



## **History of the city of Manitowoc from 1850 to 1860. Monograph 56 1985**

Hubbard, Caroline

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# History of the City of Manitowoc From 1850 to 1860

SEP 4 1985

by: Caroline Hubbard  
1904

## PREFACE

The following resolution was passed by the Library Board, February twenty-seventh, nineteen hundred and three, and the accompanying historical sketch was prepared and accepted in accordance therewith.

"Resolved, That there be, and there hereby is made to the senior classes of the High Schools of Manitowoc City and the Training School of Manitowoc County, the following proposition:

1. Written presentations are invited upon subjects of local history, including local biography; each paper must be neatly prepared in typewriting in readiness for the printer, and contain not less than 10,000 nor more than 15,000 words; no name and no designation of the author shall be upon or appended to the manuscript, but upon a separate accompanying slip shall be given the name of the author and the school of whose senior class he or she is a member. Such manuscript shall be delivered by the principal of the school to the president of the Library Board not later than the 20th of May in each year.

2. Such papers shall be placed in the hands of three judges to be selected by this board who shall report in writing, ranking them first, second, third, etc., according to their respective merits, and file such report with the chairman of the Library Board not later than the 15th day of June each year. The student who has first place according to the markings of the majority of judges shall be declared the winner. In case no such decision be reached the sum of the ranks shall be taken and the lowest sum shall win. The subjects for the papers of each year will be announced by this board on or before the first day of October.

The first prize was awarded in 1903 to Otto Gass of the North Side High School, Class of 1903.

## HISTORY of the CITY of MANITOWOC from 1850 to 1860

Few persons except those who have attempted the task can appreciate the difficulties to be encountered in preparing the history of a city of which so little is on record. Facts gleaned from personal recollections are generally fragmentary in character and often unsatisfactory to the writer, bearing the marks which time never fails to impress and the uncertainties which accompany observation when not directed by a definite purpose. The old settler finds delight in relating

the events connected with his early life, his reminiscences are usually suited to a narrative embracing various anecdotes rather than to be a part of the authentic record of brief historic facts. Besides memory is not exempt from the ravages of time. Many of the early settlers of the city have passed from the scenes in which they were prominent actors. Those that remain to contrast the progressive present with the laborious past, in which is bound the greater part of their life work, suffer often from infirmities which make the past painful and the present obscure. Searching thru the printed recollections of the early inhabitants of Wisconsin we find that mention of Manitowoc is seldom made. The persons to whom I am most indebted and to whom I wish to extend my most cordial thanks for their kind help are:

— Mr. and Mrs. Perry P. Smith; Mr. and Mrs. Harvey F. Hubbard; Mrs. A. Wittman; Mr. H. Wittman; Judge Anderson; Mr. S.A. Wood; Judge Markham; Mr. Robert Blake; Mr. John Schuette; and Mrs. Charles Fitch.

During the year of 1850 the census of Manitowoc city and county was taken by Deputy Marshall Bennett. The entire population of the county was found to be 3,702 and that of the city 756. The population of the county in 1860 was 22,416. So the decade from 1850 to 1860 was very important in the growth of the city as well as the county.

The people who came into the village between 1850 and 1860 were mostly Germans. During that time a number of the early German settlers sold out their homes in Freistadt, Cedarburg and Kirchhain and came to Sheboygan and Manitowoc Counties where land was much cheaper. Mr. Richter did much to influence German settlers to come and settle in Manitowoc. In his letters to his German friends he recommended Manitowoc as a very suitable place for a home on account of its healthful climate, facility for navigation, fertile soil, and especially for its tillable lands, bountiful supply of good drinking water, and its fine quality of timber. In the year 1859, fifty

emigrants came from Germany and made permanent homes near the Calumet Road. These people proved to be very valuable citizens. Among the families that came here at that time or a few years before were Esslinger, Rahr, Schuette, Klingholz, Baensch, Richter, Lueps, and Koch. These Germans were mostly engaged in merchandizing or brewing in a small way and some of them or their sons are still engaged in the same business; but on a much larger scale.

Among the Scandinavians who came at that time were Christian Anderson, a former lighthouse keeper; J. Halverson; A. Silverson; and O. Torrison the father of the present Torrison firm. The American population that came into the village at that time did much for the health and welfare of the inhabitants. Messrs. Preston Zealey, Easton Schenck and Simon came as physicians; and Messrs. Ricker, Colby and Wood, came as lawyers. All nationalities were represented in Manitowoc at this time. There was an Irish settlement in the vicinity of the Building Supply Company. Here it was that such men as Captain Timothy Kelley spent their boyhood days.

Most of the inhabitants in the surrounding country were engaged in cutting trees for cordwood, sawing it into lumber and making shingles. The occupations of the people of the village were multifarious — such as are usually incident to the building up of a village or city — no special line of business predominated, except shipbuilding. Then, as now, from the common laborer up, each did something for a living, according to the demand, and qualifications for the service required. There were quite a number of sawmills here previous to 1860, Mr. Guyles's mill was where the Johnson Coal Yards now are; Stuart's mill was on South Eighth Street near the bridge; B. Jones & Co.'s where the coal dock is at the foot of Chicago Street. Mr. Stuart's mill in 1853 was where Mr. Rozinski has his furniture store now. One day while the men were at work, suddenly they heard a great

crash; the boiler had blown out and had gone about four hundred feet from the mill. No one was hurt but the incident caused a great deal of excitement. The wages paid in the sawmills were generally very low, varying from six to eight shillings a day. Often the wages were paid in store pay, as at that time money was very scarce in Manitowoc. In a great many cases shingles were used in place of money. Mr. Wittman relates that at dances, the young men paid for their tickets with a pack of shingles. Oftentimes unfairness crept into this method of paying. The first young man would present his pack of shingles and the host would tell him to put the pack around the corner of the house. Then the next man would slip behind the house and, taking this same pack of shingles, would present it to the host, and the host would tell him to put it around the corner of the house. In this way each guest would present the same pack and the host would thus be cheated out of his evening's earnings. In 1855 Manitowoc began its shipbuilding interest. The shipyard was established where Torrison's store now stands. The first schooner built there was the El Tempo, built by Mr. Goodwin. In 1856 another shipyard was started on the south side of the river near the present site of the electric light plant. Several vessels were built by Mr. Bates. About the same time a number of vessels were built in a yard just west of the present dry docks. A very large number of vessels were built in Manitowoc during the next few years. In the winter of 1859-1860 the first steamboat was built and called the "Union".

In 1848 the firm of Hinkley and Allen built the south pier, which was bought up by Oliver Hubbard for his son, Erwin. Early in the fifties Mr. Jones built a bridge pier at the east end of Chicago Street. These piers proved of great importance to the city, as they made markets for all the wood which was purchased by the steamers from farmers for miles around. Soon after, the north pier went into the hands of Johnson and Hodges, they ran it until the harbors were improved, which happened soon after 1860. The piles seen above the water of the lake at the foot of Chicago Street are the remnants of what once was the north pier. The amount of shipping business and the value of the commerce of Manitowoc was not known abroad. The following vessels hailed from here and were actively employed in conveying to other to ports on Lake Michigan the products of Manitowoc and other counties tributary to the commerce of this city; — Schooner, Joe Vilas, commanded by Captain Albrecht; Belle by H. Edwards; El Tempo, by Mr. Hughes; Gertrude, by J. Edwards; Charlotte, by Fulton; Jane Louise, by

Mr. Rahr; Traveller, by Mr. Wright; Colonel Glover, by Mr. Koehler; Gesine, by Mr. Weckselberg; Two Charlies, by Mr. Stevenson. Most of these, if not all of them, were ranked as "A No. 1," and some of the quickest trips were made by them. They averaged a trip a week between this port of Chicago, both ways, and it was not unusual to make a trip in fifteen to twenty hours between ports. The Manitowoc vessels were some of the best built and fastest sailors on the western waters. As there were few connections with the outside world, the first steamer in the Spring was a welcome sight. The "Queen of the Lake" was the first propeller here.

The exports were chiefly lumber, cedarposts, and shingles. Almost everything required for domestic purposes was imported, sometimes from the older settled parts of Wisconsin but more often from Chicago. However toward the close of 1860, as the clearing of the land which was originally an unbroken wilderness became more extended, some of the farmers began to raise agricultural products beyond their needs and thus the importations, previously necessary, were gradually reduced. The larger vessels bringing the imports to our city could not come up the river; only small boats could venture up because at that time the river was but a stream. Both Mr. H. Wittman and Mr. J. Schuette remember to have waded across the river at its mouth when the water did not go above their knees. The boats that carried passengers had no schedule time for coming and going, and oftentimes when a person wished to go away he had to wait a whole day and sometimes longer for a boat. The mails on account of irregularity of the trips were greatly hampered; and often the stages that carried the mails were very slow and could not be depended upon. Although within seventy-five miles of Milwaukee, with a steamboat plying between both places every day, yet it consumed three days to receive a letter or paper from that city. Some idea may be formed of the business of Manitowoc generally when we take its shingle trade alone in consideration. From April 2 to July 1st, 1859, Mr. O.H. Platt shipped 23,000,000 shingles and still had on hand 2,000,000 more. The ox teams hauling lumber came from the neighboring vicinities in long processions. These ox teams were very slow but nevertheless they did much to help the people in the early days of Manitowoc. On July 25, 1859, while the schooner Belle, commanded by Captain Henry Edwards, was lying at the dock, some desperate character bored a hole in her bottom, and sunk her. All on board, numbering as nearly as could be ascertained about fifty, were generally supposed to have been

lost.

Previous to 1850 there were no regular church services held in Manitowoc, and the only sermons heard were those preached by traveling ministers who chanced to pass thru the city. The St. James Episcopal Church was the second church built in the county of Manitowoc. The lot at the corner of Ninth and Chicago Streets was donated by B. Jones; the church was built by Rev. George Schetky, and consecrated by Bishop Kemper in July 1852. About three years later the St. Paul's Methodist Church was built on Seventh Street between State and Chicago Streets, on a lot donated by B. Jones. About the same time a little Catholic Church was built on the south side on the site of the present Catholic Church, on the corner of Tenth and Marshall Streets. The lot is said to have been donated by Charles Esslinger. During these ten years there was also a Presbyterian and a Lutheran Church built. The Presbyterian was on the east corner of Ninth and Chicago Sts. where Mr. Wittman now has his harness shop. The building, which was called the Tabernacle, was owned by Rev. Holmes who was the pastor. The Lutheran Church was on the corner of Eighth and Hamilton Streets.

There were two school houses built in the Second Ward during the fifties on the same ground which the North Side High School now occupies. The first, which fronted Sixth Street, is now used by the Jews as a church. The teachers, as our old settlers remember them, were Miss Louise Dunham; Mr. W. Waldo; Joseph Vilas, Sr.; J.W. Walker of Chicago. The second and larger one was built fronting Seventh Street. This school was established in 1857 and was the first graded school in the village. First there were two, and later three departments. The first principal was O.R. Bacon and Mrs. Dickenson as assistant; later Miss Edith Squires assisted Mr. Bacon. The first school house built in the First Ward was built on the corner of Seventh and Washington Streets and was called the "Red School House". Among the first teachers were Mr. Wood; Mr. Warren and Mr. Gibson. Here it was that Mr. John Schuette attended school.

In the year 1854 the "Manitowoc Seminary" was instituted at the special desire of several friends of practical education, living here. The plan was to introduce such studies as were taught in high schools or academies. The school was first opened in Mrs. Ricker's house, near the bridge, after Mr. August Wittman's arrival in 1854. After having been in operation only a few years, three lots were purchased on Seventh Street on the south side, and by means of a loan out of the school fund of the state and the

assistance of several citizens, a building was erected, fifty by twenty-five feet and two stories high. The school was then removed from its first location, and in the presence of all its friends opened with an exhibition, October, 1856. By 1859 several of its students had entered business and proved to have received a suitable education. German students were instructed in their own language until they acquired a sufficient knowledge of the English Language to be instructed therein. The principal studies taught were: — German, English, and French Languages, geometry, arithmetic, geography, history, reading, writing, natural history and philosophy, zoology and mineralogy in winter and botany in summer, drawing, vocal and instrumental music. The principal was Mr. August Wittman, who had come from Newark, N.J., where he had superintended a like institution until called to take charge of the Manitowoc Seminary. The building contained three rooms for instruction and a sufficient number more to accommodate five boarders. The terms of tuition were one hundred dollars per year. Music, except vocal, was forty dollars extra. Often the tuition was paid in pork and beans instead of money.

The people of Manitowoc at an early date realized the importance of transportation facilities, and persistent efforts were made to secure railway communications with other points. In 1850 there were cheering prospects that the Chicago, Milwaukee and Green Bay Railroad would be extended to Manitowoc. The road was graded some distance north of Milwaukee and then discontinued. In 1853 a charter was granted to the Michigan and Wisconsin Transit Railroad Company to build a railroad from Manitowoc into the northern peninsula of Michigan. It is remarkable for a number of its provisions not the least of which is that on rates: — "And said company shall transport merchandise, property, and persons upon said road without partiality or favor, and with all practicable dispatch, under penalty for each violation of this provision of one hundred dollars." Here we have the first attempt — conscious or unconscious — of the legislature of Wisconsin to prevent discriminations. Nothing came of this project.

The Manitowoc and Mississippi Railraod Company was incorporated by an Act of Legislature of the State of Wisconsin, passed on the 15th of March, 1851, and was authorized to construct a single or double track railway from Manitowoc to a point on the Mississippi River. The Act of Incorporation conferred upon the Company all necessary powers for procuring right of way, depot grounds, and materials for construction; and to

build branches to connect with other roads. By an act passed March 11th, 1854, the Company was further authorized to construct a branch railroad, with a single or double track, from such points east of the fourth meridian as may be determined by directors, to the state line between the State of Wisconsin and Minnesota, and with the consent of the Territory of Minnesota to continue such branch to St. Paul. The officers of this road were: George Reed, President; H.S. Palmer, Secretary; Jacob Lueps, Treasurer; C.R. Alton, Chief Engineer; Fred Salomon, First Assistant Engineer; Mr. Robert Blake, Contractor. Other persons interested were: S.A. Wood; Chas. Esslinger; Curtis Reed; B. Jones; Charles Klingholz; E.D. Smith and Mr. W.P. Clinton.

George Reed had brilliant plans for making Manitowoc a railroad center of lines converging from the west, and connecting with a line of steamers to Pere Marquette. It seemed for a time as if these plans were to be realized, but nevertheless they failed. The charter was granted to the Mississippi Railroad Company in March, 1857. The corporation had a capital of \$1,500,000 and work was actually begun on the road to Menasha. This road was to be built about where the North Western Railroad passes thru the city; in fact some of the grading done for the Mississippi Road was used by the Northwestern. The Village of Manitowoc and a number of its prominent citizens subscribed for bonds. There was the greatest enthusiasm at this time over railroad matters. The inhabitants of Manitowoc felt assured that the natural advantages of the town, aided by the completion of this road and the improvement of the harbor would result in making it the metropolis of the state and the great commercial center of the north-west. Nor were the citizens of Manitowoc alone in this opinion. Many persons during this period of prospective prosperity were attracted to Manitowoc by the splendid possibilities which seemed to be within reach. Perhaps these great plans could have been realized had not jealousy prevented the cooperation of our citizens.

Work had begun on the road and was progressing rapidly; the road was graded as far as Menasha and a few ties were laid. The Company sent to New York to an Eastern company to purchase the rails. On account of the panic of 1857 money was very scarce in Manitowoc, so the Company agreed to give its note for the rails. The Eastern Company having heard of the factions in Manitowoc soon after the rails were shipped, as they saw no guarantee of payment for the rails, recalled their shipment. Thus the cherished hope of the early citizens failed and the road

was sold for non payment of interest to Mr. Jacob Lueps on April 22, 1859.

The Lake Michigan and Mississippi Railroad Company was formed in 1859, for the purpose of completing the railroad which had not been entirely abandoned; but nothing came of the re-organization and in fact railroad matters were at a standstill, until the building of the Milwaukee, Lake Shore and Western in 1871-1873.

About 1855 or 1856 plans for a plank road from Manitowoc to Menasha were agitated. The towns thru which the road was to run signified their willingness to aid the enterprise. Work was to be begun at both ends of the road; and Manitowoc completed her portion to the Four Corners, before the project was discontinued. The people fully realized the importance of these indispensable adjuncts, but lacked the means of accomplishment. They had the sagacity which foresees the results which come from extended commercial facilities but they were hampered by circumstances beyond their power to remedy.

The bridge that was here in 1850 spanned the river at the same place as now does the Eighth Street Bridge. This bridge was a sort of rude structure; piles were driven in the river quite closely together and then planks were nailed on top of these piles. This bridge could be crossed by teams, and in 1859 it was repaired and fixed so that boats could pass thru it up and down the river. This bridge was what was called a "jackknife" or a draw bridge. It was constructed so that it would part in the middle and then could be drawn up by means of chains.

In the early fifties the only means the village had for putting out a fire was the "Bucket Brigade." All the houses were at that time built down near the lake and around Eighth Street Bridge. When a fire broke out all the men would form into two lines from the river or lake to the burning building. Each man provided himself with a pail and the one nearest the river filled his pail and passed it up the line until it reached the burning building. Then after the water was used the empty pail was passed down the second line. In the year 1855 the first fire engine was brought to Manitowoc. The Badger Engine Company No. 1, on Seventh and Commercial Streets, owned the engine which was only a hand machine. The first fire department consisted of an engine, a hook and ladder wagon, and a bucket wagon. There were iron hooks on the bucket wagon on which rubber buckets were hung.

December 3, 1859, the propeller Mendota, arrived at Manitowoc and landed a new fire engine for Torrent Co. No. 3. It was manufactured at Waterford, New Jersey. The company turned out over forty strong, with uniforms and band to receive the

machine, drawing it thru the principal streets to the engine-house on the south side of the river. The company was composed of: — Foreman, A. Berner; Hose Captain, H. Berner; Second Hose Captain, John Leykom; Secretary, Carl Schmidt; Treasurer, George Dusold.

In its social, industrial and political life Manitowoc led the characteristic existence of western towns in those days. Industries of other kinds than those connected with lumber arose in these years rapidly. Among the earlier manufacturers were the Sherman Leather Company, dating from 1854; the Pautz Brewing Company which had been started in 1849 was progressing rapidly; the Smalley Manufacturing Company, which was started in 1859 and W. Rahr Brewing Company which dated from 1848. In 1859 a large and commodious store was built on York Street by Messrs. T. and J. Robinson. The Platt and Vilas store was on the corner of Seventh and Commercial Streets. B. Jones & Co.'s store was on the site now occupied by the Smalley Manufacturing Company; later, this store was moved to the corner of Eighth and York Streets. August Baensch's store was on the corner of Ninth and Jay Streets. Some of the first stores were: — Klingholz and Bock, next to the Victoria house; Buerstatte, Esslinger; Torrison; and Schuette. N. Fenton had a furniture store, ware-room and manufactory on the Northside. P.P. Smith had a store on the corner of Sixth and York Streets, where dry goods, boots, shoes, groceries and provisions could be purchased. A clothing and tailoring establishment was conducted by Christian Anderson.

Previous to 1853, the cemetery was located on North Eighth Street, where Mr. C.W. Morse's residence now stands. In 1853 the remains of the dead who had been buried here were removed to what is now known as "Evergreen Cemetery," which at that time, embraced about ten acres and extended as far north and south as it now does, and about as far west as half the distance from the gate at the east to the Torrison monument. In 1853 when the first burial took place the cemetery looked very wild. Some of the trees had been cut down and the brush burned; yet this did not to a great extent decrease the utter loneliness of the place. The first burial of an adult in the new cemetery was made under very pathetic circumstances. Mr. Colby, who had been much interested in securing this property for a cemetery, was the first adult person to be buried in it, dying May 11th. Mr. Colby who had been a public spirited man, was very popular, and consequently the general sense of loss felt in the community was expressed in the large attendance at the funeral. The services

were held in the Northside School House. In those days there were no horses and no carriages, so all sorts of vehicles were pressed into use for the occasion. The remains were carried in a spring wagon owned by Mr. Fitch. It was a mild May day but the roads were almost impassible. As the long procession traveled slowly up the hill overlooking the village, a solitary horseman came galloping over the bridge on a large white horse. Checking his horse at the side of a little boy playing in the road, the stranger inquired. "Can you tell me where Mr. Colby lives?" The child looking up with wide open and wondering eyes answered, "He don't live any more, he's dead, and there they go with him now to the new cemetery." The man was Mr. Colby's brother, who had come all the way from New England in response to a letter telling of Mr. Colby's illness. Spurring on his tired horse he overtook the procession just as it was about to enter the cemetery. Almost beside himself with grief, he rode up to the big wagon that carried the mourners and a halt was called. There was scarcely a dry eye in all the assemblage. The lonely surroundings, and the wind moaning thru the trees seemed a fitting accompaniment to the sad scene. The brother insisted on having the funeral postponed. In that first moment of his terrible grief he felt he could not reconcile himself to the thought of having his brother laid away in that wild, lonely place where he could never see his grave. However after serious consideration it was decided that the burial take place, and a removal be made later in the season if it was then thought best. Bereaved Mrs. Colby could not persuade herself to consent to have his remains disturbed so they remain in "Evergreen Cemetery" to this day.

In 1853 the legislature changed the county seat from Manitowoc Rapids to the Village of Manitowoc and authorized a vote of the electors of the county on the removal. The act also required the county board to provide suitable rooms for the county officers within one year after the removal of the county seat. During the first year that the county seat was here, court was held in the Dusold building. A special meeting of the county board was held in May, 1853, principally for the purpose of taking means to erect county buildings. An animated contest took place as to the location of the county buildings. The first struggle or difference of opinion between the North and South Sides took place at this time. The Southside wished to have the court house built on that side of the river and the Northside wished to have it built on their side of the river. It was at first decided to erect the building on the side of the North Side Park, but this resolution was

subsequently rescinded on account of the inability of the county to secure a good title to the land. During the discussion of this question the people of the Southside raised about six hundred and seventy-five dollars and in August, 1853, donated the ground at the corner of Eighth and Washington Streets, the site of our present court house. Mr. Goetzler took the contract for the building and work was begun, but difficulties arising both with the contractor and with the former owner of the soil, the building was not completed until 1857. John Meyer designed the building and also took the final contract for its erection for \$8,000; but it was completed at a total cost of \$10,000, which sum the legislature authorized the board of supervisors to borrow and to issue bonds at ten per cent. The county offices were built in 1860. The contract was taken by Benjamin Jones for \$2,800; but there was so much extra work that the entire cost of the building did not fall short of \$5,000. The town board of supervisors for 1859 were Charles Esslinger, Henry Baetz, and J.D. Markham. The Manitowoc village officers of 1859 were: — President, S.A. Wood; Clerk, J.W. Toombs; Treasurer, Oscar Koch; Marshal, Charles Biegel. The First Ward officers were: Trustees: Henry Baetz, H.S. Auburgh, John Hoist; Assessor, Blasius Biegel. The officers of the Second Ward were: — Trustees, J.D. Markham, Fred Borchardt, Fred Gage; Assessor, O. Torrison. The officers of the Third Ward were: — Trustees, John Meyers, Mr. Westphal and Michael Kuhl. The following is an authentic list of the village presidents of Manitowoc since its incorporation together with the date of their services and political complexion where elected on partisan ticket. 1851, George Reed, Democrat; 1852-'3, James Bennett, Independent; 1854, William Bach, Democrat; 1855-'56, Charles Esslinger, Republican; 1857, James Bennett, Republican; 1858, Charles Esslinger, Republican; 1859-60, S.A. Wood, Democrat.

The first cattle show and fair of the Manitowoc Agricultural Society, was held in Manitowoc on the third and fourth days of October, 1859. A liberal amount of premiums in money and books was offered by the society, and a splendid exhibition of domestic animals, agricultural products, machinery and works of art was the result. The grounds selected for the exhibition were on the south side of the river, and embraced the whole of Washington Square, which was leveled, fenced off, and fixed up for the purpose under the supervision of Henry Berner.

In the year 1852, Washington's Birthday was celebrated in Manitowoc for the first time. Mr. Sherwood was chosen speaker of the day. He seemed

to be an especial favorite with the citizens and during his speech altho they did not appreciate all Mr. Sherwood was saying, they often broke out into loud cheering. Mr. Sherwood after eulogizing George Washington finally wished to say a few words about Martha Washington. He said, "She was a woman —" when the loud "Hurrahs" of the citizens drowned the remainder of the sentence. This seems to show that even in those early days a woman was appreciated in Manitowoc. Washington's Birthday was not very regularly or specially celebrated; but when anything in that line did occur it was usually on a small scale in a convivial way at some hotel or saloon.

The first celebration of the Fourth of July was held in 1852, on a cleared plot of ground near St. James' Church on Chicago Street. Mr. Kyle gave an address in English and Mr. A. Wittman gave one in German. Mr. Wittman, a highly educated man for his time, who was always called upon to address the people on all public occasions, proved himself an important element in the progress of the city.

Perhaps it might be interesting to note that in the early fifties the citizens were having about the same trouble with the ravages of the lake upon the land as they are having now at the Little Manitowoc. At an early date the land on the Southside from Washington Street up as far as the Pump House, extended way out into Lake Michigan. The large and strong waves washed the land out so rapidly that oftentimes a man on getting up in the morning would find half of his land had disappeared and sometimes he would find his house undermined. Once the water rose during the night and carried a tannery so far out into the lake that the owner was unable to recover it. The citizens at that early day became very anxious about their land but not having the means necessary to put an end to the encroachments of the water yielded to the loss in dumb submission. In a few years the ravages of the lake in that section ceased and now it has been venting its erosive powers on another section of the shore.

During the years between 1849 and 1855, cholera prevailed here every summer. It was a very contagious disease and many people died. One evening as a man and his wife were sitting talking in their home, the man was taken sick with the cholera and died the next morning; before the following evening his wife was also dead. Many children died of this disease and the percentage of the death rate during those few years increased rapidly. There was a constant worry among the citizens, when one of their friends left them to make a trip to another city or village for they were

fearful that he might become, as many others had, a victim of this frightful disease. At the first touch of frost as if by magic, the city was freed from the plague. Altho the winters were long and dreary and many people suffered from hunger and cold, yet as they saw their dear ones torn from them by the relentless disease, they longed for the healing frosts.

Fishing was an important business in Manitowoc. Many white fish, pickerel and trout were caught here. The lake shore was lined with little fish shanties. Most of the fish that were caught were salted and shipped to Chicago, and the Eastern markets. Fish served as one of the chief foods of the early settlers. During the years 1854 and 1855, Indians were in the habit of traveling thru our city. The land occupied by Elevator B, was, at that time, a large swamp and oftentimes the sides of this swamp literally swarmed with hundreds of Indians. These Indians were supposed to have come here to get the fish heads from the Manitowoc fishermen. The Indians brought in with them furs, deer and other wild animal skins, venison, maple sugar and Indian handiwork such as baskets and trinkets, which they sold to Mr. Glover, an Indian trader, for such goods as they most required. The Indians, after constructing their little wigwams, spent their evenings sitting around the fires smoking. Dressed in blankets with their faces painted and their long black hair hanging down over their shoulders in strings, they were the terror of the little village children. The little Indian boys and girls used to roam around with their bows and arrows hunting for birds and game. Sometimes the citizens would put a coin up as a target for the little Indians to shoot at. At such times the little Indians would crowd around to take turns in shooting at the mark. As the coin was to become the property of the one who should be fortunate enough to hit it, great was the joy of the little Indian when such luck was his. The citizens often paid the Indians to dance a war dance for their amusement. As the city advanced in civilization these visits of the Indians became less and less frequent until finally they ceased altogether.

The Tracy Lodge Number 107 of the Masonic order obtained its charter at one of the sessions of the Grand Lodge and was solemnly dedicated July 15, 1959. The following officers were installed: — Fred Borcherdt, W.M.; Fred Ransch, Sr. W.; August Wittman, Jr. W.; Charles Korten, Sec.; Charles Winkelmuller, Tr.; Adolph Wittman, Sr. D.; Edward Mueller, Jr. D.; Daniel Boehmer, Tiler; Fred Krause and Herman Gutmann, Stewards.

The first paper printed in Manitowoc was entitled the "Manitowoc County

Herald," and was published by Charles W. Fitch. The first issue was published November 30, 1850, and thereafter every Saturday morning at Manitowoc. The yearly price of subscription was one dollar and fifty cents, in advance; if not paid in advance, two dollars was charged. Advertisements that contained one square or less were inserted three times for one dollar — and for each additional insertion, twenty-five cents was charged. The usual deductions were made to quarterly, half years, and yearly subscriptions. The Herald was devoted to the dissemination of foreign, political, general, and miscellaneous news, and the publisher did his best to make each department useful and reliable. The growth and prosperity of the town and county were items of local interest. The paper was printed chiefly for "home market" and the opening of the new road, the erection of the steam mill and the plank road, were objects of interest to every man, woman and child in the village. Mr. Fitch said that politically his paper would advocate the Democratic party. Involving the principles of the party Mr. Fitch says he endeavored to deal squarely with those who entertained adverse opinions. There were times when the existence of subjects calculated to excite political parties or local communities, produced agitation and bitter hostility between the two parties; but he said he looked for liberal allowance for the infirmities of humanity. They aimed to make the Herald acceptable to all and tried to make it indispensible to the enjoyment of every fire-side.

Mrs. A. Wittman is in possession of a copy of the first Herald published in the city. It is a six column folio and is rich in advertisements. On the outside there are five columns of selected reading matter. On the first page are two poems entitled, "Battle with Life," and "Mind." Four columns suffice for local news and editorial comment. The third page is extensively devoted to advertisements. To a present resident of Manitowoc, the advertisements are the most interesting part of the paper, showing as they do, the complete changes which have taken place in business circles, the changes in employment made by men who then figured in the affairs of the county and who still participate in public matters, and bearing the names of men and firms that now exist only in the recollections of some of the old settlers. Some of the advertisements in a later issue of the Herald are of the legal fraternity which consisted of James L. Kyle, Ricker and Wollmer and S.A. Wood. K.K. Jones takes a column of space in which to set forth the excellence of his stock and to assure the people that he had but one price.

The "Wisconsin Demokrat," a German free soil paper was established in 1852 by Charles Roeser. The publication of the "NordWesten" established by C.H. Schmidt in 1855, was suspended during the war but resumed in 1865. The "Manitowoc Pilot" was established by Jere Crowley in August 1858. This paper was published weekly and was about the same style of a paper as the Herald. The motto was: "Union, Concession, Harmony — Everything for the Cause — Nothing for men." One odd point about those early papers is that they were very flattering to the people of the town. For each person mentioned there were always four or five, oftentimes more, adjectives or expressions denoting his good qualities. The "Manitowoc Tribune," Republican in politics, was established in 1854; in 1858 its proprietors started a daily paper known as the "Daily Tribune."

Several banks were established between the years of 1854 and 1861. The first bank was organized during 1854 and 1855 by Mr. Bach and was located on the corner of Eighth and Quay Streets; later it was removed to the corner of Eighth and Jay Streets where Schuette's bank is now; but in 1857 this bank closed its doors. Mr. Wollmer also had a bank in this city, but it was not long before it also failed. Among others were the Lake Shore Bank; C. Kuehn and Company; but all failed or went out of business.

The first library here was opened about 1855, on the Southside near the corner of Washington and Ninth Streets. It was a private affair owned by Mr. G. Fechter who himself acting as librarian let the books out charging a small sum per week. This library was composed chiefly of books of history, travel and fiction. The citizens were very glad of this chance to get books and Mr. Fechter's library had a lasting effect on many of the early inhabitants.

The first brick building at Manitowoc was the Glover house which was built where the mattress factory now stands. The bricks which were brought here from Racine on a vessel, were carried from the lake shore to the place of building by ox teams. This brick building was considered a wonder by all the citizens, who thought that as Manitowoc could boast of a brick building, matters were progressing very rapidly. It has been said that brick was manufactured in this city before 1850; be that as it may, in 1850 there was no brick manufacturing done here. Mrs. Fitch says that she and her husband came to Manitowoc in 1851 and Mr. Fitch, who set about promptly building a home, considered himself fortunate in securing brick for the foundation of his house. A vessel loaded at Milwaukee with bricks and bound for Green Bay,

was wrecked by a storm just off the shore of Manitowoc. Unable to proceed further she disposed of her cargo of bricks to Mr. Fitch. In 1859, the most handsome edifices of the town were those of J.E. Platt, Judge Reed, and Mr. H. Glover. Mr. Platt's residence was said to be unsurpassed in Northern Wisconsin.

The panic that swept thru the United States in 1857 brought very hard times to the citizens of Manitowoc. It is said that people coming to Manitowoc between the years of 1848 and 1857 suffered more from hard times than those that came at any previous time. Money was almost unknown. There was one butcher shop, but fresh meat was a very rare luxury. Most of the people used salted meat. Salt pork could be purchased in Chicago at two or three cents a pound. Flour, which varied in price was quite high at times, especially before wheat raising became an important industry, but on an average was about \$12 per barrel. It was not until 1859 that Manitowoc raised enough wheat to produce sufficient flour for its own use. Vegetables were quite cheap because each man generally planted enough for his own use, and as the soil is fertile, vegetables grew well. In 1859 the first flour mill in Manitowoc was built. Land was cheap being valued only at three dollars and seventy-seven cents per acre in the city.

It was during the year of 1857 and '58 that the news came to Manitowoc of the great gold fields in Colorado. This news produced quite a stir in Manitowoc and expeditions to "Pike's Peak" were talked of a great deal. It seemed according to the news they received that there was sufficient gold in Colorado to enrich the world. By 1858 the people were quite enthusiastic and in that year Mr. Hall and Mr. Carpenter, two American citizens, started out for the "land of gold." As they came up Eighth Street in covered wagons, they were attended by a large crowd, to whom the sight was a novel one. Mr. Hall and Mr. Carpenter went about half way to Colorado and then for some unknown reason they turned back, contented to settle down in Manitowoc and work for their money.

During the years between '50 and '60 ox teams were used almost entirely. Oftentimes farmers had hard work to purchase wagons; it was not an uncommon sight even in the middle of the summer to see a team of oxen come into town dragging a heavy sleigh. Immediately at the close of navigation in 1859, the Wisconsin Stage Company placed a line of coaches, at that time considered very comfortable, on the line between here and Milwaukee. They made the trip each way in one day and a half. Manitowoc had some excellent side-walks and the citizens, especially along Eighth and Seventh

Streets, were very eager to have more built.

Previous to 1851 the poor of the town were cared for according to the town system. In March of that year, the county abolished the town system of providing for the poor, and established a county system. In May 1851 the county board directed the purchase of a farm in the Town of Manitowoc Rapids which continued to be known as the "poor farm" until the county system for caring for the poor was abolished. Three hundred dollars were appropriated for the erection of a suitable house on the farm. The 1859 the board of supervisors elected Mr. R. Hoes of Manitowoc, Jason Pellet of Gibson and Louis Faulhaber of Rockland, as the superintendents of the county poor.

Prior to 1857 there was no jail in Manitowoc. One disobeying the laws was taken to the jail situated at Manitowoc Rapids. There was little use for a jail in Manitowoc in those days; everybody was too busy to get into mischief.

During the three years from 1857 to 1860 the jail was jail was kept at the present site of the Court House. In the early fifties the Post Office, which up to this time had been kept at Manitowoc Rapids was removed to this city. Not very much mail came to Manitowoc in those days; the stages did not come in every day and so the postmaster did not have a great deal to do. When the Post Office was removed to Manitowoc it was located near where the Victoria hotel now stands. Between 1850 and 1860 there were four postmasters; Jas. Bennett; Jas. L. Kyle; S.A. Wood; and Adolph Wittman.

There was a hotel called the "United States Hotel" on the southside of the river where the Landrith pea packing establishment is now located. In 1850 the hotel was run by Mr. and Mrs. Giles Hubbard, who kept it but for a short time. Hotel keeping even at that early date was quite an important business. People who came here at that period to investigate the land were almost constantly coming and going.

In the medical profession during the decade were: — Doctors Zieley; Colburn, Easton, Thorpe and Preston, the two latter being the first homeopathic physicians in the place. Dr. Preston did valiant service in the territory during the cholera scourges which swept away so many of the inhabitants during the years between 1849 and '54. The bar of Manitowoc in the '50's was made up of the following firms: — Hamilton and Van Valkenburg, Parrish and Esslinger, Lee and Walker, and J.D. Markham, who at present resides in Manitowoc.

In looking over the newspapers of the time of which we write we find that the following men lived here and were engaged in business a part if not all of

the time between 1850 and '60. Some of them left before the latter date and some had not come as early as the former. In the Pilot of 1859 under the head of leading attorneys and counsellors are the names of: — W.R. Crissey; William Nichols; George Lee; and S.A. Wood. Charles A. Reuther, Notary Public, who had his office on South Ninth Street seemed to be rather an influential man of his times, and performed the duties of his office very well. At that time the holding of a public office did not signify all the dignity that it does now; for at that time an office could be had almost for the asking. Beer and Kern had a dry goods and grocery store in a building which occupied the same ground on North Eighth Street as now does the clothing store of Mr. Seibel. Richards' foundry then stood on the present site of the National Bank. O. Torrison, father of the present firm, had a dry goods store in one of the buildings situated between the Windiate Hotel and the Melenyd residence T.C. Shove had a bank on the Southside on Eighth Street, where J. Dempsey now keeps a saloon. The Lake Shore Bank, previously mentioned, was on South Eighth Street, where Mr. Staehle has his store; George Adams was cashier. Mr. Glover kept a livery stable opposite the Windiate House on York Street where Mr. I. Pankratz now has his livery stable. People at that time seldom drove for pleasure and Mr. Glover kept but three or four horses, yet the livery business was quite an important one, for the irregularity of the boats often made it necessary for a person to hire a horse and drive thru as far as Sheboygan or some other convenient place in order to catch a boat. The prices were quite reasonable — the charge for a trip from here to Two Rivers and back was from \$1.50 to \$2.00. A drug store kept by T. and J. Robinson, at the corner of Seventh and Commercial Streets was later removed to Frazier's. A saddle, harness and trunk manufacturing establishment was kept on Quay Street near the bridge by Mr. Michael Kuhl, who is still engaged in the same business at the same place. The Manitowoc Bank located on York Street, was kept by C.C. Barnes, president, and Mr. C.B. Barnes, cashier. Fred Rudolph, on the corner of Eighth and Quay Streets, was engaged in the liquor business. The "Clipper City Flouring Mills", on Commercial Street, were owned by George Dwyer. There were two hardware stores, one on York Street belonging to Mr. E.H. Rand and the other on the present site of the Toledo House to Borcherdt and Smith. A drug store on the Southside, on Franklin Street, was owned by Adolph Wittman. A. Fenton owned a furniture store, located on Commercial Street. The furniture, made to order, was not

fancy; and a large display of goods was not made. The hotel called the "American House" located on the corner of Sixth and York Streets, was owned and run by Mr. C. Bartley.

The social life of the citizens of Manitowoc at that time was quite limited. Parties were held quite often and dances were not infrequent. There was always a New Year's, an Easter and a Washington's Birthday dance, in which young and old alike participated. The dances were generally held at Mr. George Dusold's building, but the best dance hall around here was at Manitowoc Rapids, where oftentimes the young people of the city attended. The beauty of the music, usually consisting of a first and second violin, is indescribable. The writer had the pleasure of listening to some of these old "dance tunes" played on the violin by an old pioneer, Mr. Perry P. Smith. The beauty and harmony of the tones drawn from that violin by the old man whose soul seemed to be expressing itself through the strings of the instrument wove a subtle bond between the "now" and the "then". Between 1855 and '60 organs began to be used. The dances were mostly quadrilles and jigs and those styled "old country dances." Soon after the Germans came the waltz became a very important factor in the evening's program. The people at that time also had masquerades, much after the fashion of those of today.

The first theatre in Manitowoc, a frame building on the south side of the river, on the corner of Ninth and Jay Streets across from Mr. Esch's store, was owned by Ed. Roehmer. The stage was raised about a foot and a half from the level of the floor. The seats, mere benches, were made of planks. A German play was the first to be rendered in this theatre. Most of the plays were home talent; but one evening a great play was advertised promising the people an evening's entertainment by a noted woman. Anticipating a rare treat, at the appointed time all the people of the village gathered at the theatre. Much to their surprise when the curtain rolled back, a number of people from the town came out on the stage and took the parts in the play. The citizens enjoyed the joke as much as did the actors. At another time a great concert was advertised, and a noted singer was supposed to take the leading parts; but to the astonishment and delight of the audience, an old Irishwoman who could not sing a note came out on the stage. Two singing societies were organized in 1855. These two societies offered many a pleasant evening to the hardworking and lonely pioneers, whose pleasures were but few and those hard earned.

Even at that early day the City of Manitowoc was called the "Clipper

City." Manitowoc, being very much interested in shipbuilding, often boasted her ships to be the fastest and best built ships on the lakes. One shipbuilder built a fine boat and called it the "Clipper", which signified that it was the star sailer. The name soon came to be applied to Manitowoc, and altho Manitowoc's shipbuilding fame has long since declined, the appellation still clings to her.

In the early fifties the harbor of Manitowoc was in very poor condition. Large boats could not enter the river at all because it was so very shallow, and oftentimes the small boats had to wait until the waves coming from the lake were strong and large enough to drive them over the sand bars at the mouth; then if the lake became very quiet, the boats would sometimes have to wait until the waves again arose and helped them out. When a storm came up there was no protection what-so-ever for the large vessels except to tie up to the old piers. At the time of which we are speaking all the business was done near the river; there were no houses built far inland until 1860. In the early '40s and '50s congress was repeatedly asked to improve the harbor; but internal improvements were not then greatly encouraged by the general government.

The citizens of Manitowoc did not give up the project of making a good harbor. Even at that time George Reed planned not only the improvement of the harbor but also that, when the Manitowoc and Mississippi Railroad which was to connect Manitowoc with some of the greatest commercial centers of the United States, was completed, the cars could be loaded on large car ferries and carried across the lake. Many of the people who laughed at and ridiculed Mr. Reed for these great plans have lived to see the plan realized. In 1851 interest was aroused by the harbor question and they started to repair the harbor. The farmers around Manitowoc with their ox teams hauled logs and stones to where the Goodrich warehouse now stands, and four cribs were built. Then for some reason or other the project was abandoned; but the four cribs remain there to this day. In 1852, however the state legislature authorized the village to bond itself for \$15,000 for harbor improvements, but these bonds were never issued as congress in the same year made an appropriation of \$8,000. This small sum was expended in 1854 under the direction of Major Graham and the local agent, Temple Clark, who recommended plans of improvement, to cost upwards of \$60,000. The remaining \$52,000 was not obtained however until the conclusion of the Civil War in 1866. Thus it happened that not until a few years ago, the original plans of improving the harbor,

drafted in 1838 and expanded in 1852, were followed.

In the course of the 50's lake commerce increased surprisingly and shipbuilding by 1860 had become the principal industry of the village. It was not until the next year however, that steamboats were built here, the first being the well built side wheeler Sunbeam of 450 tons, built by W. Bates. Captain Goodrich started a line of steamers 1856, running at first only the propellor Huron, which he himself commanded and which touched the ports of Milwaukee, Sheboygan, Manitowoc and Two Rivers. Said the Manitowoc Weekly Herald of September 24, 1856, "We hope that Captain Goodrich's experience will

induce him to try the route another season, and that his efforts to accommodate our business community will be properly appreciated." Besides the Goodrich steamer Huron and later sister craft — the Ogontz, Wabash Valley, Comet, and Lady Franklyn, there were other crafts which in the early '50s stopped at Manitowoc, among them those of the Collingwood and other Buffalo and Chicago lines.

In 1859 the lighthouse which had been built here in the '30s was torn down and Mr. Lederl, sent on by the Lake Light House Department came here for the purpose of constructing a new one. The new lighthouse, as was the old, was situated on the S.W. corner of Fifth and York Streets, and was

larger and much higher than the old one. It was equipped with a new revolving Fifth Order lens. The signal lights were varied at intervals of two minutes. Manitowoc could now boast of having as good a lighthouse as any village along the lake shore. The cost of the light was seven hundred dollars and the total cost of the light and other improvements was sixteen hundred dollars.

Such is a brief sketch of the development of the little town on the beautiful shores of "Old Michigan." Such was Manitowoc when in 1860 the fires of a great civil strife broke thruout the happy land.

## MANITOWOC COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Address of Communications To:

**NEWSLETTER**  
Ruth Beyer, Sec.  
P.O. Box 574  
Manitowoc, WI 54220-0574

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