WRITERS OF MANITOWOC COUNTY
By Ralph G. Plumb

Although Manitowoc county has had no major writers, it has contributed written records in almost every field of human activity. Some of these writers have gone hence and done their creative work elsewhere, some have done their writing within the county borders and departed later, while still a third group have been permanent residents of the county.

In the religious field the first to attract attention is the Reverend Gustave Unonius, founder of St. James church. After he had departed from his labors here and returned in later years to Sweden he published two large volumes devoted to reminiscences interspersed with a good deal of doctrinal discussion. The wife of the first pastor of the First Presbyterian church, Mrs. W. Herritt, wrote a book called "The Keepsake" giving some account of her life in the village of Manitowoc; and years later Mrs. Oliver H. Johnson, wife of another pastor, described her experiences as a minister's helpmate, a book that gained wide circulation. In 1863 Reverend Mead Holmes of the Presbyterian church published "A Soldier of the Cumberland", a biography of his son who had lost his life in service that year. Reverend J. N. Davidson of Two Rivers, a Congregational pastor in that city about 1900, was also a writer of historical articles and poems. Still another church writer was Reverend Carl Nagel who wrote "Pebbles and Posies."

Two Histories Written

In history the first attempt was the county history in atlas form written by John Nagle, whose later book published posthumously as "John Nagle's Philosophy" became well known.

Ralph B. Plumb's "History of Manitowoc County" came out in 1902. A. H. Lohman's "History of Two Rivers" five years later, while Caroline Hubbard and Otto Gass wrote the city history in the years 1903-04. The two volume "History of Manitowoc County" edited by Dr. Louis Falge and in great part written by him was published by the Clarke company in 1912. Other writers of shorter historical works were Judge J. S. Anderson, Judge Emil Baensch, and Joseph Frank Wojta. The last named wrote the story of the town of Two Creeks. Of marine history should be mentioned two books by R. G. Plumb, a sketch of marine disasters by Herbert Pitz, and the many articles furnished the press by Captain Edward Carus.

In economics and science Manitowoc county has had many an important contributor. Solomon Huebner's text books on the subject of insurance became known the country over. The same may be said of the treatises on chemistry by Prof. Louis Kahlenberg and Prof. Herman Schlundt and of Arthur Koehler's "Properties and Uses of Woods." In civics a booklet prepared by Superintendent Hugh S. Bonar was used in Wisconsin schools. Also there should be mentioned educational publication of Professor C. E. Patzer, Superintendent P. J. Zimmers, G. H. Matravers, and Robert Lindwall.

Opinion and Culture

Frank J. Droba wrote of the educational problems of Poland and Sister Orestes treated certain phases of American public opinion on culture in 1942. Sister Teresita Kittell wrote of natural history. Then the young Dr. Jerome P. Ledvina published a
work on certain types of psychology in the same decade. Nor must the leading works on anthropology be overlooked by Professor Ernst Hooten of Harvard University, a son of a former Manitowoc Methodist minister, be overlooked. It is often forgotten that the town of Cato was the birthplace of that outstanding theorist in economy, Thorstein Veblen. True it is that his parents moved to Minnesota soon after he was born, but Manitowoc County can claim the origin of this famous author of "The Theory of the Leisure Class" and "Theory of Business Enterprise."

In lighter vein, the two books of John Schuette and his brother George were most interesting, the former giving an illuminating view of early days in Manitowoc. Mrs. Elizabeth Bass is writing now the story of her varied experiences in political life and as narcotic commissioner. Children's books have included "Journey of the Toys" by William and Ruth Rahr and others by Leonore Kadow. Novels came from the pens of Mrs. Sophia Belzer Engstrand, former Two Rivers teacher, who wrote "Miss Monday," and "Wanda P. Neff." The Manitowoc Hotel was the home of Mary Louise Mabie and her mother, both writers, while the former was writing her latest and best novel, "Prepare Them for Caesar." Bobbs Merrill had previously issued four of her novels, while Mrs. Louise Kennedy Mabie had been an acceptable contributor to the Saturday Evening Post and other periodicals. Other local novelists have included Francis Huard and Greta Hamilton De Launey. Estle F. Orr has had articles printed in American Mercury.

Finally, in poetry names to be mentioned include Mrs. Milton Weber, Miss Ruth Richter, Miss Flora Waldo, and Dr. M. P. Andrews. Nor should it be overlooked that the works of Manitowoc county and all others for a generation had to pass through the office of Thorvald Solberg, register of copyrights at Washington, D. C., a Manitowoc born scholar, himself an author of reminiscences in 1839.