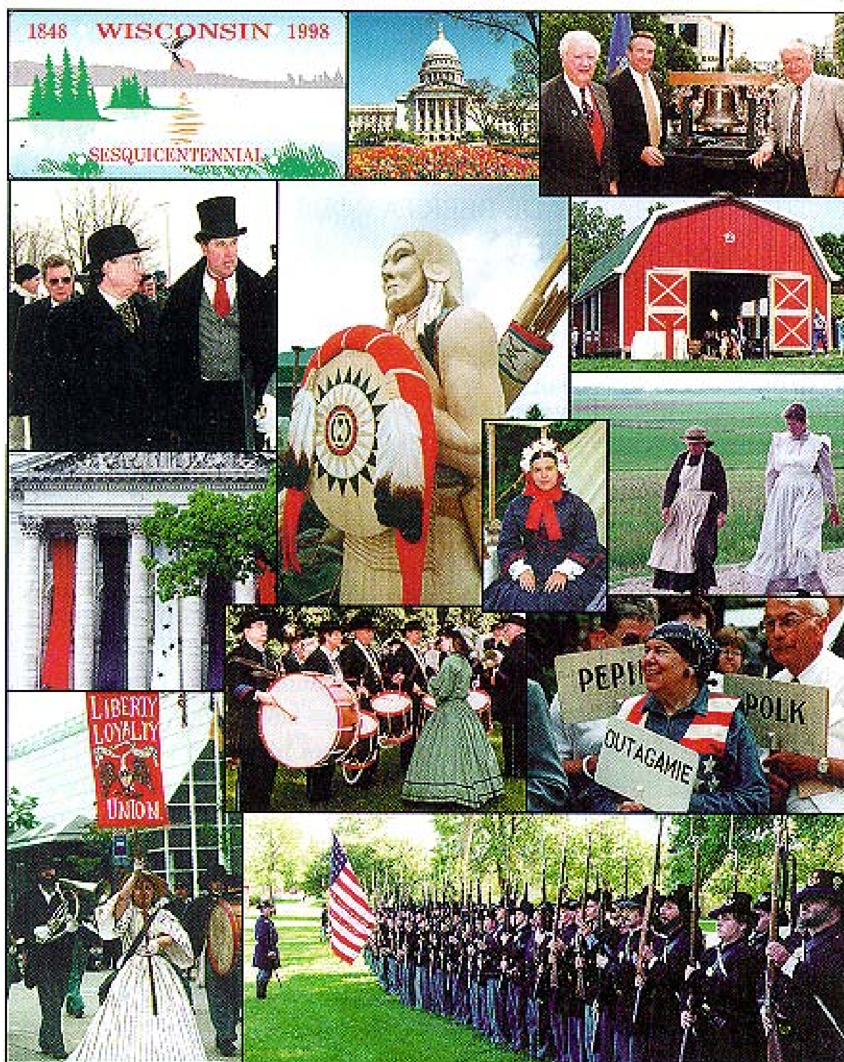
Feature Article

Ten events that shaped Wisconsin: a review of ten events pivotal to the evolution of Wisconsin's geography, economy and government

Scenes from the Sesquicentennial



TEN EVENTS THAT SHAPED WISCONSIN'S HISTORY

By Norman K. Risjord

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. THE DAM-BURST AT DEVIL'S LAKE, CA. 12,000 B.C. . . . 101
2. JEAN NICOLET LANDS IN GREEN BAY 105
3. MADISON SELECTED AS CAPITAL 110
4. INDIAN LAND CESSIONS, 1829 – 1842 116
5. STATEHOOD, 1848 120
6. THE JOSHUA GLOVER-SHERMAN BOOTH AFFAIR 125
7. FELLING THE WHITE PINE 128
8. THE FIRST CHEESE FACTORY 132
9. THE CITY THAT MADE BEER FAMOUS 135
10. THE WISCONSIN IDEA 141

TEN EVENTS THAT SHAPED WISCONSIN'S HISTORY

By Norman K. Risjord

As we celebrate the 150th anniversary of Wisconsin's admission to the Union, it seems appropriate to look at Wisconsin's past and the major events that shaped its history. To form a list limited to a few such events – say, ten – is to invite controversy. But that also makes it a challenge and a game. Here are my candidates:

1. The Dam-Burst at Devil's Lake
2. Jean Nicolet Lands in Green Bay
3. Madison Selected as Capital
4. Indian Land Cessions, 1829 – 1842
5. Statehood, 1848
6. The Joshua Glover-Sherman Booth Affair
7. Felling the White Pine
8. The First Cheese Factory
9. The City That Made Beer Famous
10. The Wisconsin Idea

Do I detect some raised eyebrows and puzzled frowns? Everyone, of course, will have his or her own idea as to the importance of certain events. Much also depends on how one defines the word "event". Before we proceed to the hanging tree, let me assign the reasons why the series I have mentioned has my vote.

1. THE DAM-BURST AT DEVIL'S LAKE, CA. 12,000 B.C.

Everyone will agree that the last glacier had an enormous impact on the topography of Wisconsin. As the ice melted about 18,000 years ago, leaving behind massive amounts of sand and rock, the flowing waters formed the moraines, drumlins and eskers that lend a special quality to the Wisconsin landscape. Pockets of melting ice within these formations turned into the "kettle" ponds of the Kettle Moraine and the lakes that dot the northern part of the state. But, to my mind, the most dramatic event of that age was the sudden breakup of the earthen dam at Devil's Lake.

The sheet of ice that is often called the "Wisconsin glacier" because of its dramatic impact on the Badger State, originated in the Canadian highlands east of Hudson's Bay about 30,000 years ago. After experiencing a relatively warm climate since the previous (Illinois) glacier, the earth began to cool off, for reasons still not fully understood. What is clear, however, is that, once started, the ice sheet fed upon itself. The expansion of perma-

nent glaciers in both the Arctic and the Antarctic reflected back into space a significant amount of the sun's energy, thus preventing the earth from receiving its normal summertime warming effect.

As the earth cooled, snow, brought by moist air from the south and east, accumulated in ever-greater depths on the granite shield of Canada. Partial melting in the summertime changed the snowflakes from filigreed crystals into tiny balls of ice. The weight of additional layers pressed the balls into a hard mass. The layering of snow and ice continued year after year, century after century. The great weight of the glacier, together with heat from the center of the earth, melted the ice at the bottom and produced a thin film of water under the ice. Sliding on this film, the bottom ice oozed outward, creaking and groaning, while new snow accumulated at the surface of the glacier. The movement was slow at first, but as the glacier worked southward onto the level lands around the Great Lakes it increased to 200 or 300 feet a year. The glacier eventually reached a depth of two miles in central Canada, and its weight was such that it compressed the earth's crust, creating a huge dent in the earth itself, a dent which eventually filled with seawater and is known as Hudson's Bay.

The moving ice picked up sand, gravel, rocks and even huge boulders, absorbing them into the glacier. The sliding mixture scoured the earth and picked up even more debris. When the leading edge of the glacier reached present-day Lake Superior, it found a rift or crack in the earth's crust. It flowed downward into the rift and scooped out the basin down to the bedrock, some 730 feet below sea level. The lake has since filled in with sand and silt, but its contours were formed by the glacier. To the east, about 23,000 years ago, the moving ice encountered an ancient riverbed, and a lobe of the glacier followed that southward to carve out Lake Michigan.

The creeping ice could be deflected by high, hard outcroppings of rock. One such was the Niagara Escarpment that forms Door County at Green Bay. This wedge of hard rock threads east from Green Bay to Niagara Falls and south to Lake Winnebago. The escarpment split the Lake Michigan lobe and caused a new lobe to begin moving southwest across Wisconsin. This mass of ice – the Green Bay lobe – had the most dramatic effect of all on the landscape of the state. It gouged out Green Bay, Lake Winnebago and the Horicon Marsh. Beyond the Niagara Escarpment it was free to move to the east where it collided with the expanding Lake Michigan lobe. Like two huge bulldozers, the ice sheets formed a mountain chain of rocky debris, now known as the Kettle Moraine.

About 18,000 years ago the earth's climate turned warmer, and the glaciers began to melt and recede, leaving behind ridges of rock and sand

The great dam burst of 12,000 B.C. carved out today's beautiful Devil's Lake State Park. (Bob Queen, Department of Natural Resources)

known as moraines. On its western side the terminal moraine of the Green Bay lobe ran on a north-south line from the current Stevens Point to a point just west of Madison and thence on to Janesville. It crossed the Baraboo Hills at Devil's Lake and blocked an ancient riverbed with a giant earthen dam. The backed-up waters of the melting glacier created a huge freshwater lake that extended north to Stevens Point and west as far as present-day Tomah. This body of water – "Glacial Lake Wisconsin" to geologists – covered at least 1,800 square miles, about three-fourths the size of the Great Salt Lake in Utah. Its depth in places was 150 feet. The lake lay at the northern edge of the unglaciated part of Wisconsin – the "Driftless Area". Icebergs, broken off from the glacier to the north and east of the lake, rafted sand and boulders onto the lake that sank to the bottom when the ice melted.

The dam was a fragile one, consisting of loose rock and sand, and when it broke, about 14,000 years ago, geologists estimate that the lake drained in about three days – the force of the water carried boulders weighing more than a ton miles down the Wisconsin River valley. The rushing water created a new course for the Wisconsin River as it carved out the Dells and swung east around the Baraboo Hills. The land that had lain under the lake for several thousand years was level and sandy, with occasional rock outcroppings that had once been islands. The area is known today as the Sand Counties.

The force of the rushing waters of the Wisconsin River and its tributaries carried sand and rocks – "glacial drift" – onto parts of the unglaciated Driftless Area of southwestern Wisconsin. The unique features of this region were noted by the first settlers in the lead mining region. As early as 1823, W. H. Keating, a professor of mineralogy at the University of Pennsylvania, traveled overland from Chicago, entered Wisconsin near present-day Monroe, climbed onto the Military Ridge west of Blue Mound, and followed it to Prairie du Chien. Long before he reached the Military Ridge, Keating noted the absence of erratic boulders and fine silt that he had seen in Illinois. Only in the bed of the Wisconsin River did he observe this water-borne "drift". Because there was no theory of glaciation at that time, geologists assumed that the drift observable in northern Wisconsin and along Lake Michigan was caused by some vast inland sea eons ago. Keating supposed that southwestern Wisconsin had been an island in this sea and thus, except for its river valleys, escaped sedimentation.

Not until the 1870s did geologists finally reach a correct explanation for Glacial Lake Wisconsin, the Sand Counties, and the Driftless Area. At the root of their new approach was the work of Yale geologist Clarence King, first director of the United States Geological Survey office. In the years

1867-1869, King conducted a geological and biological survey of the 40th parallel (the northern boundaries of California, Nevada and Utah). King's report popularized the theory that much of North America had at one time been covered by great ice sheets. The Great Basin between the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevada, he explained, once contained two gigantic lakes formed by melting glaciers, of which the Great Salt Lake was a remnant.

Following the theoretical lead provided by King, R. D. Irving did a geological survey of Wisconsin in the mid-1870s and published the following conclusion as to the path of the glacier:

> The Driftless Region of Wisconsin owes its existence, not to superior altitude, but to the fact that the glaciers were deflected by the influence of the valleys of Green Bay and Lake Superior.

With that dawn of understanding, geologists quickly pieced together the story of the moraine crossing Devil's Lake, the formation of Glacial Lake Wisconsin, and the great dam-burst of 14,000 years ago.

2. JEAN NICOLET LANDS IN GREEN BAY

Ever since Magellan's voyage of 1519 had opened for Spain a southern route to the Orient around Cape Horn, northern Europeans had been searching for a "Northwest Passage" that would lead to the Pacific Ocean and thence to China. During the age of Queen Elizabeth, English explorers had searched in vain for a water route to the Orient around Canada. The remaining possibility was a route through the middle of North America. The French settlement at Quebec was only 10 years old in 1608 when its founder Samuel de Champlain, the first French governor of Canada, boldly predicted to King Louis XIII that the lakes and rivers of New France would lead to "the Kingdom of China and the East Indies, whence great riches could be drawn."

In the meantime, the French in Canada took up the fur trade with the Indians, notably the Huron tribe, who lived on the shores of Lake Erie and Lake Huron. From this tribe, Champlain learned of a people who resided on another large lake several hundred miles farther west and who spoke a strange language that the Hurons did not understand. The Hurons were evidently referring to the Winnebago, who occupied the Fox River Valley of Wisconsin and the shores of Green Bay. The Winnebago were unique among eastern Wisconsin tribes, most of whom spoke a form of Algonkian language, as the Hurons did. The Winnebago spoke a language related to that of the Sioux, who lived in the forests of western Wisconsin and Minnesota. The tribal name that the French heard was recorded as "Ouinipeg", and they translated it "people of the salt water".

By the time he learned of the strange-speaking "people of the water" in the 1630s, Champlain was too old to mount an expedition himself. (He died in 1635.) So he entrusted the task to one of his young proteges, Jean Nicolet. Nicolet came from Normandy; his father was a mail carrier between the port of Cherbourg and Paris. When he arrived in the New World in 1618, Champlain sent him to live among the Indians to learn their culture and language. Champlain had instituted a policy of sending young men into the wilderness in 1610, realizing that adapting to the ways of the native inhabitants was the first priority for a future explorer and trader. The first of these apprentices was Etienne Brule, who resided for more than ten years among the Hurons. Although we know little of his activities because he kept no personal journal, Brule was probably the first white man to enter upon Lake Superior and possibly the first to visit what is now Wisconsin. Unfortunately, he was not available when Champlain was casting about for an expedition leader in 1634, for the previous year Brule's Huron friends had inexplicably turned on him, clubbed him to death, and eaten him.

Nicolet had been sent to live in an Ottawa village on the Isle du Allumettes in the Ottawa River. The Ottawas, whose lands straddled the great trade route across central Canada from the St. Lawrence to Lake Huron (by way of the Ottawa River, Lake Nipissing, the French River and Georgian Bay), were a trading people. They had been the link between the Algonkian tribes of the St. Lawrence Valley and the peoples of the western lakes long before the French arrived. When the Iroquois, armed by the Dutch of New Netherland (later New York), closed the Lake Erie trade route, the French fur trade shifted northward, and the Ottawas replaced the Hurons as middlemen. Nicolet quickly absorbed their language and earned their respect with his skill in the hunt and bravery in battle. He even accompanied them on a peace mission to the Iroquois.

Some time in the mid-1620s Nicolet went to live with the Nipissings, a small tribe whose lands also straddled the great trade route. He stayed with them for eight or nine years, learning their language and sometimes serving in their councils. Yet he also realized that life in the wilds held no future, and he eventually returned to Quebec. He was living there in 1634 when Champlain summoned him for a new assignment.

After receiving his instructions, Nicolet packed carefully for any eventuality. Both the Hurons and the Ottawas had described the western "people of the sea" as being fiercely warlike, given to cannibalism, and possessed of an odd language and culture. There was certainly a possibility in Nicolet's mind that they might be related to the peoples of China or the Indies. Among the things he packed was a robe of damask silk, embroidered

with birds and flowers of many colors, of the sort that Chinese mandarins were known to wear. Accompanied by Ottawa guides, he traversed the passage into Georgian Bay and Lake Huron.

At the Huron village on Manitoulin Island (part of the string of islands that separate Georgian Bay from Lake Huron), he probably picked up Huron guides and paddlers. It is unclear from Nicolet's account where he traveled from there. His narrative becomes a jumble of waterways, peninsulas, and islands. Perhaps this is not surprising because lakes and rivers look a lot alike when viewed from the seat of a canoe. A paddle northwest along the islands would have taken him to the Sault Ste. Marie, the river draining from Lake Superior. Although Nicolet was acquainted with the people who lived along this waterway (ancestors of the Ojibwa tribe, whom the French called Saultuers), it is unlikely that he took that path. His narrative contains no mention of the currents and rapids he would have had to negotiate on the St. Mary's River – an adventure graphically described by Pierre Esprit Radison 30 years later.

Instead, his likely route was westward through the Mackinac Straits into Lake Michigan and Green Bay. To ensure a proper reception, he sent messages ahead to the Winnebago villages. Having encountered nothing but fresh water and Indian tribes on his route, Nicolet was under no illusion that he had reached China. Nevertheless, he donned the silken robe and stepped

Nicolet's landing at Green Bay, 1634, as painted by Edwin W. Deming in 1904. (State Historical Society, #WHi (X3) 40974)

majestically ashore with two pistols in his belt. Standing before a curious assemblage of several hundred Indians, he suddenly drew his pistols and fired into the air, causing the Indians to scatter in panic. Having demonstrated his divine power, Nicolet proceeded to demonstrate his friendly intentions by placing gifts on small platforms made of sticks.

Nicolet soon found himself surrounded by four or five thousand admirers, including, no doubt, delegations from the Menominee villages, the peaceful, rice-eating neighbors of the Winnebago. The leaders of each village laid out a feast for Nicolet and his guides. One dinner table contained 120 roasted beavers! Although he could not communicate with the Siouian-speaking Winnebago, Nicolet was apparently informed by their Algonkian-speaking neighbors of a great waterway to the west, though there was no mention of a route to a salt sea. He spent the winter on the shores of Green Bay, and it is likely that he paddled up the Fox River as far as Lake Winnebago, but nothing else is known of his stay. He returned to Quebec in 1635, married, and settled in Three Rivers as a fur trader. He died eight years later when his canoe capsized in the St. Lawrence – the Indians had taught him everything but how to swim.

The deaths of Champlain and Nicolet ended the French urge to explore and expand their empire. Not until a new king, Louis XIV, resuscitated the thinly populated settlements on the St. Lawrence did the conquest of the continent resume – with the voyages down the Mississippi of Marquette and Joliet (1673-1674) and LaSalle (1679-1681). The Iroquois wars that dominated the latter half of the century kept the French on the defensive and scattered their fur-trading partners. Iroquois war parties smashed the villages of the Huron and Ottawa tribes in western Canada and the Potawatomi of Michigan, forcing the remnants of those once-proud nations to take refuge on the western shore of Lake Michigan.

Despite lack of support from Paris and the wreckage of war along the Great Lakes, the French maintained a strong influence among the Indians that Nicolet had first befriended. This was due in small part to the work of Recollet and Jesuit missionaries and in large part to the fur trade. After some initial failures, Catholic fathers established missions on Chequamegon Bay of Lake Superior and on the Fox River (De Pere) a few miles west of Green Bay. The missions quickly attracted wandering bands of Hurons and Ottawas, who had been introduced to French culture and religion in their former homelands. Although the Jesuit fathers largely failed in their efforts to save the souls of the Indians, their missions became important trading posts.

The fur trade was more successful in cementing the ties between the French and the Indians because it provided the natives with weapons, utensils, textiles and, unfortunately, liquor without immediately threatening their ways of living. The trade was closely regulated by the French crown, which allowed colonial authorities to confer licenses, limited to 25 a year, on only the most reputable traders in Quebec, Montreal and Three Rivers, and these were expected to obey the rules and treat the Indians with justice. The traders remained in the cities along the St. Lawrence and recruited *voyageurs* to live permanently in the Indian country. These local traders took Indian wives, fathered their children, and absorbed the culture of their Indian neighbors. Indian tribes were ever shorthanded, due to a low birthrate, frequent warfare, and the dangers of wilderness living. The French residents were thus a welcome addition of manpower – and no threat to the Indians' lands or lifestyle.

When the Iroquois war threatened to spread into Wisconsin, the Indians looked to the Jesuit missions for leadership. The fathers, who lived *among* the Indians but not *with* them, provided arms but little sympathy. In 1670, Father Claude Dablon rather contemptuously described the actions of the Indian defenders of the St. Francis Xavier Mission at Green Bay:

> Those newly-made Soldiers took it upon themselves to honor us with the same ceremonies that they had seen practiced by ours. . . . For, when it was time to assemble, two of them came to call us, muskets shouldered and war hatchets, instead of swords, at the belt; and throughout the sitting of the assembly they continued this species of sentry duty at the Cabin door, assuming as much dignity as they could, and pacing back and forth (which the Savages never do) with their muskets now on one shoulder and now on the other.

Blinded by Christian notions of God and the human soul, the Jesuit priest had never thought to inquire into the Indians' metaphysics. Most of the Algonkian-speaking nations of the western Great Lakes believed in a resurrection of the spirit. When a particularly revered leader died, an aspiring leader – sometimes, but not always, a descendent – would seek through a religious ceremony to acquire his attributes – his spiritual powers, wisdom in councils, and bravery in battle. However, death and resurrection were not always essential to the transfer of spiritual powers. It seems likely that the conduct which Father Dablon witnessed was an attempt to imbibe the secrets of French military and technological power in order to protect themselves – both from the Iroquois and the rapaciousness of some traders.

Though never fully understood by the French, the spiritual association with the Indians of the Lakes, initiated by Champlain and Nicolet, survived

even the English conquest of Canada in 1760. Elements of the Ottawa, Huron and Potawatomi tribes were at the core of Pontiac's Rebellion (1763-1765), which had as its central aim the resurrection of the French king and the restoration of his power in North America.

Frenchmen influenced the course of Wisconsin history for many years after the British conquest and even after Wisconsin became part of the United States in 1783. French traders continued to dominate the fur business in Wisconsin, although the pelts ended up in New York or London, rather than in Paris. And two of these traders were instrumental in the founding of Wisconsin's first cities – Charles Langlade in Green Bay and Solomon Juneau in Milwaukee. Other cities that grew up on the site of French trading posts were Prairie du Chien, Sheboygan, Manitowoc, Appleton, Oshkosh and Fond du Lac. Jean Nicolet's venture of 1634 cast a long shadow.

3. MADISON SELECTED AS CAPITAL

James Duane Doty was born in western New York, but he could trace his ancestry to the Pilgrims and the Mayflower. After studying law he made his way west to Detroit in search of opportunity. Though only 19 years of age, he became a partner of the most prominent attorney in that fur-trading settlement.

In 1818, the year Doty arrived in Detroit, the U.S. Congress, upon admitting Illinois to the Union as a state, attached the remainder of the Northwest Territory (Wisconsin and the part of Minnesota east of the Mississippi River) to the Michigan Territory. Lewis Cass, governor of the Michigan Territory, thus found himself the ruler of a vast wilderness empire extending north from Lake Erie to Sault Ste. Marie and west to the Lake of the Woods and the Mississippi River. To control a region inhabited by wary, if not downright unfriendly, Frenchmen and Indians, Congress authorized the construction of three forts in the West – Fort Howard at Green Bay, Fort Crawford at Prairie du Chien and Fort St. Anthony (later named Fort Snelling) near present-day St. Paul.

Cass determined to explore his domain, and, having obtained permission and funds from President James Monroe's Secretary of War, he started north to the Sault Ste. Marie in the spring of 1820. Doty's energy and intelligence had by then brought him to Cass's attention, and he accompanied the expedition as its secretary. With ever-present thoughts of publicity and self-promotion, Doty sent back to Detroit newspapers detailed accounts of the landscape and its inhabitants. From the Sault the expedition paddled along the south shore of Lake Superior to its western tip, where the sluggish St.

Through James Duane Doty's efforts, Madison was named Wisconsin's capital in 1836. *(State Historical Society, #WHi (X3) 51904)*

Louis River passed through olive-colored waves of wild rice to merge its waters with the lake.

Obviously unaware of the Brule-Namekagon-St. Croix passage that had been used for years by fur traders and explorers, Cass's party trudged overland through forest and bog to the headwaters of the St. Croix River. They stopped to treat with the Sioux at Fort Snelling and proceeded down-river to Prairie du Chien, a fur-trading post inhabited by French and Indians. They returned by the much-traveled Fox-Wisconsin waterway, Green Bay, and Mackinac. Doty profited immensely from the journey. He gained first-hand knowledge of the terrain and waterways of the mysterious region west of Lake Michigan, information that would set him on his calling as town builder and canal promoter. He also emerged from the experience an intimate friend of Governor Cass. Ever ambitious, he turned next to using his political influence to advance his career in the law.

The Supreme Court of Michigan subdivided itself and rode circuit in order to staff the local courts, but none of the judges ventured west of Lake Michigan. Courts west of the lake at Green Bay and Prairie du Chien were

staffed by untrained and unsupervised officers, with about the status of a justice of the peace. Doty and Cass together decided that a superior court of law was needed west of the lake. Together they took a plan for what came to be called the "Additional Court" to Congress, which approved the idea. In 1823 President Monroe appointed Doty to the post.

Doty, in effect, became the law west of the lake. In his nine years as judge, he traveled by horseback and canoe through every part of his jurisdiction. Like most Westerners, Doty speculated in the rising price of lands, but, unlike most, he preferred town lots to farmland. Cities were the future, he realized, and urban lots rose in value more certainly and more rapidly than rural acres. He made his home in Green Bay and purchased lands along the Fox River, anticipating the westward growth of the city. Another site that caught his eye was the southern tip of Lake Winnebago (Fond du Lac). He bought several thousand acres there in 1835 and made plans for a canal that would link Lake Winnebago with the Rock River. He envisioned Fond du Lac as a great trade entrepot linking the Great Lakes with the Mississippi.

In the meantime Doty lost his job as a judge. In creating the "Additional Court" Congress had limited the tenure of its judge to four years. Doty had already served two terms when President Andrew Jackson decided to replace him with a loyal Democrat (coming from Green Bay, Doty was misliked in the lead mining region of southwestern Wisconsin, which strongly favored Jackson and the Democratic Party). Doty returned to the practice of law, but he retained his interest in town building and transportation improvements. After Black Hawk's "war" (1832), Congress authorized the construction of a Military Road that would connect Fort Howard at Green Bay with Fort Crawford at Prairie du Chien. Doty volunteered to survey the route, and Secretary of War Lewis Cass gave him the job. Doty, who had grown tired of traveling his judicial district by canoe, had marked out a possible route for a highway by horseback in 1829. Accompanied by an army surveyor, Doty laid out the Military Road (with blazes on trees where possible, with crossed sticks on the open prairies) in the winter of 1833-1834. His route ran from Green Bay along the Niagara Escarpment on the east side of Lake Winnebago. From Fond du Lac (where Doty would start purchasing lands within a year) it led west across the grassy oak openings of the sun prairie and passed about ten miles north of the Four Lakes. Doty visited the two northernmost of the Four Lakes (Mendota and Monona) and almost certainly spotted the potential for a future city. West of Blue Mound, Doty followed the height of land (still known as the Military Ridge) that separated the waters flowing north into the Wisconsin River from those flowing south via the Sugar, Pecatonica and Rock Rivers into the Mississippi.

Doty initially envisioned the Four Lakes townsite as a transportation hub. Although it was located inland and was as yet devoid of white settlers, Doty thought it would fill up quickly when the government put lands along the lakes up for sale. It was close to the Military Road, and a railroad, already in the planning stage, from Milwaukee to the Mississippi, would inevitably pass that way. Doty proposed a third avenue of communication, a canal from the Fourth Lake to the Wisconsin River, which, with some cleanup of the Catfish (Yahara) River, would link central Wisconsin with central Illinois. A further advantage of the site was its central location, which made it a potential seat of government when Wisconsin became a federal territory.

Doty had been advocating separation from Michigan and the establishment of a territorial government for Wisconsin since the 1820s. Congress was amenable, but the first step had to be statehood for Michigan. That was delayed for several years by a dispute between Michigan and Ohio over Michigan's southern boundary. Congress finally resolved the dispute in 1836 in favor of Ohio, giving the older state the mouth of the Maumee River and its lakeport potential (present-day Toledo). It compensated Michigan by giving the new state the Upper Peninsula, including lands to the north and west of Lake Michigan extending to Lake Superior. Although this area had previously been treated as part of Wisconsin, no one in Wisconsin objected. The center of Wisconsin's population was now the lead mining region, and the inhabitants of Platteville and Mineral Point were, for the most part, emigres from Illinois and Missouri. In this fashion, Michigan became a state in 1836, and Wisconsin was erected into a federal territory. President Jackson appointed as governor Henry Dodge, an ex-Missourian, hero of the Black Hawk War, and a staunch Democrat.

Others had seen the scenic and political potential of the Four Lakes, and when the government began selling lands there in 1835, speculators quickly snapped up the shoreline of the First and Second Lakes (Kegonsa and Waubesa). Doty had earlier spied an even more inviting site. On April 6, 1836, while Congress was putting the finishing touches on the territorial legislation, Doty and a partner purchased approximately 1,000 acres between the Third and Fourth Lakes, acquiring parts of four sections whose lines intersected on the glacial drumlin where the State Capitol now stands.

On the day that the first territorial governor, Henry Dodge, took his oath of office, July 4, 1836, Doty toured the neck of land between the lakes in the company of Michael St. Cyr, a squatter who lived with his Winnebago wife in a log cabin on the shore of Lake Mendota. Although St. Cyr had no more than "squatter's rights" (i.e., the right to buy his few acres at the gov-

ernment minimum price of $1.25 an acre), Doty obligingly brought him into his newly formed joint stock company – whose other stockholders were unnamed and probably nonexistent. The company then deeded all of its lands to Doty to be held in trust – a total (with St. Cyr's contribution) of 1,360 acres. On that July 4 holiday, Doty staked out some streets and bestowed on his future metropolis the name "City of Madison" in honor of the former president who had died earlier that summer.

Realizing that government with its attendant offices and officeholders was the most fertile base for urban growth, Doty was prepared to offer either of his imaginary hamlets, Fond du Lac or Madison, as the location for a territorial capital. Joining him with similar ambitions were the partisans of Green Bay, Milwaukee, Mineral Point and Prairie du Chien. Another part of the cacophony were proponents of Dubuque, Burlington and Des Moines in present-day Iowa. (Congress had extended the territory's western border to the Missouri River.) To the disappointment of all, Governor Dodge named as a temporary capital the quiet community of Belmont on the edge of the lead-mining district.

Undaunted, Doty determined to attend the legislative session, which was scheduled to convene on October 25, 1836. On his way to Belmont, Doty and a friend, John V. Suydam, a Green Bay newspaper editor who had turned his hand to surveying, stopped in Madison City to survey streets and lots and draw up a preliminary map. Wandering among the hazel bushes and stunted oaks blackened by prairie fires, the pair laid out future streets on a grid pattern. On the high knoll between the two lakes they laid out a square "to be used for county or territorial purposes". "Wiskonsin Avenue" ran from lake to lake, interrupted by the square. At right angles to this street they projected broad "Washington Avenue", with a "Railroad from the Mississippi to Milwaukee" running right up the avenue to the capitol square. He then set off for Belmont with a scheme for turning his vision into a reality.

Doty arrived in Belmont to find a community little better prepared than Madison to house a government. It had been laid out by a friend of the governor's the previous spring astride the deeply rutted wagon road that led from Mineral Point to Galena. Frantic construction that summer had resulted in a two-story frame building to serve as the capitol, three taverns, three or four lodging houses for legislators, and an unfinished stable. One visitor grumbled that it was "without wood, water, in an open bleak prairie, with no communication" to other parts of the state. Into this isolated but seething cauldron Doty rode on the 2nd of November.

Although he had no official status, his influence was almost immediately felt. The bill for the establishment of a capital initially named Dubuque as the temporary site and Fond du Lac as the permanent location. No one considered the trans-Mississippi towns as viable contenders because it was widely assumed that Iowa would soon be made a territory of its own (nearly half the population of the Wisconsin Territory lived west of the Mississippi). After a day's debate, a Des Moines delegate successfully moved to substitute Madison as the permanent location. (He later appeared on the books as a Madison landowner.)

Amidst heated debate over three days, 16 substitute sites were proposed and voted down. When approved at last, the bill located the capital at Burlington while buildings were constructed at Madison for the permanent seat. How the legislature finally agreed upon Madison remains an enduring mystery. The centrality of its location was certainly a factor, but those who recalled the battle in later years were inclined to credit the machinations of Judge Doty. "While others were planning," a Green Bay delegate noted, "Judge Doty was acting." The nature of Doty's activities was revealed in the reminiscence of another contemporary:

> Doty supplied himself with a full stock of buffalo robes, and went around camping with the members, and making them comfortable as he could, until he organized a sufficient vote in the Legislature to make Madison the permanent capital. . . . The winter was a cold, dreary one, and Doty with his buffalo robes had been a real blessing to the members, and he also accommodated them with town lots in the new, wild, uninhabited town of Madison.

Doty's buffalo robes, apparently obtained from a Sioux village on the Mississippi, are a fixture in Wisconsin lore, but his distribution of city lots (16 of which went directly to members of the legislature) may have been more influential. Equally important was Doty's establishment of a broad base of ownership in Madison that would ward off future efforts to change the location of the capital. By the spring of 1837, he had sold, or given, portions of Madison to wealthy speculators and prominent officials, including the territorial delegate to Congress and the chief justice of the Wisconsin Supreme Court. Governor Dodge deplored the chicanery that attended the selection of the capital, but when his own son, Augustus C. Dodge, turned up as one of the city's landowners, he silently signed the bill into law.

The legislature placed Doty on the three-man commission charged with supervising the construction of the public buildings, for which Congress had appropriated $20,000. The site for the capitol was cleared in the spring of 1838. The specifications called for a stone building 30 feet high with col-

umned piazzas in the front and rear. Surmounting the building was a dome 26 feet in diameter covered with tin. After the legislature and the supreme court settled into the new building, Doty was given credit for managing the entire affair. He was, for the moment, the most popular man in the territory. His popularity did not last, but his urban monument grew and prospered. Madison remained the capital of the territory and, after 1848, the state. In the following year it also became the site of the state university. The natural beauty of the location, which caught the eye of James Duane Doty, together with the wealth of cultural, literary and scientific talent attracted to the city by the government and the university, have made Madison, for the last century and a half, one of the premier cities of the country – and one with a world-class reputation.

4. INDIAN LAND CESSIONS, 1829 – 1842

Wisconsin Indians initially welcomed the first white explorers and traders. By the early 18th century, however, the Indians had come to realize that the advancing European frontier threatened their lands, their culture – their existence as they knew it. A long and deadly war between the French and the Fox tribe in the 1720s and 1730s bled each side into exhaustion. Wisconsin Indians fought on the side of the French in the French and Indian War (1756-1763) and on the side of the British in the American Revolution. Although the fighting never reached their homeland, their participation stemmed from fear of the advancing agricultural frontier.

In the first decade of the 19th century, Tecumseh, a charismatic Shawnee whose people had been pushed out of Ohio by the advance of white settlement, sought to form an alliance of the northwestern tribes to resist any further land cessions. The glue that held together Tecumseh's confederacy was the messianic appeal of his brother, the Prophet, who preached a doctrine that the red man would ultimately triumph if he rejected the sins of white civilization, notably liquor and gambling. The Prophet's voice was heard across Wisconsin, even to the shores of Lake Superior where the Ojibwa threw their medicine pouches into the water and embraced the new religion. Traders, who in desperation offered the Indians free whiskey, found themselves scornfully rejected.

In 1811, Tecumseh journeyed to Tennessee and Alabama on a mission to recruit the southern tribes into his defensive alliance. William Henry Harrison, governor of the Indiana Territory, took advantage of his absence to lead an army against the Prophet's Town on Tippecanoe Creek, a branch of the Wabash River. Although under orders by Tecumseh to remain at peace during his absence, the Prophet attacked Harrison's army, and his followers were routed. In the Indian village, Harrison found crates of guns that

provided hard evidence of British-Canadian intrigues among American Indians. The discovery was a major factor in Congress' decision to declare war on Britain in 1812.

Although Tecumseh was furious with his brother and banished him to the Great Plains, he had no choice but to ally himself with the British in the war, and the Wisconsin Indians joined him en masse. The French inhabitants of the region also sided with the British; not a single pro-American voice could be heard anywhere in the land west of Lake Michigan. A month after the declaration of war, a band of Canadians, together with several hundred Sioux, Winnebago and Menominee, captured Fort Mackinac, which guarded the straits leading from Lake Michigan into Lake Huron. Learning of this disaster, the commander of Fort Dearborn, which was located in the heart of present-day Chicago, abandoned his post and led his men toward Detroit. The Sauk and Fox, joined by other southern Wisconsin Indians, fell on the retreating garrison and massacred it. By August 1812, Tecumseh controlled a force of 1,000 warriors, and the commander at Detroit, fearful of another massacre, surrendered to an inferior British-Canadian force that had never stepped out of Canada. With the surrender of Detroit, everything north and west of Fort Wayne, Indiana, was in Indian hands. The handful of Americans living at Prairie du Chien fled down the Mississippi, and the Winnebago plundered their houses.

In the summer of 1813 General Harrison, with the aid of an American naval victory on Lake Erie, crossed the lake and invaded upper Canada. The British commander at Detroit abandoned his post and retreated eastward. Tecumseh finally forced him to make a stand at the Thames River, some 50 miles east of Detroit. The Battle of the Thames in October 1813, fought mostly by the Indians while the British commander sat in his carriage prepared to flee to Montreal, was an overwhelming American victory. Tecumseh was killed; Indian morale devastated. The battle ended any further organized Indian resistance east of the Mississippi River.

The American victory also opened the Northwest to white pioneers. Within six years after the end of the war, Indiana, Illinois and Missouri had achieved statehood, and migrants were spilling over into Wisconsin and Iowa. The federal census of 1820 reported 651 white civilians west of Lake Michigan and 804 soldiers. A decade later, the region had more than 3,000 white inhabitants, and, when the Wisconsin Territory was established in 1836, a census revealed a population east of the Mississippi of 11,683.

In 1820, the Indians still owned all of Wisconsin, except for pinpoints of white settlement at Green Bay, Portage and Prairie du Chien. The end of the Indian woodland culture began in the mid-1820s with the movement

When this gathering was held at Prairie du Chien in 1825, Indians still held almost all of Wisconsin. By 1842, the entire area had been ceded to the U.S. government. Painting by J.O. Lewis, 1825. (State Historical Society, #WHi (X3) 40971)

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of the lead-mining frontier northward from Galena, Illinois. Without obtaining a title from the Indians, the federal government began leasing mining sites to prospectors, causing a "lead rush" into southwestern Wisconsin. By 1829, there were 4,253 miners and 52 licensed smelting works in the region. Indians naturally resented the intrusion. In 1827, outraged Winnebago murdered settlers who had encroached on their lands, but the incident only gave the federal government an excuse to extort land cessions.

Militia from Green Bay, Fort Snelling, and even Illinois, converged on the hapless Winnebago, and the army built a new fort (Fort Winnebago) at the Fox-Wisconsin portage. In the summer of 1829, American commissioners summoned representatives from all of the Wisconsin and Illinois tribes to a conference at Prairie du Chien. The Sauk and Fox, who had offended no one but who happened to stand in the way of the advancing mining frontier, were forced to sell their holdings between the Wisconsin River and the Rock River of Illinois. Most of the tribe were moved across the Mississippi River to Iowa. The Winnebago were next. They yielded any claims they might have to this same territory, as well as lands along the Wisconsin River as far up as the great portage. These forced concessions set the stage for the last Indian conflict east of the Mississippi, the Black Hawk War.

For more than a century, the Sauk and Fox tribes had been retreating before the unrelenting pressure of the white frontier. By the 1820s, they had been pushed into the valley of the lower Rock River. Their main village was

on a neck of land where the Rock flowed into the Mississippi. The lands west of the Mississippi had become their principal hunting grounds by then, but they returned to the east bank of the river every summer to plant their fields of squash and corn. After the great cession of 1829, most of the tribal members moved permanently over to the Iowa shore. But one band stood fast; it was led by a 62-year-old warrior named Black Hawk, whose history of resistance to the advancing frontier dated back to the War of 1812. He did not participate in the 1829 conference and claimed that the treaty signed by other chieftains had nothing to do with him.

In 1831, Black Hawk finally yielded to government pressure and took his people across to the west bank. Although he was "determined to live in peace", as he wrote in his autobiography, his people went hungry that winter. They had not had time to develop cornfields, and supplies of government-issued food ran short. Responding to the cries of his women and children, Black Hawk returned to Illinois in April 1832. He had with him a thousand warriors, together with an assortment of elderly men, women and children. He planned to drive the usurpers from his lands and replant his traditional cornfields. It was a visionary plan, one almost certain to fail, but it was hardly a declaration of war.

General Henry Atkinson, who had commanded the force that had wreaked vengeance on the Winnebago five years before, learned of the crossing, alerted Illinois authorities and gathered an army. Alerted to Atkinson's movements, Black Hawk abandoned any thought of planting corn and marched his band up the Rock River to a Winnebago village, whose leader had promised him support. Learning the Winnebago were in no mood for another fight, he proceeded farther north along the river to a Potawatomi village, which had also sent him encouraging messages. Finding that the Potawatomi promises were empty and their food bins even emptier, Black Hawk decided to give up.

On May 14, he sent a delegation under a white flag to the camp of some Illinois militia, commanded by Major Isaiah Stillman. Far from accepting the surrender, the undisciplined militia fired at the truce party, killing several Indians. Black Hawk's warriors arrived on the scene and discharged their weapons, watching in astonishment as the Illinois farmers fled in terror. The "battle" was ever after known as "Stillman's Run".

Finding no one willing to accept his surrender, Black Hawk sought to escape to the north and west. He followed the Rock River and its tributary, the Yahara, to the Four Lakes Region, skirting the south shore of Lake Mendota across the glacial moraine that would later become the campus of the University of Wisconsin. General Atkinson had been forced to stop at Lake

Koshkonong to await supplies, and Henry Dodge, commander of the Wisconsin militia, took up the chase. After a brief but sharp skirmish on the heights above present-day Sauk City, Black Hawk escaped across the Wisconsin River and drove his weary band toward the Mississippi.

Reaching the Mississippi on August 1, the exhausted and starving Indians hastily built rafts. Only a few made it across the river before the steamboat *Warrior*, dispatched from Fort Crawford, appeared. Ignoring the Indians' white flag, the steamboat opened fire, slaughtering men, women and children indiscriminately. Black Hawk and about 50 of his men fled north along the riverbank. The rest of his followers were slaughtered the next morning by Atkinson's forces in what has become known as the Battle of Bad Axe Creek. Black Hawk surrendered to a party of Winnebago, who turned him over to the army. After a brief imprisonment in an army barracks in St. Louis, he was set free and lived to write his memoirs, an eloquent defense of his efforts to maintain a way of life for his dispossessed people.

The federal government never investigated the savage behavior of its army nor did it attempt to comprehend Black Hawk's motives. Instead, it demanded retribution – from all Indians in the region. Ignoring the fact that the Wisconsin tribes had refused to join Black Hawk and some had even aided the army, the government punished them all. In 1832-33, it forced the Winnebago, Potawatomi and Menominee to sell all of their claims to land south and east of the Wisconsin River. In subsequent treaties of 1837 and 1842, the Sioux and the Chippewa surrendered their claims to the remaining lands south of Lake Superior. The Sioux joined their brethren in the Dakotas. Chippewa, Menominee and Oneida settled on "reserves" where many of their descendents reside today. By 1842, the Indian title to all of present-day Wisconsin had been cleared. One culture had all but vanished; another ruled supreme.

5. STATEHOOD, 1848

There was no ideology in the politics of the new territory. Geography and family background for the most part governed how people voted. In the southwest, most of the miners had come from the lead mines of Missouri by way of the lead mines around Galena, Illinois. They sympathized with the slaveholding South. Andrew Jackson was their hero; the Democrats were their party. On the national level, the Democrats were in trouble in the late 1830s. President Jackson's war on banking and attempt to put government transactions on a hard money basis (the "Specie Circular", 1836) had helped bring on a financial panic and a prolonged depression that clouded the administration of his hand-picked successor, Martin Van Buren. Despite

the hard times, the lead-mining counties of Wisconsin and their political leader, Dodge, remained staunchly Democratic.

The southeastern counties of Wisconsin were rapidly filling up with wheat-growing farmers from New York and New England. These people detested Jackson and Van Buren, but they had no organization of their own. On the national level the foes of Jackson, led by Henry Clay, had formed the Whig Party in 1834, but it had no organizational roots in Wisconsin until the end of the decade.

James Duane Doty played both sides of the political street. His grand plans for townsites linked by highways, canals and river improvements vanished with the depression. The parsimonious Van Buren firmly rejected all calls for federal aid in the development of roads and canals or the issuance of paper money to combat the depression (one of the Whigs' proposals). In 1838, Doty was elected territorial delegate to Congress with the help of the fast-growing lakeports, Milwaukee and Racine, whose businessmen needed river and harbor improvements. Although Van Buren was no friend to Doty's schemes, Doty could not afford to alienate the President. Statehood for Wisconsin was his prime objective, and he would accept help from any quarter. On arriving in Washington he wrote Van Buren: "Much is said here about my own politics and those of the Territory, but I have declined for the present taking party ground."

Unfortunately for Doty, the legislature had no such scruples, and it was dominated by Democrats from the lead region. The legislature was in ill-humor from the moment it first convened in Madison in the winter of 1838-1839. Doty had pushed construction of the capitol building in frantic haste to preclude the legislature from taking up temporary quarters in some other city. It had been constructed of green oak, and the floorboards later shrank when the single fireplace and stove were ignited. Delegates could peer through the cracks and see the hogs, sheltered in the unfinished basement by building contractor James Morrison, scavenging below them, while the contents of their inkwells froze on their desks.

Congress had appropriated $20,000 for the construction of public buildings in Madison and, in his haste to erect the capitol, Doty had not kept proper account of his expenditures. The legislature promptly began an investigation and, after it departed for home, Moses Strong, U.S. Attorney for the territory, took up the cudgel. A Democrat from Mineral Point, Strong began a 10-year legal crusade against Doty that reduced him to political and financial ruin.

Trying to ignore the uproar in Madison, Doty in Washington found himself more and more in tune with the Whig leadership. His developer mental-

ity responded to Henry Clay's proposals for government funding of roads and canals and tariff protection for manufactures. Doty built a particularly warm friendship with Daniel Webster, U.S. Senator from Massachusetts and a power in the Whig Party. Doty's strategy paid off when the Whig candidate, William Henry Harrison, "Old Tippecanoe", won the presidency in 1840. Doty even survived a temporary setback when Harrison died of pneumonia after only a month in office and his running mate, John Tyler, entered the White House. Tyler obligingly named Doty territorial governor of Wisconsin. Doty was now in a position to realize his dream for statehood.

Unfortunately, Doty's grand plans fell on deaf ears in Wisconsin. So long as Congress paid the territory's debts and financed its road and harbor improvements, the citizenry had little use for the responsibilities of state sovereignty. Even more embarrassing, the voters returned a Democratic majority to the legislature and elected Henry Dodge territorial delegate in Congress. Doty and the legislature grappled in daily battle over every item on the political agenda – Indian treaties, village post offices, erection of counties, chartering of banks and improvements in transportation. In Washington, Dodge worked assiduously to wreck Doty's standing among the Whigs. President Tyler was no help, for he had alienated his own party by vetoing bills for the rechartering of a national bank and the distribution of federal funds to the states for roads and canals. Doty lost his only friend in the administration when Secretary of State Daniel Webster resigned in 1842 in protest over Tyler's vetoes. Stripped of any political influence and facing financial ruin from the lawsuits instigated by Strong, Doty informed President Tyler in the spring of 1844 that he had no wish to serve a second term as governor. Tyler replaced him with one of his own allies, a congressman from New York. Doty moved his family to the southern shores of Lake Winnebago and retired from public life.

The Democrats returned to the White House in 1845 with the election of James K. Polk, and Dodge took over the governor's chair in Madison. The Democrats' return to power ironically revived the prospect of statehood for Wisconsin. President Polk, schooled in the Jacksonian tradition of limited federal involvement in the economy, vetoed bills for internal improvements, and the money for Wisconsin's roads and harbors dried up. Statehood, which entailed a bonus from Congress of 500,000 acres in federal lands, as well as a section in each township for the maintenance of schools, suddenly seemed more inviting. Congress was more receptive as well. The outbreak of the Mexican War in 1846 exacerbated sectional tensions, and Northerners were eager to add another free state to balance the recent admissions of Florida and Texas.

The bounty of Wisconsin is represented in the Capitol dome's mural. *(Kathleen Sitter, Legislative Reference Bureau)*

The legislature that assembled in Madison in the spring of 1846 differed markedly from the first assembly that had met at Belmont a decade earlier. The Democrats still had a majority, but the size and complexion were much different. Newly created counties of Walworth, Waukesha, Rock and Racine – all in the southeastern part of the territory – now sent members. The southeast had outdistanced the lead region in population, and its Yankee culture was being diluted by an influx of German, Irish and Scandinavian immigrants. As in 1836, not one member of the legislature was a native of Wisconsin. The building in which it met was also changed. The entrance was embellished with an eight-column piazza and a balustrade. The basement, long the domicile of the village's hogs, had been deepened for offices that were in the planning stage. Workers had mowed the hazel brush and grubbed the oak stumps, replacing them with maples and elms.

Not waiting for Congress to act, the legislature authorized a popular referendum on statehood. When the voters overwhelmingly gave their approval, Congress obligingly passed an Enabling Act, which permitted Wisconsin to hold a convention and draft a state constitution. The act set the western boundary of the state at a line drawn due south from the western tip of Lake Superior to the St. Croix River and thence along the St. Croix and Mississippi Rivers, the present boundary with Minnesota and Iowa.

The convention that met to draft a state constitution in the fall of 1846 was heavily Democratic, and it reflected that party's Jacksonian biases. A draft submitted by Strong prohibited the state from chartering any banking corporations and forbade the state from incurring public debt. The convention also felt the influence of the democratic reform impulse that was sweeping the North in the years before the Civil War. It extended the vote to white male immigrants, and it seriously considered black suffrage (an issue that it submitted to the voters separately). The constitution also allowed married women to own property independently of their husbands, a reform that was far in advance of most other states. Unfortunately, the constitution was too far ahead of its time and suffered defeat at the hands of voters, 14,000 in favor to 20,000 against. Negro suffrage went down to defeat by a similar margin.

A second convention in 1848 was more discrete. The document that emerged omitted any mention of women or blacks, and it left the question of voting rights to the legislature. However, it did embrace the concept of state-supported public education, a reform that had only recently been introduced among the states of the Northeast. Bowing to the pleas of Milwaukee and Racine businessmen, the constitution allowed the legislature to

charter banks, subject to popular referendum, but it prohibited the state from incurring debts for the construction of roads and canals.

Voters approved the constitution by an overwhelming majority. The principal opposition came from an antislavery party, born of the Mexican War, which thought that Wisconsin's blacks ought to be given the vote. Wisconsin was a state at last – just when the Union it joined was beginning to come apart.

6. THE JOSHUA GLOVER-SHERMAN BOOTH AFFAIR

One of the great mysteries of Wisconsin history is the state's role in the Civil War. By the end of 1861, the first year of the war, Wisconsin had raised on a purely voluntary basis 13 regiments of infantry and a company of cavalry, totaling 14,002 men. The figure represented about 9% of the white males of military age in the state. This was a higher proportion of the population than has ever stepped forward in the first year of any war the United States has fought. And these Wisconsin farmboys made outstanding soldiers! The valor of the Iron Brigade at the battles of South Mountain and Antietam is legendary. Southern farmboys-turned-soldiers – who had an abundance of foolhardy courage of their own – came to fear "those damned Black Hats" from Wisconsin.

How does one explain this extraordinary behavior? Wisconsin was a remote frontier, far removed from the moral struggle between slavery and abolition that took place in Congress. Hardly any of the Wisconsin volunteers had even met a black person – and would not have enjoyed the experience if he had (racial prejudice among Wisconsin soldiers was evident throughout the war). Antislavery was an abstract concept to these young men; what made them want to fight was not so much a hatred of slavery but a hatred of things Southern. This attitude, which grew out of a feeling that Northerners were being victimized by an aggressive slave power conspiracy, can be traced back to Sherman Booth's valiant struggle against the federal Fugitive Slave Law.

The Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, adopted as part of a sectional compromise that admitted California to the Union as a free state, allowed Southerners to recover runaway slaves in the Northern states with only a minimal appearance in a federal court. The fugitive was not allowed to testify; the single affidavit of the claimant was sufficient. Worst of all, the judge was allowed to share in any reward offered by the slaveholder. The effect was to bring the moral issue of slavery into the backyard of every Northern home. The South came to be symbolized by an overbearing, whip-wielding, flinty-eyed slavechaser.

The three-man Wisconsin delegation in the House of Representatives – a Democrat, a Whig and a Free Soiler – voted in favor of the admission of California and against every other feature of the Compromise of 1850. The compromise slipped through Congress because moderates in both North and South hoped it would end the agitation over slavery. In Wisconsin it did nothing of the sort. Meetings were held all over the state to protest the Fugitive Slave Law. Southern insistence on including the law in the compromise package proved a ruinous mistake, for the law carried slavery into the North. What had been an abstract moral issue suddenly became personal. Slavery was no longer a "peculiar institution" in a distant state – it was a black face peering out from prison bars asking for help. A gathering in Winnebago County resolved: "The Fugitive Slave Law has no binding force upon us and therefore we will continue, as heretofore, to help the slave escape."

Few whites in Wisconsin or anywhere else in the North favored the immediate abolition of slavery. To the extent that emancipation was brought about by force of law or arms, it would involve the confiscation of Southerners' property, and that was too drastic a step for property-conscious Americans. In addition, the U.S. Constitution did not mention slavery, except to prohibit the international slave trade. Slavery was instituted by state constitutions and laws in the Southern states. Nevertheless, by the 1840s there was a growing feeling that slavery was morally wrong and that something should be done to confine it. The Liberty Party, founded in 1840, reflected this view. It proposed that Congress prohibit slavery in the areas under its jurisdiction, the District of Columbia and the Western territories. The party ran a candidate for president in 1840 and again in 1844, but it received only a few thousand votes.

The War with Mexico in 1846 brought to a head the question of slavery in the West. Many Northerners suspected that the war was part of a Southern plot to extend slave territory in the Southwest, from Texas to California. From 1846 to 1848, Northerners in Congress repeatedly attempted to prohibit slavery in the land acquired from Mexico by the war. The discussion gave rise to a new form of antislavery known as "Free Soil". The idea of the Free Soilers was to ignore slavery where it was already entrenched and work instead to prevent the expansion of the institution into the Western territories. The proposal was moderate enough to attract a broad following: it was the lowest common denominator of antislavery feeling. It also appealed to the prejudices of Northern whites because it confined blacks to the states of the Old South and kept them out of the Western settlements. In the

presidential election of 1848 the Liberty Party was reincarnated as the Free Soil Party.

The Liberty Party had substantial support in the Wisconsin counties settled by Yankees, and it maintained a newspaper in Milwaukee, the *American Freeman*. In 1848, just ten days before Wisconsin was admitted to the Union, Sherman Booth, a 35-year-old native of western New York, arrived to take over the paper. A universal reformer, whose views on temperance were as fanatical as his views on slavery, Booth was erratic and abrasive, but for the next decade he almost singlehandedly dominated the slavery debate in Wisconsin. Wisconsin gave its vote to the Democratic candidate in 1848, but the candidate of the Free Soil Party (former President Martin Van Buren) received 27% of the popular vote, a better showing than he obtained in any other state except Massachusetts.

The Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 was anathema to Sherman Booth. In the columns of his newspaper he called on all persons "with a human heart in their bosoms" to defy the law. His opportunity to show what he meant by such defiance arose in the spring of 1854.

Sherman Booth, on horseback, urges the flight of Joshua Glover after his escape from jail, as painted in 1948 by William Ashby McCloy in his centennial mural for the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. *(Kathleen Sitter, Legislative Reference Bureau)*

On a March evening in 1854, a deputy federal marshal broke into a shack about four miles north of Racine where Joshua Glover, a runaway slave, was playing cards with two other black men. After a sharp struggle, the marshal put Glover in manacles and carried him away in a wagon. Alerted by the mayor of Racine the next morning, Booth made inquiries and learned that Glover's master had obtained a warrant in accordance with the Fugitive Slave Law and that Glover was lodged in the Milwaukee jail. When a federal judge refused Booth's request for an open trial of the fugitive, Booth mounted his horse and, "full-bearded, bald-headed and in trumpet tones, riding through the principal streets," shouted: "Freemen to the rescue!"

Booth called for a meeting at the court house square, and a crowd of several thousand showed up. It demanded that the judge issue a writ of habeas corpus releasing Glover. At that juncture, the Racine County sheriff, backed by a hundred men, appeared with a warrant for the arrest of the deputy marshal on a charge of assault and battery on Glover. With the law now on the side of liberty, the lawless took charge. The mob made a rush for the jailhouse door, broke it with a huge timber, and set Glover free. He was spirited by night to Racine and put on a boat to Canada.

Booth was arrested on a charge of violating the federal law and abetting an escape. He was fined $1,000 and sent to jail. The Wisconsin Supreme Court promptly issued a writ of habeas corpus freeing him on grounds that the Fugitive Slave Law, under which he had been convicted, was unconstitutional. Twice more federal authorities jailed Booth, and each time the state supreme court set him free. In effect, the supreme court was asserting it had the authority to review the constitutionality of a federal law and to nullify an act of Congress when it failed to meet the test. In 1857, the legislature joined the fray by enacting a "personal liberty law" that prohibited the use of any state agency in the recovery of fugitives. The prolonged confrontation between Wisconsin and the federal government was played out on the backdrop of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, "Bleeding Kansas", and the Dred Scott decision – each of which, in the minds of Northerners, was further evidence of an aggressive slave power. In effect, Sherman Booth had begun Wisconsin's own Civil War.

7. FELLING THE WHITE PINE

Commercial logging began in Wisconsin in the 1840s, and it quickly overtook the fur trade as the territory's main source of income. The white pine was the primary target of the lumbermen because it was light, soft and easily worked by carpenters. The advance of the lumbering frontier into Wisconsin coincided with the invention of the "balloon frame" house, so named because of its spindly 2 x 4 studs and 2 x 6 joists. Due to the unifor-

mity of its parts, it could be built quickly and cheaply. Such houses, made almost entirely of pine, became the standard residential construction for the cities of the Midwest and, indeed, remain so today.

The empire of the white pine lay north of a line that extended roughly from Manitowoc to Stevens Point and thence to the falls of the Chippewa and St. Croix Rivers. The logs were brought out of the woods by water – another reason for the preference for pine, which was light and floated easily. (Green hardwoods, such as maple and birch, sullenly dragged on the bottoms of rivers or sank altogether.) As a result, the waterways of Wisconsin dictated the growth of the lumber industry. In the east, the Wolf and Fox reached far into the interior both north and south of Green Bay. Through the 1840s and 1850s, Oshkosh and Fond du Lac were rivals for the title of sawmill capital of the state. Most of their output went into residential housing in the booming city of Chicago.

The logging frontier moved westward after the Civil War into the valleys of the Black, Chippewa and St. Croix Rivers. The Chippewa Valley alone was an empire in pine. From Eau Claire, the head of steamboat navigation, the river stretched more than a hundred miles to the northern highlands. Lengthy tributaries, such as the Cedar, the Couderay and the Flambeau, created a watery handprint another hundred miles wide. It has been estimated that the Chippewa Valley alone contained one-sixth of all the pine timber between the Appalachians and the Rocky Mountains. La Crosse and Black River Falls became the new sawmill capitals of the state. Although the western watersheds were not fully developed until after the Civil War and long after railroads had become the nation's freight carriers, the rivers were such efficient movers of logs that railroads did not successfully compete in the lumber trade until the 1890s.

The logging camp was a small affair, although it was usually part of a large corporation that managed dozens of camps. It often contained no more than 20 or 30 lumberjacks, a manager, a cook, and the cook's helper, or "cookee". From a management standpoint, the most important laborer was the cook, for camp morale depended on an abundant supply of food reasonably well prepared. The basic fare was bread, salt pork and beans. The camp was usually located on a river, its perimeter determined by the distances crew and horses could haul logs by sled. Logging was a winter occupation because the giant trees could be moved only by horse-drawn sled, usually on grooves formed of ice. The work of the lumberjack was perhaps the hardest, most dangerous and most poorly paid in the country. Lumber companies, operating on credit, paid their workers only when the season was over. The lumberjacks themselves were rivermen, farmers and itiner-

ant laborers, held in place for a season only by their own indebtedness to the company and the severity of the winter.

The work involved certain specialties, if not skills. The scaler marked the trees to be felled and determined the number of logs to be cut from each. The fellers dropped the tree where it could be most easily worked. By the 1870s the two-man crosscut saw had generally replaced the axe, doubling the production of a felling crew. A bucking crew limbed the tree and cut it into 16-foot logs. The teamster dragged the logs on the snow to a loading area, where they were piled onto sleds. A crude block and tackle, drawn by horses, was used to guide the top logs into place, the pile extending anywhere from 10 to 20 feet high. Horses, oxen or – by the end of the century – steam engines pulled the laden sleds to the riverbank, where the logs were piled to await the spring thaw. An inspector placed the company's logmark on the butt of each log, so the mass of wood could be sorted out and each company claim its own timber when it reached the sawmill.

The log drive began when the snow melted, the river rose, and the current freshened. The rivermen, whose job it was to keep the unruly logs moving and gather up those that had fallen into backwaters and eddies, have often been portrayed in romantic fashion as courageous souls, riding the bobbing logs with a rhythmic sway, deftly stepping from one to another with only a long pike for balance. A contemporary described them as "hard-living, hard-drinking, hard-fighting, blasphemous pioneers", who were picked from the camp crews for their agility and strength. French Canadians allegedly were the best at riding a log through rapids.

The most dangerous part of a log drive was breaking up a jam. A narrow bend in the river, a rocky stretch or a sudden shallows could cause the logs to go aground and pile up. Because all of the logging companies throughout a watershed put their winter's crop in the river about the same time – April and May – a jam, once started, quickly piled up into a stupendous amount of timber. A famous jam on the Chippewa River in 1869 extended for fifteen miles with logs piled thirty feet in the air in some places. In 1886, more than 200 men and two steamboats struggled for six weeks to break a jam on the St. Croix River. Small jams could be loosened by teams of rivermen nudging the logs apart with their steel-edged pikes. Larger jams were broken by teams of horses who pulled free the logs near the riverbank, leaving an apron in the middle that was gradually broken up by the current.

At first, every lumber company maintained its own sawmill on the lower reaches of the river. Each mill attempted to extract its own logs from the mass of timber coming downstream, but that created utter confusion and bitter conflicts. A further difficulty was that a log that missed its intended des-

Log jam on the St. Croix River, 1886. *(Department of Natural Resources)*

tination could not be recovered, for there was no way to carry logs upstream. The lumbermen devised a system of log exchange, but this involved a good deal of laborious bookkeeping. The solution was a central organization of lumbermen on each river, and this was generally achieved by 1870. In each logging district, a company was formed, which constructed extensive works on the stream for handling and sorting logs. Such works, unfortunately, had to be maneuverable so steamboats and other traffic could use the river. In 1861, James Allen and Levi Pond of Eau Claire solved the problem by designing a fin boom, which utilized the current of the river to push the boom (consisting of a chain of timbers) across the channel. By turning a series of collapsible rudders or fins, the operator could induce the current to bring the boom back to shore. The device was put to use on every logging stream in the country.

The boom stopped the floating logs and channeled them into a narrow passage flanked by gaps which led to the booms of individual owners. At each of these gaps a workman, using a long pike pole, picked out the logs belonging to his company. The system was quite efficient. The sorting works of the Black River Improvement Company, for example, could handle a million board feet of logs a day. Even so, every year 10% of the timber cut was lost in the bogs and sloughs of the rivers.

The principal market for the timber of Wisconsin's western rivers was St. Louis. By the 1870s lumbermen had found it most efficient to ship their logs all the way to St. Louis, rather than sawing them into lumber in Wiscon-

sin. They did so by binding the logs with ropes and chains into gigantic rafts. The first step was to form a brail, or hollow frame, of chained logs. The brail was then filled with logs. The standard brail was 600 feet long and 45 feet wide. Six brails fastened together made up a Mississippi raft, which was then pushed downriver by steamboat. The pine lumber that poured out of the sawmills of St. Louis was used to construct frame houses for the prairie farmers of Illinois, Missouri and Iowa, as well as residential housing in the bustling crossroads of Kansas City and Omaha.

Wisconsin was swept clean of merchantable white pine by about 1900. Logging would continue throughout the 20th century, but the new targets were hardwoods, aspen, birch and maple, remade into paper, firewood or furniture. The logging era changed the landscape of the North and its economy. A few hardtack farmers tried to cultivate the cutover, mostly without success. Ultimately, after the coming of the automobile, tourism became the economic mainstay. But the white pine will never again be king – although in the mind of some a single tree by the roadside or in a pasture, its broad arms spread to the heavens, can convey a regal presence.

8. THE FIRST CHEESE FACTORY

Wheat was the crop of choice among pioneer farmers because it required relatively little labor. It could be sowed beneath the dead branches of girdled trees and grew with little attention until harvest time. Repeated crops depleted the soil but, so long as land was cheap, it mattered little. Pioneers either cleared new land of their own or moved on to the West. William W. Daniells, professor of chemistry and agriculture at the University of Wisconsin, tried in vain to get wheat farmers to mend their ways. Wheat farming, he wrote in 1878, was "mere land-skimming. . . . It was always taking out of the purse and never putting in." The professor demanded that farmers change "to a rational method that will preserve the soil's fertility and pay for the labor it demands."

The revolution that Daniells predicted was brought about, not by soil exhaustion, but by the building of the transcontinental railroads. The railroads pushed onto the plains of western Minnesota and the Dakotas in the 1870s, opening a vast new realm for wheat culture. Wheat farmers, mostly of Yankee stock, followed the railroads to the West. Their farms were taken up by immigrants from Europe and, before long, by migrants from New York. Both sets of newcomers were dairy farmers. An agricultural revolution was underway.

Commercial dairying was not possible before the advent of refrigeration because dairy products spoiled so quickly. As a result, nearly every family had a cow or two. This was true even in the cities where poor families, who

lived on the periphery, maintained cattle and chickens. (Prior to the coming of the street car and the automobile, the wealthy lived in the center of town and the poor on the edge.) As a result, milk and butter were made and consumed at home. Nor was there any effort to control what the cow was eating, and many unwholesome odors – from wild onions to wild garlic – found their way into the milk and thence into the butter. Butter that was shipped to urban areas was an amalgam of contributions from many farmers without inspection or quality control. As late as the 1870s, Wisconsin butter was sold in Chicago by the hundredweight as a base for wagon-wheel lubricants – in short, as axle grease.

Although the refrigerated freight car was introduced in the 1870s (by meat processors), cheese was the product that made commercial dairying economically feasible. Cheesemaking, a craft familiar to both European and New York immigrants to Wisconsin, was highly profitable because it used the whole milk, rather than just the butterfat. It also traveled better than butter and required less refrigeration. However, to be competitive in big city markets, it had to be of uniform quality. The cheese factory was the answer – and the basis of the agricultural revolution.

Originating in eastern Europe, the cheese factory was introduced in New York in 1851, and it revolutionized dairying methods within a decade. The technology arrived in Wisconsin in 1864 when Chester Hazen, an emigrant from the Empire State, built a factory at Ladoga in Fond du Lac County. Since good cheesemakers were a rare breed, the cheese factory utilized an economy of skill. The cheese factory purchased the milk from farmers in the surrounding region, thus consuming the output of 200 to 500 cows. The cheesemaker, a skilled craftsman, usually of New York, German or Swiss birth, supervised the production of two to 20 factories, and thus ensured a product of uniformly good quality.

Since even the smallest cheese factory required contributions from at least 200 cows, farmers committed to the new system had to find converts, and the proselytizing was reminiscent of a religious tent-camp meeting. Resistance was not simply a matter of innate conservatism. Cheese production imposed a tyranny of its own because bad milk from one farm could ruin a batch of cheese for an entire district. Thus, successful cheesemaking required quality control and constant monitoring. The experience of Wisconsin dairymen as they entered the marketplace was not unlike the discipline being imposed on urban factory workers who found their lives governed by whistles and work rules.

Even with new recruits, the cheesemakers' demands always seemed to exceed the supply of milk. The difficulty was winter feed. Because most

Cheesemaking was a source of pride in Monroe by the time this postcard appeared in 1910. (State Historical Society)

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farmers cut and stored only enough hay to keep their animals alive during the winter months, they made no effort to milk the cows after October. In addition, they assumed that the winter "rest" increased output during the brief milking season, when the cow had its calf. Cheese factories accordingly operated only for four or five months, during what was known as the "flush" season. Larger barns, capable of holding more hay, was one answer, but barns were expensive to build. In 1880, one farm expert estimated that a barn capable of accommodating 30 cows cost about $3,000. Some farmers preferred octagonal barns, which, for less money, could be designed to serve as milking shed, hayloft, carriage house and horse stable.

The most economical solution to the problem of winter forage was the silo. The concept of storing grain in air-tight pits or trenches was known to the Romans (the term "silo" is derived from a Latin word meaning "trench"), but European farmers did not begin experimenting with it until the mid-19th century. German farmers began storing chopped up beets and beet leaves in large wooden receptacles, in a process similar to the way they made sauerkraut for themselves. In 1877, a Frenchman published the results of 25 years of experiments with silage – green feed fermented in a tightly enclosed space – and American farmers undertook experiments of their own. The fermentation process converted the carbohydrates into acids, chiefly lactic acid, which helped to prevent the silage from spoiling. The essence of successful silage was the exclusion of air, that is, oxygen. With too much air, the fermentation process heated up and turned the green

matter to ash. Any plants, except members of the cabbage family, could be used for silage – corn, oats, grass or beans. The crop had to be chopped finely and pressed tightly into an enclosed space. The first silos were square and made of wood, but these could not withstand the pressure and permitted pockets of air. Later silos were round and made of glazed brick or concrete.

In 1881, Dean William A. Henry of the University of Wisconsin School of Agriculture obtained a legislative appropriation of $4,000 to build an experimental silo on the university farm. The silage was accepted by the university herd, and Dean Henry became an apostle for the new feeding system. Joining him in the crusade was William Dempster Hoard, another transplanted New Yorker who published *Hoard's Dairyman*, the nation's preeminent dairy publication. In 1872, Hoard had founded the Wisconsin Dairymen's Association, and he had used the political clout of the association to persuade the state's railroads to start carrying dairy products in the new refrigerator cars, developed by Chicago meat-packer Gustavus A. Swift. In the 1880s, Hoard devoted his promotional talents to spreading the gospel of the farm silo. It was found that a single acre of grain made into silage could feed three cows through the winter, whereas it required hay from two acres to maintain a single cow. The reason was that grass made into hay lost about 50% of its nutrient value, while corn made into silage lost only about 10% of its nutrients.

The cheese factory, the refrigerated railcar and the introduction of the silo completed the dairy revolution. Together they enabled Wisconsin's dairy farmers to enter the national marketplace. The Wisconsin Dairymen's Association was able to negotiate favorable rates with "fast freight" shippers who guaranteed delivery within six days to New York and eight to Boston. Because they had the advantage of cheaper land and labor costs, Wisconsin's dairymen were able to compete well with New York farmers in Eastern markets and even in London. The "revolution", to be sure, did not happen overnight. As late as 1904, a statewide census reported only 716 silos in Wisconsin. Nevertheless, by that date Wisconsin had become "America's Dairyland".

9. THE CITY THAT MADE BEER FAMOUS

The Milwaukee River rises in rich farmland south of Lake Winnebago and flows determinedly southeast to Lake Michigan. Coming within a mile or two of the lake, the river loses its determination, shifts to the south and flows parallel to the lakeshore for more than 10 miles. Nudged by the Menominee River, which joins it from the west, the Milwaukee River turns at last back to the east and punches through sand dunes into the lake. For many years after the City of Milwaukee was founded, the mouth of the river was

shallow and shifting, depending on which sandbar it decided to shove through in the spring thaw.

Although only the most optimistic developer could envision the area as a great seaport, people settled on the bluffs above the river from earliest times. Indians encamped there, and the French operated a fur trading post on the site. In 1818, Solomon Juneau, an agent of John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company, set up a trading post on the east bank of the river. Juneau was an enterprising man, but he could do little to develop the location so long as Indians held title to the land.

The Indian cessions in the wake of the Black Hawk War opened the way for settlement, and in 1833 Juneau formed a partnership with Green Bay speculator Morgan Martin (who had accompanied Doty on his 1829 horseback journey across the territory). Juneau gave Martin a half interest in his preemptive claim to the lands between the river and the lake, in return for Martin's money, expertise and influence with the Green Bay land office. Juneau then fenced off his claim to the peninsula between lake and river to preserve his rights against future squatters like himself. By the time the land office put the lands up for sale in the summer of 1835, speculators were wandering around the site "in swarms", and Juneau was getting $500 to $600 bids for half-acre lots, which he had purchased from the government for the statutory minimum of $1.25 an acre. In the meantime, another speculator, Byron Kilbourn, posted a claim to the lands on the west side of the Milwaukee River and north of the Menominee. He rejected a Martin-Juneau offer to cooperate and, as a result, the city originated as two townsites, Juneautown and Kilbourntown. The two sites were incorporated into Milwaukee County in 1837 and became wards of the Village of Milwaukee two years later, but they maintained separate governing powers by ward for many years.

The opening of Milwaukee lands in the mid-1830s coincided with an era of feverish speculation, as states invested heavily in canals and railroads and banks offered easy credit to land speculators. Nowhere was speculation more feverish than in Milwaukee. By early 1836, Juneau was a rich man, reportedly worth $100,000 and doing a daily business of $8,000 to $10,000. Kilbourn made even more money because he had more room to expand into the interior, but he lost much of his fortune in an ill-fated effort to dig a canal connecting his portion of Milwaukee with the Rock River.

A traveler who arrived in Milwaukee in July 1836 reported a village of 50 houses and 1,208 people where, he wrote in astonishment, "18 months ago there were but two families." Even so, 50 structures for more than a thousand people suggests a severe housing shortage. One observer reported

that "Every day, almost, new frames were erected. Men's hats were crammed with maps of paper towns." Owners of vacant lots commanded high rents for the privilege of selling goods on their property. One reporter claimed that profits could be made simply by "standing around, i.e., watching the land market for bargains."

The inevitable "bust" came with the banking panic of May 1837, and Milwaukee plunged into depression along with the rest of the country. Aggravating the hard times in Milwaukee was the lack of a port facility. Wheat farmers were moving into its hinterland, and it had the potential of rivaling Toledo and Cleveland as wheat and flour shipping centers if it could develop a harbor. As it was, lake steamers had to anchor out in Lake Michigan and transfer their cargo and passengers to smaller vessels that could negotiate the river's mouth. Byron Kilbourn operated two small steamers for this service, but they put in only on the west bank of the river. Milwaukee made annual pleas for federal help in digging a harbor, but they fell on deaf ears in Van Buren's Washington. After the Whigs came to power in 1841, the government appropriated $30,000 for Milwaukee, but government engineers, ignoring the city's plea for a "straight cut" from the river to the lake above Juneautown, wasted the money removing sandbars from the mouth.

In 1843 a Milwaukee investor built a private pier from the foot of Huron Street next to the eastside business district. Extending 1,200 feet into Lake Michigan and 49 feet wide, the pier accommodated lake steamers and became a model for others in the vicinity. The piers would eventually allow Milwaukee to attain its promise of a major lake port. But in the meantime, the years of stagnation were evident. Its population of 3,000 in 1843 was only slightly more than Racine and far behind booming Chicago, which had been founded about the same time.

Milwaukee was transformed from fur-trading outpost to modern metropolis and brewing capital of the nation by calamities – that fell upon others. There were three of them over a span of thirty years, and, figuratively, they represented three of the four horsemen of the Apocalypse – famine, war and fiery death.

The famine struck in western Europe in the 1840s with a blight that destroyed potato crops. Though associated primarily with Ireland, the hunger and death rate was nearly as bad in Germany and Scandinavia. Peasant farmers fled from hunger in Germany, Ireland and Norway by the hundreds of thousands, and many made their way to the western river cities, Cincinnati and St. Louis, as well as the busy lake ports, Milwaukee and Chicago. Most of the immigrants pushed on into Milwaukee's hinterland, but significant numbers went to work in the city. Its population exploded to 14,000

King Gambrinus, the mythical monarch of brewing, looks down on a brew kettle at a Milwaukee brewery. *(Department of Tourism)*

within three years and 20,000 by the end of the decade. Milwaukee was the fastest growing city in America in the 1840s, and, by 1850, it was within 7,000 of equaling the population of Chicago (although that was as close as it would ever get).

On matters of drink, the Irish of Milwaukee preferred whiskey, which was one of the few things they had in common with their Yankee-Protestant neighbors. The drink of choice among Germans, on the other hand, was beer. Beer had been known in America from the time of the *Mayflower* (the Pilgrims thought that beer carried better on a long sea journey than ordinary water), but Americans had always preferred stronger spirits – wine among the wealthy and rum or whiskey among the poor. With a new demand for beer in Milwaukee, the market was quick to respond. The city's first brewery was established in 1840 by three Welshmen at the foot of Huron (later

Clybourn) Street, where it catered to the traffic on the pier. However, they specialized in English-style ale and did not have the future that would belong to German beer-makers.

Jacob Best established the Empire Brewery (forerunner of both Pabst and Miller) in 1842. John Braun went into the brewing business (forerunner of Blatz) in 1846, and August Krug started a brewery (forerunner of Schlitz) on Chestnut (Juneau) between Fourth and Fifth Streets in 1849. It is interesting that of the four great names that made Milwaukee famous only one, Frederick Miller, had a background as a brewmaster. The other three were opportunists with a keen sense of business and Germanic names, who began with little or no knowledge of how to make beer.

Frederick Pabst had migrated from Germany at the age of 12 and found a job on one of the lake steamers. He was a mate on a steamboat by the age of 19 and captain and part owner of the *Sunbeam* when he was 20. (He would retain the title "Captain Frederick" all his life.) Sometime around 1860, he married the daughter of Philip Best, who had taken over control of the Empire Brewery from his father Jacob, and renamed it Ph. Best & Company. Captain Fred went to work for his father-in-law in 1864, and within a year he was head of the firm. By 1889, when he renamed the company after himself, it was turning out 500,000 barrels of beer annually and was the largest brewery in Wisconsin.

Frederick Miller was a successful braumeister in Wurttemberg who decided to relocate in Milwaukee, no doubt having heard of its rising reputation for beer-making. Miller arrived with $10,000 in gold, and in 1855 he purchased the Plank Road Brewery from Charles Best, another of the sons of Jacob Best. His first year's production was 300 barrels.

Valentine Blatz, the son of a Bavarian brewer, worked in several large German breweries before migrating to Milwaukee in the mid-1840s. He found work as a foreman in the brewery founded by John Braun. Braun died in 1851 and left his brewery at Broadway and Division (Juneau) streets to his wife. Blatz bought the business from her for $500. He then married the widow and developed the brewery into one of Milwaukee's finest.

August Krug's brewery on Chestnut Street was still a small operation when he died in 1856. His bookkeeper, Joseph Schlitz, who had arrived in Milwaukee the year before, took over management of the brewery on behalf of Krug's widow. Although only 25 years old at the time, Schlitz was a shrewd businessman who rapidly expanded the enterprise. He married the widow in 1874 and changed the named of the brewery to the Jos. Schlitz Brewing Company. The following year he planned to return for a triumphant visit to his hometown in Germany. Aware of the dangers of ocean

travel, he made out a will requiring that his name be forever associated with the company. He died in a storm at sea in 1875.

The second calamity that advanced the development of Milwaukee and its brewing industry was war – the American Civil War. Until 1860, the Milwaukee breweries were small operations, catering to the local German population. The native Yankee population, as well as the Irish, still preferred whiskey or rum. The distilled spirits were actually cheaper than beer when priced by alcohol content. For a serious drinker in a village saloon distilled spirits were simply more efficient. And Americans generally were serious drinkers in the mid-19th century. Foreign travelers reported that a glass of whiskey was consumed at every meal – the purpose, they would add acidly, being to kill the taste of awful cooking.

To finance its share of the war effort, the Wisconsin Legislature imposed a tax of one dollar on each gallon of hard liquor and a dollar on each barrel of beer. Since there were 31 gallons in a barrel of beer, the effect was to make beer the bargain beverage on an alcohol-to-price computation. Beer sales soared. Milwaukee brewers doubled their production between 1860 and 1865 and doubled it again by 1870. Even when the tax was removed, beer remained the drink of choice among the saloon customers of the state, and Milwaukee's product was being distributed in every village and hamlet.

The third calamity, the Chicago fire of 1871, started Milwaukee beer on the road to national fame. Chicago also had a sizable German population and a thriving brewery business, but the fire destroyed the breweries and, before new ones could rise from the ashes, Milwaukee's industrious promoters had moved in. And they did not stop there. Taking advantage of the communications revolution wrought by the railroads, they moved into the markets of the Eastern seaboard. The Philip Best Brewing Company, which was capitalized at $300,000 in 1873, was worth $4 million when it changed its name to Pabst in 1889, and by 1892 it stood at $10 million. The Jos. Schlitz Brewing Company was capitalized at $200,000 when formed in 1874. After Schlitz died the following year, the business fell into the hands of August Uihlein, an immigrant who came from a family of Bavarian brewers. Uihlein and his brothers were astute businessmen who invested in real estate, banking and insurance, as well as the brewery, and by 1903, when Schlitz took over national leadership from Pabst, the company was capitalized at $12 million.

The secret to such rapid growth was shrewd advertising and self-promotion. Both Schlitz and Pabst made a business of buying corner lots in major cities and financing the construction of saloons. Captain Pabst controlled nine hotels or restaurants in New York, Chicago, Minneapolis and San Fran-

cisco. He would hire theater idols to stroll into his establishments, order a beer and say in loud but sober tones: "I am drinking the health of Milwaukee's greatest beer brewer, Captain Fred Pabst."

The Pabst plant began to bottle beer in 1875, and soon thereafter employees were fastening by hand a blue ribbon to each bottle of its "Select" beer. "Blue Ribbon" was adopted as a trade name in the late 1890s. By then Pabst had also developed a catchy slogan, which he plastered on the walls of beer wagons: "Milwaukee beer is famous – Pabst has made it so." In 1898, Schlitz challenged the right of Pabst to use the slogan. It turned out that its shrewd advertising department had, some years earlier, purchased the slogan "The beer that made Milwaukee famous" from a small brewing concern for $5,000. Pabst had to relinquish its slogan because of the similarity to the one for which Schlitz had a prior claim.

In fact, in only one year during the 19th century – 1889 – was brewing Milwaukee's leading industry. Nevertheless, as the Schlitz slogan suggests, beer is Milwaukee's most famous product, and the two are virtually synonymous.

10. THE WISCONSIN IDEA

In 1912, a little-known public servant, Charles R. McCarthy, who headed an obscure agency, the Legislative Reference Library (now the Legislative Reference Bureau), published an important book, which he entitled *The Wisconsin Idea*. The book was a summary of progressive reforms pioneered by Wisconsin, and it served as a blueprint for a national reform movement.

Central to the Wisconsin Idea was the use of experts in drafting laws and in staffing regulatory commissions. Many of these were recruited from the campus of the University of Wisconsin. Although no one knows who coined the phrase "the boundaries of the university are the boundaries of the state", it reflected a spirit of public service that characterized the University of Wisconsin from its very inception. The Morrill Land Grant College Act, passed by Congress in 1862, offered public lands to schools that agreed to emphasize vocational arts, such as agriculture and engineering. In accepting Congress's land grant in 1866, the legislature revised the university's charter to include "courses of instruction in the mathematical, physical, and natural sciences, with their applications to the industrial arts, such as agriculture, mechanics and engineering." The statute also authorized Dane County to issue bonds for the purchase of land to be donated to the university as an experimental farm. These actions ensured that the state university would also be Wisconsin's "A & M college". College of Agriculture Dean

William A. Henry's promotion of the dairy industry in the 1870s and 1880s was a sample of the university's role in the state's economic development.

In 1903, Charles R. Van Hise, a geologist by profession, became president of the university, and in his inaugural address he advocated that state agencies make more extensive use of the university and its scholarship. Governor Robert M. La Follette, who had been a classmate of Van Hise at the university, fully agreed. La Follette had been elected governor of Wisconsin in 1901 on a progressive platform that included such democratic reforms as popular selection of party nominees through a primary election and curbs on big business, such as state regulation of railroad freight rates. Although his program was stymied in his first term by the opposition of Republican Stalwarts in the legislature, La Follette had a strong voice in the selection of Van Hise as president of the university. (La Follette appointed 10 of the 13 university regents who selected Van Hise.)

La Follette instituted a Saturday Club to bring together state officials, legislators and members of the university faculty with common interests. Such social/intellectual gatherings were made possible by the uncommon circumstance that the state university and the seat of government were in the same city. (This is the case in only nine states.) Within a few years, delegations arrived in Madison from all over the country to see firsthand how the university was serving the state. After returning home, the leader of an Arkansas delegation reported to Van Hise: "I am sure that the visit will be of great benefit to education in Arkansas. . . . The University of Wisconsin is at the top and we are looking to you for counsel."

The theoretical underpinnings of the Wisconsin Idea was the "new economics" of professors John R. Commons and Richard T. Ely. In the early 1890s, Ely had given up a professorship at prestigious Johns Hopkins University to become director of the UW School of Economics, Political Science, and History. He had been attracted to the shores of Lake Mendota by the university's growing reputation for innovative scholarship. One of the young professors in his department was Frederick Jackson Turner, whose 1893 essay "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" influenced a generation of historical scholarship.

In his economic theory, Ely rejected the classical notion that economics was a "pure" science governed by eternal verities, such as the "iron law of wages" (a Malthusian concept that overpopulation necessarily drove wages down to a level of bare subsistence). Peering at his seminars through round, steel-rimmed glasses, Ely taught that economics was an inductive science, subject to experiment. He thought government had an ethical role to play

in setting rules for fair competition, for instance, and encouraging labor organizations that would guard the welfare of workers.

Commons, the most important of La Follette's scholar-administrators, had earned his Ph.D. at Johns Hopkins, under the guidance of Ely, who had called his attention to the labor organizations of Baltimore. Commons became one of the first (and remains today one of the foremost) scholars to study the history of organized labor. He bounced through several teaching jobs before landing a distinguished chair at Syracuse University. However, the regents of that school found his economic theories far too progressive, and they abolished the chair in order to get rid of him. In his autobiography, Commons described himself as "born again" when he arrived in Madison. Governor La Follette, who had met Commons two years earlier, promptly put him to work drafting the state's first civil service law, which the legislature approved in 1905.

Charles McCarthy, originator of the legislative service agency model, with the staff of the Legislative Reference Library in 1906. (State Historical Society, #WHi (X3) 49904)

The catalyst for the interaction between scholarship and legislation was the state's Legislative Reference Library, the single-handed creation of a New England emigre of Irish descent, Charles McCarthy. After graduating from Brown University, McCarthy came to Madison to do graduate work in history under Turner. When the legislature authorized a small appropriation for a "documents clerk" in 1901, Turner recommended McCarthy for the job. With consummate bureaucratic skill, McCarthy steadily enlarged his documentary holdings, his staff and his influence. In his autobiography,

Commons explained how McCarthy's "bill factory" worked. La Follette, who moved from the governor's mansion to the U.S. Senate in 1906, and State Assembly Speaker Herman L. Ekern had asked Commons to prepare a bill in 1907 for the regulation of public utilities on the model of railroad regulation. "McCarthy gave me a room in his library, and during the five or six months' session of the legislature I met there the representatives of the public utility corporations and worked with Mr. M.S. Dudgeon, of McCarthy's legal staff, in drafting the bill." Commons added: "I did not, of my own initiative, introduce anything new in drafting the bill. I got it all from others. I was a kind of sieve for funnelling ideas from everywhere into legislative enactment."

McCarthy added another feature to the Wisconsin Idea – a phrase that he apparently coined with his 1912 book title – that of carrying the university to the people through an extension system. During the 1890s professors from the university in Madison, including Turner, had given "short courses" of liberal arts lectures in cities around the state, but, popular though the program was, it proved to be too time-consuming and exhausting for the instructors. McCarthy's idea was to establish centers with a permanent staff to offer courses in the liberal arts and agricultural sciences. He administered the system through a department in his Legislative Reference Library and wheedled steadily increasing funding allotments from the legislature. By 1912, the extension system had 63 branches around the state, including centers with permanent staffs at Milwaukee, La Crosse and Oshkosh.

Wisconsin's brand of Progressivism reached full flower during the administration of Francis E. McGovern, elected governor in 1910 and reelected in 1912. McGovern received his political baptism in the city politics of Milwaukee, where the leading political force was the radical Social Democratic Party. La Follette, who was, after all, a Republican, regarded McGovern as a bit too radical, but he joined forces with him in 1910 because he needed McGovern's strength in the lakeshore counties for his own senatorial reelection campaign. By 1910, the spirit of reform had so captured the popular imagination that even Stalwarts were describing themselves as Progressives. With support from Democrats, Republican Progressives and Milwaukee Socialists, McGovern faced a cooperative legislature.

The first item on the agenda was worker's compensation. Injuries on the job had multiplied as factories became larger and more complex. Yet an injured worker could obtain compensation only by suing his employer and proving negligence. For some years, labor unions in Wisconsin and elsewhere had demanded a state-mandated insurance fund for compensation without regard to fault. In 1911, Commons undertook the job of drafting

the legislation and winning political support. Though sympathetic to labor himself, Commons was able to enlist the support of all interests involved, manufacturers as well as labor unions. Farmers and village shopkeepers threw their support to the law when Commons exonerated businesses that employed fewer than four persons. The statute slipped noiselessly through the legislature and became a model for other states.

The Wisconsin Industrial Commission was another of Professor Commons' offspring. The statute establishing the commission gave it broad powers and ample discretion. Its advisory committees, consisting of representatives of management, labor and the public, all guided by experts, were to establish codes for "reasonable conditions" of safety in each industry. Since the courts' interpretation of the term "reasonable" in prior statutes had deprived it of any meaning, Commons and McCarthy wrote a definition into the statute. They defined it as "the highest degree of safety, health and well-being of the employees that the nature of the industry or employment would reasonably permit." With that, "reasonable" meant "state of the art" precautions as defined by the experts. Commons himself served as the resident expert on the commission for its first five years.

McCarthy's description of the Wisconsin Idea brought it to national attention, and it was adopted in whole or in part by many other states. The previous year, Theodore Roosevelt, who had become editor of *Outlook* magazine after retiring from the presidency, paid the following tribute to the tripartite alliance of scholars, legislators and civil servants: "In no other state in the union has any university done the same work for the community that has been done in Wisconsin by the University of Wisconsin."

The progressive impulse altered the politics of Wisconsin for decades to come. The spirit of the Wisconsin Idea was carried on by La Follette's sons, Phillip, who served as governor in the 1930s, and Robert, Jr., who served in the U.S. Senate until 1946.

SUGGESTED READING

Two good introductions to the impact of the glacier on Wisconsin are Gwen Schultz, *Ice Age Lost* (1974), and Lee Clayton and John Attig, *Glacial Lake Wisconsin* (1989). Lawrence Martin, *The Physical Geography of Wisconsin* (1965), is scholarly and ponderous, but it contains a wealth of information.

George I. Quimby pioneered the study of Native American cultures, and his *Indian Life in the Upper Great Lakes* (1960) is a classic. *The Chippewas of Lake Superior* (1979) by Edmund Jefferson Danziger, Jr., is a good study of one tribe. New discoveries and new interpretations are rapidly changing

the field of Native American studies. My interpretation in this article of the metaphysical beliefs of the Hurons and Ottawas in the sketch on Jean Nicolet, for instance, is drawn from a biography of Pontiac by Gregory E. Dowd, forthcoming in Norman K. Risjord, ed., *American Profiles* (Madison House, Inc., Madison, Wis.).

The standard work on the exploration and early development of Wisconsin is Alice E. Smith, *History of Wisconsin: From Exploration to Statehood* (1973), Volume I of an excellent six-volume history of the state, published by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. Also useful and nicely written is John A. Caruso, *The Mississippi Valley Frontier: The Age of Exploration and Settlement* (1966). Alice E. Smith's biography of *James Duane Doty, Frontier Promoter* (1954), provides colorful details of the Wisconsin Territory's political wars.

The standard account of the middle decades of the 19th century is Volume II in *The History of Wisconsin,* subtitled *The Civil War Era, 1848-1873* (1976) and written by Richard N. Current. Fred L. Holmes, *Badger Saints and Sinners* (1939), contains nice biographical sketches of Sherman Booth and William D. Hoard. A more detailed study of Wisconsin's battle with the federal government in the 1850s is James I. Clark, *Wisconsin Defies the Fugitive Slave Law: The Case of Sherman Booth* (1955).

The standard account of the latter half of the 19th century is Volume III of *The History of Wisconsin*, subtitled *Urbanization and Industrialization, 1873-1893* (1985) and written by Robert C. Nesbitt. A nice, readable account of the logging years is Robert F. Fries, *Empire in Pine: The Story of Lumbering in Wisconsin, 1830-1900* (1951). Eric Lampard's *Rise of the Dairy Industry in Wisconsin* (1962) is heavy reading but the standard work. Bayrd Still, *Milwaukee, The History of a City* (1948), is likewise ponderous but standard. A colorful portrait of "the city that made beer famous" is Robert W. Wells, *This is Milwaukee* (1970).

Jack Stark, "The Wisconsin Idea: The University's Service to the State," published in the *State of Wisconsin 1995-1996 Blue Book* (1995), contains a wealth of information though, in my judgment, it stresses too much the role of the university in progressive reform. Studies of key individuals associated with the Wisconsin Idea are David P. Thelen, *Robert La Follette and the Insurgent Spirit* (1976), and Maurice M. Vance, *Charles R. Van Hise, Scientist, Progressive* (1960).

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For 1935 to 1962 *Blue Books:* see 1964 *Blue Book,* pp. 227-232.

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Wisconsin's Agriculture, 1958 *Blue Book,* pp. 103-113.

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Equal Representation: A Study of Legislative and Congressional Apportionment in Wisconsin, by H. Rupert Theobald, 1970 *Blue Book,* pp. 70-260.

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The Budget – State Fiscal Policy Document, by Dale Cattanach and Terry A. Rhodes, 1970 *Blue Book,* pp. 261-272.

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Wisconsin Business and Industry, by James J. Brzycki, Paul E. Hassett, Joyce Munz Hach, Kenneth S. Kinney, and Robert H. Milbourne, 1987-1988 *Blue Book,* pp. 99-165.

Wisconsin's Commerce, 1958 *Blue Book,* pp. 129-138.

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The Wisconsin Idea for the 21st Century, by Alan B. Knox and Joe Corry, 1995-1996 *Blue Book,* pp. 180-192.

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The Landscape Resources of Wisconsin, by Philip H. Lewis, Jr., 1964 *Blue Book,* pp. 130-142.

The Physical Geography of Wisconsin, by Robert F. Black, 1964 *Blue Book,* pp. 171-177.

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