CHAPTER XXVII

SHERRY AND SHERRY STATION

Sherry.—The village of Sherry is situated in Sections 4 and 9, Town 24 north, Range 5 east, the town and range corresponding to Milladore Township. It is 16 miles north (and slightly west) of Wisconsin Rapids, and five miles from Milladore, which is the nearest banking point. Though not directly on a railroad, it is but two miles south of the Minneapolis, St. Paul & Sault Ste. Marie tracks, where there is a station named Sherry, and another village, the post office of which is called Blenker. A stage is run between the two villages, making two trips daily. The village contains two general stores, a hotel, an auto repair shop and garage, the real estate office of Benson & Anderton, a firm that has cut a considerable figure in the development of the northeastern part of Wood County, a cheese factory, and two churches, one Presbyterian and the other Lutheran. The village has express, telegraph and telephone communication with the outside world.

The village was named for Henry Sherry, in early days one of the most prominent lumbermen in this region, who with a partner operated here under the firm name of Briggs & Sherry. In 1880 the firm erected a good-sized sawmill here and engaged Herbert Cady to keep a store for them, which he did in his own house for awhile, or until Briggs & Sherry put up a store building near the mill.

After conducting business for awhile Mr. Briggs sold out his interest and Mr. Sherry formed a partnership with Norman and Charles Willard. Later he bought out the Willard brothers for a sum amounting to $10,000 more than they had paid into the firm, and in association with James W. Cameron and Walter Paddock formed the Sherry Lumber Company, with a capital of $200,000, the new company continuing to operate the mill at Sherry. In this company Mr. Sherry owned three-quarters of the stock and drew seven per cent whether the other members got anything or not. A large house had been erected in the village by the Willard brothers for their mother, whom they brought here from Neenah, and it was occupied by her until they sold out and left the village.

The Sherry Lumber Company after awhile failed and was dissolved. Mr. Sherry also started the Sutton Manufacturing Company, composed of several members, including Messrs. Sutton, Donaldson and Venustram. This company operated a stave factory, but after several years it also failed and the stave mill was sold to W. D. Connor and taken to Stratford, where it is now. This failure occurred shortly before that of the Sherry Lumber Company.

In the meanwhile the large Willard house was bought by Mr. Sherry, who exchanged it with Mr. Sutton for a residence in Neenah. It was subsequently bought from Mrs. Sutton by Mrs. Anderton, who now owns it. The Sherry interests were finally bought by the real estate firm of Benson & Anderton.

When the Sherry Lumber Company failed, Walter Paddock was placed in charge of the concern to wind up the business, but after awhile he went to Milwaukee, leaving George Smith in his place and Mr. Smith put up the store build-
ing now occupied by Anton Wiken. The Briggs & Sherry store in time became a horse stable kept by George Whitney. The first blacksmith's shop in the village was operated as an adjunct to the Sherry mill by a man named Fisher. At present there is no blacksmith's shop in the village. In connection with the Sherry & Briggs mill there was also a planing-mill which later burned down.

Another sawmill must be mentioned, which was built by Tom Hoseley and Freidlein Becker near the site of the first one. The latter was torn down and its frame moved three miles away to a location in Arpin Township about two miles from the village of that name. The Hoseley & Becker sawmill was subsequently given up and the machinery moved to Stevens Point.

The first postmaster at Sherry was Mr. Briggs, who, about 1885, had Herbert Cady handle the mails for him. Ed. Ramsdell was the next to keep the office, and he was succeeded by R. O. Evans & Son. After that Mrs. William (Cecilia S.) Jones was postmistress for a year, she being succeeded about a year ago by the present incumbent, Miss Ethel Spice.

The first schoolhouse in Sherry was a small building constructed of scrap lumber and battened. It was in use until 1889, when the present commodious frame building was erected.

In the year 1900 the Presbyterian congregation was organized with 11 members, by "Father" Jacob Patch, and he served for awhile as its pastor. Meetings were held in the town hall and schoolhouse until 1903, when the present brick edifice was erected. The congregation now includes about 45 members and the present pastor is the Rev. Paul H. Wright, who also serves the Presbyterian church at Arpin, and who has preached here since May, 1922. The most active member of the church during its early growth was the Rev. W. J. Agnew, who founded in Sherry what was known as the Northwestern Collegiate Institute, the site of which was on the old Sherry Lumber Company's farm, owned by Benson & Anderton (Edward A. Benson and Charles E. Anderton); but as the college was never able to pay for the land, it was given up some two years ago. The first elders of the church were Grif Humphrey, Ed. Jones and Thomas Williams. The only original member now living here is Mrs. George Weatherly. In connection with the church there is a Sunday school, Missionary Society and Christian Endeavor Society. Services are held every Sunday.

The German Lutheran Church in Sherry was built about 12 years ago, or one year after the Presbyterian. It is served at present by the Rev. W. List of Sigel Township.

**Sherry Station.**—When the Wisconsin Central Railway (now the "Soo") was constructed through Wood County it passed about two miles north of the site of Sherry village, but a side-track and loading platform from which shipments could be made were constructed at the nearest point on the road, in 1883; this point was then called Briggs' Switch; later a station was built and named Sherry, which name it still retains. A new settlement grew up, however, in the vicinity of the station, chiefly on the north side of the tracks, which today constitutes a small village in Milladore Township, the post office being named Blenker, after John Blenker, an early settler here who was the first postmaster.

The beginning of this settlement was in 1881, when Louis Kelnhafer built a store; Kelnhafer, coming about 1880, was one of the first settlers in the locality,
and carried on farming on land he had homesteaded, in addition to operating his store. In 1896 he also started a cheese factory in the frame building, located just north of the tracks and near the east end of the village, now used as a storehouse. Subsequently he sold his store to John Blenker, disposed of his other interests, and removed to Oregon. Charles Augustine, who homesteaded about half a mile south of the present settlement, was another early settler, having arrived about 1881. Charles Lynchmair came in 1882 and built a house just north of the tracks, but three-quarters of a mile east of the present village. John Schafhauser, still a resident, was another early settler, and built a log house on the present site of the post office. A public school was started in 1884, the first teacher being Mary Brennan; a log building served as a schoolhouse for about ten years, after which the present frame building was erected. The post office was also started in the spring of 1884, previous to which time the mail was obtained from Milladore. Henry Blenker, son of John, succeeded his father as postmaster and served for about four years; he was succeeded March 14, 1917, by the present incumbent, William Letwon.

On November 20, 1898, a severe disaster visited the village; fire, starting in the Blenker hotel at the east end of town, consumed this building and rapidly spread to others; the destruction of Lawrence Seidl’s frame store building followed that of the hotel; next the hotel barn burned, and then the saloon, dwelling, and dance hall of the estate of Jacob Seidl; Seidl’s barn was next in order to fall before the devouring element, and following that the cheese factory of Lawrence Seidl, and the Catholic Church. Eight buildings were laid low within a space of two hours.

A new village soon rose on the ashes of the former one, however; Lawrence Seidl’s cheese factory was the first structure to be rebuilt, many willing hands being lent to this work. This place Mr. Seidl operated as a cheese factory until about 1913, since which time he has used it as a feed mill and repair shop. The settlement now has three general stores, three soft drink saloons, a creamery operated by William J. Dehn, feed mill, school, and Catholic church; a record of the latter will be found in the chapter devoted to the history of the Catholic Church in the county. The number of inhabitants in about 150.