The name Manitowoc," says John Nagle, in his "History of Manitowoc County," "is an Indian word, and considerable diversity of opinion prevails as to its significance, authorities differing in its interpretation when they do not agree in ascribing its origin to the same tribe. It is variously translated as 'the place of the Manitou,' 'the habitation of the good spirit,' and the 'Devil's Den.' All agree, however, that the name resulted from a tradition current among the Indians that a nondescript being was at various times seen at the mouth of the river."

The earliest mention we find made of Manitowoc is by Col. A. Edwards, who made a trip in 1818 from Green Bay to Chicago, in a canoe. He says when he arrived at Manitowoc "many Indians were out in canoes spearing white fish."

The first land entry in this locality was made in 1835, which included all land south of Little Manitowoc for three miles, and west from the lake to the present line which separates the towns of Manitowoc and Rapids.

To Benjamin Jones is given the honor of founding the city. He was one of two brothers, who, in 1836 organized a land company in Chicago, known as the Manitowoc Land Company. The company sent a gang of men here to clear a site for a town. They cut down a dense tamarack forest which skirted the river near the foot of Sixth and Seventh streets. The trees were cut into steamboat wood and piled up for future use, as steamboats had not then begun to touch at Manitowoc.

In April, 1837, the Jones company sent forty laborers, besides carpenters, to Manitowoc to erect buildings and to continue the work of clearing off the forest which began the year previous. Among those men were Moses and Oliver Hubbard and D. S. Munger.

The date of the first real settlement in Manitowoc is given as April 17, 1837, when Oliver C. Hubbard, Moses Hubbard, D. S. Munger and others with their families, totaling about forty, arrived here to become pioneers. The little settlement grew and in 1855 the inhabitants numbered 2,185. Twenty years later the population was nearly 7,000, this increase being chiefly due to the building of a railroad, the Milwaukee Lake Shore & Western, which stimulated industry.

A census taken in 1895 credited the city with 9,427, while in 1910 Uncle Sam counted 13,027 wrights here. The latest federal enumeration will shows about 18,000, an increase of thirty-four per cent, in spite of the eighteenth amendment.

Manitowoc has been frequently referred to as the Gateway of the Great Northwest. It is ideally situated, favored with excellent transportation facilities.

Shipbuilding was one of the pioneer industries of Manitowoc when it became a city and today, fifty years later, it retains leadership among all industries, the mammoth plant of the Manitowoc Ship Building Company, with an assessed valuation of $3,000,000 and employing nearly 2500 in its allied plants, being the largest institution of the city.

Manitowoc is also the home of the Aluminum Goods Manufacturing Company, the largest concern in its line of business in the world. The company's Manitowoc
plant covers nearly a full block and there is in prospect the building of a large rolling mill which will occupy another half block which the company acquired by purchase more than a year ago. At the present time the company is completing a large, six-story, steel-concrete plant adjacent to its present factory and will occupy the new building this summer.

Besides a large line of high-grade and popular priced utensils, the company also manufactures hundreds of other goods such as automobile parts, screw caps, boxes, signs, aeroplane parts, collapsible cups, jelly moulds, salt and pepper shakers, house numbers, bath room fixtures, hot water bottles, camp outfits, child’s toy sets and innumerable other articles embraced by their slogan “Makers of Everything in Aluminum.”

Full-page monthly advertisements in the country’s most influential magazines are spreading the fame of the company to all parts of the world. An international business which will have an important bearing on the future growth of the company is being developed.

In keeping with other great manufacturing concerns, the company believes in contented workers. It believes that such things as abundant fresh air, good natural light, ventilation, workrooms, modern in every respect, free insurance, medical attention, comfortable homes, bonuses, and most important, adequate pay are good investments. It is through these things that the company has succeeded in building up an organization of 3,000 happy souls. Many of the employees have been with the institution since its humble beginnings, twenty-six years ago.

More than $15,000,000 is invested in the various industrial plants of the city, and not one of them is not a successful, growing institution. Products of the city’s industries include steam ships, pleasure yachts, aluminium wear, school and church furniture, farm machinery, vinegar, sweaters, gloves, engines, butter, cheese, cereals,
canned goods, cheese vats, lumber, toys, engines, ice cream, gloves, plated goods and filing cabinets.

The city is favored with excellent schools, churches and a well equipped hospital conducted by the sisters of St. Francis. As soon as the project can be financed a modern high school, estimated to cost about $1,500,000, will be built, a site already having been purchased.

Besides the magnificent high school, considerable building is planned or in progress. The Knights of Columbus are erecting a palatial club house, which will be completed in late autumn; the Eagles plan to build a home, costing about $200,000; George Brothers have started on their theater building, which will be "le dernier cri" in playhouses, and probably most important of all, a new hotel project is taking form. Manitowoc has never had an abundance of hotels, although the Manitou, the city's newest, is an excellent, well appointed hostelry, but with the closing of the Hotel Victoria another is needed.

One of the evidences of the city's expansion industrially is found in the record of banking institutions during the past year. The three banks of the city, prior to 1919, having a total capital stock of $485,000, today have increased to nearly $1,000,000, the value of bank stock this year being $985,000. In addition the new State Bank of Manitowoc has been organized to open within a short time and increases this total materially. Increase in capital and surplus have been authorized for all three banks of the city and the banking institutions will number four with the opening of the new state bank.

Sixteen men have served as mayor of the city. Besides Mayor John Schroeder, five former executives still live, namely, Henry Stolze, Jr., Charles A. Groffman, Dr. W. G. Kemper, Max Rahr and Reinhardt Rahr. To the late Peter Johnston, father of Mrs. R. H. Markham, belongs the honor of having been Manitowoc's first mayor. He served from 1870 to 1872.