A pioneer log school in Manitowoc county in early days.

With the arrival in 1836 of the first settlers locating near the mouths of rivers, the first schools of the Manitowoc county school system were developed. In 1844, three school districts were organized—No. 1, the Two Rivers, No. 2, the Manitowoc, and No. 3, the Manitowoc Rapids areas. They were administered until 1848 by county school commissioners. District taxes, per capita tax, and gifts supported these schools.

After Wisconsin became a state in 1848, a town superintendent was elected annually to take the place of the commissioners running these county schools. Although this official needed no qualifications for office, he was empowered to license teachers, organize school districts, and supervise the instruction offered.

In 1861, the state legislature provided for the election of a county superintendent of schools at the fall election for a two year term. No qualifications for office were stated. In 1904, the county superintendent was elected at the spring election for a two year term, but on a non-partisan ticket. A four year term came after 1929.

Qualification standards were first set up by the legislature in 1895, requiring a minimum of a county superintendent's certificate, or a state certificate and a minimum of eight month's teaching experience. In 1929, the legislature asked an unlimited state certificate of candidates. In 1944, qualifications demanded four years of college training in the teaching profession.

Scantily Furnished

Crude homemade furniture, scantily furnished the first pioneer school. In the 1870's, frame buildings were erected, many of which are in use today. By 1910, modern brick buildings marked many progressive communities. Furnishings and equipment kept pace with the structures, keeping Manitowoc county prominent in the state educational system.

A three month term of 22 days a month comprised the pioneer school year. In 1905, the state specified eight months and in 1937, a minimum of nine months.

Anyone who could read, write, and figure could teach. Not until 1861 did the legislature provide for the general control over examinations of teachers by specify-
ing the subjects and grades necessary for certification. Teachers' examinations were held until 1939, but a few took them after the establishment of the Teachers Training School for Manitowoc county in 1901. After 1939, prospective rural teachers had to be high school graduates and, in addition, two year graduates of some teacher training institution. Now one year of additional training must be completed every seven years by teachers who stay in the profession until a four year professional course has been completed.

Pioneer children were taught the 3 R's, but as time went on grammar, geography, history, civics, and physiology were added to the curriculum. In 1910, grading by letter was instituted: A, B, C, D, E. Today the rural teacher is prepared and required to teach 25 to 30 classes daily in addition to meeting janitorial and emergency demands.

Early Text Books

The early textbooks were the Bible, foreign and English books brought west by the settlers McGuffey's readers, Sander's, Swinton's, Watson's, Harvey's, and Harper's readers and spellers; Robinson's and Ray's arithmetics; McConnell's and Mitchell's geographies, Goodrich's history; and Kerl's and Green's grammars were used. Library books were uncommon, for it was not until 1889 that a workable library law was placed on the statutes. The blackboard and slate were important tools of teaching and learning.

Much of the pioneer life centered around the little red school house. Spelling bees, singing societies, and literary clubs were popular. After the turn of the century, town and county spelling, adding, and achievement contests were in vogue. Township fairs were popular from 1915 to 1930. The coming of the automobile widened the county horizon resulting in regional county music and folk festivals.

One-room rural schools were acceptable up to 1905. Enrollment of 100 or more were common. After 1905, the state allowed no more than 65 pupils to one room. This law, affecting county school districts, resulted in graded schools. Graded schools at Reedsville, Mishicot, Valders, and Kiel, developed into high schools and are now serving the youth of the surrounding townships. Two Creeks No. 2, Kossuth 4, and Rapids 3, became three and four department schools. Two Creeks 2, and Kossuth 4, offered two years of high school until the summer of 1948. Various attempts have been made in the past sixty years to equalize educational opportunity for all children. The Callahan Equalization Law, passed in 1927, was one of the first. It was effective until costs rose in the 1940s and the burden of school support was placed on property owners.

Little Has Been Done

By 1860, the town superintendents had ordered the organization of about 90 school districts in the county placing them within walking distance of the settlers' children. The resulting hodgepodge reveals some districts small and compact and some miles long and a mile wide. The power to reorganize districts has been placed in the hands of the town boards but little has been done. By 1948, eighteen of the 115 districts had ceased to operate. The 1947 legislature set up county school committees with the power to draft plans for school district reorganization. Wm. Kappelman, Mrs. George Schmidt, Willard Sauve, Arthur Murphy, Floyd Evenson, and John Gable, the Manitowoc County committee, have formulated tentative plans to reorganize the 115 school districts and combine them into nine new districts, centering around Manitowoc, Two Rivers, Valders, Kiel, Reedsville, Brilllon, Denmark, Mishicot, and Sheboygan.
Equalized educational opportunities for all children may be a fact before many years of our second century of statehood have passed.

The modern and efficient public school system of Manitowoc in this centennial year of 1948, is the result of 100 solid years of progress in the educational circles of the community. Needless to say the picture of education that confronted the Manitowoc citizen of 1848 was indeed different from the one today. Between these two dates of 1848-1948 lies a wealth of dramatic historical literature, marking the past century as one of great educational progress.

In 1844, the county school commissioner organized three school districts for Manitowoc county. District No. 2 was to include the present township of Manitowoc. By the year 1856, the village of Manitowoc had become incorporated, and the township had four school districts. District No. 1, roughly speaking, comprised the area between the present Chicago Street on south and the riding academy on the north. Joint School District No. 2 was an area between Chicago street on the north, Marshall street on the south, Lake Michigan on the east, and the Manitowoc-Manitowoc Rapids town line on the west. District No. 3 was composed of sections 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, T. 19., R. 24\E., the first Goodwin school district, and Joint District No. 4 was all the territory south of Marshall street from the lake to the west township line.

Called Ward Schools

When Manitowoc village became the city of Manitowoc on March 12, 1870, wards were recognized as official political divisions, it became the common custom of the residents to refer to the schools as “ward schools.” In some American communities this custom still persists.

By the year 1910, there were seven public school buildings in the city. They were the third ward school (Washington park), the fifth ward schoo’ (Garfield school), the seventh ward school, (Cleveland school), the second ward school (Madison school), and the sixth ward school (McKinley school), the Division street school (Jefferson school), and the first ward school, (Roosevelt school).

Up to this time old settlers will recall that there was no unified high school organization. The first district to organize its secondary school system was the Northside (Park school) dating from 1877. The southside and westside followed this lead in a few years; Manitowoc thus had three high schools operating simultaneously. Sentiment for unification arose about this time. To us, who today are accustomed to a unified system, this step does not seem disturbing. At this time, before 1910, the citizens of Manitowoc were torn by bitter dissentions. Each side literally bombarded the citizens with circulars offering...
pro or con arguments regarding unification Old timers within the city will recall that it took three separate elections to unite the three districts within the city. Since the special election in 1909, Manitowoc has one high school system instead of three.

First Board of Education

In the spring of 1910, the Manitowoc public school system had its first board of education consisting of Dr. Louis Faige, Isaac Craite, Frank Miller, Henry Vits, Albert Schuette, Henry Wernecke, and L. E. Geer. P. J. Zimmer of Kenosha was chosen to be the first city superintendent of schools on April 18, 1910. L. W. Brocks was chosen high school principal of the central high school which was located in what was then known as the third ward school or the present Adams school on South Twelfth street.

One of the first things that the community began to do was to look around for a site for a new central high school, obviously one of the most important needs of the city. In 1911, Charles G. Stangel, who had served several years as head of the schools in Sturgeon Bay, was brought to Manitowoc as the high school principal. Mr. Stangel retired from his position in 1947 and from active duty in the public schools in 1948 after serving for 37 years consecutively. The board of education found some property on what was then called Roeff's hill, south of Columbus street along the lakeshore which they believed was an ideal location for the new high school. After much consideration the property was purchased and the new Lincoln high school was completed in 1924. It was occupied on January 26 of that year.

2 Junior High Schools

As educational theory progressed, the new idea of the junior high school came to Manitowoc and two were established, one in the old northside high school and the other in the old third ward school, predecessors of Wilson junior high school and Washington junior high school, both built in the 1930's. Manitowoc was equally conscious of its elementary schools currently using McKinley school, Madison school, Adams school, Jefferson school, Cleveland school, Garfield school, Custerdale school. The old Roosevelt school is not being used. Manitowoc's superintendents began with P. J. Zimmers in 1910. Successors have been, Mr. Elmer Waite, who served from 1920 to 1927, Mr. Hugh S. Bonar, 1927 to 1943, and L. H. Lamb the present superintendent. L. W. Brooks, the first high school principal, appointed in 1910, served one year. He was succeeded by C. G. Stangel, who served 37 years. Rex K. John holds the position today.


Not only has education progressed in Manitowoc because of administrative and organizational developments listed above, but also in the most important phase of the instructional program. The American schools of 100 years ago differed in this respect, also. In the elementary schools of those days not only were the subjects taught more difficult, but also they were more remote from the daily lives of the children. Arithmetic problems and reading selections of that day were extremely difficult and would startle most children of today if faced with them.

Prepared for College

And the high schools of the early part of the century were likewise quite different. Emphasis was put upon college preparatory courses and the classics. Technical, vocational, and prac-
tical courses were unheard of in the high schools of that day. The chief stress was upon Greek, Latin, algebra, geometry, natural philosophy, English grammar and literature, elocution, spelling and penmanship. When this is contrasted with the much broader and more practical offering of the schools of today one can see the great difference. One reason for the difference may be that there were very few who were privileged to attend high school. More or less of a balance is evident in today’s schools; the cultural and the vocational both get attention.

Education today in Manitowoc has progressed rapidly and in step with the general progress of the city. The contrast between the school of 100 years ago and today’s school is great. As Manitowoc moves forward, its educational institutions will continue to keep in step with the community.

Two Rivers School System

Two school commissioners were in charge of schools within the county before Wisconsin became a state. These two men, Oliver Clawson and E. L. Abbott, in 1844 set up the Two Rivers school district made up of the entire town of Two Rivers. This was then known as school district No. 1, town of Manitowoc, the name given to all of the area now within Manitowoc county. On Oct. 10, 1944, elections were held to elect the school officers for the three districts set up by the commissioners.

The pioneer settlers of Two Rivers did not build a school house as soon as the district was organized. As the settlement grew, classes were held in several buildings in the present down town area. Private schools were also serving the small community. It was not until 1866 that the present H. P. Hamilton school site was purchased from Smith and Mann on May 3 for $475. Then a frame school building was erected which accommodated all of the school children. The two-storied school house was about 40 feet by 140 feet. It had two entrances, one near the center of each long side, which opened into hallways and stairways dividing the building into north and south wings with two classrooms on each floor.

Enrollment Grows

By 1877 the enrollment had outgrown the capacity of the build-
ing. A second school was erected on the same site for $3,200 located at the northeast corner of the school yard. The second two story four-room building was about 30 feet by 80 feet and of frame construction with the entrance from the playground side. Part of this building was used for high school classes beginning in 1877. A third building on the site was erected in 1897 for $1,500. It was a barrack-type structure to accommodate the overflow enrollment. This two-room building was about 30 feet by 60 feet. The present H. P. Hamilton school was built in 1903 for $54,000 and replaced the three frame buildings which were torn down and the lumber sold to Two Rivers citizens for home construction.

The development of the southside brought about a demand for a school in this section of the city. In 1891, the school board purchased a site on Roosevelt avenue from Augusta Baerwald for $800. Immediately thereafter building operations began to construct the south wing of the old Roosevelt school for $6,800. It was a two-story brick structure with one classroom on each floor. By 1909, the school became too crowded and the present north wing was erected at a cost of $12,000. The addition had one classroom on each floor, making a total of four classrooms for the entire building. During the first World War, a two-room barracks was erected on the site to care for the growing enrollment. For some years, prior to the erection of the present Koenig school, an additional first grade classroom was rented from the Evangelical church. The old Roosevelt school was abandoned in 1931 and sold to the Crescent woolen mills in 1841 for $3,750.

Build Modern School

The Joseph Koenig school site, consisting of two blocks, was purchased from property owners in early 1930 for about $18,475. Construction of this modern elemen-

tary school was begun in the summer of 1930 by contractor Joseph Rezach. The two story building with full basement, a modern auditorium, a large gymnasium, and housing classrooms to accommodate about 350 pupils was erected at a cost of about $147,500 which included the necessary equipment.

The Washington school erected at the foot of Washington street was completed in September 1922. The site was purchased from J. R. Currens on Dec. 17, 1918, for $20,000 and consisted of 9.82 acres. The original grade and high school structure was erected by the Hansen Construction company for about $40,000. It was an L-shaped building, three stories high with a full basement. In 1936-1937 a three story addition was added to the north end of the first building as a P. W. A. project at a cost of about $200,000. The lower two floors of the addition are used for grade school rooms.

A city dump, adjoining the school site to the east, was covered with good ground and the whole area was landscaped. This area of three or four acres was added in 1947 to the school site and provides additional athletic grounds for the athletic programs carried on by the high school.

Clarke In Charge

Two Rivers set up its high school system in 1877 but the full four year course was not offered until 1893. Attendance was limited largely to students interested in entering the teaching profession and for those wishing to enroll in college work. The enactment of attendance laws by the state resulted in a steady and uniform increase in high school enrollment after 1910. Statistical reports show that from 1877 to 1905, there were only 136 high school graduates. There were 200 high school students in 1912, but by 1922 the enrollment was 400. An attendance of about 800 was
recorded by 1932. The high school has been in charge of L. B. Clarke since 1920.

Two Rivers district No. 1, consisting originally of the entire Two Rivers township area, was reorganized into seven separate school districts by 1863. The pioneer settlement had grown sufficiently by 1856 to incorporate as the village of Two Rivers, remaining so until 1878. At that time the village became an incorporated city and the school district designated as Two Rivers city district No. 1. The school system of the village and city remained under the jurisdiction of the county superintendent until 1906 when a city school system was established with a city superintendent of schools. The first city superintendent was S. E. Pearson who also served as high school principal from 1905 to 1907. W. J. Hamilton served from 1907 to 1917; W. T. Darlington from 1917 to 1920; F. G. Bishop from 1920 to 1943; and George E. O’Brien since 1943. Under their leadership the schools of Two Rivers have gained state-wide and national recognition.

Vocational and Adult Education

The ability to read and write in pioneer days was considered sufficient education to become very successful in one’s profession or trade. In fact, anyone who could read and write the English language in pioneer times was usually given positions of trust and responsibility. They were the school and town officers, the teachers, and the legal advisers in the community.

The pioneer boy and girl went to work on their father’s farm or in the factories at an early age. The offerings of the public schools were limited in scope and in most instances the full advantages of such offerings were seldom used. The completion of a first or second reader was considered a fair education. It was not until the early 1900’s that completion of the eighth grade became a common practice among pupils enrolled in our elementary schools.

High school education before the 1920s was limited to those who wished to become businessmen and those who wished to enter the professions. It was not until after the first World War that a tremendous increase in high school attendance was recorded. Two factors caused this to come about. They were the demand of labor unions for compulsory school laws up to the ages of 16 and 18 for youth living in the cities; and the general demand of returning veterans for advanced educational facilities for themselves and their children.

Education Neglected

Before 1911, when few restrictions of any consequence were placed on the employment of young girls and boys, their general education was often neglected. There arose a demand for schools making possible the continuation of their schooling after school hours or for one or two days during the week. In answer to the need of these working boys and girls, the first continuation schools (as they were first named) were established in 1911. Since these youngsters worked and attended school part time, they were also called part-time schools.

Wisconsin, a pioneer in providing schools for working boys and girls passed the first Vocational school law in 1911. This law required all cities of 5,000 or more population to organize a Vocational school. It also required all children between the ages of 14 and 16 residing in such cities and who were employed to attend school five hours per week. No child could work unless he was issued a labor permit.

The first continuation or part-time school in Manitowoc was begun as a girls’ school with Mrs. E. Tollefson as the instructor em-
ployed on a part-time basis. She taught four afternoons per week and on the fifth afternoon made calls on industrial plants. The school was then located in the old Luling (McKinley) school. In 1913, W. F. Weisend was appointed part-time director of vocational education and began shop classes for boys in drawing, woodworking, and machine shop. In 1920 the Vocational school was moved to the former war workers’ dormitory and hospital building located at the foot of South 16th street. The courses were expanded and adult training was begun.

**Build New Schools**

In 1929, the school was moved to the present Adams school, temporarily, because plans were being made to build a new school at 1402 Clark street at a cost of $235,603. In September, 1932, the new building was occupied for the first time. A $12,709 addition was added to the north end of the building in 1941. Directors heading the school were L. P. Whitcomb, A. L. Nimitz, and John Ausman.

The Two Rivers vocational school system was organized the same year as the Manitowoc city system. Classes were held at first in various vacant downtown rooms. It was not until the high school classes moved to the new Washington high that permanent quarters were provided the Vocational school in the H. P. Hamilton school. A. L. Kruschke has served as director since its organization.

The beginning of the second World war found the Vocational schools at Manitowoc and Two
Rivers ready for the training of war workers in the critical industries. This training program ended in 1945. A decided shift from the continuation school idea to a system of vocational and adult education has occurred within the past decade. The vocational schools now center their educational offerings on apprentice and on-the-job training.

The first evening school in Manitowoc in 1913 was in charge of C. G. Stangel. The course was limited to the teaching of English, citizenship, reading and writing and was offered to about 500 people. There has been a steady growth in attendance and courses offered to adults at these evening schools.

Extension Schools

The University of Wisconsin extension division is housed in the Manitowoc school of vocational and adult education. The first classes were held about 1935 and consisted of evening classes for rural and city teachers who wished to do more college work. These first classes were also attended by high school graduates who wished to complete their first year of college courses. Day classes were organized in the fall of 1935. Full two years of college work was first offered in 1936. The credits earned through these extension classes are transferable to any institution of learning towards graduation.

The Manitowoc county teachers' training school was organized in 1901 through the efforts of County Supt. Fred Christiansen. The first school was housed in the present Garfield school with F. S. Hyer as principal. He was succeeded in 1904 by F. C. Christiansen. The same year the school was moved to the second floor of the public library where it remained until 1923. A modern school building was erected on a four acre tract at the corner of Michigan Avenue and 18th Street. Principal Christiansen retired in 1934 and was succeeded by A. R. Thiede. The name of the school was changed to the Manitowoc county rural normal in 1923 in accordance with a new state law. The model room accommodating grade children for practice classes was established in 1924. The normal school has graduated more than 1,200 teachers during its 47 years of existence. Many of them have become the leading educators of today. Others, after a few years of teaching, entered other professions and trades where they have become successful leaders.

A business college preparing young men and women for secretarial and accountant positions was first opened in 1889 by C. F. Moore assisted by J. A. Book. It was then known as the Wisconsin business college. I. D. Wood, the present head of the school, took over this adult school in 1918 and has operated it continuously except during the Second World war years of 1943 to 1947, inclusive.

Religious convents and seminaries were organized as early as 1857 by Father Oschwald at St. Nazianz. He organized the Third Order of St. Francis for women and a branch of the same for men. The “Pink convent” was for 50 years the religious convent for this community. The present Salvatorian seminary, a training school for young men interested in the priesthood, is an outgrowth of the seminary started in 1871 by Father Oschwald. The “Pink convent” graduated many sisters who became teachers in the parochial schools throughout this area of the state. The Alverno convent was established through the efforts of Rev. Joseph Fessler about 1866 at Silver Lake. The first sisters came from St. Nazianz to organize the institution. It is now known as the Holy Family convent interested in preparing young women for the profession of teaching and nursing. The hundreds of sisters carry on their good work in many areas throughout Wisconsin and the United States.
Manitowoc Public Library on North Eighth street

**Public Libraries**

Almost since the earliest days, Manitowoc has had a library in one form or another. The first library in Manitowoc County of which there is any record was started in 1852 in the town of Kossuth, where there was a large settlement of English and Scotch. Each settler contributed one or more books to the library which was located in the home of William Eatough.

The first library movement within Manitowoc city proper was begun by a club of young men before the outbreak of the Civil War. Members donated their books as well as volumes solicited from their friends. They acquired a library of about 200 volumes but the library project was abandoned when all the members of the club joined the army.

The first effort to establish a public library in Manitowoc was made in 1868 by K. K. Jones who donated a lot and building on York Street east of Seventh Street. He donated some other lots later sold to raise money for the library fund. The fund for books was obtained by membership fees. A life membership was $25 with an annual membership of $4. Theoretically only members
or their families were privileged to draw books but soon the use of the library was extended to the general public.

**Raised Book Funds**

The book fund was further increased by fines and through the proceeds of concerts, lectures, and social entertainments. In a short time a library of some 1,600 volumes was accumulated. The first librarian of the Jones Library was Alonzo D. Smith, the son of one of Manitowoc's earliest settlers. Mrs. Sharp was the next and she was followed by Mr. and Mrs. C. J. Langworthy. The library was kept open only a few hours each week. The only compensation given the librarian was fuel and the right to live in the rooms on the upper floor. There was no fund provided for the upkeep. The building in time became so dilapidated that Mr. and Mrs. Langworthy handed in their resignations.

Following this, various organizations took charge of the library including the Manitowoc Y.M.C.A. and the Calumet club, a social organization of young men of the city. No new books were added and many of the books became lost.

Only 800 books remained when the Jones library voted to turn them over to the Free Library association. The site of the old Jones library on York street is now marked by a special monument.

**Collect Library Funds**

For many years the city was without a public library although sporadic efforts were made to either revive the Jones Library or to establish another.

The re-establishment of a library was finally taken up by the Clio club. Their first move was to address a series of questions to leading business men regarding the need of a public library, the benefit it would be to all citizens, and the way in which it should be supported. This preliminary canvass was conducted by Mrs. Rahr and Mrs. Oscar A. Alter. The letters received in reply were published by the press afterwards and served as a good pivotal point for the soliciting committee. This committee was composed of five members from the Clio club who went among the citizens and solicited subscriptions for a public library to be supported by public taxation. The sum of $4,700 was collected by the committee during 1898-1899. It was contributed in sums varying from $1 to $500.

The matter of establishing a library was presented to the city council in November, 1899 by Lyman Nash. The council accepted the gift from the subscribers and provided a tax to support the library and appointed the first library board consisting of C. F. Canright, John Nagle, and Norman Torrison.

The board secured the rooms over the old postoffice, the two story brick building owned by the O. Torrison company adjacent to the river on the east side of Eighth street. A trained librarian, Miss Henrietta von Briesen, who served until June, 1, 1902, was engaged. She was succeeded by Miss Florence C. Hays.

**Opened in 1900**

The new library was first opened to the public on March 15, 1900, with 1,683 books ready for circulation. Soon the first headquarters were too small. This, with other considerations, prompted the application to Andrew Carnegie for money to build a library building. On Dec. 29, 1902, Mrs. J. S. Anderson received the following reply from Mr. Carnegie's secretary: "If the city agrees by resolution of the council to maintain a free public library at cost of not less than $2,500 per year and provides suitable site for the building, Mr. Carnegie will be glad to furnish
$25,000 to erect a free public library building."

Lyman Nash presented the offer to the city council and they accepted on the above conditions. The site on the northwest corner of Chicago and Eighth streets was purchased for $9,000. Ground for the building was broken on August 3, 1903, and the cornerstone was laid on Sept. 24, 1903. On Saturday, August 27, 1904, the library was opened to the public.

Branch libraries were established in Manitowoc to bring books closer to the people. The locations of these branches were changed from time to time. At present there are three branch libraries, the Washington branch library at 1816 Washington street, built in 1938; the north branch at 1722 New York avenue; and the Custerdale branch, opened in September, 1943, in the administration building at the federal housing project.

**Joseph Mann Library**

The first suggestion of a public library in Two Rivers came about through discussion by members of the Chautauqua Reading circle, which was organized in 1888. Subscriptions from manufacturing concerns and individuals made possible the erection of the first library building in 1891. Mrs. Joseph Mann, widow of a former resident of Two Rivers, subscribed $1,000 on condition that the library be named the Joseph Mann Library in memory of her husband. The first building was a neat frame affair with basement and attic, which is now used as the city hall.

On Jan. 27, 1893, the library was transferred to the city of Two Rivers by the Joseph Mann Library association so that taxes as well as private donations could contribute to the support of the library.

In 1913, a grant from the Carnegie library fund and the gift of a site for a new library directly across the street from the old one made possible the erection of the present yellow brick structure. Although really a Carnegie library, the name of Joseph Mann library was retained when the new building was completed in 1914.

**Kiel Library**

The city of Kiel organized a public library which is housed in the Kiel city hall building. A full-time librarian is not employed as library services are provided on certain days and for certain periods of the day.