DETROIT TO MILWAUKEE

The boat arrived at Detroit on the first of October, remaining to the following day, when it proceeded through the St. Clair river and lake into Lake Huron and on the evening of the fifth day reached Fort Mackinac. The diarist continues:

Here is one of the places that breathes religion. It is impossible to look upon the crest of this crag over the large, clear body of water which surrounds it without exclaiming: 'God is good and his world is fair.' Everything suggests to the observer that he stands on the brink of civilization, yea, even that he has crossed it. A group of Indians were camped in the dale below, and others were drifting on the water in their excavated log canoes, here and there touching on this island, where according to their legends the Great Manitou abides, and where the red men will again gather in the deep forests to light their holy fire or send their weird songs up to the Sun, the symbol of the Great Spirit. But such happenings are now a thing of the past. In the place of the former heathen altars now stands a Christian temple, sending out words of peace and conciliation, where once the wild war-cry of the Indians was heard, and where the different Indian tribes combined in the most unspeakable cruelties to the white invaders of their lands.

Some of the passengers went ashore to view the fort and surrounding settlement, but Unonius and his party remained on board. Had they known, however, that within the walls of this fort was stationed, in the service of the United States militia, a brother of Mrs. Unonius, who had recently been transferred from Fort Snelling, Minnesota, their plans would have been quite different. Imagine their sorrow when several months thereafter they were informed of his presence there at that time, and that through a whim of fate they had missed him, their only relative in the country.

After passing the point of St. Ignace, the boat proceeded into Lake Michigan.

The fourth of October—Sunday.

Religious service was announced for the forenoon, which they attended jointly. Unonius remarks:
The service began with the singing of a psalm, while all remained standing, after which the minister said a short prayer. Then he read a chapter from the bible and delivered an extemporaneous sermon on the text, all of which we understood but little. We knew, however, that it was words of Him, to whom all tongues give praise, and it seemed that in this moment of devotion He also heard our silent prayers not only for ourselves but for our dear ones far away, who perhaps felt our thoughts in the communion of the soul.

While the steamer was slowly paddling its way down Lake Michigan, they were told that they would reach Milwaukee that evening, a city in Wisconsin, a new territory in the United States. They had heard nothing in New York of this city or territory, but while on the Erie canal and during the voyage on the Great Lakes had made the acquaintance of some people, Americans as well as Europeans, who spoke of them as the most beautiful, and the district as one of the most fertile sections in the great West, and under present circumstances one of the most attractive and best suited for settlers.

On the steamer they had heard the same kind of reports, and quite a number of emigrants made preparations to disembark at Milwaukee. As they had no special reason to prefer Illinois, more so as there was a rumor afloat that the best land in this state was held in the hands of speculators at high prices, and as they were weary and exhausted from the long journey, they easily yielded to a strong desire to exchange their uncomfortable steerage quarters for even the simplest dwelling on shore.

One piece of land might be as desirable as another, and they knew just as much, or rather just as little, of one as of the other, so they thought it worth while to look into the present prospect to which so many seemed to be attracted, especially as it was put directly in their way. After a short consultation, they decided to disembark and so informed the captain.
Thus, in a moment fate directs the destiny of man and changes his entire future life. It is quite probable, that had they followed their original plans and continued to Chicago, their future career in America would have been quite different from what now was in store for them. Unonius relates that they dropped anchor about ten o'clock in the evening in the Milwaukee harbor, and that only a long enough stop would be made for the disembarking of the passengers. A small lighter came out from the city for the transfer of passengers and baggage. They were prepared to pay again rather heavily for overweight, but in the hurry and in the dark a piece of baggage now and then slipped by without being noticed by the officials on board. In order that no one might keep track of what luggage they had, they themselves—the passengers—helped to transfer their belongings to the lighter. The purser called for a dollar now and a dollar then, but they busied themselves more with the work than with the paying, considering themselves entitled to escape the extra charges, inasmuch as they already had been made to pay much more than agreed upon by the transportation company.

After much commotion the transfer was at last completed, and Unonius thought that all their belongings were safe on the lighter. The captain had already given signal for departure, the gangplank had been withdrawn, and the steamboat was starting to move, when Unonius to his distress found that his wife was not with them. At this moment he heard her well-known voice calling his name from the bridge of the steamer. She had delayed her leaving until the last minute in order to make sure that nothing had been forgotten. In desperation he yelled in all the languages he could think of, calling attention to the situation, when a kind-hearted member of the crew grasped the dilemma. He grabbed Mrs. Unonius by the waist and literally threw her
from the high deck of the steamer down to the lighter below, where she fell faint from fear into the arms of her husband. One moment more and it would have been too late.

The waves had begun to rise, and as the lighter had no railing, the trip up the river seemed quite precarious. They really felt that they now were exposed to greater danger than at any other time during their entire trip from Sweden; they thought it a wonder that both people and freight were not tossed overboard, as the little tug rolled from side to side. Wet and tired they finally approached the landing and were safely docked.

It was now two o’clock in the morning, but notwithstanding this, they were fortunate in getting their goods stored in a warehouse and in finding for themselves good accommodations in the best hotel in town. Here they soon found peace and rest, such as they had not enjoyed since they left New York more than two weeks previously. They were happy to think that they were near the end of their long journey.

MILWAUKEE

The Memoirs continue:

We now began to feel quite certain that our goal had been reached and that no further travel by bark or boat would be necessary. We would hail with joy the day when Carl and I could start on our tour of exploration in order to discover and select a suitable location where we might establish our home and our penates in peace. In the morning we were awakened by the sound of a gong which made a noise sufficient, one might think, to wake the dead.

We were freely discussing our plans and program over the breakfast table when our talk was overheard by a young, buxom waitress, who excitedly interrupted us with: ‘De ere da saa Gud Svenske folk.’ (‘God bless me, but you are Swedish people.’) Never in my life had the Norske Sprog sounded so melodious to my ears, much like the mellow tone

* Unonius in his Memoirs spells Milwaukee with ‘ie’ which was acceptable and correct, as the government cancellations of postage stamps at the time will bear witness.