It is generally accepted as a fact — although there are no documents to sustain it — that Stevens Point was named after George Stevens who in 1839 used the “point” or peninsula on the Wisconsin River at the foot of modern Main Street to launch his supply canoes for the journey north to Big Bull Falls (Wausau) where he built a saw mill in 1840.

The most oft-repeated version of the naming of the village is provided by Sherman, himself a pioneer of 1848, less than a decade after Stevens passed through. The Sherman version, in brief, follows:

“In 1839, bidding his (i.e. Stevens’) family and friends goodbye, he, with John Fox, a millwright, started for the Pinery... In Illinois he purchased two yoke of oxen and a wagon, hired Daniel D. Dillie as a teamster to drive, and after loading the supplies, started for the Pinery. After a long and tedious journey, they arrived at the end of the road, at a point at the head of Shaurette Rapids on the Wisconsin River, now the foot of Main Street in this city. After a short rest, he sent the team and teamster back for more supplies while he and Fox remained to make further preparations for ascending the river to Big Bull Falls... While stopping at the head of Shaurette Rapids he built the addition to the log shanty...”

In order to learn what “log shanty” Sherman is speaking of, it is necessary to jump ahead a number of Note Books where it is stated that this shanty, which was 12 by 16 feet, was constructed not by Stevens but by James Allen, a part Indian, who worked for Conant and Campbell in the saw mill at Conant Rapids in 1838 or 1839. Allen, he says, was married to an Indian, and

“... as females were very scarce in those days and as he wished to remove his Indian queen from the influence of the white man, he went up the river about a mile and with the assistance of Leander Trudell, built his cabin on the bank of the river at the foot of Main Street. Soon after the cabin

1 Note Book, no. 1.
was erected, George Stevens, with John B. Fox and Daniel D. Dillie, arrived at the head of Shaurette Rapids where the shanty was built. He purchased the shanty from Allen, and built an addition, where he stored his goods."

This log shanty apparently stood on the point of the peninsula in the Wisconsin River formed by the slough along modern Briggs Street and the deep curve of the Wisconsin just below modern Clark Street and from whence came "Stevens' Point." A birdseye view of the city made in an artist’s sketch of 1874 reveals more strikingly than any plat or map how the bend of the Wisconsin River between Clark Street and the slough formed a point resembling an arrowhead aimed directly into the river (see illustration).

In his late years, Sherman, who died in 1906, began collecting papers for the purpose of writing a history of Portage County. From these it is learned that not only Trudell took part in helping Stevens build an addition to the log shanty mentioned above, but also Orin Maybee. After completing this task

"... they (presumably Stevens, Trudell and Maybee) went to the foot of Conant Rapids ... and made a large canoe, which was hauled by teams to the head of the rapids. Here the goods were shipped and taken up the river to Little Bull Falls [where] they had to make a portage by hauling their boats and goods above the falls, then reloading them again and landing at Wausau..."

If teams were required to haul this canoe, it probably was a dugout hollowed from a big pine, not a bark canoe. But from the evidence of the Sherman account, there is reason to wonder why this community was not named after Allen or Trudell. That Stevens remained in the area for only a short time and used the shanty merely as a transshipment point to Big Bull leaves one to wonder how the name ever stuck at all, if, in fact, it did. Yet out of a chance remark, or reference, many of the names of the county, as elsewhere in the state, can trace their heritage with little relation to the logic of things.

The story of how Stevens came to pass through the

1 Note Book, no. 6.
tract of land which would one day bear his name is also described in the reminiscences of the Hon. John C. Clark of Marathon County.

"In 1835 Robert Wakely opened a tavern and trading post at Point Baussee; he being a live American, desiring to know where the river headed, wandered to the north and traveled up and up until he came to Big Bull, and on and on to Grandfather Bull ... In 1839 he was down at St. Louis on lumber from Whitney mill, there met George Stevens, who was there with lumber from Alleghany where he had lumbered for many years. He run his lumber down the Alleghany to Pittsburg, in rafts and on to Cairo, the mouth of the Ohio River, then by barge up to St. Louis.

"Wakely told Stevens about the great pine forests and the water power on the Wisconsin river which greatly excited Stevens, for he thought that Wakely was telling him fairy tales ... Stevens soon after came to Wisconsin and found things to his notion far better than Wakely had told him ..."

That Wakely lived at Point "Baussee" (variously spelled) a decade later is certified in a mortgage entered into at that place between Francis La Mere and Wakely. La Mere mortgaged "one dark red ox, and one light red ox with a white star on his forehead, being the same yoke of oxen purchased by Wakely from Houghton & Batten in the fall of 1844."

The entry on the land which Stevens occupied around Plummer and Clark Islands at Wausau was made Oct. 5, 1840. Judge Marchetti writes that the mill "must have been built and ready for operation in 1840, because there exists a contract ... in which Stevens obligates himself to pay to the other party, who evidently was renting and running the mill, the sum of $4.50 per 1,000 feet for sawing, he, Stevens, to furnish the provisions for the men and buying all the 'clear stuff' manufactured by the mill man at the rate of $9 per thousand."

Apparently Stevens’ mill went into operation in the latter part of 1840 as Henry Merrell, who visited Big

1 History of Marathon County, pp. 63-64.
2 Mortgages, Book A, p. 56.
3 History of Marathon County, p. 62.
Bull Falls on a census taking mission in the summer of 1840, found Stevens still in process of construction. In the spring of 1841, according to semi-legendary accounts, Stevens engaged Hiram Stow to pilot what is believed to be the first lumber rafts down the Wisconsin River from Big Bull to St. Louis. Stow, who later operated a store at Plover, almost surely had previous experience in lumber rafting, yet on the success or failure of this trip no doubt hung the future of the Upper Wisconsin Pinery. For unless the pine lumber could be rafted to market, there was no other feasible way out. Stow lived to tell the story of this great adventure and lest anyone doubt his skill or his courage let him gaze hard on the angry rapids below the Consolidated dam in Stevens Point where, at the time, there was no dam, no slide, and no piers to guide the raftsmen, only masses of jagged rocks and a current so powerful that the slightest miscalculation might shatter the raft to smithereens and drown the raftsmen in whirlpools of foam that spun like a top. Nevertheless, this epic trip by Hiram Stow, as unbelievable as an exploit by Paul Bunyan, went unsung in the ballads of the times.

But what one man could do, others could do after him, and within a few years, great fleets of pine lumber — the hardwood was not being cut as it would not float — began moving down the Wisconsin each spring and early summer, and the slack water above Shaurette Rapids became a stopping place for the raftsmen who tied up their cribs of lumber and came ashore for supplies at the local chandlers and probably bought rope, chains, hammers, axes, peavy poles, canthooks, saws, blankets, and tobacco, not to mention food and liquor. And by 1847 the territorial census reveals that the Precinct of Stevens Point was already forging ahead of Plover Precinct. It was apparent that here, not in Plover where the county seat was located, the first city of the county would one day be located.

But the first man to make an entry on land in the future village and city of Stevens Point was Andrew Mullarkey, an immigrant from County Connaught, Ireland. According to family tradition, missionary stories
were being circulated in Ireland in the early 19th Century about the evangelization of the Indians in the land of the "Moscosin" (Wisconsin) and one of these stories described the whirlpools in the big river of the "Moscosin" which dragged Indian canoes under and which, at certain levels, even howled and moaned for the blood of its victims. From this had developed a belief among the Indians that a large animal (no kin of Lochness monster) inhabited the river, and, when the Indians were introduced to the Christian conception of original sin, they naturally associated the monster in the river with the devil. Accordingly, hazardous curves and whirlpools were given names like the Devil’s Elbow, the Devil’s Jaws, and the Witches’ Gulch.

These missionary stories excited one Henry Mullarkey who, probably in the 1830s, set out from Ireland to challenge the monster in the river of the "Moscosin." When he arrived he may have stayed for a time with James Allen, or even DuBay, because family tradition holds that he shared a shanty with a man part Indian on the Upper Wisconsin. He may have established a trading post on a spot tentatively identified as the site of the Green Bay Depot at the foot of the present Main Street in Stevens Point. The trading post was probably moved a short time later to the left bank of the Little Eau Pleine by sliding the building on winter ice up the Wisconsin River. The land where Mullarkey’s new trading post allegedly stood was actually entered by Andrew Dunn in 1844 and sold to Andrew Mullarkey in 1845. (See Eau Pleine, The Township of.)

Failing to find the land or the river of the "Moscosin" as bad as the missionaries had painted it, Henry Mullarkey meanwhile had returned to Ireland to bring as many of his family as were willing to come to America, although his own father refused to make the move. Other members, including brother Andrew, settled first in northern Illinois. Leaving the family eventually, Henry and Andrew went north and rediscovered the location of the trading post which Henry is said to have first built at the foot of Main Street before moving it farther north. Presumably impressed with the location.
Andrew may then have gone south to the U.S. Land Office in Mineral Point where he made an entry on fractional government Lot 1 (Sec. 32, T. 24, R. 8) on Sept. 10, 1844 and a few weeks later on government Lot 2 covering all of the property around the future Public Square in Stevens Point down to the banks of the Wisconsin River and a few blocks to the east. To repeat, this is the earliest indenture on a tract of land affecting the future city. The land around had been surveyed into sections by Hathaway in 1839-40, but it had not been subdivided into forties or, in this instance, fractional government lots. Mullarkey may have accomplished this himself, or hired another surveyor.

In 1845 Mathias Mitchell acquired government Lot 1 from Andrew Mullarkey and "a certain piece of land" in government Lot 2 from Mullarkey and Charles Maddy. Mullarkey, who lies buried in Bellville, Wisconsin, may have remained for a time in Grand Rapids Precinct as the 1847 census lists the firm name of "Cain & Mullarkey" at the head of a household of 12 persons, none of which was a female, which suggests a mill or logging operation. Henry Mullarkey, who remained on the Upper Wisconsin, eventually disappeared and not even legend survives the circumstances of his death. Perhaps the Old Man in the river had met the old man from Ireland after all and challenged him on his own ground.

The first mention of the name Stevens Point appears in an indenture dated Jan. 29, 1847 when Mitchell borrowed $2,000 from A. Warren Sr., and as a bond offered "certain lots and tracts of land laying (lying?) in this place commonly called Stevens Point, and numbered on the map of that said place in part as follows according to (here the entry leaves a blank space) Birchley's Survey, namely Lots 1 & 8 in Block 2, and all the land north of said Lots and of equal width with them, as far back as the first little creek or brook. Also 66 feet of land fronting on Main Street..."

In making this arrangement with Warren, it was also

\[^1\text{Mortgages, Book A, p. 109.}\]
agreed that Mitchell was to buy the plat or map made by the man referred to as Birchley. Later in the year, probably using Birchley’s map to guide him, Mitchell platted the land he acquired from Mullarkey into village lots and blocks, all lots 132 feet by 50 feet, and laid out the two streets, Main and Clarke (Clark) east and west, and 1st and 2nd Streets north and south, none of which were more than four blocks long. He also deeded to the village of Stevens Point a Public Square, a heritage of New England, containing one and half acres which, it should be noted, is not square, but rectangular, longer north to south. The original plat, entered Nov. 12, 1847, reveals that most of the business lots were located around the square and west to the river. The north lots terminated at Moses Creek, popularly referred to as the “slough.” Decades later the city drained this slough through a large sewer. The reclaimed land has been built up with residences as well as making possible the opening of a couple of blocks on the west end of Briggs Street formerly subject to flooding during high water.

In the first several years of growth the name of the village and of the township was variously spelled Stevens, Stevens’ or Stephens Point. When John DuBay took oath of office as supervisor on the new town board of Stevens Point in 1850 reference is made in the affidavit to the “town of Stephens Point.” An indenture of March 8, 1849 which describes a land transfer between John and Henry Curran makes reference to the “town of Stephens Point.”¹ The possessive Stevens’ Point was also common and appears in a news dispatch as late as 1853.²

The point on the river bank used as a staging area by George Stevens had no doubt been used for similar purposes by the Chippewas long before this. The field notes of Hathaway refer to a Chippewa trail on the opposite bank of the river a little farther upstream where a man called Charetes (Shaurette?) had already built two

² *Pinery*, July 27, 1853.
establishments before 1839 and which, there is reason to believe, were trading posts. This Chippewa trail may have been a short-cut from Plover to the Black River country for Indians, dragging their canoes on a travois, who wished to avoid the extra trip north where the river could be forded on foot at DuBay's and instead launched their canoes at the foot of the present Main Street in Stevens Point to cross the river and pick up the trail west.

Before the dam at Shaurette Rapids was raised, an island was located less than a quarter of a mile north of the Clark Street bridge known to the Chippewas, according to Hiram Calkins, as Kah-kag-e-win-ch-e-min-it-e-gong, meaning, he says, “Hemlock Island... a name applied to Stevens Point on account of an island in the Wisconsin opposite to the village covered with Hemlock...” John T. Kingston, clerk of the board of county commissioners in 1848, told Dr. John Phillips that when he first visited the Pinery, Stevens Point was known by the Indian name of Hemlock Island. Neither one of these versions makes clear whether the Indians referred to the “point” in the river, the island in the river, or both, as “Hemlock Island,” nor is there any reference to the latter name in early indentures.

Some idea of the primitive conditions of the forest which surrounded the little settlement clinging to the bank of the river in 1848 is gained from Sherman who offers what appears to be the only eyewitness account. He was approached in Plover, he says, by Matt and John Campbell to come to Stevens Point and finish the inside of a store and install shelves. There is no mention in early indentures to a “Matt” Campbell but as James Campbell's middle initial was 'M' it is quite possible that his middle name was Matthew or “Matt” as Sherman refers to him. According to the History of Northern Wisconsin, the Campbells in 1850 were operating

2 Obituary, Stevens Point Journal, June 11, 1898.
a hardware store, "successors to Robert Bloomer."

Sherman describes his first trip to Stevens Point in part as follows:

"... the next morning I took the necessary tools upon my back and started for Stevens Point... Through mistake I took the path leading up the Plover. After traveling it some distance... I was satisfied I was on the wrong track. So I left the trail and took a westerly course through the woods until I came to a small hill or knoll with some graves upon it. While here I heard some one chopping still farther in a westerly direction. I went on until I came to a small building about opposite of where the Curran house now stands (Copps Company in 1958). This proved to be my destination and where I put up shelves and fitted the room for a store, which I think was the first one in Stevens Point. That day Dr. Phillips (John) came and stopped with the Campbells. At night we were put to bed by crawling up a ladder and through a trap door, where we found a bunk or bed tucked in under the roof. The doctor being the smallest crawled in first, leaving the front side for me, and there we slept..."*

In another version of the same story, Sherman recalls being surrounded "by an army of bedbugs" but in the above letter, written on the occasion of the death of Dr. John Phillips, he omitted the insects. The knoll with the graves was probably the first cemetery in the community and was located between 425 and 433 Main Street. This suggests that the 400 block in 1848 was considered far enough away from the settlement to be safe for a graveyard. It was later removed.

As the Campbells had taken over the original store of Robert Bloomer, the first in the village, it is pertinent to fix the location of this pioneer establishment. In 1851 James M. (Matt?) Campbell disposed of this property to John Slothower and the description of this indenture states that the property was 15 feet off the east side of Lot 2 & 7, Block 7, and 35 feet off the west side of Lot 1 & 8 in the same block.* It probably stood somewhat in the middle of Lots 2 & 7 facing Main Street, or about half a block east of the modern Green Bay De-

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2 Letter in Stevens Point Journal, Aug. 15, 1903.

pot building. There is no record of a license issued to either Bloomer or Campbell to operate a store. This suggests that it was a bona fide store, did not need a license, and did not sell liquor. The Campbells apparently began operating a tavern-house either in the same building connected with the store or elsewhere in the village as the county commissioners early in 1847 issued a license to James M. Campbell "to keep a tavern at Stevens Point. . . ." But they continued in the hardware business at least until 1851 when the store was taken over by Slothower.

However, the first tavern-house or hotel in the village was built by Mathias Mitchell at the foot of Main Street, probably in Lots 2 & 3, Block 1, and Lot 10, Block 2, in other words, a few feet east of modern Crosby Avenue on Main Street, today used as a municipal parking lot. These lots conform more or less to an indenture of May 24, 1847 when Mitchell disposed of this land and property to Joseph B. Phelps who took a $2,000 mortgage with Mitchell described as "Commencing at the southeast corner of lot upon which Warren's store is erected and running west 156 feet to the corner of the D. F. Smith lot. Then north 132 feet, said lot to be of equal width at each end. Said lot to be the same upon which the tavern house now occupied by A. H. Bancroft is erected and situated on the north side of Main Street. . . ."

This suggests that Asa Bancroft (or Bancraft) had been operating the Mitchell tavern, apparently as a renter, which was now being taken over by Phelps. The first county treasurer's book reveals that Mitchell paid $15 for a tavern license on March 24, 1845, while the County Board proceedings of 1846 mention a notice to Mitchell, C. P. Rice and John DuBay that their tavern license had expired. The treasurer's book shows that Mitchell renewed the license, not Bancroft. The tavern was known variously as the Raftsmen's Home, the Rafters, or as Mitchell House. It was here that the

spring election was held in 1850 for the first town board of the newly-created township of Stevens Point when it was referred to as the "house of Messrs Phelps & Hinton" (Thomas H. Hinton, who also operated the "Blue Eagle" tavern in Wausau).

A third tavern-house license was issued to H. W. Kingsbury (listed in 1847 census of Stevens Point Precinct) a few weeks after the Campbells got their license.

The first to be issued a license to operate a "grocery" at Stevens Point was A. (probably for Andrew) Warren Sr., whose bond was approved July 19, 1847. It was obviously in operation before this date as the indenture between Mitchell and Phelps, which mentions the store, is dated May 24, and from the description, was situated in the southwest corner of Lot 9, Block 2, or one lot or so west of the Copps Company at 144 Main Street.

On Sept. 5, 1847 William Richards (an error for Reichardt) appears to have applied for a license "to keep a grocery at Stevens Point." This was probably located in Lots 4 & 5, Block 7, that is, on the west side of south 1st Street facing Main Street. On Sept. 18, 1848 Reichardt disposed of this property to Angus McAuly (or McCauly) and Samuel Drake who in turn were granted a license for a grocery by the county commissioners on Sept. 15. Finally, the county commissioners on April 3, 1848 had also approved a license for a tavern-house to Welcomb Mitchell and Daniel Brown at Stevens Point.

No other licenses are mentioned in the county sessions, for after Jan. 9, 1849 these functions were taken over by the town board of Middletown. These tavern-houses, stores and "groceries," then, are the first in Stevens Point of which there is evidence. It is significant that no mention is made to saloons licensed in the village. A license for a tavern-house, which did not serve liquor, cost $25 in 1847-48 at Stevens Point. But when Reichardt was licensed to operate a grocery, he was charged $75. There is reason to believe that the "groceries" included liquor and that he was paying ex-

tra for the privilege. This falls within the meaning of
the word attached in the early 19th Century to a groceri
or grocery, often little more than a grog-shop. And it
is also reasonable to assume that the lumberjacks and
river men who passed through Stevens Point in the
1840s were not being deprived of their grog rations
however surreptitiously acquired.

By the fall of 1850 the village of Stevens Point had
a population estimated at 200. The History of Northern
Wisconsin quotes a business directory (apparently no
longer available) of the village for the year 1850 which
included the following: Mitchell House operated by
Joseph Phelps; City Hotel operated by Brown &
Granger; Star Saloon operated by Walton (William) &
Walsworth (Silas S.); The Ocean Wave, a saloon (proba-
ably named after a Great Lakes vessel of the same name
which went down in a fire in 1853); Sailor Jack & Watts,
another saloon, (“Sailor Jack” was John Hawn, a
Hollander, and Watts’ given name was William); Matt
and John Campbell, hardware; John Strong, general
merchandise; Mathias Mitchell, Young & Maybee,
Thomas Hinton, B. Finch, and Campbell & Bros.,
lumbermen; Francis Lamere and James Crandall,
boarding house keepers; Seneca Harris, a boot and shoe
maker; Anson Rood, builder and merchant; and J.
Young & O. Wiswald, hotel keepers. The local money
lender and broker was John Weland.¹

Although the period of its existence is uncertain,
there also appears to have been a saloon known as
“Norwegian Hell” which had “memories of hard drink-
ing and skylarking…”²

The first issues of the Pinery in early 1853 carry only
one advertisement of a saloon, which did not preclude
others, known as the “American Saloon” and operated
by G. C. Reveland who advertised, in part, as follows:

“Any persons particularly anxious to escape the awful fate
of starvation can most effectually do so by stopping at this
Saloon, and just calling for anything in the line of eatables

¹ History of Northern Wisconsin, p. 727.
² Harry Ellsworth Cole, Stage Coach and Tavern Tales of the Old North-
west, ed. Louise Phelps Kellogg. (Cleveland, Ohio, The Arthur H. Clark
that he can think of. Fowls of all kinds, Oysters, Pigs Feet, 
Sardines, Crackers, Beef Steak, Fish, and just as like as not 
Quail will be in the programme in a few days . . ."

The advertisement is garnished with small insets of 
snipe, clam and fish. Perhaps this was the real Nor-
wegian Hell.

On Jan. 28, 1854 the Pinery had occasion to refer to 
the hotels in the growing village. Phelps "new tavern 
house" (the first one burned in 1853) was to be opened 
Feb. 22. In addition, N. B. Lloyd’s Franklin House, 
James S. Young’s United States Hotel, and Mann & 
Slutts’ (Azro Mann & Matt Slutts) American House, 
were described as “all good houses in full flow and 
doing good business.” The location of Franklin House 
is uncertain, but the United States Hotel and others 
that followed it undoubtedly stood at 144 Main Street. 
The American Hotel was in the block directly east of 
the United States Hotel on the north side of Main 
Street adjoining the Public Square. This burned 
Christmas Day in 1854 and was never rebuilt.

The price of commodities in Stevens Point, prevail-
ing wage scales and interest on money, quoted for June 
3, 1853 in the Pinery of the same date was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commodity</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pork per bbl</td>
<td>$18.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flour per bbl</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butter per lb.</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lard per lb.</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggs per doz.</td>
<td>.06 to .09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dried apples per bu.</td>
<td>1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beans per bu.</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oats per bu.</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corn, shelled per bu.</td>
<td>$ .70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hay per ton</td>
<td>6.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hams, smoked, per lb.</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheese per lb.</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candles, tallow, per lb.</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soap per lb.</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt, fine, per sack</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beer, strong, per bbl.</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Laborers’ wages per day, common $ 1.25
Laborers’ wages per month $16.00 to $20.00
Rafting and running river, per day, $1.50 to $2.00
Mechanics, per day $1.50 to $2.00
Milch cows, fresh, each $25.00 to $30.00
Public Lands, per acre, each $1.25
Public Lands with land warrants $1.00
Money for 30 days 1½

The first saw mill in the village was built by William H. Johnson in 1846-1847 on the Wisconsin River near the terminus of modern Arlington Place. (See Those Who Came First.) This mill, the several tavern-houses, saloons and stores, in addition to a number of frame shanties and log cabins was the Stevens Point which Albert Gallatin Ellis no doubt found when he visited here in 1851. What his primary mission was is uncertain, but the field notes of Portage County refer to a fractional survey made by Ellis and his son of Town 23, Range 7 (Linwood) in mid-September 1851. Up to the time of his arrival, probably no one had fully appreciated the strategic situation occupied by the village and its potential in the lumbering industry, for in the next 30 years Stevens Point was to become the center of lumbering and logging operations in the Wisconsin Pinery, in addition to serving as a supply depot for raftsmen running down lumber to St. Louis from mills in the northern part of the county and in Marathon County.

And in the next 30 years no man did more to publicize and popularize the village, later the city of Stevens Point, than Albert G. Ellis, not only a pioneer of the city, but a pioneer of the Wisconsin Territory. Born in New York state in 1800, he became an apprentice printer at the age of 16, and three years later was engaged by Eleazer Williams, the half-breed Indian missionary, to serve as his assistant on a visit to Green Bay in 1821. Returning to the East, Ellis arranged to be sent back to Green Bay the following year as a missionary school teacher and lay-reader of the Episcopal Church. In 1827, he entered government service and
in the next several years served in various capacities as a surveyor and assistant in Indian affairs. In 1836 he was elected a member from Green Bay to the first territorial legislature at Belmont, and also served in 1841-44, once as speaker of the house. In 1837 he was made surveyor-general in charge of sub-contracting for regional surveys.

In his early years at Green Bay, Ellis assisted in found- ing the first newspaper in the Wisconsin Territory known as the Green Bay Intelligencer, and on the basis of his visit, or visits, to Stevens Point in the early 1850s, launched the first weekly newspaper in the village appropriately called the Wisconsin Pinery which made its initial run on Jan. 14, 1853. When the government opened a land office at Stevens Point on June 24, 1853, no doubt at the urging of Ellis, he had himself appointed receiver and Abraham Brawley, register. In later years he served several times as mayor of the city and died on Dec. 23, 1885. A strong Democrat in his po- litical affiliations, deeply devoted in his religious faith, Ellis took the lead in building an Episcopal Church in the summer of 1853, the first in the village of any de- nomination. This was located on the northeast corner of Church & Clark Streets. His contribution to the cultural life of the community he had chosen as his home, both through his newspaper work and later in articles for statewide publications, can scarcely be gauged and it is fitting that his oil portrait should be included among the famous men of Wisconsin at the State Historical Society in Madison as well as in the Public Library at Stevens Point.

While the Wisconsin Pinery publicized central Wis- consin, it did not reach out far and was not meant to. To fill this need, Ellis in 1857 wrote the Hand Book of Stevens Point and the Upper Wisconsin which appeared in the size of a modern pocket-edition. It may have been distributed gratis to newspapers in the New England and Atlantic states. While some of the com- ments and hopes expressed in the book are overly optimist- ic, as time was to prove, Ellis nevertheless gave a
picture of Stevens Point and other communities on the Upper Wisconsin which was both timely and historic. No doubt the book did much to bring both business men and settlers to the county.

The years between 1853 and 1857 can well be called "boom" years for Stevens Point. From a village of some 600 or more in 1853, the population early in 1857 had jumped to nearly 2,000. There were several saw, lath and picket mills either in or just outside the village limits. The Moses Strong, ex-Johnson, mill was being operated by J. H. Morrison, and a mile above the village, also on the left bank near modern Bukolt Park, Abraham Brawley had built a mill operated by steam and had a log boom in the Wisconsin River. On the right bank of the river, on or near the old Conant & Campbell site, Messrs. Dale, Carson and Robinson were operating a saw mill. Ellis estimated that there were 500 buildings of all kinds in the village, 270 of which were dwellings and 23 stores which he classified nine as dry goods, seven grocery and provisions, two hardware and tin, two clothing and merchant tailors, and three variety and fancy goods. There were six hotels and several boarding houses, ten saloons, one meat market, one bakery, one brewery, one grist mill, one planing mill, seven carpenter shops, two dry kilns, one lath factory, two wagon shops, four blacksmith shops, five shoe shops, three cabinet and furniture shops, two paint shops, one harnessmaker's shop, two watch makers, two millinery stores, one dressmaker's, two banks, three school houses, one high school (apparently the White School was considered a "high school" although not to be confused with the modern sense of the word), two churches completed and two in construction, one newspaper and printing office, two law and land agency offices, one livery stable, two stage offices, a railroad office, a post office, and a U. S. Land Office. In addition he mentions that the village was served by six physicians, five lawyers, one surgeon-dentist, two Daguerr-rean photo shops, three music teachers, four surveyors, and four ministers.

It is significant that Ellis, in his Hand Book, should
make a special point of defending the integrity of the lumbermen who were opening up the Wisconsin frontier. Said he:

"A great misapprehension had prevailed abroad, not only in regard to the extent of this pursuit, but more especially as to the character of the men engaged in it, which the foregoing exhibit (meaning his Hand Book) will serve in some measure to correct . . . . The lumbermen on the Upper Wisconsin are not only men of means to prosecute the business with eminent success, but they have the further qualification of intelligence, energy and perserverance [while] the character of the Wisconsin lumbermen for honesty, intelligence, and astuteness in business, will not suffer in comparison with that of any other class, at home or abroad."

What Ellis saw he unquestionably believed in. One who took a rather dim view of the men who worked in the woods and on the river, and by implication of their employers, was the Rev. O. A. Duus of Scandinavia who served a small group of Norwegians in Stevens Point as visiting pastor in 1855-56. From his letters it is learned that he was in Stevens Point on March 5, 1856, and found lodging in a house located directly on the Wisconsin River, and this is what he saw and thought:

". . . The river is filled with rafts of logs and other timber which are to float down from the pineries via the Wisconsin and Mississippi rivers to the southern states, where there are few pines. A poor house of planks or just a board laid crosswise over a plank serves as a shelter for the crew of the raft, who have all their possessions there. They earn from $1.50 to $4.00 a day but they are unfortunately the scum of humanity, the dregs both of Europe and America. They live a life of constant drinking, gambling, swearing and cursing, and even of occasional murder. They flee from justice, and since the language is all the same here in America they cannot be detected by their dialect. They lead a detestable existence and consider perjury as nothing."

Ellis represented the builder-type of American and though no doubt a man as religious as Duus, was not blinded by the nature of man to the point where he let it unbalance his judgment, whereas Duus, who came

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1 Albert G. Ellis, Hand Book of Stevens Point and the Upper Wisconsin, (Stevens Point, Wis., Ellis, Tracy & Swayne, 1857), p. 17.
from an aristocratic family in Norway, never succeeded in comprehending the spirit of new America and within a few years returned to Norway. It was that way for some.

But Duus was not entirely wrong, nor Ellis entirely right. Both views were exaggerations. The one man, trained to detect sin, found it in abundance; the other, probably anxious to overlook sin, found an overly amount of virtue. Moreover, Ellis was writing in the formative period of economic expansion, but as competition increased among the lumbermen, ethical practice deteriorated and even today one may hear stories of logs stolen at night by a leading lumberman in the booms above the city, or how another lumberman sabotaged his competition by blocking the transit of lumber until he got his own fleet over the Shaurette dam first. Laws were slow to be enacted to regulate the new industry, and apparently even slower to be enforced, and despite the earlier protestations of Ellis, Stevens Point in the next several decades became what may be described as a “tough town,” something like a Western cow town, only instead of cow hands coming in to spend their savings after the long drive up to Kansas from the Panhandle, these were loggers and lumberjacks who had spent the winter in the woods. In the spring they came out of the woods to relax and spend their money, or stopped on their way back from St. Louis after delivering a fleet of lumber to celebrate with their hard-earned savings. Men worked under conditions which no labor union would consider feasible today, while the type of men who were attracted to the logging and river running had, of necessity, to be men of tough fibre who, if willing to risk death over the rapids, were equally willing to risk death in a local saloon fight. But the brawls in the saloons and local dives were mostly rough-and-tumble affairs with occasional mayhem. Few involved murder.

While there appears to have been no settlement on the modern West Side of Stevens Point until the 1870s, mill owners farther down the right bank of the Wiscon-
sin River as well as on Mill Creek were no doubt crossing the river in private boats to purchase supplies in the village even before a ferry was established here in 1853. On March 31 that year the County Board issued a license to Valentine Brown to operate a ferry for a period of eight years “from the foot of Main Street.” The Pinery, however, reported that the ferry was already in operation on Jan. 21.

Ferry rates allowed by the County Board for each vehicle or wagon drawn by one span of horses or one yoke of oxen was 50c; for each additional span or yoke of animals, 25c; for one span of horses, mules or yolk oxen, $37.50c; for every vehicle drawn by one beast, 25c; for a single horse or ox, 20c; for droves of cattle, per head, 5c; for droves of sheep, per head, 3c; and for foot passengers, 5c.

Brown either defaulted on his franchise or refused to continue, for on March 29, 1855 the County Board granted a license, for a period of four years, to Francis LeMere and his heirs “of keeping and maintaining a Ferry across the Wisconsin River from the West end of Clark Street... to a point opposite on the West side... and no other Ferry shall be established within one mile... above or below...” In granting this franchise the board insisted that the new operator should maintain a good ferry and attend to business at all times, which might suggest that affairs under the previous management had not been satisfactory. Ferry rates were about the same with a proviso added which doubled all rates after 9 o’clock in the evening.

LaMere apparently conducted a business-like arrangement and the County Board renewed his license on April 5, 1862. When LaMere went off to service in the Civil War, the charter was turned over to William Avery on Jan. 25, 1864 and he appears to have continued until the first wooden bridge was built in 1867. Work on the iron bridge to replace the wooden structure, destroyed in a tornado, was begun in 1877. This

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² Ibid., p. 237.
stood until May 30, 1923 when it was destroyed by fire and was replaced by the modern concrete bridge.

It is an interesting fact that the County Board maintained control over the licensing of river ferries on the Wisconsin River both in Linwood and the city of Stevens Point.

Around 1900 some citizens, apparently under the impression that the name Stevens Point had a "back woods" sound to it, began a movement to change the name to "Plato," after the Greek statesman and philosopher. George W. Cate, a pioneer of 1845 and longtime judge, took up the defense of the old name and in a long letter to the press said that the arguments for a change "look like a nine-cent sieve after a lot of boys got through playing shinny with it." This appears to have put the quietus on the movement and the history-packed name of Stevens Point was allowed to remain, even as it ever should be.

\footnote{Stevens Point Journal, Jan. 19, 1901.}