St. Mary church at Manitowoc Rapids, built in 1850

Early History

Early settlers came to America for religious freedom. Those who came to Manitowoc county after 1836 continued the desire to have churches and church affiliation. The churches of our county then, beginning with the settling of our communities, have grown and developed, so that today the county is dotted with fine church edifices, attesting to the interest of its citizens in religious affairs. Most of the churches located in or near community centers have grown and prospered; others in the open country have declined in membership or have been torn down and the members joining nearby village churches of the same denomination.

School records of the county schools often mention the fact that church services were held in the pioneer log school houses until a church edifice could be erected. In communities where mixed religious groups settled, the voters at annual meetings forbade the use of the school for church purposes.
Religion is an essential need in the growth of every community. The history of early beginnings of religious groups is always interesting and at times shows elements of the heroic. To present a logical and coherent history of the development of the beginning and growth of the various religious groups, the series of articles on religion will trace the histories of the Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish groups.

Catholic Parishes

The Catholic church in Manitowoc county has grown from six struggling missions scattered throughout this Wisconsin wilderness to the present day total of 25 well-established parishes made up of more than 25,000 souls. The church has also established 23 parochial schools with over 4,000 children taught by 120 nuns. Up to 1868, the established parishes belonged to the Milwaukee diocese, but since that time have belonged to the Green Bay diocese.

Early Green Bay was the center of church activities in pioneer Wisconsin. The first Catholic missionary sent to Manitowoc county was Rev. Joseph Brunner in 1850. There is, however, strong evidence to the claims of earlier visits by missionaries and explorers. They are said to have planted the cross in this Pottawatomis county. This Indian tribe had frequent missionaries from Green Bay as visitors. Some of them were the Rev. Theodore Vanden Broels, 1834-1840; Rev. Flo. Bonduell, 1840-50; the Jesuit Fathers Anton Anderlady and Joseph Brunner, 1850-1; and the Crusade Fathers Edward Daems and H. J. Nuyts from 1851-3.

Began Pastoral Work

It was not until Rev. Brunner’s arrival that definite pastoral work began. This energetic and zealous church leader by 1853 had established six parishes located at Manitowoc Rapids, Two Rivers, Cooperstown, Meehme, Maple Grove, and Francis Creek. The first Catholic church, known as the Church of Holy Maternity, was built at Rapids with Rev. Brunner as pastor. He gave religious instruction in German, French, and English. He also attended monthly the St. Luke parish at Two Rivers established in 1851. Rev. W. DeYouge was the first resident pastor at Rapids, succeeded by Rev. H. J. Nuyts. The Catholics in the village of Manitowoc attended this first church at Rapids.

Father Nuyts foresaw the fact that the major settlement of the county would not be at the rapids of the Manitowoc river, but at its mouth. Accordingly, in 1853, he built a church at Manitowoc dedicated to St. Boniface. Within a few years after the establishment of St. Boniface the Rapids church became a mission until it was discontinued.

St. Boniface, Manitowoc, was dedicated March 15, 1853, with Rev. H. J. Nuyts as the first pastor. He was succeeded after three years in turn by Rev. Beittner, 1856; Rev. Maly, 1857; Rev. Gerubauer until 1859; Revs. DeBeche and Pfeiffer until 1863; Rev. Stehle until 1866, Rev. Joseph Fessler until 1878; and Rev. Henry Jacobs until 1881. May 1, 1881, marked a new era in the history of this pioneer church. On that date Rev. W. J. Peil later monsignor, became pastor and served until 1934. He was instrumental in building the present church, the school and the home for the teaching sisters. Three times during his pastorate, it was found necessary to subdivide the parish.

Poles Start Parish

A desire for a congregation their own prompted the early Polish settlers of Manitowoc to form the St. Mary parish in Feb-
uary, 1870. Prior to that time the people attended St. Boniface or St. Casimir at Nordheim. A frame church was erected but soon proved too small. In 1883, and old frame building, used by the German Lutherans, was purchased, enlarged, and dedicated on Sept. 2, 1884. In 1888, the present twin-steepled Gothic-style church structure was begun but not completed until 1899. The first pastor was Rev. F. F. Kralczyński. A new school was erected in 1925 and a new parsonage in 1931. The congregation now has over 600 families.

In 1902 the northside members of St. Boniface organized the Sacred Heart parish under the guidance of Rev. J. T. O'Leary. Until 1905, the parishioners worshipped in what was formerly an Episcopal church located at Chicago and North Ninth streets. The building was then owned by John Kellner. A house was rented for a rectory on south Seventh street while a new one was being erected. The cornerstone of the present building was laid Sept. 18, 1904. The structure is still a combination church and school. The parochial school was opened in September, 1908.

St. Paul Parish Started

In order to relieve the crowded conditions at St. Boniface in 1920, Bishop Rhode established the St. Paul parish to serve the west side and Rapids residents. Rev. Martin Jäckels was the first and present pastor. The cornerstone for the Tudor Gothic type building was laid in August 1921. The eight-room school adjoining was completed and dedicated May 6, 1928.

Another division of the St. Boniface congregation took place in the spring of 1927 when St. Andrew parish was organized for the far southside. Rev. Henry Letz was appointed pastor and serves today. A brick-combination church-school was dedicated Dec. 23, 1928. The school opened in January, 1929.

In 1923 a division of the Sacred Heart Parish was deemed necessary and so Holy Innocents parish was established. A combination church-school building and a rectory of stone and brick were constructed. Rev. E. A. Radey was the first pastor and serves at present. The congregation now numbers over 600 families.

All of these divisions of the original St. Boniface parish into six separate parishes attests to the growth of the city and the number of Catholic families in and near Manitowoc.

At Two Rivers the religious movement began in the 1830s when Catholic missionaries visited the community from time to time, saying mass in the private homes of the Ebert, Stahl, Gagnon, Niquette, Berner, and Holland families. The Rev. Joseph Brunner, with the aid of Oliver LeClair began the erection of the first log church in 1852. After Rev. Brunner's departure the parish was cared for by visiting priests from Rapids. On March 1, 1857, the Rev. Peter Menard was named the first parish priest and the church placed under the patronage of St. Luke.

In 1863, a 60 by 22 foot addition was erected. During the pastorate of Rev. James Gauche, 1873-77, a parochial school was begun and was in charge of lay teachers until 1887 when sisters took over the teaching duties. Under Rev. Joseph A. Geissler, 1890-1923, the cornerstone for the present brick church was laid and the structure dedicated Oct. 23, 1892. The old church was moved across the street to serve as a parish hall and school. The present rectory was built in 1895; the home for the teaching sisters in 1903, and the present large brick school in 1909 and enlarged again in a few years. The Rev. C. V. Hugo, an assistant for 17 years, became pastor in 1923. The congregation numbers 1,200 families.
Form Own Parish

In May, 1889, the Polish parishioners of St. Lukes decided to build a church of their own. At the organization meeting 36 charter members were present. They authorized a combination church school dedicated to the Sacred Heart. The parish was at first attended by Rev. Z. Luczycki of St. Mary home, Manitowoc. In 1898, the present brick church was begun and dedicated Dec. 24, 1899. The old building was remodeled into the present sisters’ home. The present brick school was built in 1919.

The third and youngest Catholic church in Two Rivers is St. Mark, erected in 1924. Because of overcrowded conditions in the mother parish, the parishioners residing on the southside, organized their own congregation with Rev. Peter J. Nilles, a native of Two Rivers, as pastor. The rectory and the sisters’ home were purchased in 1925. The parochial school was begun in 1926 and completed in November of that year. The church property now consists of an entire block and is valued at more than $100,000.

One of the first six parishes begun in our county was at Cooperstown in 1850. The church was attended at intervals by Rev. Joseph Brunner who built a parish house in 1854 but the church was of mission type until Rev. James Gauche became resident pastor in 1870-3. During his pastorate a larger church was built and dedicated in 1871 as the St. James church. During the pastorate of Rev. Rossochowitz, an exile of Bismark’s “Kultur Kampf”, a parsonage, a school, and an enlarged church were constructed in 1876-84.

Francis Creek Parish

Another of the first parishes in our county was built at Francis Creek. According to records some 25 families joined forces in 1848 to build a log church, 60 by 30 feet, on the present site of the Francis Creek cemetery under the supervision of Rev. Joseph Brunner. The first mass was said in the fall of 1851. St. Ann parish remained a mission of the Rapids congregation until 1860 when Rev. Maly established his residence at Francis Creek. In 1873, the present brick church was erected at a cost of $6,000. The present rectory was built shortly thereafter. A school and sisters’ home was erected in 1875. The church was rebuilt and a 106 foot steeple added in 1894, and about 1910 two sacristies were added, making the church 20 feet longer. The present modern four-room school and sisters’ home were built in the 1920s.

St. Augustine at Reif Mills dates its origin to 1862 when the first church was built. It prospered so much that in 1890 a parochial school was erected, but later discontinued. The spiritual needs of the congregation have always been cared for by priests from Kellnersville and Francis Creek. At present it is a mission of St. Ann.

Initial steps for the formation of another of the first six parishes were taken in Meeme in the fall of 1850 following a mass by Father Brunner in the John Mullitor home.

Land Is Cleared

The land was cleared by Henry Mulholland for a church site and accepted, and a log church, 30 by 50 feet was erected. The Germans wanted to name it St. Joseph but the Irish insisted on St. Patrick. Bishop Henne settled the issue to the satisfaction of all by naming it St. Isadore. Father Brunner and other neighboring priests served the parishioners as missionaries for some years. In 1864 the second church was built and that was replaced in the 1920s during the pastorate of the Rev. E. J. Schmit. At the same time the modern
brick church and sisters home was constructed at St. Fidelis at Spring Valley is now a mission church to St. Isadore, but a parochial school is maintained there.

Another of the first county parishes was established at Maple Grove in 1850 by 14 Catholics meeting at the home of B. S. Lorrigan to form St. Patrick congregation. Father Brunner also served this as a mission. A frame church was built shortly thereafter. The Rev. Sebastian became the first resident pastor in 1861. The present church was erected in 1869-9. The modern school, rectory and sisters home was erected in the early 1900s.

St. Casimir parish at Nordheim was organized in 1868. The first frame church was destroyed by fire in July, 1880. The parishioners then voted a brick church, 70 by 40 feet, with an 80 foot steeple. The building was dedicated in July, 1881, by Archbishop Heiss of Milwaukee. The new parsonage was built about 1875 and the old one converted into a school which was discontinued about 1900. In the 1920s the abandoned church was remodeled into a winter chapel and place for catechism instruction.

**Mission Pastor**

Father Brunner and Father Wenninger are believed to have administered to the Catholics around Mishicot as early as 1851. The first log church was built in 1861-2 with the Rev. E. Van Steenwyck of St. Luke as mission pastor. The first resident pastor was the Rev. Rinckes in 1875-7, who enlarged the church. The parish became a mission of St. Ann from 1890 to 1897. Under the Rev. Peter Schmitz of Francis Creek the new Holy Cross church was erected in 1894 and in October, 1897, the parish was again assigned a resident pastor. The first and present brick parochial school was built in 1907 with the Rev. Philip St. Louis the architect and contractor.

The Bohemian Catholics of Reedsville at first attended St. Patrick church at Maple Grove. In 1865 they organized their own congregation and built a small log church dedicated to the Virgin Mary. From 1865 to 1876 the congregation was served periodically by the Rev. Joseph Maly and Rev. Julius Stroike. In 1876 the Rev. G. Mazanek was appointed resident priest. A brick church was erected in the 1880s and was utilized until 1906 when it was torn down and the new brick building built in 1907. In 1886 the first log church was moved across the street to the present school site and remodeled into a school. It served that purpose until replaced with the present two story school in 1895.

The history of St. Wendel parish, Cleveland, dates back to May 31, 1853. Catholic families, mostly from Rhinelund, were then contributing to a fund to erect a church and to pay for the services of a mission priest from Sheboygan. The first services were held in the Joseph Schulte residence. The first log church was dedicated in 1855. The parish was served as a mission church from 1853 to 1861, by Rev. DeBerge of Sheboygan who came once and later twice per month. In 1863, permission was obtained from the archbishop of Milwaukee to erect a church and rectory at Centerville with Rev. Joseph Reible as pastor. This church of St. Grove was dedicated Oct. 23, 1864. The old church at St. Wendel then became a mission of St. George congregation. With the decline of Centerville, St. George congregation became and is now a mission church of St. Wendel.

The old log church erected in 1855 at St. Wendel was replaced by a new structure dedicated on Oct. 20, 1864. The old log church was converted into a parochial school. The first resident pastor at St. Wendel was Rev. J. Korphage, 1871-5. On Christmas day, 1894, the church and the old log
school were destroyed by fire. They were replaced by the present structures in 1895. The present church rectory was built in 1893, and the sisters' residence in 1930.

St. Joseph's parish at Kellnersville had its beginning with the erection of a small log church at Greenstreet in 1856, and known as St. Wenceslaus. Rev. Maly of Francis Creek first served them as missionary priest. This structure served the Greenstreet area until abandoned in the 1920s and torn down in 1947. The Kellnersville Catholics petitioned for a church in their village in 1868. This petition was granted and an American colonial design church was dedicated to St. Joseph August 28, 1870. A home for the pastor was completed a short time later and occupied by Rev. George Brunner, the first pastor. In 1914, Father Cipin persuaded the people to build a new church which was completed in 1915. The old frame school built about the time of the first church was damaged extensively by fire in 1935, so it was replaced by a modern red brick school housing the grades and two years of high school. It also houses the sisters' residence.

History Identical

The history of St. Gregory parish is identical with that of the St. Nazianz colony founded by Rev. Oschwald. The first church, a frame, two-story structure, was dedicated on Oct. 21, 1854. The upper story was the church proper while the lower floor was the rectory. It still stands today. The second and present stone church was dedicated in 1864. It was remodeled in 1926. The public and parochial school were closely interwoven with lay and religious leaders heading the school system. The present parochial school was erected in 1884. Holy Trinity church at School Hill, organized in the 1860s, is now a mission of St. Gregory.

The church of Immaculate Conception at Clarks Mills was organized Oct. 6, 1865, under the direction of Rev. Eugene McGinity. The first church building was remodeled from a store and hall and presented as a gift to the congregation by Francis, and Anna Marlborough. The first mass was said Dec. 8, 1865. The next year Father Joseph Fessler cared for the parish as a mission until 1871. That year it became a mission of the St. Patrick congregation, Maple Grove, until about 1875 when Rev. John Wernert was appointed resident pastor. While a mission of St. Patrick, Rev. Saubert of Maple Grove began the present brick church at Clarks Mills in 1873. The church and rectory were not fully completed until 1879. The frame parochial school opened in 1887 was replaced by the present modern structure in 1928. The Clarks Mills church was incorporated as St. Mary in 1884 after it had again become a mission for a few months.

Kiel Church History

The history of SS. Peter and Paul, Kiel, dates back to the early 1850s. About 1859 the German and some Irish pioneers erected the first Catholic church, administered for many years by priests from St. Ann, about five miles west. One of these priests, Rev. P. A. Schleider, was instrumental in erecting the parish school in 1878, and in replacing the first church with a new building in 1885. Rev. J. S. Schiefen erected the first rectory in 1892 and occupied shortly thereafter by Rev. George Weiss as first resident pastor. The modern brick school was built in 1904 and the present brick church in 1913 at a cost of about $43,000. In 1929 the school was enlarged and quarters for the sisters added.

The German Catholics, members of St. Mary congregation, who lived near Pine Grove (Whitelaw) organized their own St. Michel parish in October, 1872. The frame church was dedicated in February, 1874, and became a mission church of the Rapids congregation until 1881.
That year it became a mission of the Clarks Mills congregation. The first resident pastor was Rev. John Rhode who served from 1884 to 1896. He built the first rectory and school about 1886. A new school was erected in 1903, a beautiful new church in 1907, the sisters’ home in 1915, the two room school enlarged to four rooms in 1918, and a new rectory in 1926.

The settlers in the northern part of Manitowoc county built their church at Tisch Mills in 1863 as a mission of St. Joseph at Carlton. In 1888 the pioneer church was replaced by the present structure. A new rectory was built in 1919. No parochial school was ever built.

Organized in 1874

St. Josephs, Alverno, was organized in 1874 and a church dedicated that year with Father Fessler as the mission priest from St. Boniface. He became resident pastor in 1878. The first church was destroyed by fire in 1907 but a new structure was built and dedicated that same year. The parochial school is conducted in the basement of the church.

Two other Catholic institutions must be given mention before closing the Catholic church history of our county. St. Mary home was the direct result of the activities of Rev. Z. Luizycik of St. Mary congregation. In 1886, he rented two homes in which he provided a home for the aged and the orphans. They were ministered to by Felician sisters from Detroit. In 1889 plans were laid for a new building to increase the available room and the present home erected. In 1929 the home was entrusted to the care of Franciscan fathers of Pulaski, Wis. The home sheltered only the aged after 1934.

Franciscan Sisters

In 1866, Rev. Joseph Fessler of Clarks Mills engaged a young woman, Theresa Gramlich, to teach his little religious school, little dreaming that she was to become the founder of a new religious order of women. Four other young women joined Theresa and formed the nucleus of the Franciscan Sisters of Charity at Alverno. When Father Fessler was transferred to St. Boniface, this group of women followed, resolving to consecrate themselves to the vows of a religious life. On Nov. 9, 1869, they were solemnly received into the Third Order of St. Francis. The first convent in Manitowoc, a small frame house, soon became too small so a site was purchased at Alverno in 1873. The new brick convent was dedicated August 2, 1875. The “May laws” of 1873 by the German government drove a community of Franciscan sisters in Germany to the Silver Lake convent and with the $16,000 realized from the sale of their German property helped enlarge the convent. On Sept. 1, 1881, the convent was struck by lightning and destroyed. On Dec. 7, 1882, a new convent was dedicated which has been enlarged several times since its erection. The convent concentrates on training teachers for parochial parish, high, and boarding schools throughout the United States. A training school for nurses in their own hospitals at Manitowoc and Zanesville, Ohio, is also maintained. Schools of music and art are conducted in the larger parishes. The sisters also conduct a home for the aged in West Point, Neb.

The Holy Family hospital, administered by the Franciscan sisters, was erected in Manitowoc in Sept. 28, 1899. Many additions have been made through the generosity of the citizens of Manitowoc county since the original building was constructed. The hospital is now recognized among the leading hospitals of the nation.

In addition to its spiritual functions the church provides for the social and ethical betterment of its members through such organ-
izations as the Catholic Order of Foresters, Catholic Knights, Knights of Columbus, Columbian Squires and the Holy Name society for the men and youth; while the women are members of Catholic Women’s clubs, St. Anne Christian Mothers society, Young Ladies sodality, and Daughters of Isabella.

Protestant Churches

The first settlers of Manitowoc county were largely Yankees and Germans. It is then only natural that Protestant missionaries would come to our county and attempt to establish missions and churches. It is reported that Rev. Richard Cadle, a Protestant missionary, was in charge of the mission at Green Bay and held services at Manitowoc Rapids early in the 1840s. The success of these pioneer church leaders is reflected in the development and growth of the various branches of the Protestant group in our county during the past century.

Episcopal Church

One of the first Protestant groups to carry on religious services in our county was the Episcopal church. The Rev. Richard Cadle, a missionary, held services at Rapids in June, 1841. Other missionaries of this religious group were Revs. Hoyt, Akerly, Homman, Wilson and Bishop Kemper. The Episcopal parish records in our county begin with their first meeting on Feb. 28, 1848. The members voted to organize a parish known as St. James and selected as their first rector the Rev. Gustav Unionius, a native of Finland. Services were held in the rectory at Manitowoc and in a private home at Rapids. In 1851, the Rev. George Schetky became rector holding services in Manitowoc and missions at Two Rivers and at Branch.

A church building for St. James congregation was built in Manitowoc on the northwest corner of Chicago and ninth and consecrated on July 25, 1852. That church building served the parish until 1902 when it was sold and was turned into a warehouse and store.

During the time of Rev. Thomas B. Dooley, 1866-1870, a parochial school was established with the pastor and his two daughters as teachers. They began with 19 pupils, but the enrollment grew to 40 by the time the school closed in 1870.

A program of improvement began in 1889 with the coming of Rev. B. Talbot Rogers. A small pipe organ, still in use today, was purchased during his time. The present stone church building on Eighth and State streets was erected in 1901 and dedicated on St. James’ day, July 25, 1902, at a cost of $35,000.

St. James’ society was founded in 1917 by Mrs. Mabel Killen and Mrs. Mollie Rahr to aid in raising funds for a new rectory as the previous one was sold when the new church was built. In 1924, the society purchased the Dr. A. J. Patchen residence for a rectory.

St. Paul Episcopal parish was organized in Two Rivers in 1855 but disbanded within a few years as most parish members moved away. It was in charge of the present rector of the Manitowoc St. James’ rector evidently. The church holds services in the Two Rivers Community Building at certain times of the year.

The oldest church, St. James in Manitowoc, has many church societies and organizations. The parish guilds, St. Faith’s, St. Elizabeth’s, St. Margaret’s and Circle A, help finance the needs of the congregation. A Young People’s society provides a field of service and fellowship. The parish has a Sunday school, Scout troops, Altar guilds, and junior and senior choirs.

The one hundredth anniversary...
sary of the parish was properly observed on Feb. 28, 1948, with Bishop Harwood Sturtevant of Fond du Lac in attendance.

First Baptist Church

In 1849-50, a number of Baptists came from Germany and settled in Kossuth. E. Grimm, originally of Germany, came to visit his Baptist friends and through his efforts converted and baptized 29 persons. On June 2, 1850, the German Baptist church of Kossuth was organized with Mr. Grimm as the first pastor. A warranty deed, conveying two acres of land in Kossuth to the congregation, was executed on Feb. 25, 1851. The first log church was built on the site by members at a total cash outlay of $21.30.

In 1856, 28 members left the Kossuth church to organize a Baptist church in Manitowoc. This organization stayed in existence until 1890 when the members sold their Manitowoc property and returned to the Kossuth church. In 1898, the frame edifice was built at Kossuth and remained there, about a mile north of Francis Creek, until 1945 when it was moved to Manitowoc. The plans were to convert it into a modern house of worship but the project was abandoned because of building difficulties and the structure was sold.

In 1894, a parsonage was built in Kossuth. This structure, together with a portion of the site, was sold in 1944. The congregation decided to hold its services after May, 1943, in the Lincoln park field house with the view of making Manitowoc its headquarters. On August 15, 1943, the parish voted to change its name to the First Baptist church of Manitowoc. The congregation purchased the Schuette property at 812 Huron street, on May 11, 1947, for church purposes. The second floor has been remodeled for a parsonage while the first floor houses the church and Sunday school rooms. The basement has been made available for social purposes.

The school history of Meeme four records the fact that a Baptist church was established and maintained for many years by the Welsh across from the Mineral Springs school. The church is gone, but a large well-kept cemetery remains north of the school.

Methodist Churches

St. Paul — The honors of pioneer Methodism in our county belong to Rev. H. W. Frink who held the first Methodist services in Manitowoc on June 23, 1837. Missionaries held services from time to time in the homes of settlers as there were no public buildings at that time. Jacob Conroe offered his home as a place to worship during the times that the missionary made his rounds. The small but attentive congregation looked forward to his quarterly visits as time of great spiritual refreshing.

In 1850, Rev. Lewis was appointed the first full time Manitowoc pastor. There was no church nor parsonage. After renting a dwelling for some months, Benjamin Jones donated a lot on Park street, the present site of the St. Paul Methodist parsonage. A small frame building was erected, largely by the minister himself, and into which he moved in the spring of 1851. By the end of the next year, the congregation boasted 35 members.

Funds to erect a church building were obtained in 1852-3 and a frame structure erected and dedicated on the present North Seventh street site in 1855. The church building has been remodeled and enlarged several times since its erection and is now valued at about $26,000 in addition to a parsonage worth $10,000. The membership now totals 350. Since its first resident pas-
tor, 52 ministers have headed the Manitowoc church.

A Methodist church was organized and maintained in Newton for many years. The structure is still standing although abandoned for church purposes about 25 years ago. About 15 years ago it was purchased by Newton township for a town hall.

**Wesley Methodist**

The Wesley Methodist Episcopal congregation was formed in Manitowoc in 1854 as the German M. E. church. The church is located at Ninth and Hamilton streets. The present structure was built in 1882 and is one of the older church edifices of Manitowoc.

**German Lutherans**

The early Lutheran pioneers who came from Germany about a century ago were from the provinces of Mecklenburg and Hanover. Unlike their ancestors of present day Lutherans who came to America to escape religious persecution, these forefathers of Lutheranism in our county came to escape economic and social conditions in Germany.

In the spring of 1851, Pastor Carl F. Goldammer, a young man educated for the ministry and sent by the Barmen mission of Barmen-Wuppertal, Germany, came to Newtonburg, in our county at the request of a small group of settlers and established the first German Lutheran congregation there. Pastor Goldammer also walked to the small village of Manitowoc to hold services every second Tuesday in the district school house at the corner of Washington and Seventh streets.

The growth of the village of Manitowoc brought a demand for a new congregation in the village. In 1853, the first step was taken when a lot on the northeast corner of South 10th and Marshall streets was purchased.

In the spring of 1854, Pastor Goldammer resigned his county missions to devote more of his time to the newly organized Manitowoc congregation. As the first site purchased was deemed unsatisfactory, the property at South Eighth and Marshall streets was in part purchased and in part received as a gift from Sam Hinckley of New York.

Lutheranism has kept pace with the development of the county. Most of the Lutheran congregations are affiliated with the Wisconsin synod. There are now 13 county parishes, several of which consist of more than one congregation. Five of them have full time Christian day schools. Some of these were organized and maintained for spiritual purposes as early as 1868, offering a complete academic curriculum, as well as religious instruction. Schools are maintained at Maribel, Manitowoc, Two Rivers, Reedsville, Newtonburg, and in Liberty.

**Set Up In Newtonburg**

The first German Lutheran church was set up at Newtonburg in 1852 with Rev. C. F. Goldammer as pastor. The structure of logs built in 1852 was replaced in 1860 by a frame edifice, and that replaced in 1888 by a brick church which burned in 1922. The new and present brick church was dedicated in 1923. The congregation has always maintained a school in connection with the church and today has the present frame school house west of the church consisting of one classroom.

A parent off-spring of the Newtonburg church was the First German Evangelical Lutheran church at Eighth and Marshall streets. The congregation was at first a mission of Rev. Goldammer until 1854. A frame church was built on the site in 1855 and replaced in 1873 by the present brick structure. The church school was taught by the pastor until 1864.
when regular teachers were employed. Today the school has five regular teachers with over 150 pupils enrolled.

The growth of the city of Manitowoc in the last 100 years has brought about the establishment of two daughter congregations of the First German Evangelical Lutheran church. The Bethany Evangelical Lutheran congregation, at 28th and Wollmer streets was set up Jan. 1, 1943. It is a brick structure erected in 1941 and used in the next two years as a mission serviced by the parent congregation. Grace Evangelical Lutheran church located at 17th street and Wisconsin avenue was established in 1940 with Rev. Henry Koch as pastor. The brick church was built in 1942.

Kiel Trinity Lutheran church was organized in 1918 but had no resident pastors until 1946. The concrete church structure was built in 1918. The congregation now has 250 worshippers in charge of Rev. E. G. Behm.

Joined In 1920

St. John-St. Peter Lutheran church at Cleveland was organized as two separate congregations. St. Peter was established in 1862 as the Saxony church in the Pleasant Hill school district. St. John was organized in 1860 at Cleveland. The churches were then in charge of Rev. Quehl. The two congregations amalgamated in 1920 and built a new brick church in Cleveland in 1923 at a cost of $40,000. Sunday school is conducted for about 100 children.

The Trinity Evangelical Lutheran congregation in the town of Liberty, Webster school district, was organized in 1853. Pastor H. C. Zarwell was the organizer, but the parish was served by pastors from Newtonburg, its mother church, until 1891. The first log cabin church, really a schoolhouse was used until 1867 when a frame church was built. The third and present church building is of brick completed in 1910 for $15,000. The parsonage and school were built in 1891. The full time day school was begun in 1925 with one teacher in charge.

Zion Evangelical Lutheran church at Louis Corners was established in 1883 with Rev. Martin Denninger as mission pastor. It was without a resident pastor until 1904. The present frame edifice was built in 1883, and enlarged and a steeple added in 1898 at a cost of $1,550. The parsonage was built in 1907 for $2,365. This congregation does not maintain a day school.

Church At Mishicot

St. Peter Lutheran church, Mishicot, in charge of Rev. Zell, was established in 1861 under the direction of Pastor Goldammer. The congregation was without a resident pastor until 1902. The first frame church was replaced in 1927 by the present red granite edifice at a cost of $32,000.

The Rockwood Lutheran congregation at Rockwood was first set up in 1866 under the direction of Rev. H. Quehl. It has never had a resident pastor and is now served by the Mishicot congregation. The log church erected in 1866 was replaced by one of frame in 1914.

The Jambo Creek Lutheran church was established in 1863 under the guidance of Pastor Bjorn. This congregation had its own resident pastor until 1899 when it was served for three years by Manitowoc pastors, and since that time serviced by the pastors of St. Peter congregation at Mishicot.

Five other German Lutheran congregations are in existence in our county at this time. They are the ones located at Collins in the Woodcock school district and organized in 1857 the Two Rivers congregation set up in 1864, the
Zanders church established in 1873, the Two Creeks congregation organized first in the town of Mishicot in 1873, and the Reedsville church which was one of the pioneer congregations of the county. The Reedsville parish is one of the largest rural congregations maintaining a grade school employing three regular teachers. No information was received from the above named churches to make this history of the German Lutheran churches in the county complete.

First Presbyterian Churches

The First Presbyterian church dates back to June 26, 1851, when a number of early settlers gathered at the Fred Borcherdt home at Rapids and formed a church under the guidance of a missionary, Rev. William Herritt. For the next two years Rev. Herritt had charge and made his circuit on foot and horseback each Sabbath.

In 1852, headquarters were moved to Manitowoc with Rev. Mead Holmes as pastor. The congregation met for a time in the northside school until the decision was reached to build "The Tabernacle" at the southeast corner of North Ninth and Chicago streets, the old Witt harness shop, at a cost of $490 in 1855. The pastor was a zealous Sunday school organizer, continuing this work after his resignation as pastor.

The Rev. C. B. Stevens in the early 1870s was determined to erect a suitable church and with the financial assistance of Eastern friends realized his ambition, erecting the imposing brick edifice on Eighth and State streets in 1872. The cost of $20,000 was a large sum for those days. The new building led to an era of extended Christian work, adding much to the influence of the church in this area.

Extensive improvements to the church edifice were made in the early 1900s. The rebuilding of the church was undertaken in 1939 and rededicated. The active membership, now numbers over 900 in Manitowoc.

The Presbyterian group has established congregations at Kiel and Melnik with resident pastors. The Niles Community church is a mission. The Cato Presbyterian church was organized about 1860 and stayed in existence until the 1930s.

Riverview chapel was built in 1920 to accommodate the Presbyterians in the western section of Manitowoc. It was served by the pastor of the mother church. It was located at Meadow Lane and 24th street. In the early 1940 it was sold and turned into a residence.

County school records reveal the fact that a Presbyterian church was located in Larrabee for many years in the later 1800s and early 1900s. The church is gone but the cemetery north of the village remains.

Evangelical-Reformed Churches

The Evangelical and Reformed church is represented in our county by eight distinct congregations. The Evangelical-Reformed churches were officially organized under that name June 26, 1934, at the Cleveland, Ohio, conference. The union came about because both denominations had the same national, racial, linqueal, and creedal background. In 1948, the Evangelical and Reformed church voted further to merge with the Congregational-Christian churches.

St. John church at 15th and Marshall streets dates back to 1890. Organizational activities were carried on by pastors of neighboring cities. The Rev. J. Heinrichs was one of the first resident pastors. It was he, incidently, who established "Die Wahrheit," a German Weekly in Manitowoc. The first frame
church, built between 14th and 15th streets on Marshall street was a small structure, 25 by 40 feet, set on posts. In 1901, the edifice was moved to the present site and a new front, steeple and other improvements added. The parsonage was built in 1902. The present church building was erected in 1923.

The First Reformed church was organized March 25, 1868, by a group of German pioneers under the leadership of Dietrich Barnstein. The first pastor, a converted Jew, was Rev. John Lotka. The church site at Ninth and Hancock streets was purchased for $400 and a frame edifice erected thereon for $664. The present brick structure, costing over $6,000, was erected in 1891. This building was enlarged and modernized in 1941 at a cost of $52,000.

Church at Branch

Bethany Church at Branch built in the later 1800s was a mission of this congregation. The Branch congregation voted to disband and affiliate with the Manitowoc church on April 23, 1939. The church building was sold, torn down, and the lumber used to build a residence. The cemetery across from the public school is a reminder of the fact that this village had a church for decades.

St. Peters Reformed church, Kiel, began in 1863 when church services were conducted in the homes of pioneer members. The congregation was officially organized June 19, 1864. The first frame church was erected in 1889. The present site was donated by Rev. Ludwig Zenk, the pastor, in 1883. Horse stables were first erected on this lot for the convenience of the rural members who traveled to Kiel for church services. The second church was built in 1889 and that was replaced in 1937 by the present modern church edifice.

Bethlehem church, Evangelical and Reformed, is located in the town of Schleswig, section 9, in the Hillside Grove school district. Missionary pioneering was done as early as 1862. The church was organized under Dr. Muehlmeier on Dec. 26, 1865, and a log church erected. The present frame structure was dedicated Oct. 5, 1913. The congregation does not have a resident pastor now. Rev. Chas. Reppert of the Reformed church on the Manitowoc-Sheboygan county line conducts services.

Ebenezer Reformed

south of Newton, on highway 141, was organized in 1847 with Rev. Goldammer as pastor. In 1854 the first church building was erected of wooden blocks. Since it was at first a "free" church, the congregation in 1854 affiliated with the Reformed church. It had its own pastors for many years, but in recent times the services are conducted by theological students from the Mission House.

Evangelical Reformed Salem-Ebenezer congregation located one mile north of Newton was organized in 1854 with Rev. J. T. Klug as the first pastor. The parish was a mission church from 1851 to 1854. The first log church structure was erected soon after its organization. In 1876 a new structure was built which was partly wrecked by a cyclone in 1880 but rebuilt the next year. This building was enlarged by 18 feet in 1938. The first parsonage was erected in 1855. It was destroyed by fire in 1899 and a new one built in 1900. The first school was built in 1864 and used as the church until 1876. No regular day school is maintained now.

Freiden's Evangelical and Reformed church at Reedsville was begun in 1896 with Rev. E. J. Pleer as pastor. The first frame building was built the same year while the second and present one
was built in 1926. The congregation does not maintain a school building. Two young men of the parish have entered the ministry. Rev. Zane Pautz is now in charge of a parish at Jackson, Wis., while Calton Krueger is now studying for the ministry.

Evangelical Churches

The Evangelical United Brethren missionaries are thought to have come to Manitowoc county about 1855. The Rev. William Zickorish was the first to come to Two Rivers to conduct preaching services in private homes. The first church was built in Two Rivers on Pine street in 1859 with Rev. Peter Held as pastor. The structure was dedicated on July 17, 1859. In the year 1883 a new church edifice on Madison street, Two Rivers, was built and was known as the German Evangelical Emanuel church. The congregation continued to grow with the result that the second structure was torn down and the present edifice erected in 1931. On Nov. 16, 1946, the denominational name was changed to the present one.

At the time the Two Rivers church of the German Evangelical Emanuel church was being established, a congregation was begun at Saxonburg near Mishicot. The log church at Saxonburg served until 1903 when a frame building was erected at Mishicot. For years this congregation was identified as the German Zion Evangelical church, but now is the Zion Evangelical United Brethren church. For some years the church was served by the Two Rivers minister but now is in charge of Rev. Robert Boettcher of Denmark.

Another congregation of this denomination, the Zion and Emmanuel Evangelical United Brethren at Kubale's corner, one mile south of Reedsville, was organized in 1912. The first pastor was Rev. C. Wiegand. This congregation is the mother church of the Reedsville church of the same denomination. The brick structure in Rockland is now a mission church of the Reedsville congregation.

Miscellaneous

Several church in Manitowoc county are without resident pastors. No information was readily available for such congregation. A Lutheran church at Clover, now abandoned, was one of the oldest congregations in the county. A Catholic and a Lutheran church at Kasson are now mission churches. The Lutheran church in the village of Collins was torn down several years ago. The little white church east of Gjerpen is serviced now by a Rev. Dale and is of the Grace Norwegian Lutheran denomination. A Lutheran church at the southern village limits of Valders is unidentified.

Evangelical Churches

The English Evangelical Lutheran church was established in Two Rivers under the leadership of Rev. Shellhart of Oshkosh who canvassed the city in 1943. The congregation was incorporated in February, 1944, with 110 charter members. They held services in the Hamilton Community House at first but now meet in the Elks club auditorium. A parsonage and church building lot have been purchased at 20th and Adams streets, Two Rivers.

The Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran church at Ninth and Pine streets, Manitowoc, was organized in 1926, and is a daughter congregation of the First German Evangelical Lutheran church of Manitowoc. The present church edifice was dedicated July, 1927. The congregation maintains a Christ day school of eight grades in charge of two teachers.

The Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran congregations were first
organized in 1850. The first church was built at Gjerpen in 1852 and was used until the present frame structure was erected in 1876.

The West Valders church was built in 1853-4 and served its members until 1900 when a new church edifice was dedicated. Some pioneer pastors serving the Gjerpen and West Valders congregations were Rev. H. S. Stub, J. A. Ottesen, L. M. Biorn, and Rev. A. O. Alisen.

Used Gjerpen Church

The Valders village Norwegian Lutheran church, an affiliate of the Gjerpen-West Valders congregations, was organized as Our Savior's Lutheran congregation in 1899. Their first parsonage was the old Gjerpen church used for church purposes until 1900. A new parsonage was erected in 1946-7 at Valders. Some of the lumber from the old Valders public school was used in the construction. The parishes at Valders, Gjerpen, and West Valders were incorporated in 1946 as the Evangelical Lutheran parish of Valders.

St. Paul Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran church in Manitowoc began officially in 1873 under the leadership of Rev. Biorn who was in charge of the Gjerpen congregation. The first frame church was erected at North Seventh and St. Clair streets in 1874 with Rev. O. J. Hatlestad as pastor. A new church was erected in 1898-9 at North 10th and St. Clair streets. The Rev. O. K. Espeseth served the congregation for many years.

The First Lutheran church at Eighth and State streets in Manitowoc is another daughter congregation of the Gjerpen church. It was first known as the First Norwegian Lutheran church but after the union of the synods dropped the designation "Norwegian" from its name. The present parsonage was purchased from the Platt's in 1947.

Congregational

The First Congregational church at Two Rivers was organized in 1851 with H. H. Smith and J. Fisher as deacons. A house of worship was erected with a Rev. Stanley as resident pastor. The congregation prospered until 1857 when financial help was needed from outside sources, especially from the Reformed church organization. In 1877 the church was reorganized and has continued to prosper.

Other Denominations

Christian Scientists founded their First Church of Christ Scientist in 1904. A church is maintained at Seventh and Park streets where property was acquired and an edifice erected in 1917. Previous to that time, meetings were held in private homes.

The Salvation Army has maintained a corps in Manitowoc for several decades. Their first home were barracks on Quay street, but at present is located in the old Henry Heinrichs residence at 815 Buffalo street which the organization purchased.

The Gospel Tabernacle was incorporated in 1935 and is housed in a building at 812 Marshall street, formerly the old glove factory. Rev. E. O. Flagstead has been in charge of the tabernacle for many years.

The religious history of the county Jewish settlers dates back to about 1860 when the Mann brothers set up several businesses in Two Rivers. The first religious services were held in the homes of the members of the Jewish faith, with holiday services conducted in rented halls. The first congregation, Pele Zedek, a synagogue, was organized in Manitowoc on Feb. 18, 1900. In April of that year a building committee was appointed and they purchased the old school of the First Norwegian Lutheran congregation at North Eighth and State streets. A site at 1221 So. 13th
street was purchased and the building moved to that site for a church. This structure was replaced in 1928 by a new brick synagogue. Abe Schwartz, Sam Golden, David Balkansky, and Alfred Muchin have done much to make possible the unified congregation serving the county. Organizations sponsored by the church are Bnai Brith, Jewish Ladies Aid, Council of Jewish Women and others.

Several Manitowoc county parishes are no longer in existence. The school histories of the county soon to be published reveal instances of the establishment of churches in county communities which today are without church structures. The only remains of these former congregations are the old abandoned cemeteries which often stand neglected and almost forgotten.

The very brief church histories given in this and preceding articles indicate that the love of religious freedom brought by our forefathers is being maintained by their descendants as is evidenced by the modern church edifices common to our county.