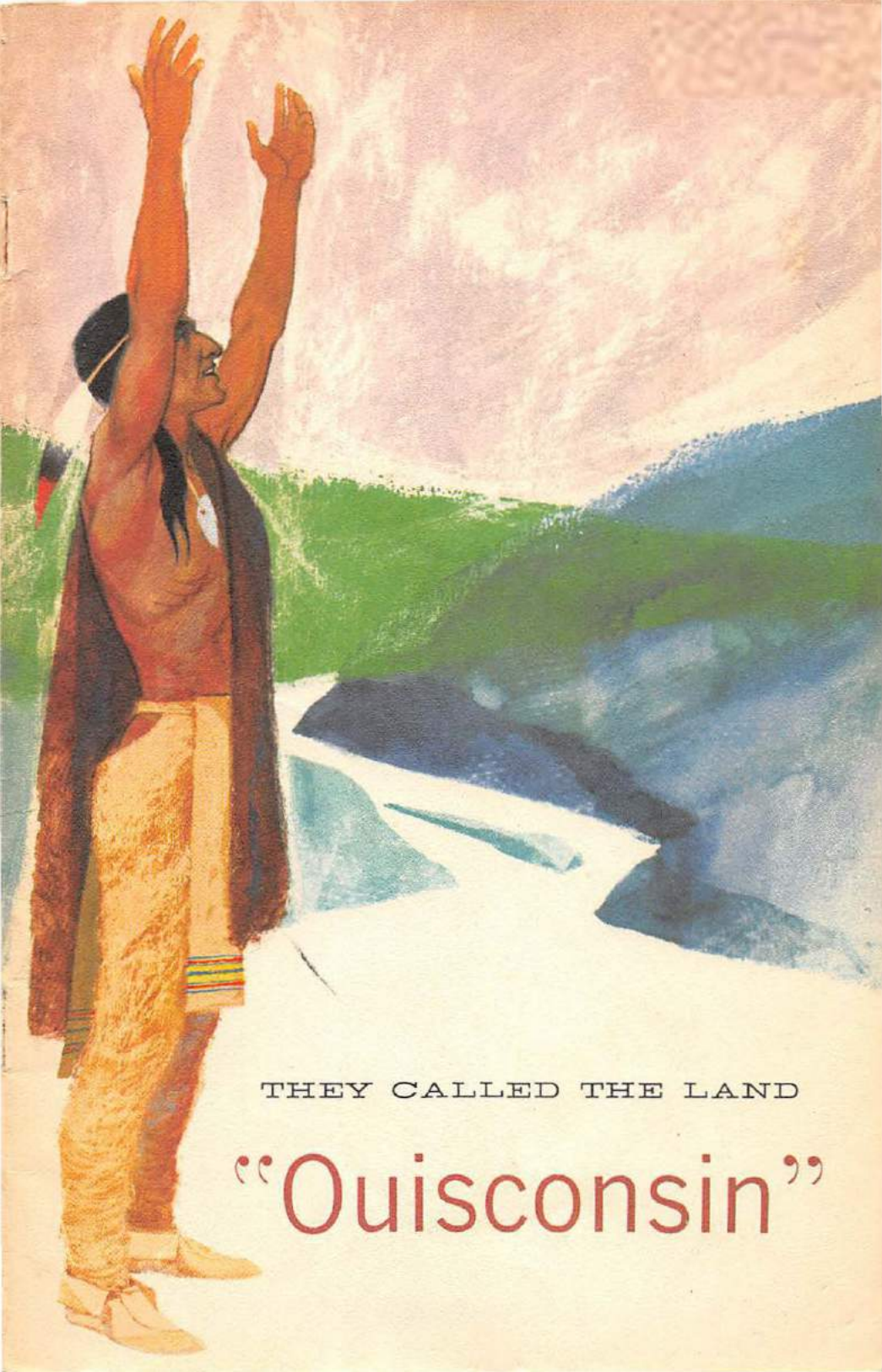

THEY CALLED THE LAND

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CHRONOLOGY

1634—Jean Nicolet lands at Red Banks

1659—Radisson and Groseilliers arrive at Chequamegon Bay

1660—First Jesuit missionary, Rene Menard, establishes mission at Chequamegon Bay

1673—Marquette and Joliet explore the Mississippi

1763—British take over Wisconsin

1815—Last English soldiers leave the area following War of 1812

1816—Fort Crawford (Prairie du Chien) and Fort Howard (Green Bay) built

1827—Fort Winnebago (Portage) built

1832—Black Hawk War

1833—First Wisconsin newspaper, Green Bay **Intelligencer**, began publication

1836—Wisconsin became a territory

1848—Wisconsin became a state

1849—University of Wisconsin founded

1854—Republican party born

1857—First trans-state railroad completed

1871—Peshtigo fire

1872—Wisconsin Dairymen's Association founded

1890—Pine lumbering a major industry in Wisconsin

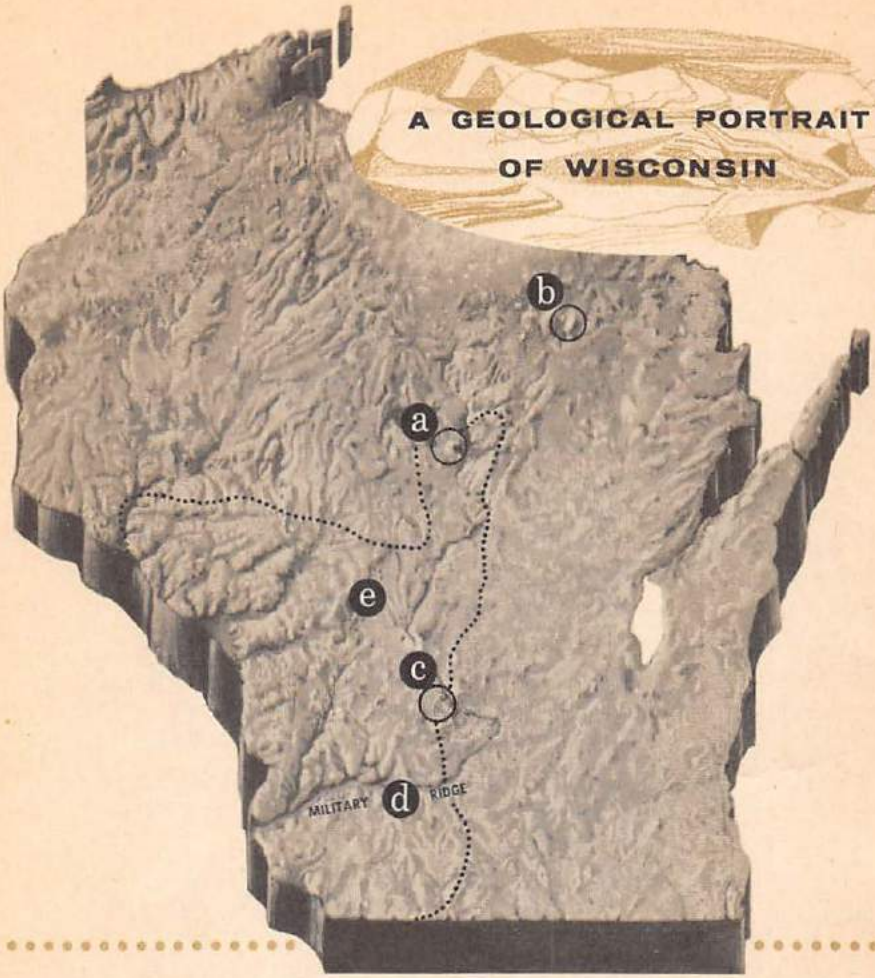
1900—Robert M. LaFollette elected governor

1904—Direct primary became law

THE BIG RIVER

Indians named the big river and the land around it "*Meskousing.*" Some authorities believe this to be a Chippewa word, but there are those who are certain it is a Winnebago name. We *are* sure of its meaning, however: "*where the waters gather.*" Through the centuries that Indian name was gradually altered, as word of mouth and, later, the hand-written journals of the missionaries and explorers, treated it. It became "*Misconsing,*" "*Mesconsin,*" "*Misconsin*" and finally, with the advent of the French and throughout their regime, "*Ouisconsin.*" In their writings, in maps and in the conversation of all who saw or heard of the pine covered wilderness and its rushing waters, the word was "*Ouisconsin.*" Then, as the French traders began to disappear, the transition began again in various English renderings. And in 1845, by act of the Territorial legislature, the name was legally changed to its present form: Wisconsin.

But whatever the transition of our state name, the old Indian word meaning "*where the waters gather*" was a fitting one, for when the glaciers chewed through the prehistoric mountains that covered the land, they left behind the vast depressions filled by Lakes Michigan, Superior, and more than 8600 others. The retreating tongues of ice started the Fox and Menominee rivers flowing into Lake Michigan; the Black, St. Croix and Chippewa moved toward the Mississippi. In the North, the big river rose and divided the country as it flowed, south by west, through the rocks and ridges of the areas untouched by the glacier, to meet the Father of Waters. Then, in the hundreds of years between the retreat of the glaciers and the coming of the Indians, dense evergreen forests covered the sandy northern soil; long grasses and clumps of oak and maple spread across the southern prairies.



SOME POINTS OF INTEREST

a RIB MOUNTAIN—A quartzite mass rising approximately 1940 feet. This resistant rock remains while the softer materials which surrounded it have been eroded away. It is generally regarded as Wisconsin's greatest elevation, a fact disputed by the measurements of **SUGAR BUSH MOUNTAIN b**, said to be some thirteen feet higher.

c THE WISCONSIN DELLS — Veritable fairy chasms of sandstone carved by the Wisconsin River seeking a new passage after having been blocked by glacial deposits in its former bed some distance to the east.

d MILITARY RIDGE—Upon the crest of this ridge was part of a military highway built in 1835 between Green Bay and Prairie du Chien. On its eastern end stands Blue Mounds, one of the highest points in southern Wisconsin, which rises roughly 1,000 feet above the Wisconsin River a few miles to the north. A cap of resistant limestone has protected the formation from erosion which has lowered the surrounding area.

e THE DRIFTLESS AREA — Contained by the dotted line on the map, is the section of southwest Wisconsin which was not covered by glacial ice. Glacial features are evidenced by deposits which were left by melt water from the glacier flowing down the Wisconsin River Valley. The Baraboo Range on the eastern margin of the Driftless Area is another case of very hard quartzite resisting erosion.

THE LAND

When the Indians and French trappers arrived, they kept the land virtually untouched, living off the animals that filled the woods and waters, cutting only what timber they needed for shelter and for space to grow a little maize. So in 1659, the famous *voyageurs*, Radisson and Groseilliers, were enchanted by the natural beauty that greeted them when they landed to trap beaver. They came ashore at Chequamegon Bay, off Lake Superior, to spend a season bargaining with the redmen. With fur-laden canoes they returned to the St. Lawrence to spread the glowing word of a vast western wilderness waiting to be tapped.

"*The country is so pleasant, so beautifull and fruitfull,*" one of them wrote, "*that it grieved me to see that the world could not discover such inticing countrys to live in. What conquest would that bee att litle or no cost; what laborinth of pleasure should millions of people have . . .* "

THE PEOPLE

The first outsider to occupy the land was Jean Nicolet, in 1634, when he beached his canoe at Red Banks near Green Bay, and waded ashore to meet a rather curious crowd of befeathered "Orientals." Nicolet had set out from the St. Lawrence and headed, so he thought, on a northwest passage to the Orient. Instead, he paddled across Lakes Huron and Michigan. His "Oriental" greeters were Winnebago Indians.

For many decades the *voyageurs* continued to come for furs. In their wake came missionaries. The Indians met both and understood neither, but found the trader with his guns, knives, cloth and kettles more suited to their temperament than the doctrine of love thy neighbor.

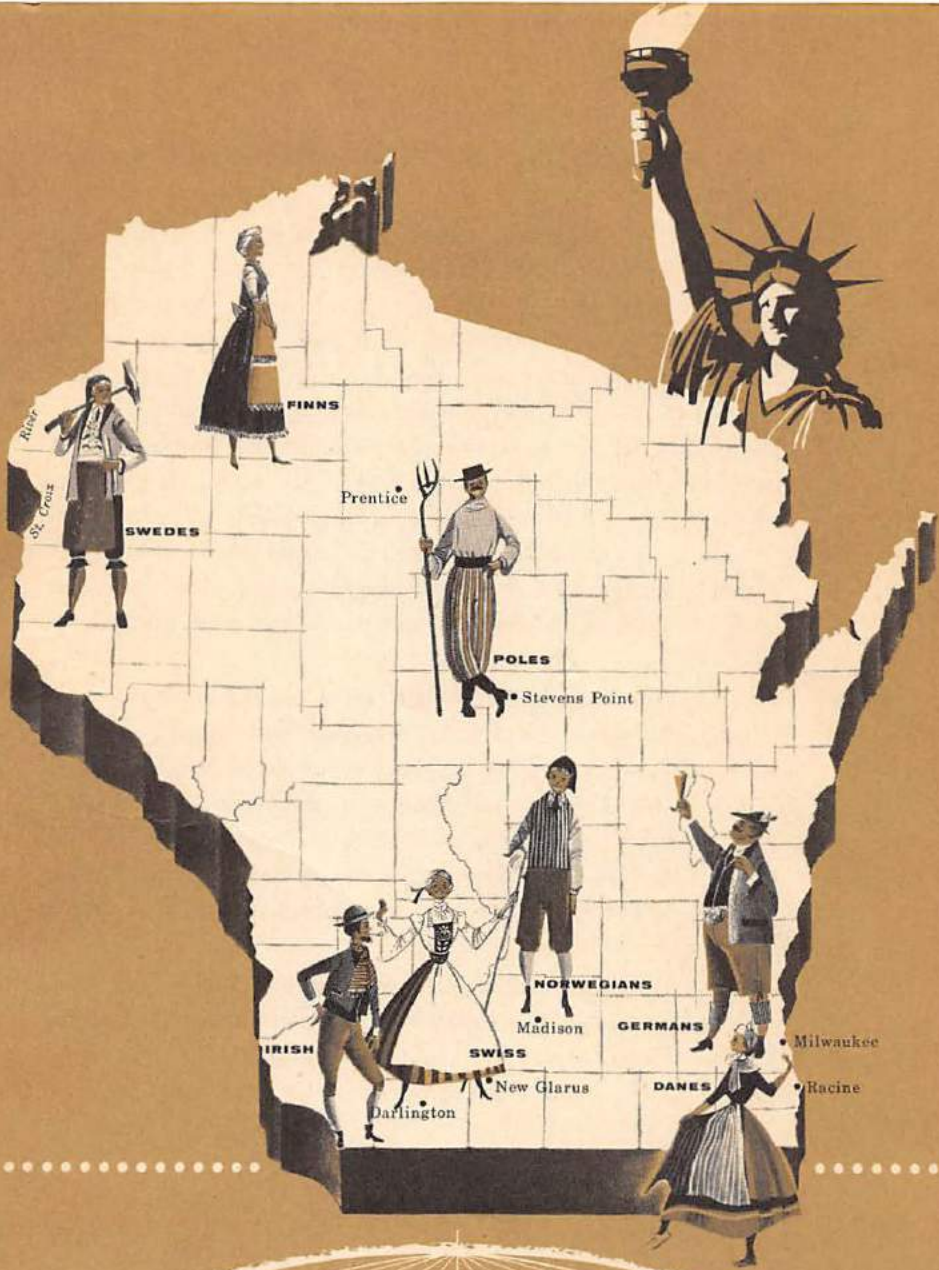
As the beaver disappeared the adventurous French element faded with them. In the end the intruders had touched the land but lightly. Only faint echoes now remain: red-capped, singing Frenchmen; heroic deeds of blackrobed missionaries; and

place names such as Eau Claire, Lac Court Oreilles and St. Croix. French control of the western fur land had long been bitterly contested by the British. The final conflict, the French and Indian War, began in the Ohio valley and ended in Paris, at the peace conference of 1763. Most of the continent east of the Mississippi then passed into the hands of the British.

With American independence Wisconsin became a part of the Indiana Territory and, after 1809, a part of Illinois. And the settlers moved in! Immigrants, from the East and South, and many European countries had begun to drift in even in the waning days of the traders. From wherever they came, each brought a bit of his home land, to give Wisconsin a diverse heritage of customs and tongues as interestingly varied as is the land itself. Settlers mined lead in the southwestern area and built villages and farms among oak groves on gently rolling prairies. Some laid the foundation for a metropolitan region of manufacturing and shipping when they began cities on the shore of Lake Michigan. Others pushed north and swept the pine forests down rushing streams to mills, then grubbed the stumps to farm the land.

Former New Englanders planted their schools and township form of government in the southwestern counties. Germans settled in Milwaukee, creating a Teutonic Athens of the West with music clubs, political societies and *Biergarten.* Poles came too, with early arrivals settling inland on farms around Polonia, Stevens Point and Pulaski, in Portage and Outagamie counties. Late-comers stayed in Milwaukee to challenge German supremacy in the lakeshore city.

Thousands of Irish left a famine-stricken land and entered Wisconsin through the lake ports and the lead region. In the southwest corner the towns of Benton, Darlington, and Willow Springs took on a tinge of green, as did the eastern counties of Washington, Ozaukee and Sheboygan. Hard times and overpopulation forced a colony of Swiss out of their canton of Glarus to the New World in search of a spot that resembled home. They found it at New Glarus in southern Wisconsin where they began



WHERE THE PEOPLES OF THE WORLD SETTLED IN WISCONSIN

again to make the Swiss cheese for which they have become world famous.

Norwegians settled in every county of the state. Such traditions as lutefisk, rosemaling and *Syttende Mai* — the day of independence — persist today in Muskego, Stoughton, Westby and Viroqua. Swedes worked their way up the western St. Croix Valley, where many found jobs in lumber camps. After the timber was gone they bought cheap cutover land for farms and established the little towns of Ogema, Prentice and Glen Flora in north-central Wisconsin. Finns took to the woods in a country where the climate reminded them of home. Many stayed to grub the stumps, cultivate the sandy soil and make northwestern Wisconsin a leading area in cooperative enterprises. And the Danes settled in Racine, making that community the most Danish city in America.

Many other groups came to Wisconsin — from Croatia, Slovakia, Italy, Russia, Belgium, Scotland and even Iceland. In all, there were 300,000 here to agitate for statehood early in the 1840's. In 1846, and again two years later, a convention met to write a constitution and establish a state government. In May, 1848, Wisconsin became the 30th state to join the Union, and Nelson Dewey, a Democrat from Grant county, was elected governor.

Yet even then the new state could look back on a series of incidents, and a wealth of experience that remains vibrant and colorful to this day.

BADGERS AND BEGINNINGS

Shortly before the War of 1812, miners came up from Missouri to dig the lead from the hills of northwestern Illinois, near Fever River. Soon the search for richer veins carried prospectors farther north across

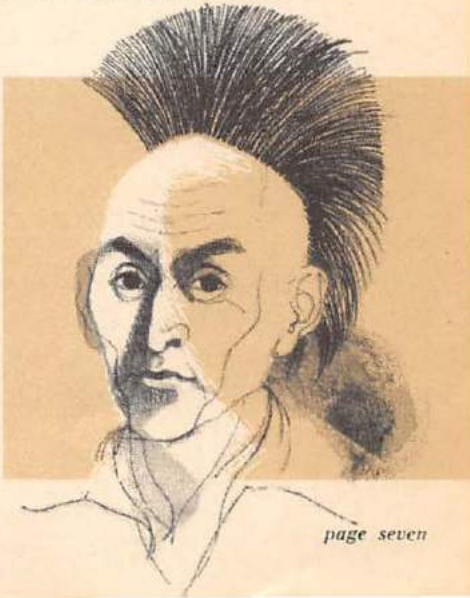
the line into what is now Wisconsin but which, at that time, was a part of the Michigan Territory.

From Missouri, Tennessee, Virginia and Kentucky the migrants flocked, dug lead and shipped it down the Mississippi. They were a rough crew, as miners had to be in those days, and life in the Wisconsin diggings was as colorful—and as transient—as it was later in the western gold fields. There were gun fights and gang brawls, and a social evening usually consisted of relaxing in the "lighthouses" — as the saloons were called — drinking "fusil oil" or "forty-rod," playing poker for a month's wages, or gathering to watch a horse race or a wolf fight. Towns sprang up in the most logical way: mounds of dirt and rock from the mines became Black Jack, Swindler's Ridge, Red Dog and New Diggings. *In their haste to get at the ore, many newcomers didn't take time to build houses. Like badgers they burrowed into the sides of hills and called it home. And "Badgers" they became.*

But there were settlers with more gentle habits, too, and the towns of Platteville, Shullsburg and Mineral Point grew rapidly. Tin miners from Cornwall, England arrived and built low, roughly-hewn cottages on Mineral Point's Shakerag Street, named for the bachelor cooks' practice of waving a bed sheet at meal time as a signal to "come and get it." Today, a visitor to Pendarvis House, on this famous street, can slip away to Cornwall over a meal of saffron bread, pasties and curdled-cream desserts.

TROUBLE WITH BLACK HAWK

By late 1829, there were 1,500 inhabitants in the lead region and a new county was formed. Mineral Point became the county seat and there, in 1830, federal judge James Duane Doty held court for the first time.



Black Hawk

It was still frontier land, however, as the settlers found in 1832, when Black Hawk crossed the Mississippi from Iowa and headed north along the Rock River. The Sauk brave nursed a bitter grudge against westward moving Americans who had pushed his tribe off its ancestral land in the Rock River country. He went north hoping to find British and Indian help to force the "long knives" off his land.

When no aid appeared, Black Hawk vainly tried to surrender to the pursuing Illinois militia then struggled into Wisconsin and to Lake Koshkonong. Now, sorely pressed and with food low and the cause hopeless, he turned west towards Iowa and safety. The militia closed in at Wisconsin Heights, near the present Sauk City. Black Hawk's rear guard held them off long enough for the main body to cross the Wisconsin River.

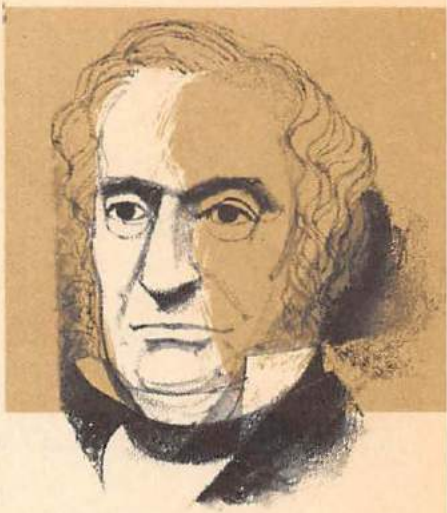
But north of Prairie du Chien, where Bad Axe Creek flows into the Mississippi, it was a different story. Here Black Hawk's band was trapped between militia on the bank and a gunboat on the river. The troops cut down braves, squaws and children as they tried to swim to safety. Of the 1,000 or more Sauk who had crossed the Mississippi fifteen weeks earlier, only a remnant returned to Iowa villages. Later, the chief explained his move simply: "Rock River was a beautiful country. I liked my town, my cornfields, and the home of my people. I fought for them."

The war gave Abraham Lincoln, Zachary Taylor, Jefferson Davis and others a taste of Indian warfare. More important, soldiers returned home full of praise for Wisconsin, and streams of migrants soon flowed west to populate the wilderness.

JUDGE DOTY, SALESMAN

When Michigan entered the Union in 1836, Wisconsin was left as a Territory of 11,600 people. Half of them lived in the lead region which, while challenged by the rapidly growing lakeshore area, remained politically dominant for several years. The Terri-

torial legislature met for the first time in 1836 at Belmont, capital city in southwestern Wisconsin.



James Doty

There was dissatisfaction with the capital's location, so selection of a permanent site was the first order of business. Judge James D. Doty, by then an active land speculator, was on hand to help. He had several choice lots in the Four Lakes country of southern Wisconsin, where a town called Madison City had already been platted. And the Judge turned out to be quite a salesman. Nearly every legislator worked for a favorite town, but during the debates Doty turned the fall nights and lack of fuel in Belmont hostelries to good advantage. He thoughtfully distributed warm buffalo robes to shivering lawmakers, and this made for warm hearts when it came time to vote. Madison was selected.

And there may have been considerations in addition to the buffalo robes. In the scramble for Madison land which followed the bill's passage, sixteen legislators turned up with city lots transferred directly to them by Doty, apparently for "good will" only. How many indirect transfers took place is anyone's guess.

Selling lots in Madison proved to be good business for Doty. He climbed high in Territorial politics, becoming governor from 1841 to 1844. Although it appears that our state capital was "born in corruption," it is equally certain that at least one land speculator had a keen eye for the beauty of the Four Lakes region.

So the Territory grew and the settlers came in to reap the wealth of the farming land in the gentle southern hills. But the rough edges were not yet completely gone.

MINUTES OF A MURDER

It happened on a winter day in 1842. On February 11, the Territorial Council debated Governor Doty's appointment of a sheriff. Supporting the governor was Charles C. P. Arndt, a former Pennsylvanian representing the Green Bay area. Arguing against the appointment was John Vineyard, who had come to Grant County from Kentucky. During the debate Arndt made a statement which Vineyard labelled false. Arndt leaped up and made for Vineyard's desk near the fireplace, but council members held them apart until the session was adjourned.

Before peacemakers could lead them out, however, Arndt broke loose and flung himself at Vineyard. "*Did you call me a liar?*" Arndt demanded. Vineyard said yes, he had. The climax came so suddenly that few in the chambers were certain what had happened. "*I heard words pass between them,*" a witness later testified. "*Arndt struck at or hit Vineyard. I heard the report of a pistol; Arndt staggered back.*" He died of a bullet through his heart as Vineyard pocketed his gun and strode from the room.

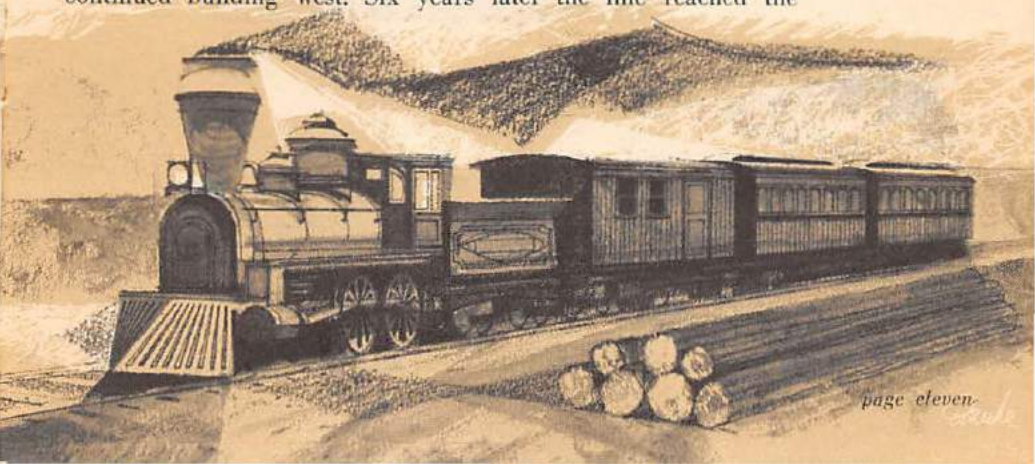
The Territory was horrified. The legislature and most Territorial newspapers proclaimed that only swift punishment of the murderer could blot out the stain. But Vineyard had a good lawyer in Moses M. Strong, of Mineral Point. Strong got the trial shifted to Monroe, Green County, near Vineyard's home, where fifteen months later a jury acquitted the former Council member. It was, they said, simply an impromptu duel — a gentleman defending his honor. Later they sent Vineyard to the state's first constitutional convention and to the state legislature.

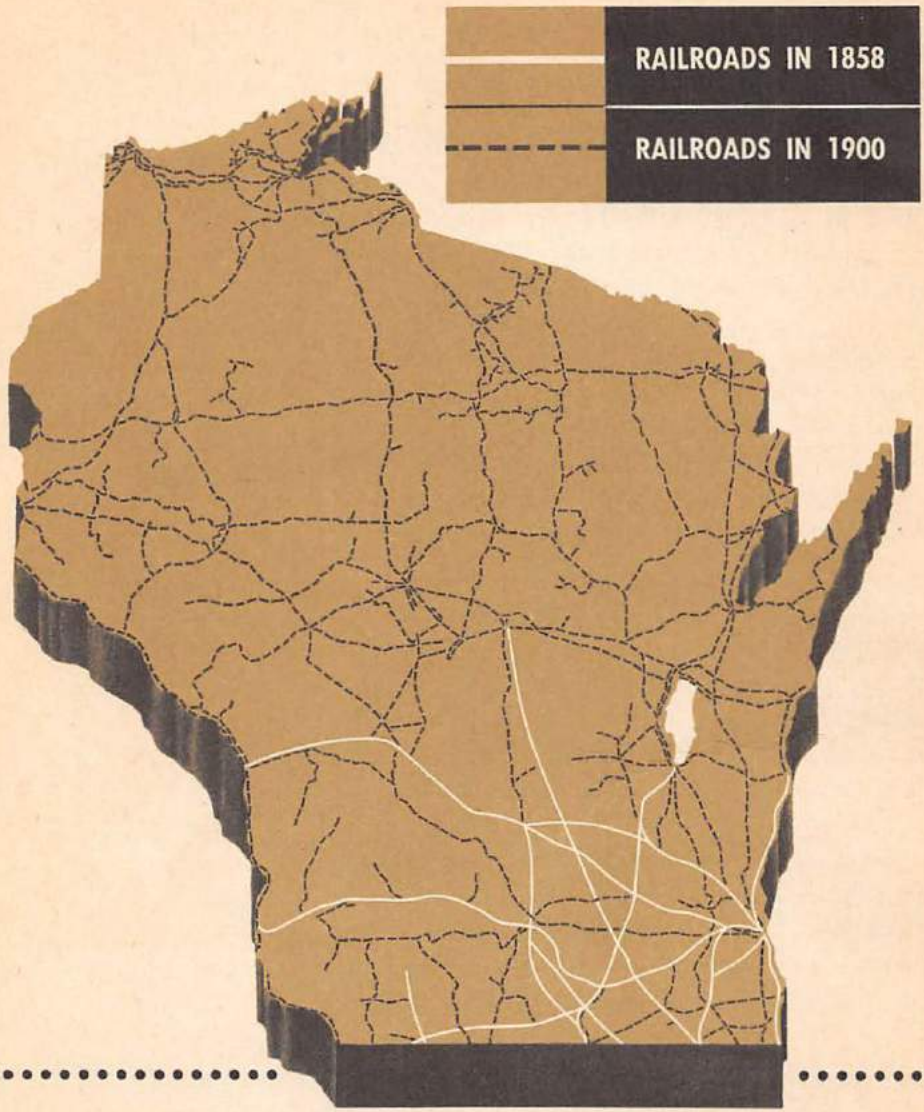
6,000 FARMERS BUILD A RAILROAD

Agitation for railroads began early in Territorial times, and as the production of grain, lead and manufactured goods increased, the post and plank roads between markets proved inadequate. So, in 1847, the *Milwaukee and Mississippi Railroad Company* was chartered. Construction began the following year but the trans-state line had not gone twenty miles from Milwaukee before it met financial difficulties. Investment capital on the frontier was scarce, thanks in part to the Panic of 1837 which ruined many canal and railroad schemes and left scattered wreckage of state and personal debts. Eastern investors became extremely cautious about risking money on western plans for internal improvements and would have nothing to do with the *Milwaukee and Mississippi.*

When work on the railroad stopped completely, its worried officials called stockholders and farmers together to consider the problem. One solution — a unique contribution to the history of railroad financing — caught their fancy. Someone suggested that farmers along the right of way exchange personal notes, financed through a ten-year 8 per cent mortgage on their land, for 10 per cent railroad bonds. The company would then sell the mortgages to raise the necessary money and credit the 2 per cent difference between mortgage and bond interest to the farmers' accounts. Spurred by the vision of easy gain, nearly 6,000 Wisconsin farmers forgot the devious ways of city slickers and the possibility of economic change. Enthusiastically they mortgaged farms worth nearly $5,000,000.

With the aid of these future customers the *M & M* continued building west. Six years later the line reached the





THE RAILROADS IN WISCONSIN
BETWEEN 1858 and 1900

Mississippi, just in time to go bankrupt under pressure from the Panic of 1857. The dismayed rural bondholders now discovered that the railroad had not lived up to its obligations. The mortgages had been sold for 50 per cent to 75 per cent of face value, and the promise to credit accumulated interest to the farmers' accounts had been neglected.

Some mortgagees later settled at less than face value and the railroad company eventually made partial restitution with more stable bonds. Many Wisconsin farmers lost their property and even the man who suggested the idea of easy financing lost $10,000 worth of land himself. The experience left bitter memories which helped make farmers sympathetic toward close railroad regulation some years later.

SLAVERY TOUCHES WISCONSIN

While Wisconsinites anxiously watched the westward progress of the *Milwaukee and Mississippi*, problems involving a different sort of "railroad" — the Underground Railroad — arose to agitate the state.

On a March night in 1854, Joshua Glover, a slave who had escaped and settled in Racine two years earlier, was recaptured by his Missourian master, who broke into the Negro's cabin. Wounded and bleeding, the Negro was flung into a wagon and carted off to the Milwaukee jail.

There was considerable sentiment for abolition around Milwaukee and Racine. Sherman M. Booth, an ardent reformer who edited the Milwaukee *Daily Free Democrat*, found this incident made to order. He and his friends immediately distributed handbills throughout the streets of Milwaukee, calling for a rally outside the jail. A mob gathered to cheer speeches

which condemned slavery and obliquely hinted that action be taken. The crowd took the hint. It stormed the jail, escorted Glover out and sent him on his way to Canada. Booth's paper proclaimed that in Wisconsin, at least, "the Fugitive Slave Law has been repealed!" Further, there would be "NO MORE COMPROMISE WITH SLAVERY!"

But such confidence was premature. Booth was arrested for violating the "repealed" law and held on $2,000 bail. He appealed to the Wisconsin Supreme Court and won a writ of habeas corpus. Eastern newspapers and abolitionists congratulated the court.

Yet federal officers were not impressed. They rearrested Booth and held him for trial. The jury found him guilty, fined him nearly $1,500 and returned him to jail for a month. In the midst of a statewide uproar with "Booth meetings" and denunciations of federal judges, Booth again appealed to the state Supreme Court. This time the three state justices went even further. They declared the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 unconstitutional and announced that the state could free anyone illegally imprisoned under it. The legislature then underscored the state's position with Personal Liberty Laws.

But the U. S. Supreme Court had the final word. In 1859 it found no grounds for unconstitutionality. Moreover, it had plenty to say about the apparent lack of legal wisdom in Wisconsin, and promptly threw the state decision out. Just as promptly, Booth was again jailed. He escaped, was recaptured and finally pardoned by outgoing President James Buchanan in 1861.

The Booth affair, Personal Liberty Laws and the birth

of the Republican Party in a Ripon schoolhouse in 1854 kept Wisconsin in an anti-slavery turmoil for several years. Yet in spite of its nullification sympathies, when the crisis came, Wisconsin unhesitatingly condemned secession. "*A state cannot come into the Union when it pleases and go out when it pleases,*" declared Governor Alexander Randall in 1861. "*Secession is revolution. A revolution is war; war against the government of the United States is treason.*" And throughout the Civil War the men of Wisconsin fought to preserve national solidarity.

THE COLONEL SAVES A FLEET

There were some 90,000 Wisconsin men in the Union army during the War, and from the home front came food and supplies for the federal armies. The state furnished heroes, too. One of them was Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Bailey, an engineer who rescued a Union fleet stranded on the Red River in 1864.

In the early spring of that year a Yankee army and a fleet of more than thirty gunboats started from New Orleans up the Red River to attack Shreveport, capital of Louisiana. The fleet was held back by low water at Alexandria, but the army set out on a single track road that led them far from the river and from supporting gunboats. At Sabine Crossroads, southern troops mauled their advance units. Union soldiers won at Pleasant Hill the following day, but several thousand dead and wounded convinced General Banks he had better return to Alexandria, join the fleet and retreat to New Orleans.

But by now the Red was even lower at Alexandria, with jagged rocks protruding above the surface. Admiral Porter felt he must wait, while army commanders, fearing southern pursuit, were anxious to move on.

Then Lieutenant Colonel Bailey offered a solution. He had enlisted from Newport, on the Wisconsin River, and knew the problems of logging drives in low water. Dam the river, Bailey suggested, and that would raise the water and allow the boats to ride over the rapids.

"If you can dam better than I can, you must be good at it, for I have been damning all night," replied Admiral Porter. But no one had a better idea. So Bailey set to work with former lumberjacks of the 23rd and 29th Wisconsin and some from Maine. Day and night they felled trees, gathered fence posts and toted rocks. From both banks they built stone-filled wooden cribs and, in midstream, sank barges to complete the dam.

Then the current washed away the barges. So Bailey and his crew left the gap in the main dam and quickly threw up wing dams a few yards up river. The result was a channelling of the river at a depth sufficient to float the ships. The job was done in eight days — much sooner than they'd dared to hope. The gunboats threaded their way through the openings, dropped into the stream below, and steamed safely downriver to New Orleans.

Today, near Alexandria, a monument to the Wisconsin officer's skill and ingenuity remains; a portion of the dam is still visible at low stages of the Red River.

BRINGING DAYLIGHT TO THE SWAMP

When lumber was king on the Wisconsin

While Wisconsin woodsmen rescued the Union gunboats in 1864, lumberjacks continued to log off forests along the Wisconsin, the Wolf, the Menominee, the Black, the St. Croix and in the valley of the Chippewa.

Much of Wisconsin's virgin timber was still uncut. So vast were the stands of pine that even Paul Bunyan, standing on the top of Rib Mountain, near Wausau, could not have seen their northern edges.

Lumberjacks moved in from Maine in the 1830's to begin clearing the forests of the middlewest. For twelve dollars a

month and board they felled giant pines from dawn to dusk, six days a week, even when the thermometer stood "two feet below zero." All winter they cut logs, and dragged them to the river banks. In the spring, when the water rose and the current roared, the drive began. Now the hardiest men exchanged their winter woolens and rubber footwear for lighter overalls and calked boots to become "river pigs." The pigs rode the logs down to the mills, hard and fast, and fought the dangerous and expensive log jams. "*The worst one I remember,*" recalled one old river pig who worked the Wisconsin River near Merrill, "*was in 1882 when 70,000,000 feet of logs were jammed at Grandfather Falls.*

"*I worked on that jam two months . . . had as high as 150 men working on it at one time. We used cant hooks, pike poles and peaveys, and horses were hitched to ropes to pull piles of logs out into deep water.*"

Whenever the key log in a jam was reached, the whole pile let go. Then men scrambled for safety, but some didn't make it. A wrong step, a misjudged distance, a peavey that wouldn't break loose, and crashing, swirling logs drowned out the screams for help.

Such towns as Eau Claire, Oshkosh and Peshtigo were built on the logging business, and at such places the river pigs relaxed. They collected a winter's wage, and headed for the saloons and dancehalls. When the wages were gone some continued to ride the lumber downriver from these mill towns; others stayed to find temporary employment until the first frost came. Then it was time again to bring daylight to the swamp.

Less than thirty years after the Civil War, the peak of lumber production was passed in the northern lands. On the heels of the loggers came the farmers, to remove the stumps and try to grow crops on cut-over land. In some parts of the cutover a thriving dairy industry began. But on thousands of acres, after years of vain effort at crops, they put the land back to work; rebuilding the pine forests to provide future resources and to launch an important resort and recreation industry. And men began to talk about conservation.

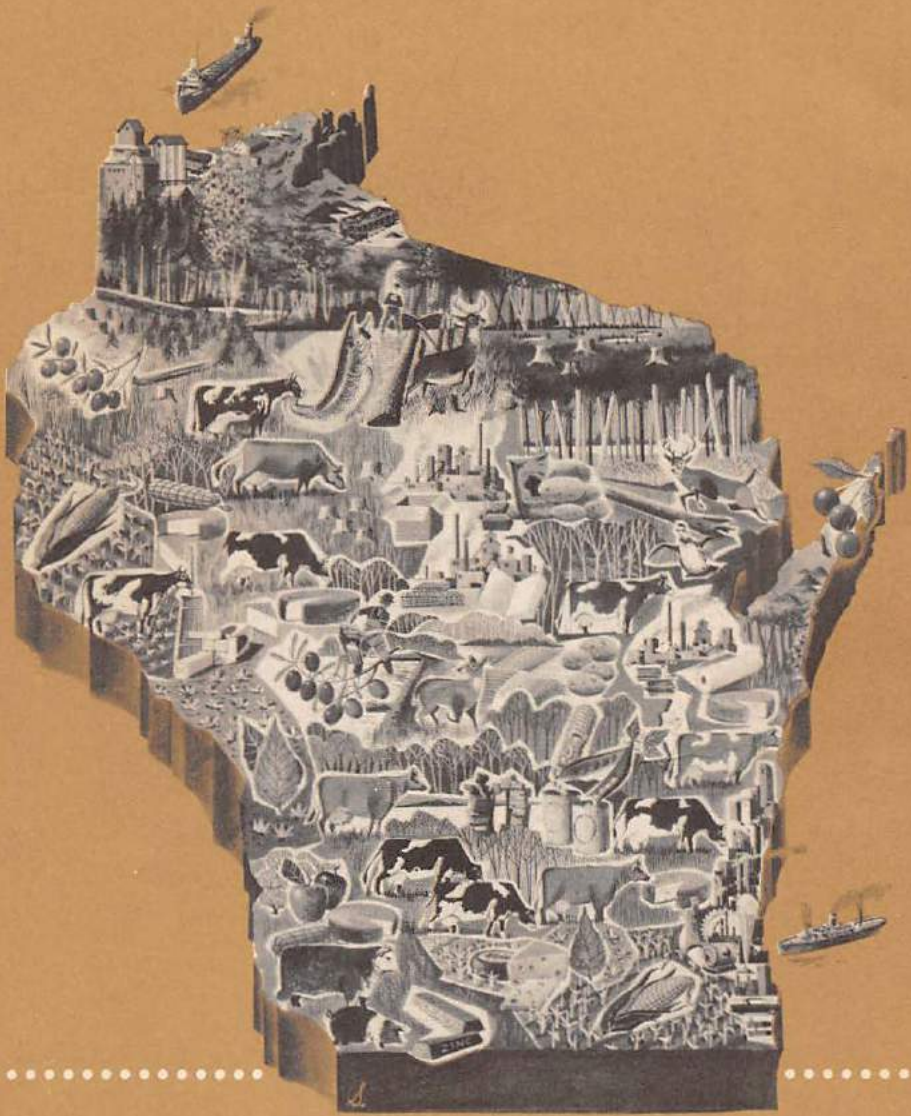
Map shows county names and boundaries and selected cities and villages as Wisconsin gained statehood in 1848

The Republican party birthplace at Ripon, Wisconsin

OLD BOB

The conservation movement which started in the 1890's was accompanied by a move to force political control of Wisconsin from the railroad owners and lumber barons. The men who set out to win the state called themselves Progressive Republicans, and they were led by a former Congressman named Robert M. La Follette.

La Follette became governor in 1900, and ushered in an era of Progressivism and the "Wisconsin Idea." It was a period of experiment and close cooperation between university and state, and La Follette and his successors sought to make government more flexible and sensitive to the needs of its citizens. Events in those years will long symbolize Wisconsin in the minds of many people throughout America, and historians are still trying to assess the movement, its causes, its values and its effects.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
IN WISCONSIN

At the beginning of the twentieth century,
this state was a far different land of plenty
from that "Ouisconsin" viewed by Radisson
and Groseilliers two hundred fifty years earlier.

It possessed a colorful and exciting past
of fur trading, lead mining, agricultural
expansion and pine lumbering.

Many of its rich resources now were
gone, yet the most important one of all
—its people—remained, and with ingenuity and
skill they built new industries, continued
to improve their farms, and passed on to
the future an even richer heritage.

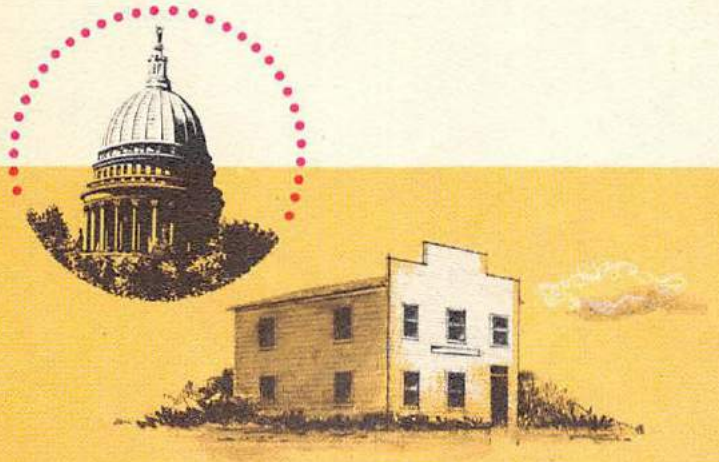
THE people who shaped our city and state were people of sturdy self-reliance—honest, hard working, thrifty. These are the qualities you always find in the character of successful men and women.

You will find that thrift is a powerful force in helping you and your family to create a rich and happy way of life. Be sure you use it.

WISCONSIN STATE BANK

GREEN BAY, WISCONSIN

MEMBER FDIC



The first state capitol at Belmont, 1836