconsin Survey Bulletin, XXXVI; Plans for the Draining of the Sheboygan Marsh, by Henry W. Peterson and Edward F. Sinz, B. S. Thesis, Univ. of Wis., 1905.

recommended the public ownership of the area to provide recreational facilities of the wildwood type for the heavily populated southeastern counties of the state, pointing out that most of the existing extensive recreation spots were located in the northern counties. These reports undoubtedly contributed to the introduction and passage by the state legislature in 1937 of a bill allocating \$75,000 annually "to acquire and develop state forests within areas approved by the Conservation Commission and the Governor," and located in the southeastern counties.⁵ Under the authority of this law the Conservation Commission proceeded to acquire considerable privately owned land in the area, until to-day the state owns around 3,000 of the 16,440 acres within the boundaries of the northern unit. The first lands acquired lay in the Mauthe Lake region, and were obtained partially by gift from the Milwaukee Chapter of the Isaak Walton League. In 1943 the legislature increased the funds allocated for these purposes to \$150,000 annually,⁶ so that in the future state acquisition on a more rapid and expanded scale than before is assured.

The kettle moraine area is a state forest and not a state park. It is financed out of funds derived from the forestry mill tax, and is intended not only to provide outdoor recreation, but to restore the forest crop that once flourished there. Parks are an annual expense to the people, while forests begin to pay their way after a period of years and eventually yield a profit. Much of the area is unfit for agriculture, on account of its gravelly soil and rough, uneven topography. The top soil is worn away, so as to bring the gravel so near the surface that it no longer is able to support cultivated crops. It is a region of abandoned fields and farms. Yet it is capable of maintaining a good forest growth, as it did before the early settlers tried to convert it into farm land. Despite the heavy erosion, the soil supports several varieties of oak, hard and soft maple, elm, birch, beech, hickory, butternut, and conifers such as the red and white cedar, and tamarack. It also supports many varieties of wild flowers and shrubs.

Besides enlarging the area by the acquisition of new land, future development will consist of the complete restoration of the forest cover, and the extension of roads, bridle paths, trails for hikers and bicyclists, picnic grounds, bathing beaches, camp sites and shelter houses. Recreational facilities like these have already been started. A unique feature in the area is the Parnell esker, a

⁵ Chap. 332, Laws of Wisconsin, 1937.

⁶ Chap. 266, Laws of Wisconsin, 1943.

long, narrow, winding ridge of sand and gravel, resembling a railroad grade in its topography, formed by the action of a glacial stream in ages long past. Eventually Kettle Moraine Forest will be a true forest, with trees covering a thousand hills— a counterpart of the historic forests of the Old World, and, like them, famed in song and story. It gives promise of becoming one of the best known forests and recreation spots east of the Mississippi.

“A great ice tongue thrust itself down the basin of Lake Michigan, taking a form closely similar to that of the lake but broader and longer. Its western margin is now marked by the Kettle Range, extending from Kewaunee county southward, essentially parallel to the lake. Another tongue of ice was thrust down alongside this, having the Green Bay-Rock River valley for its axial channel. It expanded eastward until it came into contact with the Lake Michigan glacier. The most striking result of the glacial advance was the production, along the margin of the ice sheet, of a great moraine. That portion of the moraine which lay between, and was formed by the joint action of the Green Bay and Lake Michigan glaciers, constitutes a succession of irregular hills and ridges, locally known as the Kettle Range, from the peculiar depressions which characterize it. The superficial aspect of the formation is that of an irregular, intricate series of drift ridges and hills consisting of rounded domes, conical peaks, mounds, knolls and hummocks, promiscuously arranged, accompanied by corresponding depressions rudely circular, oval, oblong, elliptical or trough-like in outline. One of the peculiarities of the range is the large number of small lakes, without inlet or outlet, that dot its course.”—Geology of Wisconsin, 1873–1877, 4 vols., by T. C. Chamberlin.

One of the state parks, Terry Andrae State Park, is located on Lake Michigan in Sheboygan County, six miles south of Sheboygan. A scenic area of 167 acres, it is unique for its clean white sand beach, its picturesque sand dunes, and its attractive white pine woods. Probably nowhere else in the state is there a more perfect bathing beach or a more wonderful outlook on Lake Michigan. The park was acquired in 1928 by gift from Mrs. Terry Andrae, of Milwaukee. It possesses the quietude and seclusion of a remote wilderness spot, and has facilities for swimming, picnicking and camping parties. It is easily reached over a good road leading directly to the park entrance from U. S. Highway 141.

CHAPTER 23

ORGANIZATION OF THE COUNTY

IT IS difficult to state just when Sheboygan County officially came into existence. On December 7, 1836, it was by an act of the territorial legislature detached from Brown County, but kept attached to that county for judicial purposes.¹ Strangely, however, no provision was made in the act of 1836 for the organization or government of the new county. It was not until two years later, December 17, 1838, that the legislature passed a law organizing the county government and authorizing the first election of officers. This election was held March 4, 1839.² The county remained attached to Brown County for judicial purposes until May 1, 1846, when it became a full-fledged unit of government.³

¹ "An act to divide the counties of Brown and Milwaukee, Section 1. Be it enacted by the council and house of representatives of the territory of Wisconsin, . . . Section 8. Townships thirteen, fourteen, fifteen and sixteen north, of ranges twenty, twenty-one, twenty-two and twenty-three east of the said meridian (fourth meridian), shall be and are hereby constituted a separate county and be called Sheboygan, and the seat of justice of said county is hereby established at the town of Sheboygan, Section 14. That the counties of Manitowoc, Sheboygan, Fond du Lac, Portage, Marquette and Calumet, be attached to the county of Brown for judicial purposes".—Ch. 28, laws of 1836. Approved December 7, 1836.

² Section 1. Be it enacted by the council and House of Representatives of the Territory of Wisconsin, That the counties of Manitowoc and Sheboygan shall be organized for all the purposes of county government from and after the taking effect of this act, and the inhabitants therein shall be entitled to, and enjoy all the rights and privileges which the inhabitants of the several organized counties of the Territory now enjoy, except as hereinafter provided. Sec. 2. The first election for township and county officers in said counties shall be held on the first Monday of March A. D. 1839, at the several places in said counties where the last general election was held, and thereafter the elections in each of said counties shall be at the times and places provided by law. Sec. 3. At the first election in said counties, returns shall be made to the clerk of the board of county commissioners of Brown county, who shall proceed to canvass the votes and issue certificates to the several persons who may be elected to office at said election, in the manner provided by law. Sec. 4. The said counties shall, for judicial purposes, continue attached to the county of Brown, and shall pay annually five per centum of all county taxes levied in each of the aforesaid counties to the treasurer of said county of Brown, for the purpose of defraying their proportion of the contingent expenses of holding the courts in said county. Sec. 5. This act shall take effect from and after the first Monday of March next.—Ch. 5, Laws of 1839. Approved December 17, 1838.

³ "An act to organize the county of Sheboygan for judicial purposes. Sec. 1. From and after May 1, 1846, the county of Sheboygan shall be organized for judicial purposes, and shall enjoy all the privileges and immunities of the other counties in this Territory."—Page 74, Laws of 1846. Approved January 22, 1846.

Ever since its creation Sheboygan County has embraced the same territory as at present; its boundaries have never been changed. Fronting on Lake Michigan, its eastern border is an irregular shore line, but the other boundaries are straight surveyors' lines. Its length is 24 miles, its minimum and maximum widths $18\frac{1}{2}$ and 23 miles, and its area 521 square miles. If it were not for the lake, the county would be a perfect square, 24 miles on each side.

Previous to 1836 Sheboygan County had never been set apart or identified as a separate political and geographical unit. In the course of history, the territory comprising it has been under four flags—Spanish, French, British and American; but it was not until



First Court House

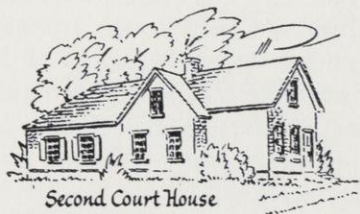
after it came under American jurisdiction, as the result of the treaty of Paris on Sept. 3, 1783, ending the War of the Revolution, that its history really began. First in the series of events affecting the area was the Ordinance of 1787, for the government of the territory northwest of the Ohio river. It provided that in all this ter-

ritory there should be freedom of religious worship, trial by jury, right of habeas corpus, equal descent of estates of intestate persons, no excessive fines, no slavery or involuntary servitude except for punishment of crimes, no laws in impairment of contracts, and no property taken for public use without just compensation. One significant provision reads, "Religion, morality and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged."

The Ordinance also provided that not less than three nor more than five states were to be formed in the territory, but it did not define or name them. (See Map 2). It is interesting to know that Thomas Jefferson, three years before, in 1784, proposed a plan for creating ten states in the territory, giving them classical names for the most part. (Map 1). The part of Wisconsin in which Sheboygan County is located he named Michigania. From 1800 to 1807 Wisconsin was a part of Indiana Territory. (Maps 3, 4, 5). In 1809 it became a part of Illinois Territory, (Map 6), and in 1818 a part of Michigan Territory. (Map 7). Wisconsin was detached from Michigan and created as a separate territory by act of Congress on April 20, 1836, at which time it already contained six counties: Brown, Chippewa, Crawford, Iowa, Michillimackinac and Mil-

waukee. (Map 8). Four of these counties were wholly within the limits of the present Wisconsin, but two of them embraced some territory now outside the state. These six original counties, formed before Wisconsin was a separate territory, are known as pre-territorial counties. Brown County, which then included Sheboygan County, was created by Governor Lewis Cass of Michigan Territory in 1818.⁴ At the same time that Sheboygan County was erected, December 7, 1836, thirteen new counties in all were detached from Brown and Milwaukee counties.⁵ This was about ten months after Wisconsin became a territory and nearly twelve years before it became a state. Sheboygan County is known as a territorial county because created while Wisconsin was a territory. Counties formed after Wisconsin became a state are referred to as statehood counties.

County government in early territorial days was the commission form. The governing body was a board of county commissioners, consisting of three members elected by the people of the county at large.⁶ This system was fostered by the lead region of southwestern Wisconsin, which exercised a dominant influence in early territorial politics. That section was settled in large part by southerners, who preferred the county commissioner plan that had long been the type of local government in the south. However, as the state filled with settlers from New England and New York, the New York system of dual county-town government was demanded. The climatic and physical characteristics of Wisconsin, together with its mixed nationalities, and its combination of numerous trading centers and extensive farming areas, it was felt, made the county too large and the town too small as the unit of local government. A mixture of the county government of the south and the town government of New England—a system partaking of the principal features of both—seemed best adapted to the needs of the state. But it was adopted only gradually. In 1841 a law was passed permitting each county



⁴ Executive Acts, Michigan Territory, Oct. 26, 1818, under No. 28.

⁵ Laws of Wis. Territory, 1836, chap. 28.

⁶ The first members of the board of county commissioners were elected on the first Monday of March, 1838. The board met at the county seat quarterly, on the first Mondays of Jan., April, July and Oct. each year. Members were paid \$3 a day, but could not sit longer than 6 days each term.—No. 7, Laws of 1837.

to have its choice, and several counties early made the change to the board-of-supervisors system. In view of the predominance of the New England and New York elements in the population, it would be expected that Sheboygan County would be among the first to take advantage of the new law; but, strangely, it adhered to the old county commissioner plan until early in 1849.

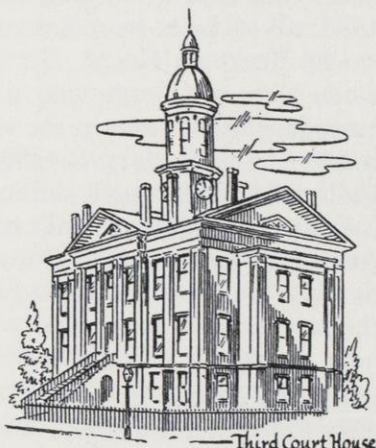
In the meantime, in 1839, the territorial legislature passed an act organizing the whole territory within the limits of Sheboygan County into one town, named Sheboygan, for local government purposes, and directing the first election in the town to be held at the school house in Sheboygan and at Giddings' Mill on the Onion river two miles south of Sheboygan Falls.⁷ One of the powers possessed by county governing bodies was to subdivide existing towns into smaller towns. Unfortunately, on account of the destruction of the county records in the Otten Block fire on January 1, 1860, but little is known of the official business of the county transacted prior to that date. However, the original certificate of the clerk of the board of county commissioners, dated January 17, 1849, on file in the office of the secretary of state, at Madison, shows that no subdividing of the town of Sheboygan, as organized in 1839, was made until 1849. And then, on January 9th, the commissioners divided the whole county into eight towns at one time, (Map 9): Sheboygan, (comprising the present towns of Sheboygan and Mosel); Sheboygan Falls, (present towns of Sheboygan Falls and Herman); Plymouth, (present towns of Plymouth and Rhine); Green Bush, (present towns of Greenbush and Russell); Lyndon, (present towns of Mitchell and Lyndon); Scott, (present towns of Scott and Sherman); Gibbsville, (present towns of Lima and Wilson); and Holland, (as presently constituted).⁸ Thereafter the county commissioners were superseded by the board of supervisors, in conformity with Art. IV, Section 23, of the Wisconsin Constitution, adopted in 1848, which reads, "The legislature shall establish but one system of town and county government which shall be as uniform as practicable." On May 7, 1849, the town of Gibbsville was divided, and the eastern part named Wilson, and the western part, Lima. On November 21, 1851, Rhine was set off from *Quitquioc*k or Plymouth. In November 1853 Russell was separated from Green Bush, and Mosel from Sheboygan. When

⁷ Chap. 48, Laws of 1839.

⁸ The statement by some writers, that Wilson was separated from Sheboygan and Lima from Sheboygan Falls, is incorrect.

Mitchell was detached from Lyndon, or Sherman from Scott, or Herman from Sheboygan Falls, does not appear; but town records indicate it undoubtedly was in 1849 or 1850. The county, therefore, had all of its present number of fifteen towns by 1853.⁹ In 1870 the present-day system of county government, whereby the county board is made up of the chairman of each town, and supervisors chosen by each incorporated village and each ward in the cities, was adopted.

In the final act of separation from Brown County, June 1, 1846, was fixed as the time for holding the first term of the circuit court at Sheboygan. From the very first, Sheboygan County was a part of the 4th judicial circuit, and is still in that circuit, although the counties included in it have varied through the years. Up to 1853, both before and after the adoption of the state constitution, there was a judge chosen in each circuit, these judges also comprising the supreme court of the territory and state. When June 1st arrived, a number of settlers gathered at the school house in Sheboygan, the most convenient place, to await the judge, Andrew G. Miller; but he failed to appear. Arriving the next day, however, he opened court. Grand and petit jurors were empanelled, but if the former returned any indictments, no record of them exists. As an indication of the independent spirit of the early pioneers, it is noteworthy that the petit jury at the first term failed to agree upon a verdict in a single case. Attaches of this first court were: John S. Rockwell, United States marshal; William P. Lynde, United States district attorney; D. U. Harrington, territorial district attorney; James Rankin, clerk; Silas Stedman, sheriff; and Thomas C. Horner, bailiff. The first judge of the 4th judicial circuit, after statehood, was Alexander W. Stow, chief justice of the supreme court. This court, while sitting at Sheboygan, appears to have been somewhat of a peripatetic institution, holding its sessions successively in the school house, academy, Congre-



—Third Court House

⁹ Sixty-two inhabitants of the town of Holland, in 1868, petitioned the county board of supervisors for a division of that town, but it was laid on the table. Supp. to Sheb. Herald, Apr. 15, 1899.

gational church, B. Teyn's assembly rooms, Presbyterian meeting house, basement of New York Block, Turner hall, and Zaegel's Block.

The first case tried in Sheboygan County, of which there is any record, was tried in 1837 before Levi Conro, a justice of the peace, who was appointed to that office by Henry Dodge, governor of Wisconsin Territory. An old Frenchman, named Gebeau, was haled before Justice Conro upon the charge of choking a boy. "Gebeau," declared the judge as he pronounced judgment, "you have been choking that boy. I shall fine you a gallon of brandy and put you in jail till it's paid." Gebeau refused to pay the brandy, and they shut him up in the barn of the Sheboygan House, where he yelled and made a great ado. After several hours confinement he concluded to pay the brandy, and was set free.¹⁰

Sheboygan County had no building for its county offices until 1853, when a brick building was erected on 7th street, near Center avenue, to house a part of them. Previously, in 1851, the county erected a wooden jail on a portion of the site now occupied by the court house. Up to December 1858, except for these buildings, the county offices were scattered in various places, wherever it was most convenient for the individual officers. Then, in December 1858, all of them were transferred to Zaegel's Block, later known as the Beekman House. Here they remained until December 1859, when they were removed to the Otten Block, where most of the records, except those in the register of deeds office, were destroyed in the fire of January 1, 1860. After the fire, citizens of Sheboygan Falls held meetings in different towns and circulated petitions to the state legislature, and caused a bill to be introduced in the Assembly, to authorize the people to vote on the question of removing the county seat to Sheboygan Falls; but nothing came of the movement.¹¹ Later that year a new county building was erected near the corner of S. 14th street and Pennsylvania avenue, and the public records were kept there from November 1860 until November 1868, when the court house was completed. It was erected at a cost of \$65,000, the city donating the land, and the clock and bell in the tower. The structure was destined to be the local seat of government and justice until 1933, when it was razed to make room for the present court house.¹²

¹⁰ Sheb. Co. Herald, Apr. 15, 1899.

¹¹ Evergreen City Times, Jan. 28, 1860.

¹² J. O. Thayer, History of Sheboygan County, in Historical Atlas of Sheboygan County (1875).

CHAPTER 24

PLACE NAMES¹

ALTHOUGH the Indians must have had names for the principal geographical features in Sheboygan County, such as lakes, streams, and village sites, yet surprisingly few of these names are now known, and with the exception of the word Sheboygan, none of them have been adopted into our language. This disregard of Indian names is to be regretted, for their picturesqueness would have added much to the charm and romance of the region. But the pioneers saw nothing in the culture of the Indians to admire or preserve; and besides, the Indian terms were too long and difficult for white men to master.

How the various places in the county derived their names is of considerable interest. The commonest practice was for the settlers to choose the names of places from which they came—probably to satisfy their feelings of homesickness, or due to their lack of originality. Names like Greenbush, Plymouth, Lyndon, Lima, Hingham, Batavia, Winooski and Silver Creek were adopted from localities back East; and Rhine, Mosel, Holland and Oostburg were transplantations from Europe. Some places were named after their founders, or early settlers, like Russell, Wilson, Gibbsville, Millersville, Weedens Station; or after famous men, such as Scott, Sherman, Mitchell, Parnell. Other names were suggested by immediate surroundings, as Glenbeulah, Beechwood, Cedar Grove, Howards Grove, Rhine Center, Five Corners, Elkhart Lake and St. Anna. A few names have been abandoned and supplanted by others. Thus Olio became Mitchell; Abbott, Sherman; Rochester, Sheboygan Falls; Greenleaf, Random Lake.

SHEBOYGAN

The meaning of the name Sheboygan is uncertain, its origin obscured in the mists of Indian legend and tradition. Two main theories exist as to its significance. One version is the Indians believed that at the mouth of the Sheboygan river on a calm summer day, by holding an ear to the ground, one could detect a deep underground sound, like the rushing or roaring of subterranean

¹ The origins of names of places in the county not included in this chapter will be found in other parts of this history.

waters; and that the word Sheboygan means either the place where the water ran under the ground, or refers to the noise produced by the hidden waters. This theory is not without support. Witherell writes that according to Louis M. Moran, an interpreter of the Chippewas, it is a Chippewa word meaning a hollow bone.² Father Chrysostom Verwyst, a former French missionary among the Chippewas of Wisconsin and Minnesota, states that it refers to any perforated object, as a pipe stem.³ Dr. Alphonse Gerend reports that Joe Wisconsin, an old Indian nearly 90 years of age, who was born on the banks of the Sheboygan river near the present site of Sheboygan Falls, told him through an interpreter that the original term was Shab-wa-wa-gon-ning, and meant "through the drumming" or "going through the drumming". Dr. Gerend also reports an interview with another Indian 85 years old, named John Novee, who lived near Wisconsin Rapids in Wood County. Novee stated that the original word was Shab-wa-way-kum and meant "a noise that goes through you that was heard at the mouth of the Sheboygan river". He added, "Someone hollers when wind don't blow and you hear noise long time". Capt. William Powell, in an interview with Dr. Lyman C. Draper, stated that the original of Sheboygan was Chapewyaconnee, a Menominee word, meaning a rumbling subterranean sound, as if it were a spirit sound, heard in the lake at the mouth of the Sheboygan river. Capt. Powell also related that Solomon Juneau, the founder of Milwaukee, used to say it was a Potawatami word, and meant the place of the mermaid.⁴

Where the mysterious underground passage was supposed to be located is not clear. One version has it at the mouth of the Sheboygan river; another, in the region of the confluences of the Mullett and Onion rivers with the Sheboygan. According to the latter theory, the Indians were said to have believed that the Sheboygan river contained no more water below the junctions of the Mullett and Onion than above, and that consequently part of the water must have disappeared into an underground channel. Still other versions place the subterranean channel as leading from Lake Winnebago, and even from Lake Superior. Snyder, Van Vechten & Co.'s Historical Atlas of Wisconsin, 1878, records, "It is said that the Sheboygan river was so called from the fact that the Indians supposed it must have an underground outlet below the conflux of

² Wis. Hist. Coll., iii, 337.

³ Wis. Hist. Coll., xii, 397.

⁴ Wis. Hist. Soc. Proc., 1912, p. 179.

the Onion and Mullett". That atlas also says, "According to Joshua Hathaway, Sheboygan is a corruption of Shawb-wa-way-kun, expressing an Indian tradition that a great noise coming underground from the region of Lake Superior was heard at this river". Dr. Gerend gives it as his opinion that "a noise of some kind, however produced and wherever it may come from, is the most logical explanation of the term."⁵

Probably the best support for this theory comes from Nehemiah King, one of the government surveyors, who got his information directly from the Indians. King recorded in his notebook in December 1835, before the days of white settlement:

"To acquire the correct Indian pronunciation of the name of the River, it is necessary to spell and divide it in the following manner *Sha-bo-wa-e-gan*, placing the accent on the 3rd syllable and giving the Italian sound to the *a* in the first and 3d syllable. The *e* forming the last syllable but one, although distinctly heard is rapidly pronounced. The word implies passing *under* or *thro'*—From a tradition among the Indians that formerly there was a sound passing underground from Lake Superior to the mouth of the River."

The other theory is that the word Sheboygan means a waterway or passage between lakes. The author is inclined to accept this explanation as the most plausible. A glance at the map of eastern Wisconsin at once discloses its significance. From its location, the Sheboygan river must have occupied a strategic position of the first rank in the trade and commerce of the Indians. Rising only a few miles from Lake Winnebago, it flows first in a northerly direction, and then swings in a great bend southeasterly into Lake Michigan, forming practically an uninterrupted thoroughfare between those two important bodies of water. For Indians traveling by canoe from the upper Fox river or Lake Winnebago to Green Bay or the foot of Lake Michigan, the natural route was northward down the course of the lower Fox to its outlet. But for natives journeying from the region of the upper Fox and Lake Winnebago to the southern or mid-shore of Lake Michigan, to go by way of Green Bay and around the Door peninsula would have taken them hundreds of miles off their course. The only direct and feasible route for primitive traffic to points east and south on Lake Michigan was down the Sheboygan river, with only a short portage near its headwaters.

⁵ Sheboygan Press, Apr. 29, 1927.

Whether the word Sheboygan actually springs from this presumed water passage will probably never be definitely proven. Indian myths and legends, conjured up by the imaginative natures of the aborigines, are of doubtful historical value. But the theory, it must be conceded, possesses the merit of plausibility, as contrasted with the wholly fanciful tale of the existence of an underground channel producing a mysterious rumbling sound. It is said of the name Cheboygan, Michigan, identical in origin with that of Sheboygan, Wisconsin, that it signifies "a place of entrance, a portage, or harbor; referring to the mouth of the Cheboygan river which was a favorite harbor of refuge for Indians and whites alike, who sought shelter behind Bois Blanc island from the fierce winds which swept over Lake Huron."⁶ The explanation that the word Sheboygan refers to a hollow bone, or any perforated object, like a pipe stem, is upon reflection not inconsistent with the view that it means a waterway or passage between lakes.

The name as used by the Indians assumed various forms, among them Sha-bwa-wa-e-gun-ning, Shab-wa-way-kum, Ship-bur-gan, Ji-boi-gan, Cha-boi-gan, Che-bow-a-gan, Sha-bou-a-gan, Sha-bow-e-gan, Sheub-wau-wau-gun, Sheub-wa-gun, Sheb-y-a-gun, the mutation of which into Sheboygan was a natural transition.

ADA.—A hamlet on Highway 32 in the northwest part of the town of Herman. Origin of name unknown. Post office established Jan. 13, 1868; first postmaster, Anton Goepfert; discontinued Nov. 18, 1873, postmaster Henry Abrahams; re-established Aug. 31, 1877, discontinued Apr. 30, 1909, postmaster William Maurer.⁷

BAR CREEK.—The name of a creek, mentioned in the early history of the county, which flows into Lake Michigan in the town of Holland. It is sometimes called Bark Creek, but inasmuch as it has an unusually large sand bar at its mouth, the correct name probably is Bar Creek.

BATAVIA.—A village in the town of Scott, probably named after Batavia, New York. The post office at Batavia was named Scott.

BEAR LAKE.—Located in sections 29 and 32 in the town of Greenbush and named by the government surveyor, Nehemiah King, who jotted in his notebook in 1835, "We could not learn the

⁶ Perry F. Powers, *A History of Northern Michigan*, I, 445.

⁷ Most of the discontinued post offices in the county went out of existence early in the 1900's when rural free delivery of mail was introduced.

Indian name of this Lake with any certainty. From the circumstances of their having recently killed bears near it, we gave it the name of *Bear Lake*."

BEECHWOOD.—A hamlet in the town Scott, named after the growth of beech trees in the vicinity. Post office established July 22, 1851, discontinued Jan. 30, 1904; first postmaster Reed C. Brazelton, last postmaster Charles W. Miller. In 1895 the place had 2 sawmills, 2 or 3 blacksmith shops, a creamery, and a steam grist mill.⁸

CRYSTAL LAKE.—Formerly known as Cedar Lake, but name changed about 1902 to avoid confusing it with numerous other Cedar Lakes in the state; named *Ki-shig-ni-bis* by the Indians.

DACADA.—A hamlet in the town of Holland on the Ozaukee county line. Origin of name unknown. Post office established Apr. 26, 1866, discontinued Sept. 30, 1903; first postmaster Peter Depiesse, last postmaster Michael L. Schmidler.

DECCA.—A station on the Sheboygan and Mississippi railroad five miles west of Sheboygan Falls. When it was discontinued, a new station was built one mile further west and called Town Line.⁹

EDWARDS.—A post office located on Highway 42 in the town of Herman, near the Manitowoc county line. Established Aug. 31, 1854, discontinued Mar. 31, 1902; first postmaster Edward Neuhaus, last postmaster Louis Dessauer. Named after Mr. Neuhaus, who moved there from Centerville in 1852, taking over the store conducted by a Mr. Lowe.

ELLEN.—Lake Ellen situated in the town of Lyndon, about a half mile from Cascade. Origin of name unknown. Local legend has it that the lake was named after a little girl who was drowned in its waters, and was buried in an isolated grave nearby. But Ellen is not the name inscribed on the gravestone; and there appears to be no foundation for the legend. The lake bore the name of Ellen as early as 1848.

ERDMAN.—A small settlement at the junction of the Manitowoc and Johnsonville roads with the Calumet road, named after William A. Erdman, who formerly conducted a tavern there. Post office established there in 1893, with Mr. Erdman as the first postmaster.

⁸ Sheb. Herald, Mar. 16, 1895.

⁹ Sheb. Times, June 13, 1874.

FIVE CORNERS.—A settlement near the center of the town of Lima, where five roads intersect. Formerly known as Kennedy's Corners after John Kennedy who conducted a saloon there.

FRANKLIN.—A village in the town of Herman. The center of the Lipper settlement, it was formerly known as Lippers Mills. In 1856 it was platted by Friedrich Arpke and named Franklin. At the same time Claus Menke platted an addition to the village.

Streets were named Main, River, Division, Bridge, Spring, and Cedar streets. Besides the saw mill and flour mill, built somewhat earlier, a brewery was erected in the village in 1856. The post office was established Mar. 23, 1870, discontinued July 13, 1871, re-established Sept. 9, 1872, and finally discontinued Dec. 31, 1909. First postmaster Gustavus Roeber, last postmaster William F. Buscher. The origin of the name Franklin is unknown.

GIBBSVILLE.—A village in the town of Lima founded by three Gibbs brothers, James H., Benjamin L., and John D., in 1836. Post office established Dec. 21, 1846, discontinued Mar. 30, 1907; first postmaster John D. Gibbs, last postmaster William H. Bruggink.

GIDDINGS MILLS.—A settlement on the Onion river, founded by David Giddings, about two miles south of Sheboygan Falls. The Sheboygan Lake Journal, Dec. 12, 1854, describes it as consisting of a flouring mill, two saw mills, a store, several mechanic's shops, and a superior water power.

HAVEN.—A village in the town of Mosel, formerly known as Seven Mile Creek, from its location on a small creek which flowed into Lake Michigan about seven miles north of Sheboygan. Post office established July 16, 1897; first postmaster Frederick W. Franzmeier.

HERMAN.—Town formerly named Howard, after H. B. Howard, an early settler, and proprietor of Howard's Hotel at Howards Grove. Name changed to Hermann or Herman through the influence of the predominant Lipper element in the town, in honor of Hermann, the great German national hero, who conquered the invading Roman army under Varus at the battle of Teutoburg Forest in 9 A. D.



Post marks found on old envelopes

HOARD.—A post office in the town of Holland established Mar. 29, 1890, discontinued Aug. 15, 1903; postmaster Ewaldus De Wall. Probably named after William D. Hoard, governor of Wisconsin from 1889 to 1891.

HOBART'S MILL.—A steam saw mill in section 17, range 22, of the town of Holland. Post office established there July 20, 1868, discontinued Mar. 27, 1876; first postmaster Henry Van Tilborg, last postmaster George Garside.

HOWARDS GROVE.—A village in the town of Herman, named after H. B. Howard, proprietor of Howard's Hotel. Post office established there July 14, 1849, discontinued Jan. 15, 1908; first postmaster H. B. Howard, last postmaster Charles Lehr. For years Howards Grove was commonly referred to as Pitchville, a name derived from the German word "Pech", meaning pitch or cobbler's wax, from the fact that at one time many of the inhabitants were shoemakers by trade or named Schumacher.

HOWARDS ROAD.—A highway extending from Sheboygan to Plymouth north of and parallel to the Sheboygan and Fond du Lac road. Named after George Howard who had a saw mill at the point where the road crosses the Sheboygan river in section 17 of the town of Sheboygan Falls.

JOHNSONVILLE.—A village in the northwest corner of the town of Sheboygan Falls. Post office established Dec. 17, 1874, discontinued July 31, 1903; first postmaster Hugo Liebner, last postmaster Fred W. Mog. From earliest times the place for some unknown reason was popularly called Schnapsville (Whiskey-ville), but the appellation being inappropriate for a post office, the name Johnsonville was adopted, after Andrew Johnson, president of the United States.

LIMA.—Town named by Hiram Humphrey in 1849 in honor of his old home in New York. Once known as Wakefield, and later Wheat Valley.

LINA.—A post office established July 6, 1852. The predecessor of Winooski, its name was changed to Winooski on Jan. 27, 1853; first postmaster of Lina, William Ford. The Sheboygan Mercury, July 17, 1852, says of Lina that it is located at Ellis & Oliver's Mills south of Plymouth, and takes the place of Mentor recently discontinued.

LINDENVILLE.—A post office of unknown location, established July 14, 1849, discontinued Dec. 31, 1850; postmaster William Thompson.

LYNDON.—Town named after a place in Vermont.

MAINE SETTLEMENT.—Named applied to an early settlement of people from the state of Maine, who settled in the town of Lima along County Trunk Highway "I", between Five Corners and Hingham.

MENTOR.—A post office located at Dye's Settlement in the town of Lima; established May 31, 1849, discontinued May 4, 1852; first postmaster John D. Parrish, last postmaster Norman C. Harmon.

MILLERSVILLE.—A settlement on the Green Bay road in the town of Herman. Named after a pioneer settler, Henry G. Mueller, who in 1866, in partnership with a Mr. Halbach, constructed a steam saw mill there.

MOHRSVILLE.—A small settlement located at the intersection of the Green Bay and Howards roads, named for Paul Mohr, who formerly conducted a tavern there.

MOSEL.—Town named by the county board of supervisors in 1853, when it was detached from the town of Sheboygan, upon the suggestion of Julius Wolff, of the town of Rhine. It was so named after the river Moselle in Germany, from the region of which many of its early settlers had emigrated. In the town, on the west line of section 28, was a post office named Mosel, established Mar. 29, 1869, and discontinued July 31, 1903; first postmaster Andrew C. Festerling, last postmaster Richard Truttschell. On the north line of section 33, there formerly was a station on the C. & N. W. Railroad known as Mosel Station.

MULLETT.—River named after John Mullett, one of the government surveyors who surveyed the exterior lines in the county in 1833-34, and probably named by Mullett himself.

NEITH.—A post office in the town of Russell, established Mar. 16, 1900, and discontinued July 31, 1903; postmaster, Gustav Brickbauer.

OURTOWN.—A post office located on the Onion river about two miles south of Sheboygan Falls, established Mar. 20, 1856 and discontinued Dec. 24, 1877; first postmaster Charles G. Stuebgen, last

postmaster Frederick Meisekothen. It was at one time the site of a water power and flour mill. Originally the name was spelled Our Town.

PARNELL.—A hamlet situated in the town of Mitchell, named after Charles Stewart Parnell, the Irish statesman and nationalist leader. Post office established June 19, 1888, discontinued July 31, 1903; first postmaster James Reilly, last postmaster John T. Manley.

PIGEON.—River named *Memee* or *Memee sibi* by the Indians. *Memee* is the Chippewa word for pigeon or dove, and was probably applied to the stream because somewhere in its vicinity, or in the vicinity of Pigeon Lake, in Manitowoc county, in which it rises, there was an extensive wild pigeon roost. *Si-bi* or *se-be* means river in the Chippewa language.

PIUS.—A post office in the town of Mitchell established July 12, 1888, discontinued June 30, 1902; postmaster, Thomas F. Heraty. Mr. Heraty named the place after Pope Pius IX, his diary reveals.

RATHBUN.—A post office in the town of Mitchell, established Aug. 16, 1849, discontinued June 30, 1902; first postmaster James E. Rathbun, last postmaster Nicholas E. Cosgrove. The post office was named after Mr. Rathbun.

RHINE.—Town named after the section of Germany near the river Rhine, from which many of its early inhabitants came. A post office in the town, named Rhine or Rhine Center, was established Mar. 10, 1863, discontinued Nov. 4, 1870, re-established June 26, 1871, and finally discontinued July 31, 1903; first postmaster Phillipp H. Wolf, last postmaster William Zillman. Rhine Mills in section 18 in the town is the site of an abandoned lime kiln. It was platted and named by John Bertschy in 1870.

RUSSELL.—Town named after John Russell, a pioneer, who settled in section 4 in 1848. A post office in the town, named Russell, was established Feb. 22, 1855, and discontinued Dec. 19, 1872. John L. Sexton was the first and only postmaster.¹⁰

¹⁰ Compensation received by the ordinary country postmasters is shown in the records of Russell post office in the possession of Ethel Gilman, Plymouth. Postmaster John L. Sexton's official reports to the U. S. Post Office Department show that for the quarter from Sept. 30 to Dec. 31, 1861, he collected \$1.93, of which his commission was \$1.52, and the balance due the

SCOTT.—Town named after General Winfield Scott, of Mexican War fame. There is a cemetery in the town known as the Winfield Scott Cemetery. Scott was also the name of the post office in the village of Batavia, which was established Aug. 3, 1854, and discontinued July 14, 1903. The first postmaster was Wells Chapin and the last postmaster Edward G. Brazelton.

SHERMAN.—Town named after William T. Sherman, the famous Union general in the Civil War. When the town became organized, it was named Abbott after a prominent family residing there. At the first meeting of electors, Apr. 2, 1850, Reuben Abbott was elected the town chairman, and besides him, the minutes of the meeting contain the names of Samuel W., Philander B., and William W. Abbott. During the Civil War, however, the Abbotts were southern sympathizers, or "copperheads". Angered at their

government was 41 cents; and that for the succeeding quarter his collections were \$3.21, of which his share was \$2.46, and the government's 75 cents.

Mr. Sexton was a picturesque character. Coming to Russell in 1851, he became the first school teacher, as well as the first postmaster, in the town. His school was a rough log cabin in section 12, accommodating about thirty pupils. Upon the death of his wife at an early date, he isolated himself from other people and became a recluse, although he remained sociable and friendly toward those with whom he came in contact. He was a lover of nature, spending much of his time outdoors studying plant life and observing the habits of birds and animals. Living alone in a small cottage near the outlet of Sheboygan marsh, his house, surrounded by fruit trees, bushes, and a garden, was a mecca for the curious. In his yard were heaps of oddly shaped and colored geological specimens, and in the cottage many Indian relics and natural history objects that he had collected in his rambles through the neighboring fields and marsh, besides piles of old newspapers, magazines, books and reports.

His long white hair falling over his shoulders, and his snow-white beard hanging down upon his breast, gave him a patriarchal appearance. He once boasted at a meeting of the Pioneer Association that he had not had a haircut for twenty-five years. Known as a hermit, it was natural for the rumor to circulate that he was a miser, with his money hidden in or about his house. It was this which led to his death on June 28, 1911. Among those who heard that Sexton was a miser was an Italian laborer named Anthony Borello, who was employed at the nearby Rhine Mills stone quarry. That night while Sexton was seated in his home, the Italian stabbed him to death with a knife and robbed him of \$300.

Eluding arrest in this country, the murderer managed to escape to his native Italy, where he was captured the next year and held by the police there. Sheboygan County thereupon sent two officers abroad to bring the prisoner back here for trial, but when the officers arrived, the Italian authorities refused to give him up, and the officers had to return without their man. Although the crime was committed in America, Borello was brought to trial for it in his own country, and was found guilty of murder and sentenced to 17 years in prison.

To commemorate Mr. Sexton's life, Charles E. Broughton, editor of the Sheboygan Press, in 1941 erected a marker on the spot where his home stood, which reads, "Site of former home of John L. Sexton, pioneer school teacher, a friend of the great outdoors, born 1824, died 1911."—Sheb. Press, Aug. 5, 1941.

itude, the people not only forced them to leave the town, but they had the name of the town changed to Sherman in 1864 by an act of the state legislature. About midway between Adell and Random Lake is a small settlement known as Sherman Center. Originally located on an Indian trail leading from Random Lake to Batavia, it was the site of a small trading post run by a man named Gregory, and built about 1840 or 1841. It was the first frame building in the town.

SILVER CREEK.—A village in the southern part of the town of Sherman. Post office established May 22, 1872, discontinued July 31, 1903; first postmaster Jonathan F. Moehrl, last postmaster Rudolph Schmidt. It is a long village, stretching for a considerable distance on both sides of the highway. Many of the buildings are built in the German style of architecture. Silver Creek was formerly celebrated for its Rietz copper distilled rye whiskey. It was the home of the Theodore Rietz distillery and wholesale liquor house, the Charles Hamm brewery, the Scheunert Bros. roller mill, saw mill and planing mill, and of a soft drink bottling works. Silver Creek was named after a place in New York.

ST. ANNA.—A village located in the town of Russell on the Calumet county line, and named after the Catholic church there. Post office established June 14, 1887, and discontinued Nov. 30, 1906; postmaster, Wendel Burg.

ST. GEORGE.—A post office located on the line between the towns of Lima and Wilson; established Sept. 11, 1879, discontinued July 31, 1901; postmaster, Jacob Hoffman. Named after the Catholic church in the vicinity. Situated at the intersection of six highways, it is also known as Six Corners.

WEEDENS.—A station in the town of Wilson on the C. & N. W. Railroad about three miles south of Sheboygan. Named after George W. Weeden, a farmer and cheese factory owner located here. For years, Mose Guyett, proprietor of the Guyett House in Sheboygan Falls, operated a stage between the Falls and Weedens.

WILSON.—Town named after David Wilson, a commercial fisherman, and a native of Ohio, who settled in section 11 in 1840.

WORTH.—A post office on the Fond du Lac road six miles west of Sheboygan Falls, established Mar. 10, 1848, and discontinued Oct. 4, 1852; postmaster, James Little.

CHAPTER 25

SCENIC SHEBOYGAN COUNTY

SHEBOYGAN County is a pleasant land to look upon—not rugged or massive, but gently rolling, peaceful, picturesque, and satisfying to the eye. Three distinctive types of scenery make up its natural beauty. Dominating the scene is the unique range of gravel hills in the western part, known as the “kettles”—so-called because of the small depressions between the hills resembling the inside of a kettle. *Potash kettles*, *pots and kettles*, *pot holes*, and *sinks*, are other names given to them. The area is the inland lake region of the county, the headwaters of most of its streams, and the site of Kettle Moraine State Forest. In its midst is also situated the extensive Sheboygan Marsh.

The hills and valleys of the kettle moraine area are of glacial origin. Some thirty thousand years ago, geologists relate, the region lay at the edge of two great ice sheets that crept down from the north, plowing out the beds of Lake Winnebago and Lake Michigan, and bringing with them great deposits of gravel and sand, much of it from thousands of miles away. And then when the advancing ice masses were checked by the heat of the sun, retreating as they melted away, they left behind them these huge dome-shaped knolls and peculiar bowl-like indentations as mementoes of their visit. They are composed largely of sharp-edged sand intermingled with rounded stones from the size of small pebbles to huge boulders. Described geologically as a terminal moraine, in no other part of the world have these remains of the ice age attained a more perfect form.

Vigorous growths of trees cover the floors of most of the valleys and extend up the steep slopes to crown the tops of the hills, or pause part way in their climb, leaving bare knob-like crests boldly outlined against the sky. The impression created by one of these little rounded vales set among the sheltering hills is that of a vast natural amphitheatre in which is being staged some hidden sylvan drama. In other valleys nestle small gem-like lakes and ponds, spring-fed and crystal-clear, and fairy-like in their perfect loveliness. Throughout this charming region the roads zig-zag in and out, and open to the gaze many thrilling panoramas of woods and waters. Here and there among the hills appear glimpses

of farms, but the gravel is close to the surface and the soil thin. As a rule only the more fertile low land is tilled; the barren hills are devoted to pasturage. It is the least productive section of the county.¹

From the eastern slope of the kettle range, the land falls away in a scarcely perceptible decline until it meets the sandy beach and blue water of Lake Michigan. The largest body of fresh water lying wholly in the United States, it is an inland ocean with all the natural attractions of the sea, except salt water and the tides. Once the high-road of adventurous aborigines, explorers and traders, it is still wrapped in romantic charm. The clean, glittering sands on the shore, the ceaseless roll of the white-capped waves, the changing colors of the water merging into the deepest blue, the giant freighters steaming along near the distant horizon, trailing their long, thin clouds of smoke, present a scene of extraordinary beauty. The shore is a favorite resort of summer cottagers, campers, bathers and yachtsmen, especially in summer when the cooling lake breezes temper the heat.

North of Sheboygan abrupt bluffs, forty to sixty feet high, come close to the water; but south of the city the shore is low and wide and covered with sand dunes. It is a bit of Indiana sand dune country transplanted to Wisconsin. The spot is unaffected by the spirit of progress and change, and is as wild and picturesque as in the days when it was the habitat of primitive savages. It is an undulating sea of sand piled up into great heaps and ridges, sometimes thirty to forty feet high, in some places for a distance of fully half a mile back from the water's edge. Year by year, with every wind blowing in from the lake, the marching dunes move forward, slowly engulfing the adjacent farm lands in their path. A sparse, coarse beach grass and a few scraggy drought-resistant shrubs and trees—the only vegetation—vainly attempt to check the shifting sands. Unfit for pasturage or farming, the land has been undisturbed by plow or harrow. With the disappearance of the Indians, the place has reverted to a state of nature, except for a few commercial fishermen who in former times dried their nets there, and but for the incursions in recent years of summer cottagers.

The sand dune region is a silent, lonely, but fascinating spot—a favorite resort and retreat for nature-lovers, botanists, hikers,

¹ *Geology of Wisconsin, Survey of 1873-1879*, by T. C. Chamberlin (1883), Vol. 1, p. 275 et seq.; *The Physical Geography of Wisconsin*, by Lawrence Martin, in *Wis. Geolog. and Nat. Hist. Survey, Bull. No. 31*, (1916).

and collectors of Indian relics. Herons, eagles, crows, owls and whip-poor-wills, together with rabbits and woodchucks, make it their home. Rare beach plants and flowers hide in its sheltered nooks. Trees and stumps that have given up their fight for life against the sand enemy, raise their bare trunks and arms in silent protest to the sky. As far as the eye can reach the surface of the ground is littered with flint chips and fragments of pottery, while here and there the wind uncovers a perfect specimen of an arrow-head or spear-point, a mute reminder of days gone by. Many of the dunes are huge cone-shaped piles of sand, and on windy days the sand blows in clouds from their summits, like smoke coming from giant wigwams. The spirits of the departed redmen seem ever to hover over this dune-covered shore.

Between the lake shore and the "kettles" at the other end of county stretches a broad extent of farming country as fascinating to the eye as any Old World pastoral picture. The rolling landscape is dotted with farmsteads, with their well-painted houses, large red barns, towering windmills and silos, and neat, well-kept yards, orchards and fields, denoting the pride of the farmers in their domains—and their thrift and prosperity as well. The spacious farm buildings are accounted for by the cheap and abundant supply of timber in early days. Probably the most pleasing feature of the countryside is the sight of the well-fed herds of black and white cattle grazing on the grassy slopes of the hills, or resting peacefully beside some meadow brook or beneath the shade of a protecting grove of trees. Scenically the county is essentially a land of charming vistas and attractive views, as picturesque as can be found in all Wisconsin, or indeed anywhere else.

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NEWSPAPERS

A surprisingly large number of newspapers have been published in Sheboygan County from earliest times down to the present day. They are the most valuable and prolific source of information regarding the events of the past. It would serve no useful purpose to name them all here. Fortunately by far the largest part of the old newspapers have been preserved; relatively few have been lost or destroyed. Bound volumes of these old papers are kept in the Mead Public Library, Sheboygan, and the State Historical Library, Madison, as well as in existing newspaper offices, as the Sheboygan Press, Sheboygan County News, and Plymouth Review. A work entitled, "Annotated Catalogue of Newspaper Files in the Library of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin," published by that society in 1911 gives a complete list of all Sheboygan County newspapers kept in that library.

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HISTORICAL SOCIETIES

Sheboygan County Pioneers Association. Organized in 1867, and active until 1895; dormant from 1895 to 1913; revived in 1913, but quiescent again since 1915.*

Sheboygan County Historical Society. Incorporated May 31, 1923.

* The first meeting of the Sheboygan County Pioneers Association was held on Jan. 22, 1867, at the Warren House, at that time Sheboygan's leading hotel, located on Pennsylvania avenue about two-thirds of a block east of N. 8th street. The idea of forming the organization originated one evening during the latter part of 1866 among a small group of early settlers sitting by the fire in J. L. Moore's store (some accounts have it C. T. Moore). Present were Mr. Moore, J. O. Thayer, A. P. Lyman and James H. Gibbs. Mr. Gibbs, the proprietor of the Warren House, proposed that the first pioneers' meeting be held at his hotel. About 175 persons attended the meeting; and it was decided to form a permanent organization. First officers elected were: David Taylor, Sheboygan, president; A. G. Dye and John Johnson, Lima, vice presidents; and H. N. Ross, Sheboygan, secretary. Lying dormant since 1895, it was reorganized at a meeting held at the engine house in Plymouth on Sept. 4, 1913. The first meeting of the new association was held at Sheboygan Falls on Sept. 4, 1914, and the second on Aug. 4, 1915; but it has been inactive ever since. Altogether the society held twenty regular meetings and four picnics.

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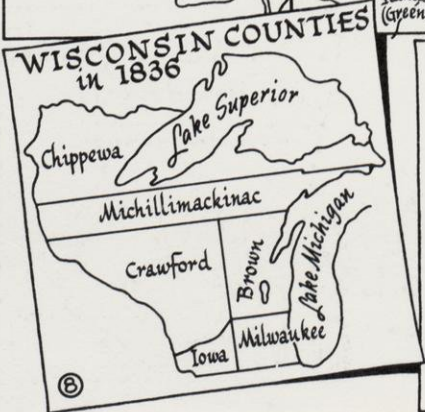
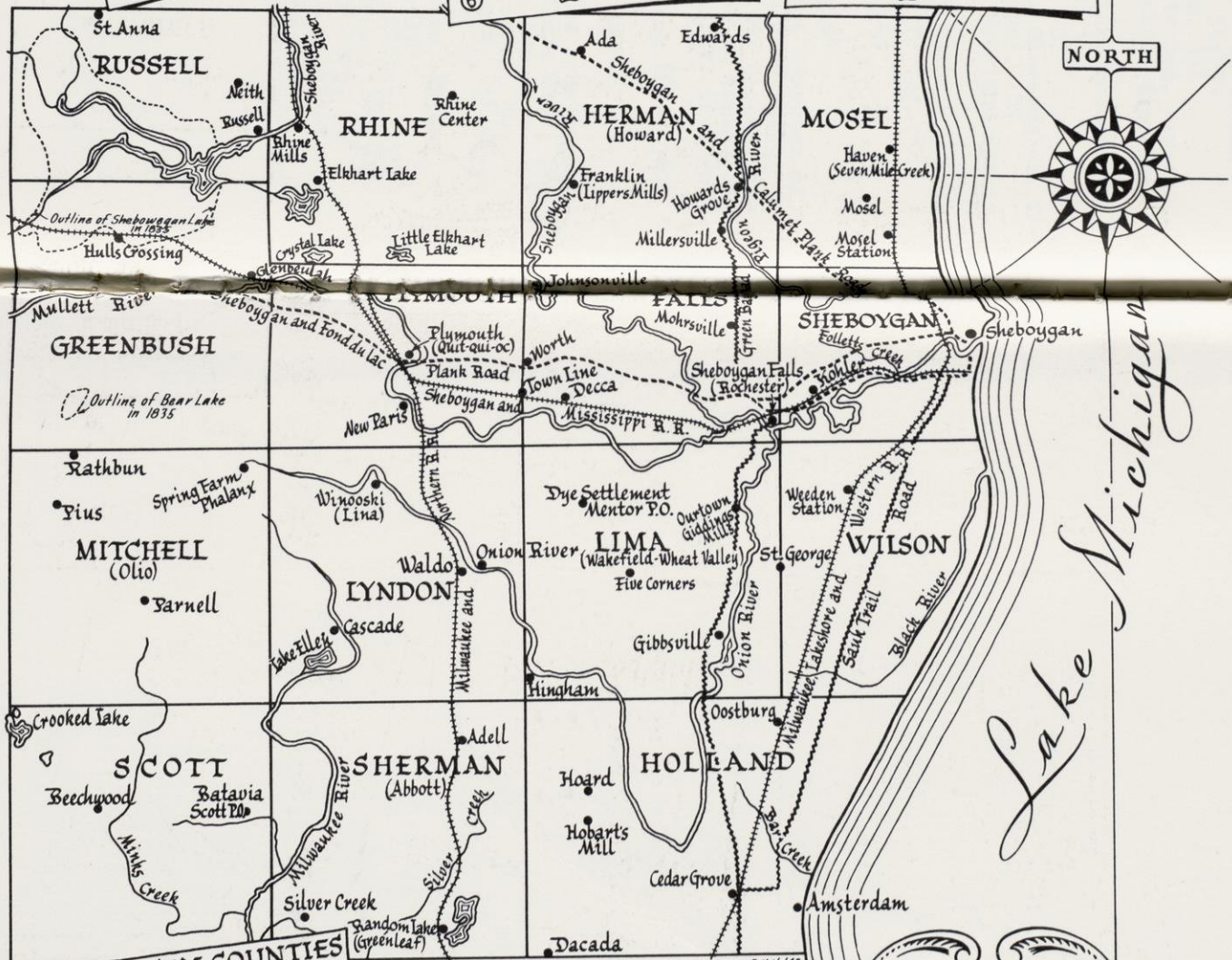
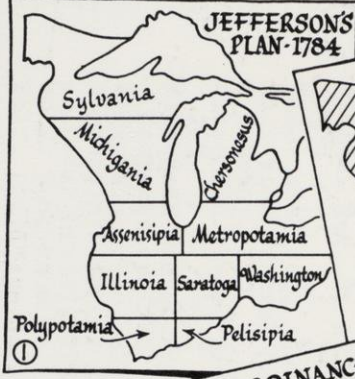
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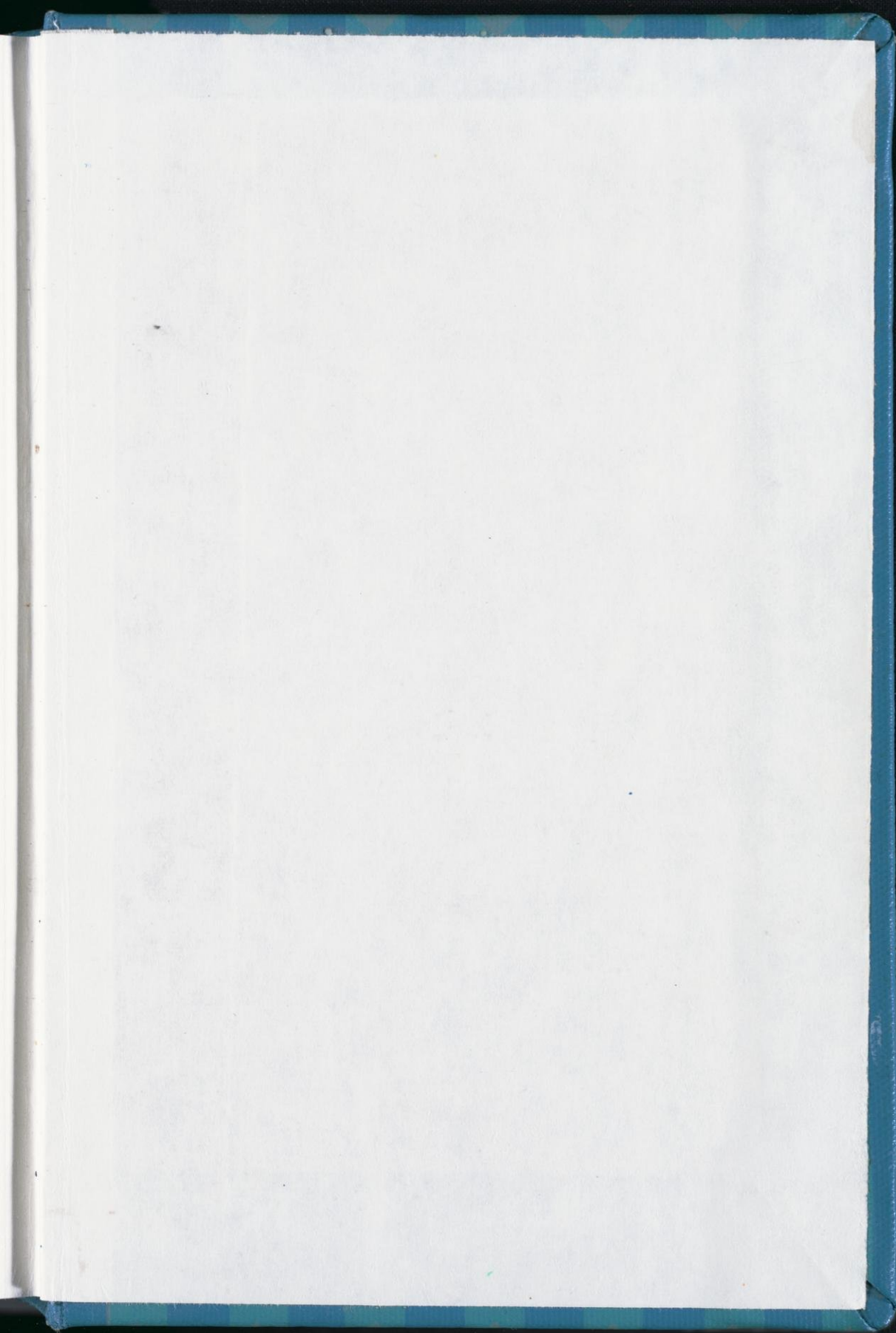
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Sheboygan County in 1849

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