CHAPTER V.

THE REAL BEGINNINGS.

In the previous articles we have tried to set forth the appearance of the city and its environments as they appeared in 1848—1851. We also gave a list of such of the early settlers as could be recalled by some of the early settlers living today.

But 1848 was not the beginning of Two Rivers. Through the courtesy of Mr. R. G. Thwaites, secretary of the State Historical Society, I have been enabled to secure some information of the earlier history that is very interesting. In the Wisconsin Historical Collection, Vol. XI, p. 211, the log book of H. M. Sloop "Felicity", Pilot Samuel Roberts, under date of Nov. 4, 1779, speaks of a certain trader named Monsieur Fay, which is at a place called "Deux Rivers 18 leagues from Millwakey to the north." This is undoubtedly the earliest record of any mention made of the present site of Two Rivers or "Deaux Rivers" as he writes it. This Monsieur Fay was no doubt one of the early traders who ventured in these parts and by friendly intercourse managed to make advantageous bargains. Two Rivers owing to its two rivers always was a favorite camping ground for the Indians as the fishing and hunting here were no doubt the finest in this section.

Nothing looking towards settling or developing the resources of this place seems to have been done until about the year 1835. The first entry of land made covering the present site of Two Rivers was made Sept. 10, 1835, by Daniel Wells, Jr., S. W. Beal and Morgan L. Martin. No doubt traders and missionaries made their regular visits here and it is not unlikely that some fishing was done in the lakes at this point before this, but we have no records of the facts. In
the Summer of 1836, however, Judge John Lawe and Robert M. Eberts of Green Bay came here and purchased a large section of timber land embracing about all the land on which the city is now located. They immediately erected a small saw mill on the north side of the Neshoto River, west of Washington Street bridge. This was the original of the old saw mill which stood on the site until destroyed by fire a few years ago.

The mill was put into operation at once under the management of Oliver Longrime who is supposed to have been the first permanent white settler of Two Rivers. This then marks the real beginning of Two Rivers. With the advent of the saw mill the first permanent settlers began to come in. This Robert M. Eberts, by the way, is the person to whom the citizens are indebted to for the public square. He donated this to the city for a public square or market place, and for a time it was used here as such. He also donated the site on which the Catholic Church now stands.

In 1837 the great panic paralyzed the industries here to such an extent that the county was almost depopulated, only one mill in the county remaining in operation, but in a few years business again resumed normal conditions.

A poll list of the voters for an election which occurred Dec. 14, 1839, gives the following list of qualified voters:

Robert M. Eberts, Joseph Edwards,
John Lynn, Peter Allie,
John E. Shepard, James Young,
Alexander Gasgo, Alexander Bovrardy,
Alexander Richardson, Brigham Vansaw,
Alfred Woods, Samuel C. Chase.

The original certified copy of this poll list has been preserved and is now in possession of the Joseph Mann Library Association.
During the Summer of 1840 Andrew J. Vieau of Green Bay began buying and handling lumber manufactured at Two Rivers. In the Fall Vieau came to Two Rivers and took possession of John Law's old mill. He operated this mill until 1847 when he sold it to H. H. Smith who later on became identified with many of the city's earlier enterprises and was instrumental more than any other man in making the settlement a permanent one by securing and fostering other industries through which the permanency of the city was established. In 1846-47 Vieau was the postmaster here and Oscar Burdicke carried the mail between Manitowoc and Two Rivers, his compensation being the net revenue of the route.

Tracing the order of development and settlement, we might say, that it began with the trading of Indians for furs, followed by fishing with the two rivers as a natural location for a port of entry. Then came the saw mills with the logging operations and the shipping of the lumber in the rough to the more settled section of the country.

As the forests gave up their wealth of timber, it was only natural to expect that some one would see the vast amount of hemlock and tamarack that grew here which, having no value as lumber, still was valuable for its bark, provided a market for the bark could be had. And so it came to pass that the first of the manufacturing institutions in the shape of a tannery which took the raw material and turned out the finished product came to be located here to take advantage of the inexhaustible supply of bark.