CHAPTER III.

LUMBERING AND FISHING.

Lumbering and fishing were about the only industries here in the year 1848. The fishing was carried on principally by J. P. Clarke & Co., a firm having their headquarters at Detroit. They employed a crew here all the year round and caught all the fish by seining. These operations extended from here to about where the Twin River light house now stands. Immense quantities of fish were caught without much effort as the lake was then teeming with fish, principally white fish, and it was believed that the supply was inexhaustible. Sturgeon were so numerous and there being no demand for them, they were thrown on the beach to die and decay. The white fish and such others as there was a market for were salted and packed in barrels and half barrels.

Messrs. J. P. Clarke & Co. owned a number of sailing vessels which made periodical trips here, taking aboard the catch from time to time and bringing provisions, clothing, etc., for their help as well as the settlers. This firm also purchased fish from other fishermen operating along the lake shore. During the winter this firm reduced their crew to 6 or 8 men and kept them at work repairing nets and making cord wood along the beach, which was shipped out early in the Spring.

Besides fishing, the only other industry here was lumbering and at that time there was only one saw mill here owned and operated by H. H. Smith & Co., who came here in 1847, which was located on the north bank of the Neshoto River near Washington Street bridge. Immense tracts of timber were standing in all directions and consisted principally of pine and hemlock. Logging operations were carried on quite close to the settlement; one of the camps being a mile up the Neshoto
River and the other about where the tannery bridge crosses the Mishicott River. The logs were rafted down in Summer and hauled down on the ice in Winter. Considerable timber was also being cut down right where the city now is.

There were no piers or harbors here at that time, so that in order that the lumber could be gotten to the market it was loaded on scows and towed out into the lake where it was loaded on vessels. A few years later, about 1850 a pier was built out into the lake by a firm of H. H. Smith Co., which was the only pier here until some time later when the firm of Isaac Taylor & Co. of Racine built a saw mill on the present site of the Two Rivers Coal docks and constructed a second pier. They also constructed a bridge at their own expense across the river there, connecting with Jefferson Street. This firm began business about the year 1852. The mill was built and the lands bought by one Isaac Taylor of Racine and then sold to the Pierpont Co., the new owners comprising Mr. Wheeler, Mr. H. S. Pierpont of Two Rivers and Mr. Canfield of Manistee, Mich. Mr. Pierpont was the local manager. The firm was in existence about five years when, the hard times coming out in 1857 and Mr. Canfield having extensive interests at Manistee, did not come to the rescue of his Two Rivers interests, so that the Pierpont Co. failed. Most of the pine having been cut on the land which they owned, the firm went out of existence. The machinery was then moved to Manistee and operated by the firm of Canfield & Co. together with their other interests there. After the mill’s failure the North pier was purchased by Mr. Nelson Pendleton and later on purchased by Cooper & Jones, they being the last owners before its destruction.

There were no schools here up to this time but during the Summer of 1851 Mrs. Diantha Hamilton, then Miss Diantha Smith, and a daughter of H. H. Smith, opened a private school in a house on the site where the residence of W. Ollendorf
now stands. It was attended by about 20 pupils. The population of the settlement including the town of Two Rivers in 1850 is given in the first issue of the Manitowoc Herald which was printed in that year as 924 souls.

Among the first settlers here of course were the Canadian French who came here attracted by the good fishing and selected Two Rivers on account of its proximity to the fishing banks. Then came New Englanders attracted by the natural resources of the country, and in turn the Germans who came to work at various vocations or go on farms. Besides these, people of all other nationalities came but the Germans predominated and today they or their descendants probably constitute a majority of the residents.