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# Early Travels in Manitowoc County 1634-1835

By: Leonard A. Coombs, Jr.

## About the Author:

Leonard A. Coombs, Jr., is an associate archivist at the Michigan Historical Collections, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, in Ann Arbor, where he has been employed since 1981. Although his work is chiefly concerned with the preservation of historical materials relating to Michigan history, he is currently spending most of his time on a project to produce a catalog of the holdings of the Vatican Archives, located in Vatican City. Coombs was born and raised in Manitowoc, and graduated from Lincoln High School in 1969. He earned a bachelor's degree in history from Northern Michigan University in 1973 and a master's degree in library science from the University of Michigan in 1978.

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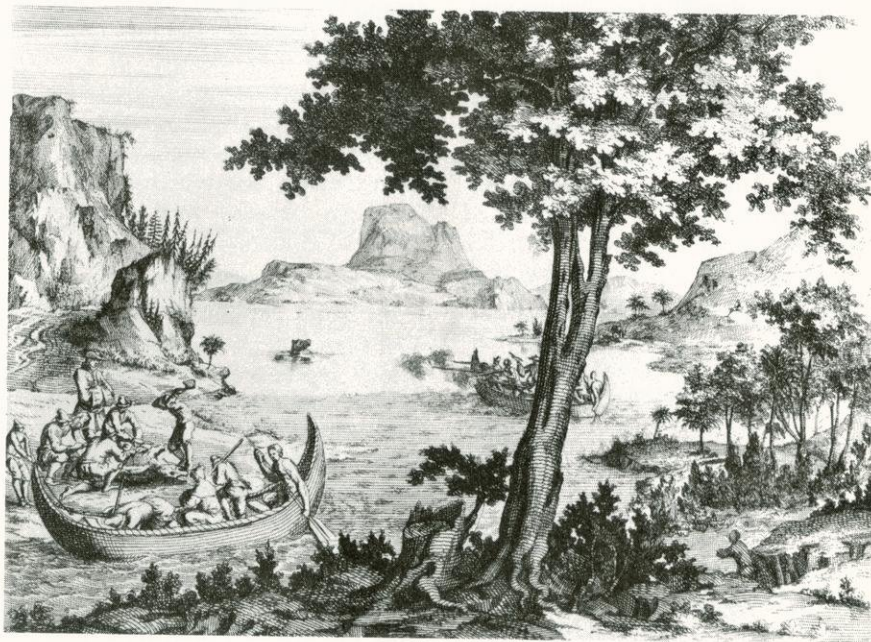
When Byron Kilbourn and Albert G. Ellis surveyed Manitowoc County in 1834 and 1835, they marked the beginning of a rapid change in the history of the area. Within a year, speculators had bought large tracts of land from the government, and towns had been founded by American settlers. The native peoples who lived in the area had quickly been changed from owners of the land to marginal groups, out of the mainstream of settlement.

But 1835 was not the beginning of the European and American experience in Manitowoc County. For over 150 years, the native inhabitants had been visited by missionaries, explorers, traders, and other travellers, who had passed through what is now Manitowoc County, sometimes pausing only

briefly, other times staying for a winter or longer.

The earliest European visitors to Manitowoc County and northeastern Wisconsin were from New France, the French colony centered along the St. Lawrence River at Quebec and Montreal, hundreds of miles to the east. Samuel de Champlain founded the first French settlement there, at Quebec, in 1608. From the beginning the economy of the colony was based on trade, the exchange of European manufactured goods for furs with the natives of the area and the Great Lakes Region to the west. The Huron people, who lived east of Lake Huron, served as middlemen in the trade,

collecting the furs in the west and bringing them to Quebec and later Montreal, the French fur-trading centers. The first European visitor to northeastern Wisconsin came during this period of Huron control over the fur trade, at a time when the Winnebago people dominated the area west of Lake Michigan. Jean Nicolet was sent to the west by the governor of New France in 1634 to meet with the Winnebago. His mission had several purposes, all related to the development of the fur trade. He was trying to improve relations between the Winnebago and their neighbors to the east, which had been damaged in 1623 when the Winnebago killed a



The earliest European travellers in Manitowoc County arrived by canoe from Mackinac, at the mouth of Lake Michigan. This rather fanciful view shows Father Louis Hennepin and his party leaving Mackinac for the west in 1681, two years after Hennepin and La Salle passed through Manitowoc County.

FROM LOUIS HENNEPIN, *Aaenmerkelyke Voyaghe gedaan na't gedeelte van Noorder America* (LEYDEN: PIETER VANDER AA, 1704) COURTESY OF THE WILLIAM L. CLEMENTS LIBRARY.



party of Ottawa who had visited them in search of trading opportunities. Nicolet wanted to head off a possible alliance between the Winnebago and Dutch traders from New Netherlands, on the banks of the Hudson River. And, incidentally, he was looking for a route from the Great Lakes to the Pacific Ocean.

The 36-year-old Nicolet travelled from New France in the summer of 1634, and reached the shores of Green Bay. The picture of Nicolet, dressed in his many-colored robe of damask, strewn with flowers and birds, frightening the Winnebago with the sound of his pistols, is a familiar one in Wisconsin history. Nicolet did conclude an agreement with the Winnebago, and returned to Quebec, coming no closer to Manitowoc County than the shores of Green Bay.<sup>1</sup>

We are uncertain whether people lived in Manitowoc County at the time of Nicolet's visit. The only clue of possible inhabitants is that a type of pottery identified with that used by the prehistoric Winnebago has been found on a Lake Michigan beach near Slieboygan, north of the Black River.<sup>2</sup>

Within a few years after Nicolet's visit to Green Bay, the population and political structure of the area had changed completely, and the people he had visited were no longer the dominant force in the region. The Winnebago, who had lived in villages of several thousand people each, were reduced by the 1660's to a group of only about 600 all together. Their fall from power and influence came as a result of a chain of events set off by the arrival of European settlers on the Atlantic coast and the development of the fur trade. Competition between French and Dutch traders and the introduction of advanced weapons led the Iroquois people of New York to attack and eventually exterminate the Huron of Ontario. Neighboring peoples and Huron refugees moved west to escape the fighting, bringing weapons and European diseases with them. At the same time the Winnebago were involved in a disastrous war with the Illinois people, who lived to the south. It is unclear exactly what factors were the most important in the decline of the Winnebago, but by the 1660's they had been decimated and their former territory around Green Bay was inhabited by

some 20,000 refugees of many tribes, including the Fox, Sauk, Potawatomi, Mascouten, Huron, Petun, and Ottawa.

By 1654, when the next recorded European visitor to the area appeared, northeastern Wisconsin was home to the Potawatomi. These people originated in southwestern Michigan, but were forced out of their home by the Iroquois wars. After years of wandering, they established a base at Rock Island, north of the Porte des Morts Passage, strategically located at the mouth of Green Bay on the trade route from Mackinac to the Wisconsin and Mississippi Rivers. They also built a fortified village on the mainland, somewhere between the Porte des Morts and Manitowoc, which they called Mechingan. The exact location of this village is now unknown.<sup>3</sup>

After destroying the Huron, the Iroquois seemed to have the upper hand in their drive to control the Great Lakes trading area. In 1653 a war party of Iroquois travelled all the way from New York to Mechingan, to attack the Potawatomi and other villagers there. But the Potawatomi at Mechingan managed to defeat the Iroquois attackers. The defeat led the Iroquois to seek a truce in their war with the French. The end of the Iroquois war (temporarily, as it turned out), allowed the fur trade to expand once again. In the place of the Huron, the Ottawa people took the role of middlemen, collecting furs from western peoples and transporting them to Montreal.

### THE FRENCH TRAVELLERS

In 1654, Medard Chouart, Sieur des Groseilliers, a 36-year-old adventurer from New France, with an unidentified companion, joined the Ottawa trading fleet that voyaged west from the St. Lawrence, to seek riches in the fur trade. Groseilliers travelled as far as the Potawatomi village at Rock Island, where he and his companion spent the winter, trading with their hosts for furs. The following spring, Groseilliers travelled farther in the Lake Michigan area, leaving a memorable description of the Potawatomi villages and countryside, as recorded years later by his brother-in-law, Pierre Esprit Radisson.

We embarked ourselves on the

delightsof lake of the world. I took notice of their cottages and of the journeys of our navigation because the country was so pleasant, so beautiful, and fruitful that it grieved me to see that the world could not discover such enticing countries to live in...[T]hese kingdoms are so delicious and under so temperate a climate, plentiful of all things, the earth bringing forth its fruit twice a year, the people live long and lusty and wise in their way...[W]hat labyrinth of pleasure should millions of people have, instead that millions complain of misery and poverty? <sup>4</sup>

Groseilliers finally returned to Montreal in 1656. His voyage proved a great commercial success, and demonstrated the value of what became the standard practice of French traders, to seek out furs in the western country and not to depend on native middlemen.

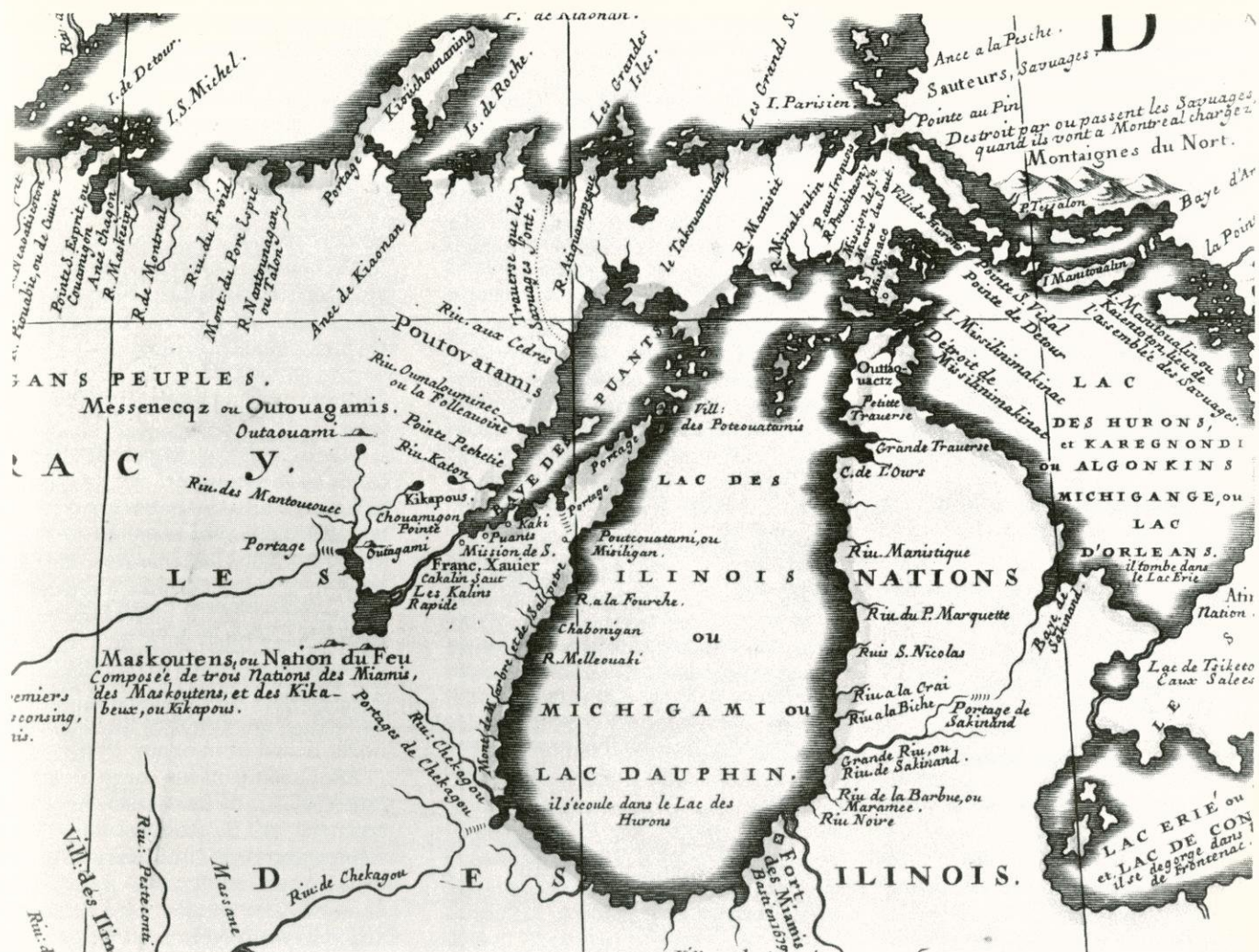
Radisson, in describing his brother-in-law's voyage, was unfortunately very vague about places and dates, and not entirely honest about details (implying that he accompanied Groseilliers in 1654, for example). His narrative is too vague to determine whether Groseilliers travelled as far as Manitowoc County in his journeys on Lake Michigan.<sup>5</sup>

After Groseilliers returned to Montreal with his cargo of furs, other traders followed his example and voyaged west to trade for furs in the Great Lakes country. Some of them undoubtedly travelled to the west shore of Lake Michigan, but none of the adventurers in the years following Groseilliers left a written record of their travels.

After a renewal of fighting with the Iroquois, another truce in 1667 reduced the danger both to the French in New France and to the native peoples in the Great Lakes country. The former refugee peoples were beginning to create permanent settlements in their new homelands, and Green Bay became a great trading center as it became safer. At this same time, the new leader of New France, the intendant Jean Talon, began a program to expand the colony. His plans set off an active period of exploration and missionary activity that brought several groups of Frenchmen to Manitowoc County.

In 1672 Louis Jolliet was commissioned by Talon to explore the Mississippi River. Jolliet, who had been born in New France, was only 27 years





Marco Coronelli's 1688 map, *Partie Occidentale du Canada*, was based on the work of all the early French explorers of the Great Lakes region. No more accurate view of northeastern Wisconsin was published before the late 1700s.

DETAIL OF MARCO CORONELLI, *Partie Occidentale du Canada* (PARIS: J. B. NOLIN, 1688). COURTESY OF THE WILLIAM L. CLEMENTS LIBRARY.

old, but was already a veteran fur trader. By December of that year he arrived at Mackinac, to the Jesuit mission at St. Ignace, where he found the missionary Jacques Marquette who had been named to accompany him on his expedition.

The following spring Jolliet, Marquette, and five voyagers set out by canoe toward the west. They first travelled to the Jesuit mission at Green Bay, then up the Fox River to the portage leading to the Wisconsin River, and from there to the Mississippi. After exploring the course of the Mississippi they returned by ascending the Illinois River and passing the portage at Chicago into Lake Michigan.

Their return trip took them north along the west shore of Lake Michigan to the Green Bay mission, where they

arrived at the end of September 1673. Their September passage made them the first documented European visitors to Manitowoc County. Unfortunately, the records of their voyage are incomplete. Jolliet lost his journals and maps, one set in a canoe accident and his security copy in a fire. There is no mention of Manitowoc in Marquette's journal, but the map he drew during the winter following the voyage, while he was recuperating at the Green Bay mission, seems to show the Twin Rivers. The map shows a distinctive set of two rivers, branched at their mouth, in the northern part of the west shore of Lake Michigan.<sup>6</sup>

While they were travelling up the Illinois River on their return from the Mississippi, Jolliet and Marquette visited the village of the Kaskaskia

people in what was known as the Illinois country. The people seemed interested in Marquette's religious message, and he promised them that he would return and establish a mission there. But Marquette was in such poor health, over the winter of 1673/1674 and into the following spring and summer, that he was unable to travel.

Finally in October of 1674 Marquette was able to leave Green Bay with two companions, Pierre Porteret and Jacques Largillier, who had accompanied him on his previous voyage to the Mississippi.

Marquette's journal of this trip is much more detailed than his earlier journal, and provides a good picture of the lakeshore area. After leaving Green Bay, Marquette met a party of Illinois and Potawatomi who accom-



panied him to the Illinois country. After portaging from Sturgeon Bay to Lake Michigan, two days travel brought them to a river that can be identified as Two Rivers.

November 1. After I said holy mass, we came for the night to a river, whence one goes to the Poutewatamis by a good road. Chachagwessiou, an Illinois greatly esteemed among his nation, partly because he engages in the fur trade, arrived at night with a deer on his back, of which he gave us a share. [November] 2. After holy mass, we travel all day in very fine weather. We kill two cats, which are almost nothing but fat.

The next day Marquette stopped at another river, possibly at Sheboygan.

[November] 3. While I am ashore, walking on fine sand, the whole water's edge being covered with grass similar to that which is hauled up by the nets at St. Ignace, I come to a river which I am unable to cross. Our people enter it, in order to take me on board; but we are unable to go out, in account of the waves. All the other canoes go on, excepting one, which came with us.<sup>7</sup>

Marquette and his party finally reached the portage at Chicago on December 4, but because his health had once again deteriorated he was unable to proceed to the Kaskaskia village. He and his two companions spent the winter at Chicago. They reached the Kaskaskia the following spring, but had to leave only a short time later as Marquette's health worsened. Marquette died near Ludington, Michigan, while trying to reach the mission at St. Ignace, at the age of 37.

After Marquette's death, Claude Allouez, an older Jesuit who was age 55 at the time and who had founded the mission at Green Bay, was assigned to take his place at the Kaskaskia mission in the Illinois country. Allouez's journal describes a difficult winter journey from Green Bay to Chicago. The priest set out in October 1676 with two companions for the Illinois country, but the water of Green Bay was covered with ice before they reached Sturgeon Bay. The small party waited until February before the ice was strong enough to bear their weight.

...we undertook a very extraordinary kind of navigation, for instead of putting

the canoe in the water, we put it on the ice, on which a favorable wind carried it along by sails, as if it was on water. When the wind failed us, instead of paddles, we used ropes to drag it as horses do a carriage.

By late March they were moving south with difficulty along the Lake Michigan shore, breaking a passage for their canoe through the ice.

The water was so cold, that it froze on our oars, and on the side of the canoe which the sun did not reach. It pleased God to deliver us from the danger we were in on landing, when a gust of wind drove the cakes of ice on one side of our canoe, and the other on the ice which was fast to the shore. Our great trouble was, that the rivers being still frozen, we could not enter them till the 3rd of April. We consecrated that which we at last entered in holy week by planting a large cross on the shore, in order that the Indians, who go there in numbers to hunt—either in canoes on the lake, or on foot in the woods—might remember the instructions we had given them on that mystery, and that the sight of it might excite them to pray.

The cross seems to have been erected farther south than Manitowoc, perhaps at Sauk Creek, in Port Washington.<sup>8</sup>

Neither Marquette nor Allouez mentioned villages along the lakeshore. This may be because they travelled in late fall and early spring, when the Potawatomi and others were dispersed to their hunting camps in the forests. In spring and summer the Potawatomi lived in large villages, planting small fields of corn, bean, and squash, fishing, and hunting. In the winter the villagers moved to small family camps to hunt deer, and in the spring to make maple sugar.<sup>9</sup>

While Allouez was taking up residence in the Illinois country, an entrepreneur was developing great plans for the Illinois and Great Lakes region. In 1678 Rene Robert Cavellier, Sieur de La Salle, a 35-year-old fur trader, obtained permission from the king of France to construct trading posts south of Lake Michigan. La Salle was given a monopoly on trade in buffalo hides, but was warned not to interfere with the trade of beaver furs from the northern Great Lakes to Montreal. La Salle's voyage to the Illinois is quite well documented, since at least four members

of the expedition wrote narratives of the journey: La Salle himself, his lieutenant Henri de Tonty, and two missionaries, Louis Hennepin and Zenobe Membre.

The first step in La Salle's plan was to send a party of traders to the west to collect furs. While the traders proceeded to the Potawatomi village at Rock Island, La Salle had a sailing ship constructed in the Niagara River, just below Lake Erie. His ship, the Griffon, became the first sailing vessel on the Great Lakes. In August 1679 La Salle and his party set sail for the west.

When La Salle arrived at Rock Island in September, he found his agents had built a house and warehouse enclosed by a stockade, and had filled the warehouse with furs, in spite of the king's orders not to interfere with the beaver trade. The Griffon was filled with furs and sent back to New France to pay the expenses of the expedition, but it never arrived. The ship and its cargo were never heard from again.<sup>10</sup>

After seeing off his cargo of furs, La Salle set out by canoe for the Illinois country on September 19, 1679. Accompanying him were thirteen other men in four heavily laden canoes. The canoes were filled with supplies for the planned Illinois trading post, including a blacksmith's forge and carpenters' tools along with trade goods and arms.

The canoes were so heavily loaded that there was little room for food—the men expected to hunt food along the way. Due to the large refugee population in the area over the past generation, the supply of game animals in northeastern Wisconsin was greatly depleted, and the expedition could find little meat to eat. While stormbound for five days on a Door County shore, their hunter managed to kill only a single porcupine. After eating all their provisions, the party reached a village of Potawatomi on October 1, probably the village of Mechingan, somewhere north of Manitowoc.

The high, steep coast was exposed to the northeast wind, which was then blowing and increasing at such a rate as to cause enormous waves to break against the shore. The only course that M. de La Salle could take, in order to effect a landing safely, was to throw himself, in company with his three men, into the water, and to carry the canoe,



laden as it was, to shore, in spite of the breakers which sometimes rolled over their heads. He waded out to meet the other canoes as they arrived, and landed them all in this way without any damage.

Since he was not familiar with the people of this village, La Salle prepared a defensive position against a possible attack. He then sent three of his men to buy food, under the protection of a calumet given to him by the Potawatomi of Rock Island.

This calumet is a kind of large pipe for smoking; the bowl is of handsome red stone, well polished; the stem, which is two feet and a half long, is of rather strong cane adorned with feathers of all colors, disposed very tastefully, and mingled with women's hair braided in various ways, each nation having its peculiar style of ornamentation. This sort of a calumet is a safe passport among all the allies of those who have given it, as they are convinced that great misfortunes would overtake them if they were to violate the right of the calumet.

The warriors of the village were rather suspicious of the travellers, and arrived at La Salle's camp armed with guns, axes, clubs, and bow and arrows, but when they saw the calumet they accepted the party as friends. The villagers gave La Salle as much corn as the canoes could carry, and La Salle thanked them with presents of axes, knives, and other trade goods.

The next day the party continued south in stormy weather, but they found no landing spots along a coast lined with high bluffs. Their food again ran out, and not until two weeks later, when they were much farther south, did they find abundant game.<sup>11</sup>

By January 1680 the expedition reached Lake Peoria on the Illinois River, where La Salle built his post, which he called Fort Crevecoeur. La Salle soon returned to New France on the St. Lawrence River to try to satisfy his creditors, leaving Henri de Tonty in charge of the post. Tonty, a 30-year-old native of Italy, had been in America only two years when La Salle left him in command. He was soon faced with strong opposition, both from the Iroquois and from his own men.

La Salle's attempt to control the fur trade in the Illinois country an-

tagonized the Iroquois, who had dominated trade there. But before they could act, La Salle's men mutinied and destroyed the fort. Tonty, with the post's two priests, 35-year-old Zenobe Membre and 60-year-old Gabriel de la Ribourde, and three other loyal men, escaped and moved their headquarters to the Kaskaskia village, where Marquette and Allouez had conducted their missions a few years earlier.

In September 1680 the men's bad fortune continued when the village was attacked by an Iroquois raiding party. Tonty was wounded in the attack, and the Frenchmen fled, trying to return to the safety of the mission at Green Bay or St. Ignace.

The six men left the Kaskaskia village on September 18, without provisions and with only one leaky canoe. Father Gabriel was murdered by a band of Kickapoo the following day, but the rest of the party made their way to Lake Michigan and then slowly up the west shore.

Their canoe was finally wrecked beyond repair on November 1, possibly near Manitowoc, but they were still twenty leagues short of the Potawatomi village they had visited the year before with La Salle. By this time the ground was covered with snow. They had no shoes, but made foot coverings from Father Gabriel's cloak. They were always short of provisions, and game was scarce along the lakeshore. Tonty wrote of living for a time on nothing but wild garlic grubbed up from under the snow; Membre wrote of having no food other than acorns and little roots.

After walking through Manitowoc County, often losing their way because they had no compass, they finally reached the Potawatomi village, only to find the people had left for the winter. Travelling north again, they came upon a group of hunters at the Sturgeon Bay portage. The Frenchmen by this time were too weak to stand; Tonty was extremely sick. After recuperation at the portage, Membre proceeded to the Green Bay mission, while Tonty wintered at Sturgeon Bay.<sup>12</sup>

La Salle and Tonty continued their efforts to build a trading empire, Tonty in the Illinois country, La Salle in Texas, where La Salle was killed in 1687. After his death, another of his lieutenants, Henri Joutel, travelled from Texas through the Illinois

country to Montreal. He seems to have passed Manitowoc in the spring of 1688, but without comment.

During the 1680s and 1690s the fur trade in New France expanded out of proportion to the demand for furs in Europe. While the supply increased, the demand declined. At the same time the government of New France was worried about an increase in illegal trading with the Iroquois and the English by western traders, and the king was concerned that the fur trade was taking too many young men from the settled life of the colony in the St. Lawrence River valley. In 1696, in an attempt to solve these problems, the king canceled all trading licenses and closed the western trading posts at Green Bay, Mackinac, and St. Joseph. For a time, the missions were the only approved French outposts in the west.

In the summer of 1698 a group of missionaries left Montreal to found new missions along the Mississippi River. Leader of the group was Francois de Montigny, a 29-year-old seminarian priest who had been in New France for the past six years. Accompanying him were Father Jean-Francois Buisson de Saint-Cosme, a 31-year-old native of New France, Father Albert Davion, and twelve lay brothers and paddlers. Buisson, who usually referred to himself as Saint-Cosme to distinguish himself from an older priest with the same name, kept a journal of the voyage that was later published.

When the priests reached Mackinac they found Henri de Tonty, who had been exempted from the king's order closing the west to traders. Tonty agreed to guide the party to their destination on the Mississippi.

The party had planned to travel the Fox and Wisconsin Rivers to the Mississippi, but was prevented from taking this route by an outbreak of warfare in the country of the Fox people along the upper Fox River. Changing their plans, Tonty and the priests travelled down the western shore of Lake Michigan.

On September 29 they came to the Potawatomi village north of Manitowoc that Tonty had visited before. They found that the people were in the process of abandoning the village, as a result of the death of their leader. After buying provisions from the villagers, the party moved on, coming on October 4 to a smaller



Potawatomi village on a small river.

At this village the men found a cross that had been planted by "Reverend Father Marais," who had spent the past winter there with some other Frenchmen. The modern editor of Saint-Cosme's journal identifies this site as Manitowoc, which if true would make Marais the first European to spend any length of time there. However, comparing the party's travel time with the distance from Sturgeon Bay to Manitowoc, it seems more likely that the village with the cross was farther south, perhaps in Sheboygan County. "Marais" seems to have been one of two brothers, Joseph-Jacques Marest, Jesuit missionary at Mackinac, or Pierre-Gabriel Marest, Jesuit missionary in the Illinois country.<sup>13</sup>

After the visit of Montigny and his party, Manitowoc and the western shore of Lake Michigan disappear from the written record for several generations. By this time several

places on the west shore had become identified by name to the Europeans. The most detailed map of the area from that period, *Partie Occidentale du Canada*, published in 1688 by Marco Coronelli, shows not only the Potawatomi village of Mechingan, but the "R. de la Fourche" (or Forded River, possibly the Twin Rivers), "Chaboigan" (or Sheboygan), the "R. Milliouaki" (Milwaukee), and the "Riv. Chekagou" (Chicago). Coronelli's maps were based on the work of Jolliet, Hennepin, and other French explorers.<sup>14</sup>

The closing of the western posts and abolition of the trading license system meant few Europeans ventured to the western Great Lakes area for years after 1696.

In 1714, in order to prevent the British from expanding into the area, trading licenses were granted once more by the government of New France. The following year,

military posts reopened at Mackinac and other strategic points. In 1717 a fort was opened at Green Bay to protect the Fox-Wisconsin waterway. After these events, Europeans regularly travelled in northeastern Wisconsin, but no narratives mentioning travel in the Manitowoc County area have survived.

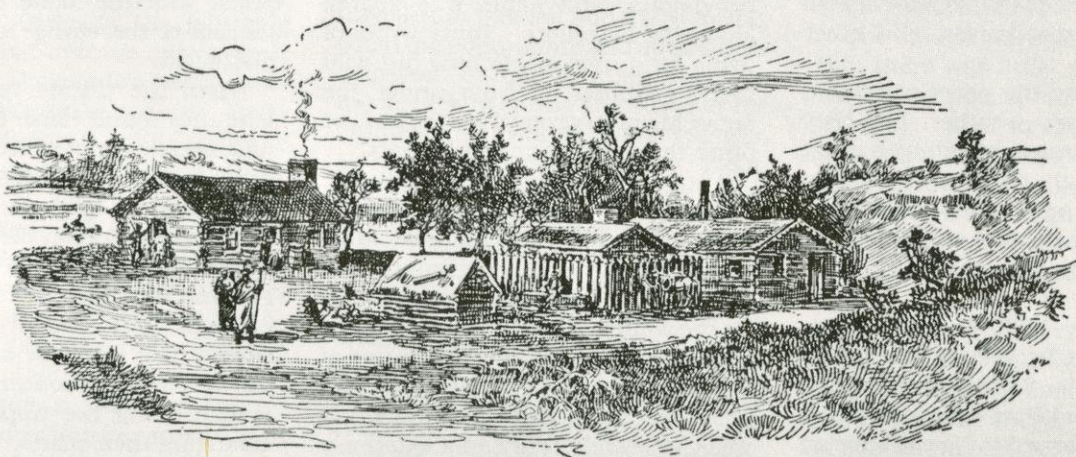
The rule of the French in Wisconsin ended rather suddenly in 1760. The year before, the French army had been defeated by the British at the Plains of Abraham outside Quebec, and in 1760 Montreal was surrendered to the conquerors. When the French commander at Green Bay learned the news in the fall of the year, he retreated with his men toward Louisiana, leaving behind a small settlement of Indians and traders.

#### BRITISH DOMINANCE

In the fall of 1761, a small group of British soldiers under the command of Captain Henry Balfour travelled

1833

SOLOMON JUNEAU'S TRADING POST



EARLY MILWAUKEE

Jacques Vieau's trading posts at Manitowoc Rapids and at Jambo Creek probably resembled his son-in-law Solomon Juneau's post at Milwaukee, seen here in an 1833 woodcut.

COURTESY OF THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WISCONSIN



from Detroit to take possession of the western country. After leaving detachments at Mackinac and Green Bay, he proceeded to the St. Joseph River, passing Manitowoc on the way, the first known British visitor to the area. Unfortunately, he left no journal of his expedition.

At the time the British took possession of Canada, a number of Ojibwa, Ottawa, and other peoples moved to the west shore of Lake Michigan to escape the control of the new regime. They made their homes alongside the Potawatomi, Menominee, Winnebago, and other peoples already in the area. Milwaukee became the home to a mixed group of these anti-British peoples of the west. It was about this time that Etoigeshak, leader of a band of Ojibwa and Ottawa from Canada, came to live in Manitowoc County. He may have been part of the anti-British migration. Etoigeshak's grandson, Waumegasako, was leader of the band in the 1830's when the Americans arrived in the area.<sup>15</sup>

According to tradition, Etoigeshak's group split into two parts, the Ojibwa settling at Manitowoc Rapids, where a trail from Green Bay to Milwaukee crossed the River, and the Ottawa settling at Two Rivers and along the lakeshore north of there.<sup>16</sup>

British control of Canada brought great changes to the fur trade. The French monopolies were abolished and the license system liberalized, and after 1760 large numbers of British and American traders joined the French who already traded around the Great Lakes. The British government was never able to find an acceptable means of controlling the trade, however, and complaints of unfair trading practices led to a series of changes in trade policy.

Green Bay became one of the centers of the fur trade in the British period, controlling the trade as far west as the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers. Milwaukee was a less important trading center. Manitowoc County residents were most likely involved in the fur trade at this time, but we have no records of that involvement dating from the early years of the British occupation.

In 1777, both as a result of complaints about the traders and as a means to cut off trade with the rebellious colonies on the Atlantic coast, the British government restricted the

number of trading licenses and prohibited any vessels not owned by the government from travelling on the Great Lakes.

Mackinac merchants attempted to overcome these restrictions on shipping by entering into a partnership with the commander of the fort there, but the scheme was only successful for a short time. The decline in the trade caused by these restrictions came at the same time as the first definite reference to a place in Manitowoc County.<sup>17</sup>

The British were concerned during the American Revolution that the Indians of the Great Lakes region might aid the American rebels and their allies. One of the allies were the Spanish who beginning in 1779, occupied the Mississippi Valley as far north as St. Louis. In fact, Sigginauk, the leader of the Potawatomi, Ojibwa, and Ottawa people at Milwaukee, was a supporter of the Spanish. The success of George Rogers Clark and his Virginia militia in capturing Vincennes and other posts in the Illinois country in 1778 and 1779 increased the concern of the British at Detroit and Mackinac. Captain Samuel Robertson, aboard the British sloop *Felicity*, was sent from Mackinac in October 1779 to investigate the loyalty of the Indians of the shores of Lake Michigan and to arrest Sigginauk. Robertson failed to find the Indian leader, but while stopping at Milwaukee he learned of a trader at Two Rivers.

...they also told us that they had sent for Monsieur Fay which is at a place called the Deux Rivers 18 Leagues from Milwaukee to the north; he has 2 Canoes of goods from the commetee, but he said it was against his orders to go amongst them, or they suposed so as no trader had ever wintered at that place.<sup>18</sup>

Monsieur Fay was one of the many fur traders who lived among the Indian villagers each winter. They traded their one or two canoe loads of goods for furs, then returned to Mackinac in the summer to sell their furs, buy more trade goods, and prepare for another winter of trading. Rather than returning to the same village year after year, most of these traders were always looking for new, more lucrative territory. Manitowoc County was generally not prime beaver country, but it did provide good

habitat for black bear, marten, raccoon, and muskrat, all of which provided skins that were important in the fur trade.<sup>19</sup>

During the later years of the American Revolution, the fur trade in the Great Lake region continued in a disorganized and chaotic manner. The merchants of Montreal attempted to improve the situation in 1783 with the reorganization of the North West Company. The new company was formed to end the rivalry and hostility among the traders in the west and bring closer cooperation among the merchants in Montreal. One of the centers of the company's activities was at Mackinac. Other, rival companies and partnerships, less well organized than the North West Company, were formed in the same period, some of them also centered at Mackinac.

The treaty ending the American Revolution in 1783 put Mackinac, along with Wisconsin and much of the rest of the Great Lakes fur country, in the territory of the United States. The Canadian merchants who controlled the economy of the region and the British army that protected their settlements had no interest in giving up their possessions. The British army finally moved out of Mackinac and the other forts they held on the American side of border in 1796, but the merchants and fur traders from Canada continued to control the economy for many years afterward.

In 1795 the North West Company sent one of its agents from Mackinac, 38-year-old Jacques Vieau, to establish trading posts along the west shore of Lake Michigan, with his headquarters to be at Milwaukee. Vieau's son described the voyage, many years later.

In 1795, he was appointed as one of the company's agents, being sent out with a supply of goods to explore and establish posts on the west shore of Lake Michigan. The goods were contained in a large Mackinaw boat, heavily loaded and manned by twelve men. He, with his family...followed in a large bark canoe, in which was also stored the camping equipage. My father's clerk, on that trip, was Mike le Petteel. The expedition started from Mackinaw in July. The first important camping place, furnishing a good harbor, was where Kewaunee is now situated. My father, I am told, established a "jack knife" post near there, to open the



trade, and left a man in charge of it. Father was called Jean Beau by the Indians, and the creek upon which his post was situated was called Jean Beau [Jambo] creek by the Ottawas....He established a post, as well, at Sheboygan, at which he also left a clerk. 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. He also located a post, with a clerk, at Manitowoc, very near the rapids; and perhaps at other points along the lake shore, but I cannot recollect any details concerning them, if I ever was informed.<sup>20</sup>

Vieau did not live at his posts at Jambo Creek and at Manitowoc Rapids, but unidentified employees did live there each winter, trading with the local inhabitants for furs and maple sugar, which Vieau retrieved in the spring as he returned from Milwaukee to Mackinac.

Vieau's Jambo Creek trading post, northwest of Mishicot (in the present day town of Gibson), seems to have been located some distance away from the nearest villages. Later residents recalled villages along the lakeshore north of Two Rivers, on the East Twin River near Tisch Mills, and near Larrabee on the West Twin River.<sup>21</sup>

The Manitowoc Rapids trading post, on the other hand, was located very near the village of Etoigeshak and later his grandson Waumegasako. The village must have been similar in appearance to the village at Milwaukee, which was described by a visitor in 1800 as consisting of a number of bark lodges for summer use. Some of the lodges were quite long, divided inside for the use of several families. Each family cultivated fields of sweet corn, pumpkins, beans, melons, and potatoes, up to five or six acres per family. The fields were rudely fenced, with bushes, poles, and brush, against intrusions by horses, since the people had no cows or hogs. The Manitowoc Rapids village was located on higher ground near the rapids, while the fields were found on the flats along the river. Vieau's trading post was located on the flats downstream from the rapids.<sup>22</sup>

Another trader at Milwaukee provided a glimpse of the native settlement at Two Rivers in 1804. Thomas G. Anderson had established a post at Milwaukee in 1803,

where he served as an employee of Jacob Franks of Green Bay. In the winter of 1804, as he relates the story,

...having no society, and little to do, I was naturally enough very lonely. I, therefore, undertook a journey along the lake shore, to visit my friend, Jacob Frank[s], at Green Bay. The first day's journey brought me to an encampment of Pottawotamies, at Two Rivers, nearly seventy miles distant, reaching there before night. I put up at the lodge of an old Indian chief, named Nanaboujou...Next morning at day-break, I journeyed on my snow-shoes, cutting across a point of land, and after a hard day's tramp, I at length reached my destination.<sup>23</sup>

Anderson's story tells little about the people at Two Rivers, and the details of the story may not be completely accurate, since it would have been very difficult for him to travel seventy miles on snowshoes along the lake shore in one day, but it is the only mention of the area between the time Jacques Vieau established his trading posts and the beginning of full American control in northeastern Wisconsin after the War of 1812.

It was during this same period that the name Manitowoc first appeared on maps of the region. An 1804 map seems to be the first to use the name "Manawoc River," although on this map the name is attached to the Twin Rivers. Over the next two decades, the names "Maurice" and "Mauvaise" were attached to either the Manitowoc or the Twin Rivers on a number of maps. Beginning in 1820 the name "Manitowacky River" was used, although the name was initially confused with the Milwaukee or Menomonee River. It was not until the 1830's that maps consistently used the name Manitowoc (or Manitowakee) for the Manitowoc River. Likewise it was only in the 1830's that the name Twin Rivers began to be used on maps to designate the East and West Twin Rivers, although their distinct form had appeared on maps as early as 1673.<sup>24</sup>

Even though the United States took formal control of the Great Lakes region in 1796, when the British gave up their posts at Mackinac, Detroit, and other locations, it was many years before the Americans fully controlled northeastern Wisconsin. Over the years, the Americans gradually asserted some control over the

traders and settlers centered at Green Bay. Jacob Franks, a Green Bay trader who was the employer of Thomas Anderson, took out an American fur trading license in 1801. In 1803, Charles Reaume, another Green Bay trader, was commissioned a county magistrate by the American territorial government. In spite of their American connections, the traders of Green Bay did not renounce their allegiance to Britain, and there was no direct American presence in northeastern Wisconsin in this period.

The coming of the War of 1812 led many of the residents of northeastern Wisconsin, both European and native, to abandon whatever attachments they had developed with the Americans and work for the return of British power in the region. In the early weeks of the war the American forts at Mackinac and Detroit were taken by the British, and the fort at Chicago was burned, ending for the time being American influence on the upper Great Lakes. Jacques Vieau and Thomas Anderson, along with many of the other traders in the area, worked as scouts and militia members in support of the British forces. Many northeastern Wisconsin native warriors also supported the British army. La Chandelle, leader of a village on the East Twin River near Tisch Mills, is supposed to have participated in the burning of the American Fort Dearborn at Chicago, and the subsequent massacre of its inhabitants.<sup>25</sup>

But not all the northeastern Wisconsin natives worked for the British cause during the war. Waumegasako, leader of the village at Manitowoc Rapids, and his brother Thunder, were reported to have fought on the American side in the Americans' attempt to retake Mackinac in 1814.<sup>26</sup>

### THE AMERICANS ARRIVE

In spite of the continued British control of the upper Great Lakes during the war, the peace treaty signed at the end of 1814 returned the region to American rule. When it retook control of the upper Great Lakes, the United States government determined to strongly assert its authority over the area, to end British influence over the natives and traders. One aspect of this policy was expressed in 1816, when fur trade



licenses were restricted to United States citizens, and Indian agents were put in charge of issuing licenses. In addition, a chain of forts was planned to block British use of the Fox and Wisconsin Rivers. As part of this program, Fort Howard was built at Green Bay in the summer of 1816. An Indian agency was established there that same year.

In 1818 Wisconsin became part of

by way of the Wisconsin and Fox Rivers and Lake Michigan. The expedition passed Manitowoc August 25, 1820. Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, the expedition's 27-year-old geologist, provided a detailed description of the region in his report.

In coasting forty miles along the shore, we came to the mouth of a large stream, called Manitowacky, where there is a village of Menomonie In-

careous pebbles, & c. In walking along some parts of the shore, I observed a great number of the skeletons and half consumed bodies of the pigeon, which, in crossing the lake, is often overtaken by severe tempests, and compelled to alight upon the water, and thus drowned, in entire flocks, which are soon thrown up along the shores. This causes the shores of Lake Michigan to be visited by vast numbers of buzzards, eagles, and other birds of prey. The Indians also make use of these pigeons, as food, when they are first driven ashore, preserving such in smoke, as they have not immediate occasion for. Vast broods of young gulls, are also destroyed during the violent storms, which frequently agitate this lake.<sup>27</sup>

Schoolcraft was unusual among travellers of this era in identifying the residents of the Manitowoc River as Menominee, but the traditions of the Menominee recorded at later time did include a band located at Manitowoc.<sup>28</sup>

After the United States took control of northeastern Wisconsin, the fur trade continued for a time much as it had before. The major Green Bay traders, Jacques Porlier, John Lawe, and the Grignon family, became American citizens by 1820, with the help of their associates in the American Fur Company, which had assumed the dominant role in the United States fur trade.

Traders returned to Manitowoc County early in the development of the new American trading system. Francois Bouthillier received one of the earliest licenses under the new system, and spent the winter of 1816/1817 at Two Rivers, working for Jacques Porlier.<sup>29</sup>

In the fall of 1823, John Lawe learned that a competitor, Moses Swan, intended to winter at Manitowoc. By the end of December, Lawe reported to Jacques Porlier that "This trader Swan that is at Munnetoowek he is a waisting his goods as hard as he can I think he will by soon done." Lawe's evaluation of Swan's business sense seems to have been merely wishful thinking, as Swan, later with his partner Isaac Haertzel, made successful trading voyages from Green Bay to Manitowoc, Sheboygan, and Milwaukee, each year until 1833.<sup>30</sup>

Swan and Haertzel were not the only traders in Manitowoc County, although they may have been the



*Alexis Clermont began carrying the mail from Green Bay to Chicago, on a route through Manitowoc County, as a young man, in 1832. Much later in life he put on his buckskins again to recreate that era for a photographer.*

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the territory of Michigan. Two years later, the territorial governor, Lewis Cass, set out from Detroit, the territorial capital, on a summer expedition to investigate conditions in his new domain and to promote settlement. After exploring Lake Superior and the Upper Mississippi Valley, Cass's party returned to Detroit

dians, of six lodges. Five miles beyond, we encamped upon the beach, having progressed fifteen leagues, as indicated by a lunar observation. The country consists of a succession of sand hills, covered with pine. The banks of the lake are elevated from twenty to sixty feet, with a broad sand beach, strewn with granitic and cal-



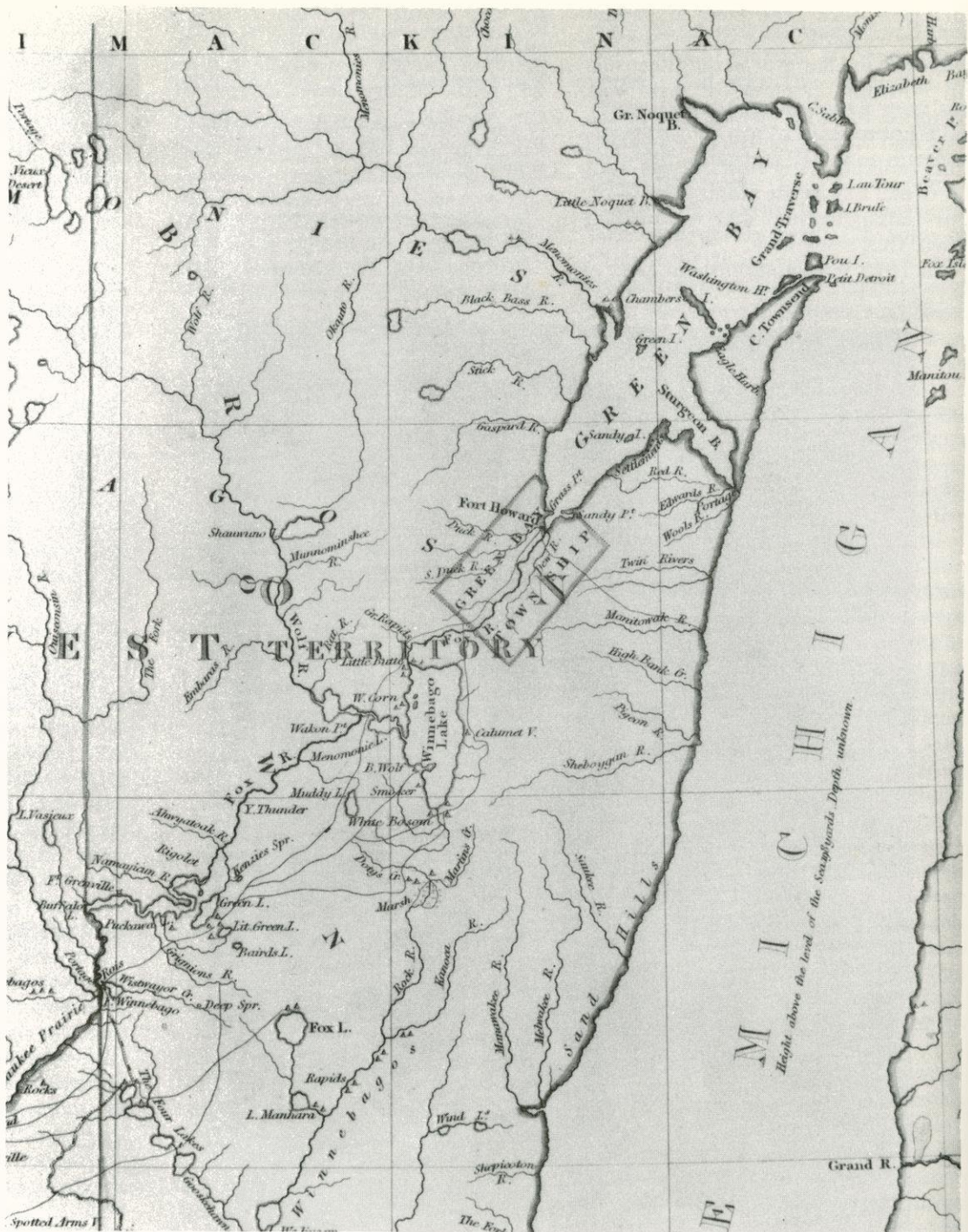
most successful. In the fall of 1824, Lawe's employee Baptiste Jacobs reported making no credits at Manitowoc or Sheboygan. Jacobs did not even see any natives to trade with.<sup>31</sup>

In the fall of 1832, another competitor for Swan and Haertzel appeared when Joshua Boyd received a license from his father, the Indian agent in Green Bay, to trade at Two Rivers. Boyd was murdered in a dispute over credit in the vicinity of Washington Island before the winter trading season even began. The small size of the fur trade at Two Rivers is indicated by Boyd's meager outfit, at \$117.89 the smallest of all the Green Bay licenses of that year.<sup>32</sup>

While the fur trade continued in Manitowoc County and the rest of northeastern Wisconsin, the development of Fort Howard and the adjacent settlement at Green Bay led to a gradual increase in the number of other travellers passing through the county. Unlike in previous years, most of them now travelled by land, not by canoe on Lake Michigan.

#### ROAD TRAVEL

Postal service was a necessity for the military establishment at Fort Howard. A post office was opened at Green Bay in 1823, but mail service began even before that. The post commander arranged the service and soldiers contributed to the cost of hiring a civilian to carry the mail. In the winter, mail was carried on foot to Fort Dearborn at Chicago.<sup>33</sup>



*It was not until the 1830s that the names Manitowoc River and Twin Rivers (or Two Rivers) were consistently used on maps to identify the major geographic features of Manitowoc County. This map of 1833 was one of the most accurate depictions of northeastern Wisconsin printed before the surveys of 1834 and 1835 fixed the names and locations of geographic features.*

*DETAIL OF SOCIETY FOR THE DIFFUSION OF USEFUL KNOWLEDGE, The North West and Michigan Territories (LONDON: SDUK, 1833). COURTESY OF THE MICHIGAN HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS, BENTLEY HISTORICAL LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN.*

For seven winters beginning in 1817, Moses Hardwick carried the mail. Hardwick was 26 years old, a recently discharged soldier, when he started carrying the mail. He and his successors John H. Fonda, who car-

ried the mail in the winter of 1827/1828, and Alexis Clermont, who carried mail from 1832 to 1836 and was 24 years old when he began, all have left reminiscences of their experiences. To carry a sixty-



pound pack of mail on snowshoes for two weeks or more between Green Bay and Chicago, and then to look forward to another two weeks walk to return to Green Bay required great strength and endurance. The mail carriers travelled by way of either Manitowoc or Fond du Lac, depending on snow conditions.<sup>34</sup>

Fonda leaves a romanticized description of a winter trip through Manitowoc County, with stops at what might be Devils River and the mouth of the Manitowoc River.

We left Green Bay on foot, carrying our arms, blankets and provisions. We had to pass through a country, as then little known to white men, depending on our compass and the course of rivers to keep the right direction. Taking an Indian trail that led in a south-easterly direction, we passed through dense pine woods, cedar swamps, now and then a grove of red oak, some of which reared their heads heaven-ward, and had for ages braved the fury of a thousand storms. Frequently would we disturb a gang of deer that had made their "yard" in the heavily timbered bottoms. And as we continued to plunge deeper and deeper into the primeval forest, and to proceed farther on our course, the tracks of the fisher and mink became more frequent, and occasionally a wild cat would get its quietus in the form of a rifle ball. Once, at night-fall, we encamped on a branch of what I now know to have been the Center River. This stream was a live spring, several yards in width, and was not frozen over. It made several beautiful cascades as it flowed over the rocks. Under a projecting bank, Boiseley found the water perfectly alive with trout, and taking from his pack the light camp-kettle, he dipped out a mess of splendid speckled fellows, that relished well after being fried over the campfire. In the evening after collecting a huge pile of wood, we heaped the snow up to wind-ward, and in the lee of the snow-bank scattered some branches, on which we spread our blankets, and laid down with the packs beneath our heads, to listen to a serenade from the wolves. The night was spent in smoking, keeping fire, and intervals of sleep.

Leaving the trail at this tributary or branch of Center River we followed the creek down to the main stream, which ran in a south-east direction, and then taking a southerly course, we traveled a distance of twenty miles, and then struck another river. Following this due east, through a rough, but heavily timbered country, we arrived at the bank

of the Lake, on the second day after striking the river. It was near sun-down when we made our camp near the mouth of this stream; and again within sight of the roaring breakers, a load of uncertainty was taken from me, for with such a guide, there was no going astray. It was decided that we should keep along the shore, at least where it could be done without diverging from a direct line running north and south; all head lands and points we crossed, instead of going around them. The roughness and difficulty of our track, on account of the icy mountains formed by the industry of the breakers and Jack Frost, made it a "hard road to travel." But trudging along through the snow, climbing over ledges of ice that in some places extended up the bank, and plunging through gullies and ravines, we managed to make good head-way.<sup>35</sup>

Mail service was not the only requirement of the community at Fort Howard. The local food supply was not adequate for the soldiers there. Cattle had to be driven from Illinois to meet their needs. One route for these cattle drives was along the Lakeshore through Manitowoc County. Cattle straying from the herds from time to time presented tempting targets for native hunters. One encounter, in the fall of 1819, was related by Col. Joseph L. Smith.

Toward the close of November a herd of Cattle, for the Assistant Commissary at this Post, having arrived within two days march, the drover near Manitouwauk upon the Shore of Lake Michigan, was attacked by several Indians, robbed of his Portmanteau (suitcase) etc., and one of the Cattle taken from him and killed. Several Soldiers were employed in conducting these cattle, but the drover at this time, had fallen some miles in the rear, with a view of bringing up such as had strayed behind when the Indians availed themselves of the opportunity, thus presented, to plunder him as above....The attack upon the drover, at Manitouwauk was committed by several young chippewas, one of whom after consultation with the Indian agent, was arrested and confined in the Fort: He was treated with kindness, and upon the exhibition of much sorrow for his misconduct, the solicitation of his relatives and their promise to make compensation to the owner of the Cattle, was set at liberty. Those concerned with him left the vicinity and could not be apprehended.<sup>36</sup>

In the summer of 1827, 30-year-old

Ebenezer Childs, concerned by hostilities among the Winnebago in the western part of Wisconsin, made a difficult drive from Illinois along the lakeshore.

I struck the lake where Port Washington, or Ozaukee, now is. We were out of provisions, except fresh beef, and had been for a long time. I was compelled to kill a young creature every two or three days; we had no salt, and the weather was so warm, that the meat soon spoiled, and we had nothing whatever to eat with it.

We followed the lake shore to Sheboygan, where we tarried a few days to recruit the cattle ... We next aimed at Manitowoc; and at Pine River the trail or path passed near the bank of the Lake. I had heavy packs on my blind horse....and unfortunately in his blindness he struck his pack against a tree, which gave a lee lurch, and over the bank he went some eighty feet down to the Lake shore, before reaching which he was stripped of his packs by some of the old trees which had slid down the bank, through which and over which he passed during his exciting if not fatal adventure. I looked over the bank, and saw my poor blind horse stretched on the sand beach, and apparently dead. The men went down and secured the packs, but left the horse alone "in his glory." We then made the rest of our way to Green Bay, where we arrived, July 3d, with two hundred and ten head of cattle.<sup>37</sup>

After rounding up his strays, Childs determined that Indians had killed 39 of his original 262 cattle.

William S. Hamilton, 28-year-old son of statesman Alexander Hamilton, drove cattle through Manitowoc County in the summer of 1825, but left only a brief narrative of his journey.<sup>38</sup>

Besides the official mail carriers and cattle drovers on contract with the army, the growth of the community at Fort Howard and Green Bay led to an increasing number of other travellers passing along the trail from Green Bay to Chicago through Manitowoc County. This trail followed approximately the path later taken by old Highway 141 (now County Highway R).<sup>39</sup>

One early traveller along this trail became the victim of the first recorded murder in Manitowoc County. In the spring of 1821, Dr. William S. Madison, a surgeon at Fort Howard, with a party of three soldiers, was travelling from Green Bay to visit his



wife in Kentucky and their newborn child, when he met an Indian named Ketawkah. James D. Doty related what happened to them in a letter written a few months later.

The Indian, Ketawkah, had left the Bay the day previous, had passed the Indian Village on the Manatoowack river on his way to Cheboigan, on the west side of Lake Michigan to see a relative of his, but had turned back and was returning to the Bay. When the Doct. met him, he was standing by the side of a tree apparently unemployed. The Indian says the Doct. addressed him, and said something from which he understood they wanted him to guide him to Chicago. As he knew he should get something to eat from them, he concluded he would go with them as far as Cheboigan. Accordingly he fell in with the party about 2 P.M., and walked on until they had passed the Manitowack river about three miles. They came to a small rise of ground over which two of the sold. had passed, and the other was by the side of the Doctors horse, and both were just on the top. The Indian was about two rods in the rear and was at the foot of the hill, when a gun was fired in the rear, and Madison received the charge in his shoulders and in the back of his neck, and immediately fell from his horse. The Indian instantly disappeared. The Doct. exclaimed—"Oh, why has that Indian shot me—I never did him or any of them injury.—To kill me too when I was just returning to my wife and my little child which I have never seen—it is more painful than death." His conversation was very pathetic, as related by the soldier, and all who heard him were greatly affected.—the Indian says he shot him without any cause or malice—that the thought came into his head about two minutes before, that he would kill one of the 4—and when he saw the Doct. on the top of the hill, he "concluded he would fire at him, to see how pretty he would fall off his horse."

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The report of a Mr. Du Charme of Green Bay provides more details of the tragedy of Dr. Madison. Ketawkah was already acquainted with the doctor, according to Du Charme, as Madison had apparently been having an affair with Ketawkah's sister. This relationship was not, however, the cause of the murder, in Du Charme's account. In this version of the story, Ketawkah visited a nearby Indian village while the doctor's party was camped near Manitowoc. At the village, the warriors were commemorat-

ing their exploits by throwing a hatchet at a post, once for each person they had killed. After being taunted because he had never killed a man, Ketawkah determined to prove his worth and returned to the party to kill the doctor. Unfortunately for him, when he returned to the village and claimed the right to throw the hatchet, the warriors took him into custody. Ketawkah was executed in Detroit in the fall of 1821.<sup>41</sup>

Ketawkah's murder of Dr. Madison was not typical of relations between Americans and natives in northeastern Wisconsin in this period. Morgan L. Martin, a 28-year-old member of the territorial legislature, and two companions found a very different attitude among natives living near Sheboygan on a trip from Milwaukee to Green Bay in the summer of 1833. The travellers came upon a fishing net spread near the mouth of the Sheboygan River and "appropriated without ceremony" two fine fish they found in it. The next morning an Indian from the village there overtook the party, not to punish them for stealing his fish, but to supply them with additional dried and smoked whitefish "which we found quite palatable."<sup>42</sup>

When Martin and his companions passed through Manitowoc County in 1833, the land was no longer legally Indian country. It had been ceded to the United States by means of a series of treaties over the previous eight years. Manitowoc County was ceded by the Menominee in a treaty signed in Washington in 1831.

When their land was taken by the American Government, the native people of the west shore of Lake Michigan slowly began to move away from their homes, trying to find more congenial places to live. The results of this movement were felt even in Manitowoc County in the early 1830's, before any permanent American settlers appeared in the county.

#### THE NATIVE REMOVAL

In the fall of 1833, six thousand Potawatomi, Ojibwa, and Ottawa gathered at Chicago to sell the last of their land in the southern Lake Michigan area to the United States government. Waumegasako, leader of the village on the Manitowoc River, attended, as did Shomin, leader of the village at Two Rivers. Waumegasako

complained at the council that his people's land had been sold by the Menominee two years before without their permission. The treaty signed at Chicago provided for payments to satisfy Waumegasako's objection, but the money eventually went to American claimants, including relatives of Jacques Vieau and Joshua Boyd, rather than to Waumegasako and his people.<sup>43</sup>

As a result of the treaty of Chicago, the Potawatomi and other natives of the southern Lake Michigan region were given three years to leave the lands they sold. The governor of Illinois had anticipated this result in December 1832, when he ordered the Potawatomi to leave his state. Native communities from Illinois and Indiana began moving north along the west shore of Lake Michigan. Many paused in their journey at Sheboygan, Manitowoc, Two Rivers, and Kewaunee, bringing new villagers to these areas that were temporarily isolated from the American settlers.<sup>44</sup>

In the summer of 1835, Shomin, leader of the village at Two Rivers, inspected land along the Missouri River that was reserved by the government for the Potawatomi, but he did not approve of the region. Most of the villagers continued moving north, eventually stopping in northern Wisconsin among the Menominee, at Hannahville in Upper Michigan, and at Manitoulin Island, in Lake Huron, where many from Manitowoc and Two Rivers settled at Sheshewoning.<sup>45</sup>

As soon as the United States government received ownership of the land of northeastern Wisconsin, government agents began to gather information of the quality of the land and its suitability for settlement. In 1831 Samuel Stambaugh, Indian agent at Green Bay, inspected the territory ceded by the Menominee between Lake Winnebago and Lake Michigan. Stambaugh found the country in the triangular region between Fond du Lac, Milwaukee, and Manitowoc, quite pleasing. The land from Fond du Lac to Milwaukee was

...generally very fertile, well watered by the waters of Rocky river and various smaller streams, and contains a sufficient quantity of timber of the best kind and largest growth. ... [T]he timber on its borders is hickory, Oak, Hard Maple, Beech, and some Black Walnut. The whole extent of country between Milwaukee and Manitowoc rivers, is rep-



resented as being equal in value to that I have just described. From the mouth of Milwaukee or Manaywaukee, to the mouth, or entrance into Lake Michigan, of Manatoowoc river, the distance of probably seventy miles. ... About thirty miles below Manatoowoc the "Three rivers" empty into the Lake, through one mouth, which will doubtless be a place of some importance when the country populates. There are several valuable fisheries on the coast, where the celebrated white fish is this country are caught, in great numbers; but unfortunately there have been but few harbors for vessels found on the coast.

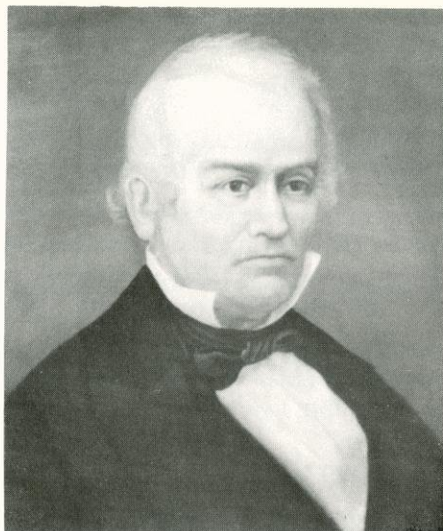
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Before the territory purchased from the natives could be opened for American settlers, the land had to be surveyed by government surveyors. The land survey in Wisconsin began in 1831 with the survey of the lead mining region of the southwestern part of the state. By the summer of 1834 the surveyors had reached Manitowoc County.

The surveys were carried out by some of the leading citizens of the territory. Byron Kilbourn was 33 years old when he began his survey of the southern part of Manitowoc County in 1834. The following year he purchased land on the Milwaukee River and began promoting the city of Milwaukee, ultimately becoming mayor of the city. Albert G. Ellis, age 34 when he began surveying the northern part of Manitowoc County, was already a leading newspaper publisher in Green Bay, and later became surveyor general of Wisconsin and mayor of Stevens Point.

Kilbourn was not pleased with the working conditions in the towns of Newton, Liberty, and Eaton in the fall of 1834.

...Should my district throughout be as bad as the Tps. run, I think I hazard but little in supposing that an equal extent of unfavorable Country for the Surveyor, cannot easily be found—The excessive fatigue of traversing Cedar Swamps—sinking through their mossy surface into the water & mud, clambering over a continual series of fallen timber as craggy as a hedge, or creeping through thickets of the closest kind, the profuse perspiration consequent on such exertions in warm weather, added to the continual wetness of the feet & legs—is what should only be undertaken and executed by a constitution of iron.



*Albert G. Ellis (left) and Byron Kilbourn (right) were in their 30s in 1834 and 1835, when they surveyed parts of Manitowoc County for the United States government. Their work led quickly to the sale of the lands in the county to speculators and settlers, and the end of the era of infrequent travel in Manitowoc County.*

*BOTH PORTRAITS COURTESY OF THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WISCONSIN.*

But when he was describing the quality of the land, Kilbourn found much to admire in those same townships.

The country which I have surveyed thus far, is favourably situated for agricultural and commercial purposes—The quality of the soil is generally of the first order, with the exception of occasional stony and gravelly ridges, and of the Cedar Swamps; which in Some Cases are too extensive and destitute of good timber for the benefit of the surrounding tracts; but in many cases they will be of great value to the Country; greater perhaps, than an equal extent of more valuable land with less valuable timber—In most cases the Cedar Swamps lie in connection with the first quality of soil, surrounding it, or surrounded by it—

I have never seen a tract of Country of equal extent with the Tps. which I have surveyed, so uniformly well watered in all its parts as are these—It is a rare occurrence to find a section or a quarter section, which has not its springs or permanent streams running through it—There are very few dry runs, even in the driest seasons...<sup>47</sup>

Ellis found the area on both sides of the Manitowoc-Kewaunee County line a similar mixture of fine and poor quality lands.

As a General rule, a line drawn at the distance of from seven to Nine miles

from, & parallel to, Lake Michigan makes a division between good and bad Country: the country on the inside (or E) of the line is for the most part forbidding while on the outside of it to the extent of 6 or 8 miles is with some exceptions a fine, rolling, hard timbered land capable of high cultivation. The East branch of Twin Rivers has its source principally from springs, in Town 23, 23 in a fine Country but it hardly leaves the Township on the W. boundary before it falls into a swamp which it does not part with until it had made six miles of southing. No very pleasant illustration of the "line of division", —on the other hand Benton Creek has its source near the same place, meanders through a very promising contry its whole length thro' Town 22, (23) and in Town 21, (23) falls into W. Branch Twin R. a noble stream which continues through a good Contry to the South Boundary.<sup>48</sup>

A land office was opened in Green Bay in 1835, and with the survey completed a land sale was proclaimed in August of that year. Land along the Manitowoc River was immediately purchased, by William Jones and others and Manitowoc County quickly shifted from being a place of native villages and infrequent travellers to a place of land speculators, town builders, and settlers.

A few traces of that older Manitowoc County remained: some native villagers stayed in the county for decades after American settlement



began, and artifacts marked the sites of their settlements for decades after that; a few place names, Manitowoc, Mishicot, Nashotah, were preserved from the earlier inhabitants; the major settlements in the county, at

Manitowoc Rapids, at the mouth of the Manitowoc River, and at Two Rivers, were built at the sites of earlier settlements; the main road to Green Bay preserved the route of the earlier foot path. On the whole, how-

ever, the American settlement of Manitowoc County quickly hid any reminders of the county's earliest exposure to French, British, and American travellers.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Barthelemy Vimont, "The Journey of Jean Nicolet, 1634," in *Early Narratives of the Northwest, 1634-1699*, ed. Louise Phelps Kellogg (New York: Scribners, 1917), 16.
2. James B. Griffin, "A Hypothesis for the Prehistory of the Winnebago," in *Culture in History: Essays in Honor of Paul Radin*, ed. Stanley Diamond (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), 846.
3. Carol I. Mason, *Introduction to Wisconsin Indians: Prehistory to Statehood* (Salem, Wis.: Sheffield Publishing Co., 1988), 87.
4. Pierre Esprit Radisson, *The Explorations of Pierre Esprit Radisson*, ed. Arthur T. Adams (Minneapolis: Ross & Haines, 1961), 91.
5. Grace Lee Nute, *Caesars of the Wilderness: Medard Chouart, Sieur des Groseilliers and Pierre Esprit Radisson, 1618-1710* (New York: Appleton-Century, 1943), 30, 37.
6. The map is reproduced in Joseph P. Donnelly, *Jacques Marquette, S.J., 1637-1675* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1968), 333.
7. Jacques Marquette, "Marquette's Last Voyage," in Kellogg, ed., *Early Narratives*, 263. For the identification of Two Rivers, see Donnelly, *Jacques Marquette*, 239-240. Raphael N. Hamilton, *Marquette's Explorations: The Narratives Reexamined* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1970), 145, identifies the location as Kewaunee. For the identification of Sheboygan, see Donnelly, *Jacques Marquette*, 240. William Joseph Sino, "Up Country: Voices From the Midwestern Wilderness" (Madison: Round River Publishing Co., 1985), 61, identifies Marquette's Nov. 3 stopping place as the Manitowoc River.
8. Claude Allouez, "Narrative of a Voyage made to the Illinois," in *Discovery and Exploration of the Mississippi Valley*, John Gilmary Shea, ed. (Albany: McDonough, 1903), 73-75.
9. R. David Edmunds, *The Potawatomis, Keepers of the Fire* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978), 15-16; James E. Fitting and Charles E. Cleland, "Late Prehistoric Settlement Patterns in the Upper Great Lakes," *Ethnohistory* 16 (Fall 1969): 297.
10. Carol I. Mason, "In Search of the Island of the Potawatomis," *Chronicle* 15 (Summer 1979): 7.
11. Rene Robert Caveller, *Sieur de La Salle from 1679 to 1681* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg, 1903), 122-129; Louis Hennepin, *A Description of Louisiana*, trans. John Gilmary Shea (1880; reprint, Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1966) 108-118.
12. Zenobius Membre, "Narrative of the Adventures of La Salle's Party at Fort Crevecoeur, in Illinois," in *Discovery*, Shea, ed., 161-164; Henre de Tonty, "Memoir on La Salle's Discoveries, by Tonty, 1678-1690 [1693]," in *Early Narratives*, Kellogg, ed., 294-295; for the identification of Manitowoc, see Marion A. Habig, *The Franciscan Pere Marquette: A Critical Biography of Father Zenobe Membre, O.F.M., La Salle's Chaplain and Missionary Companion, 1645 (ca.)-1689* (New York: Joseph F. Wagner, 1934), 71.



13. Jean Francois Buisson de St. Cosme, "The Voyage of St. Cosme, 1698-1699," in *Early Narratives*, Kellogg, ed., 344-345. It took the party four days to travel from the first Potawatomi village (not far from the Sturgeon Bay portage) to the village with the cross, and three days from the village with the cross to Milwaukee, which is specifically identified. The mouth of the Manitowoc River is about 58 miles from the Sturgeon Bay Canal, assumed to be near the old portage route. The Milwaukee River is a further 82 miles. The Sheboygan River is 83 miles from the canal and 57 miles from the Milwaukee River, which fits the travel time better. For biographical sketches of the Marest brothers, see *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1966-), v. 2.
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16. Louis Falge, "Indian Remains in Manitowoc County," *Wisconsin Archeologist* 14, no. 4 (Dec. 1915): 133.
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19. Harold A. Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada: An Introduction to Canadian Economic History*, rev. ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 296-207; Jeanne Kay, "Wisconsin Indian Hunting Patterns, 1634-1836," *Annals Association of American Geographers*, 69 (Sept. 1979): 408.
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25. For La Chandelle, see James Sibree Anderson, "Indians of Manitowoc County," 163.
26. Lawson, "The Potawatomi," 52.
27. Schoolcraft, *Narrative Journal*, 380-381.
28. Alanson B. Skinner, *Material Culture of the Monomini, Indian Notes and Monographs, Miscellaneous*, no. 20 (New York: Museum of the American Indian, 1920): 381.
29. "The Fur Trade in Wisconsin, 1815-1817," ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites, *Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin* 19 (1910): 446.
30. "The Fur Trade in Wisconsin, 1812-1825," *Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin* 20 (1911): 318, 323, 328, 332, 337; Albert G. Ellis, "Fifty-four Years' Recollections of Men and Events in Wisconsin," *Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin* 7 (1876): 240.
31. "The Fur Trade in Wisconsin, 1812-1825," 360.
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33. Francis Paul Prucha, *Broadax and Bayonet: the Role of the United States Army in the Development of the Northwest, 1815-1860* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1953), 188.



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### Further Reading

For a more comprehensive background on the early period of Wisconsin history, see Louise Phelps Kellog, *The French Regime in Wisconsin and the Northwest* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1925), which deals with the period from about 1600 to 1760; Louise Phelps Kellog, *The British Regime in Wisconsin and the Northwest* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1935), which deals with the period between 1760 and 1815; Alice E. Smith, *The History of Wisconsin. Vol. 1: From Exploration to Statehood* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1973), which concentrates on the period from 1815 to 1846; and Carol I. Mason, *Introduction to Wisconsin Indians: Prehistory to Statehood* (Salem, Wis.: Sheffield Publishing Co., 1988).