THE BEAVER IN EARLY WISCONSIN

A. W. Schorger*

Wisconsin was noted among the French for the quantity and quality of its beaver. Perrot (1864:57), who came first to the Northwest in 1665, stated that as one went north to the Wisconsin River, the winters became long and cold. Here the beaver was best and the hunting season lasted longest. A memorandum of 1786 from the British traders (1892) at Montreal states that the Chippewa country south of Lake Superior was scarcely to be surpassed or equalled for its fine furs. Johnston (1960) was at Fond du Lac (Superior) in 1792 and thought that the region produced the best assortment of furs of any place on the continent. Beaver of the highest quality, however, came from north of Lake Superior according to Aigremont (1902).

The upper Mississipi district in the season 1734–35 produced 100,000 good beaver skins, worth 178,000 livres, and this in spite of the Indian troubles (Hocquart, 1906). Champigny (1902) expressed the opinion that Le Seur’s request to develop mines on the upper Mississippi concealed an intention to mine for beaver. The number of Indian hunters frequenting Lake Pepin about 1766 was 2000 and each brought to trade 100 pounds of beaver (Carver, 1781:337). This is approximately 160,000 pelts. In 1774 about 130 canoes from Mackinac came to Prairie du Chien and departed with 1500 packs of various furs (P. Pond, 1908).

Green Bay (La Baye, Baye des Puants) was long the beaver emporium in the state. La Salle (1902), peaked at ecclesiastical competition, wrote that the Jesuits at the mouth of the Fox River held the key to the beaver country. There “a lay brother that they have, who is a blacksmith, with two companions converts more iron into beaver-skins than the Fathers convert savages into Christians.”

In 1739 Green Bay produced only 110 packs of beaver, though ordinarily 300 to 400 packs (Innis, 1927:151). A few years later this post provided 500 to 600 packs of mixed furs and was farmed for 9000 francs. The post was worth 312,000 livres to Rigaud and Marin over a period of three years (1754–56); and in the time of the Senior Marin it netted a profit of more than 150,000 livres an-

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ually (Bougainville, 1908:183, 192). Todd and McTavish (1895), merchants of Montreal, estimated in 1794 that Green Bay, including the upper Mississippi and the south shore of Lake Superior, provided 300 packs; and Milwaukee 120 packs.

A government factory, or trading post, was established at Green Bay in 1810. Joseph P. Varnum, Indian agent at Mackinac, recommended the Bay on account of the valuable beaver pelts produced in the area (Peake, 1954:20). This is a far cry from reality at that time. During a period of four years the returns in beaver to the factory were: 1816, none; 1817, 13 pounds; 1818, none; and 1819, 2 pounds (Anon., 1834). The factories were never able to compete successfully with the private traders.

**FUR TRADE ANNALS**

The arrival of Jean Nicolet at Green Bay in 1634 formed the first visit of a white man to Wisconsin. As a result of intertribal wars, no traders appeared in the state for nearly a score of years afterwards. The beaver trade then continued with few important interruptions. These were usually caused by Indian wars which were a plague to the French since they interfered with the hunting of beaver.

1654. Radisson and Groseilliers are the first recorded traders. Defeat of the Iroquois in 1658 permitted Radisson to accompany the Ottawa to the St. Lawrence with a cargo of furs.

1656. Radisson and a companion returned to Wisconsin.

1660. Radisson and Groseilliers built a trading post at Chequamegon Bay. Antoine Trottier with a party arrived at the bay. Return was delayed for three years by Indian wars. Insufficient furs were collected to meet expenses.

1668. Perrot came to Green Bay.

1669. The mission of St. Francis Xavier was established at Green Bay by the Jesuits who were active in the fur trade.

1673. Marquette and Joliet “discovered” the Mississippi though they were not the first to do so.

1679. The trader Duluth obtained a peace pact between the Indians gathered at Fond du Lac (Superior).

1678–80. La Salle had men at Green Bay to collect furs.

1685. Perrot left his command at Green Bay in autumn and built a temporary wintering post at Trempealeau. The following spring he built Fort St. Antoine in Pepin County.

1687. The mission house at Green Bay was burned by hostile Indians. Perrot lost his furs valued at $40,000.

1693. Le Seur built a post on the southwestern shore of Madeline Island.

1694. A post was established by Le Seur on the Mississippi, below the mouth of the St. Croix, on Pelle, now Prairie Island.

1689–1701. By royal decree there were few traders in the West. This was due in part to a surplus of beaver and in part to the influence of the Jesuits.

1706. Boisseau was operating at Green Bay without a license.
1716. Louvingy attacked the Fox village on Little Lake Butte des Morts. The truce agreement stipulated that the cost of the war would be paid for by the Fox in beaver.

1718. The French built a new military post on Madeline Island.
1727. A military and trading post was built on the west shore of Lake Pepin.
1731. Beauharnois sent Villiers to rebuild the fort at Green Bay. Linetot constructed a fort at Mount Trempealeau on the site of Perrot’s old wintering post. It was maintained for five years.
1740. The Chippewa drive the Sioux from Lac du Flambeau and Lac Court Oreilles.
1759. Wolfe defeated Montcalm at Quebec.
1760. Montreal surrendered.
1761. Lieut. James Gorrell with seventeen men and two traders occupied the delapidated French fort at Green Bay.
1763. Following the massacre at Mackinac, the English army permanently abandoned Green Bay.
1765. The trader Alexander Henry arrived at Chequamegon Bay.
1779. The Northwest fur company was organized.
1784. The Mackinac Company was formed about this time.
1808. The American Fur Company was organized by John Jacob Astor.
1811. Astor formed, under the American Fur Company, the Southwest Company which absorbed the Mackinac Company.
1834. Astor retired from the American Fur Company which was then headed by Ramsay Crooks.
1848. The American Fur Company virtually ceased operation.

**Utilization**

The beaver formed one of the important foods of the Indians and was captured throughout the year. It was roasted entire and the French had to persuade them to discontinue this practise as the pelt was destroyed. Perrot (1864:99) relates that the Ottawa returned some prisoners to the Sioux in northwestern Wisconsin. They did not bring back many beaver pelts since the Sioux were accustomed to roast the whole beaver for eating.

Originally the pelt was of little value in the eyes of the Indians. At Chequamegon Bay they could not understand why the French would come so great a distance to obtain their well-worn robes (La Potherie, 1753:36). While Marquette (1903) was at Chicago in 1674, the Illinois were so eager for French tobacco that they threw beaver skins at his feet in order to obtain a few pieces of it. A chief at Green Bay gave Perrot (La Potherie, 1753, II:127) ten beaver robes for some theriac.*

The flesh of the beaver was eaten quite extensively by whites especially on trading expeditions. To some the flavor was unpleasant. Edibility resulted from long boiling or preferably roasting. Lahontan (1703, I:142) thought the flesh delicious in autumn and winter but it had to be roasted to taste well. The roasted fat tail was eaten eagerly by trappers. Thompson (1962:152, 209) wrote

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*A mixture of many drugs used as an antidote to poison.
tersely: "His meat is agreeable to most although fat and oily; the
tail is a delicacy." Among the provisions for his trip down the St.
Louis River in Minnesota were four beaver tails. Hunger is a sauce
blind to discrimination. Du Creux (1951) in 1664 thought it a moot
question whether the beaver was a land or water animal. Ration-
alization permitted the French to eat beaver on meatless days. The
faculty of medicine in Paris declared from its aquatic habits that
the beaver was a fish, so the faculty of theology decided that it
could be eaten on lean days (Charlevoix, 1744:142). The kidneys
of the beaver were collected at a few posts. Perrault (1909-
10:555) brought out a keg of them, from his post on the Red
Cedar River, weighing 45 pounds. In 1754 there were shipped to
France 1040 pounds of kidneys valued at three livres a pound
(Innis, 1927:158).

Special glands in the beaver secrete a yellowish, unctuous sub-
stance called castoreum. Its uses in medicine as given by Charle-
voix (1744:145) represents the quackery of the age. In relatively
recent times it was used as a fixative in perfumes. Its most valu-
able use was as a lure in trapping beaver. The amount collected was
not large. The inventory of October 15, 1824, of all the returns
assembled at Mackinac by the American Fur Company shows 83
pounds of castoreum. During the ten-year period, 1837–46, the
total collection at La Pointe was 128.5 pounds with an annual vari-
ation of 4.75 to 26.75 pounds. On August 20, 1837, 11.5 ounces of
castoreum were sold by the American Fur Company at Mackinac
for $5.50. William Brewster, Detroit, was informed by the Com-
pany in March, 1839, that a price of $4.00 a pound was expected.

Though garments of beaver fur were worn quite extensively,
particularly in Russia, the greatest use of the fur was in the manu-
ufacture of hats. Only the hairs of the undercoat (wool) were em-
ployed. The nature of the scales on beaver hairs gives them a high
felting quality by interlocking. At first the hat was made entirely
of beaver hair. According to Cadillac (1883) a satisfactory hat
could be made by using one-third dry beaver wool and two-thirds
of fat or semi-fat wool. These terms will be explained subsequently.
The French for a long period enjoyed a monopoly in hat manufac-
ture. In 1752 the wool sold in France at 18 shillings a pound and
in England at 32 shillings. Beaver pelts were worth 6 shillings a
pound in France and 11 shillings in England. One English manu-
facturer used 10 to 12 ounces of the wool in a hat for export and
7 to 8 ounces in one for domestic wear (Hume, 1803). In France
it was estimated that 10 pounds of pelt would produce 33 ounces of
wool which would make three and one-half hats, since at most 9
ounces of wool were used in a hat (Cadillac, 1883).
Hats were eventually cheapened by using a foundation of rabbit and other common fur hairs, and limiting beaver wool to the nap or surface (Lawson, 1943). About 1830 the silk hat came into fashion and the use of beaver declined rapidly. In January, 1836, the London agent of the American Fur Company wrote that the abundance of nutria had lowered the price of beaver; and in August of the same year that silk hats were in almost universal use (Nute, 1944: nos. 1168, 1865).

**HUNTING**

Several methods for taking beaver were employed. The only trap used by the Indians prior to the arrival of Europeans was the deadfall which was baited with a branch of aspen or other suitable wood. This mechanism was used from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River (Le Clercq, 1691; Carver, 1781:185). The deadfall was of little use in winter, the season when the fur was most valuable, since at that time the beaver seldom appeared on land. Then the beaver had to be driven from its house. The early writers frequently garbled the procedure or omitted essential details. Having found the exit from the house, by cutting a hole in the ice, a net was placed in front of it. A hole was then cut into the house to drive out the beaver which was caught in the net, drawn to the surface, and dispatched (Hennepin, 1903:518). Before iron axes and spuds were made available by Europeans, the opening of a frozen beaver house was a laborious procedure for the Indian with his primitive tools.

The beaver was taken in nets in other ways. According to Le Jeune (1897.1:299) a hole was cut in the ice near the house into which a baited net was placed. On attempting to eat the bark of the wood, the beaver became entangled in the net, rose to the surface of the water and was killed with a club. This method entailed a long, patient, and often fruitless vigil on the part of the Indian. Also a hole was made in the house to drive the beaver into the adjacent pond. The dam was then broken down and a net placed in the gap to catch the beaver as it sought deep water when the pond drained (Perrot, 1864:52). Carver (1781:185) states that when a house was broken into the beaver sought the deepest water in the pond. Here a net had been set in which the beaver became entangled.

The use of nets was original with the Indians who made the twine of various bast fibers. In northwestern Wisconsin, about 1662, the Sioux stretched beaver nets with attached bells in a rice marsh where the Hurons were hidden. When the latter attempted to reach dry land, the Sioux were warned and captured them
Traders carried twine for making nets. Duluth (1902) gave an Ottawa some twine with the reminder that to keep the Indians from dying of cold and hunger the French supplied them with guns, axes, and twine.

Another method of capture was to cut a hole in the ice and drive stakes to form a ring within which fresh aspen was placed. One of the stakes was withdrawn to permit entrance of the beaver. When the beaver entered the enclosure the stake was inserted in the gap, forcing the beaver to rise eventually to the surface where it was killed with a club or a spear. Grant (1860) mentions that a board closed the entrance after a beaver entered. The method was practical only in February and March by which time the beaver had tired of his stale food.

Some beavers lived in bank burrows in lieu of houses. There were also escape burrows around the ponds if the banks permitted. The Chippewa name for a burrow was o-wazhe, corrupted to "wash." Before the steel trap came into use most of the beavers were taken from washes. Henry (1921:127-28) wrote of his hunting experiences with the Indians: "Breaking up the house, however, is only a preparatory step. During this operation the family make their escape to one or more of their washes. These are to be discovered by striking the ice along the bank, and where the holes are a hollow sound is returned. After discovering and searching many of these in vain we often found the whole family together in the same wash. . . . From the washes they must be taken out with the hands; and in doing this the hunter sometimes receives severe wounds from their teeth."

The presence of a beaver in a wash could sometimes be detected by the motion of the water at the entrance or by the muddy appearance of the water after the beaver had entered, following exodus from the house. The burrow rose from its under water entrance to a dry chamber near the surface of the ground in which was a small opening for the admission of air. In order to secure the beaver the entrance to the burrow was closed with stakes and the burrow opened at the chamber. If the beaver remained above water it was killed with a club; and if submerged, it was withdrawn with a crooked stick or by hand (Le Jeune, 1897:1:301; Morgan, 1868:238). The Indians of western Manitoba had a peculiar breed of dogs with an extremely keen sense of smell. They were used to detect the thinnest places in the beaver houses and the air openings of the burrows (Thompson, 1962:158). The Chippewa along Lake Superior also used dogs for detecting inhabited washes (Grant, 1860).

Many beavers were taken with spears. Le Jeune (1897) was requested by the Indians to furnish them with cord which was to
be attached to spears with barbed iron points. The Indian held the cord until the diving beaver became so exhausted that it could be drawn in. The father of W. W. Cooke (1940:294) speared beaver in Buffalo County. He would follow a stream with his dog which was so highly trained that he would come to a point at the air opening of an occupied wash. Cooke would go to the edge of the stream and locate the exit. On a signal the heavy eighty-pound dog would rear and come down on the ground at the air hole. The earth was usually so thin that it caved in. The beaver would break for the stream and was speared easily.

Beavers were sometimes shot. At dusk when they came out to feed or work on their dams, the hunter allowed his canoe to drift silently down stream (Henry, 1921:125). The hazard lay in securing a beaver which had been killed since it sank quickly to the bottom. The trade goods shipped to Milwaukee in 1821 for James Kinzie (1888) contained 112 pounds of beaver and duck shot invoiced at $22.40. As long as a demand existed for beaver for making hats, the value of the skin was not decreased by the perforations produced by shot and spear. After the hair was removed, the "leather," or skin proper, was made into glue.

The most effective way of taking beaver was with the steel trap which was in general use by 1750 (Schorger, 1951:178). Pierre Grignon who traded at Green Bay from 1765–95 always kept a blacksmith to make traps (Grignon, 1857). All that was necessary to catch a beaver was to place in the water a trap beside which projected a stick having castoreum on the end. The discoverer of this efficient lure remains unknown. Strangely the Indians learned its use from the whites. Many aromatic substances were used as a substitute for castoreum and were frequently mixed with it. In Trempealeau County the Indians sometimes used castoreum but camphor would also serve (Bunnell, 1897:197). Cinnamon, cloves, and oil of juniper were used in the Lake Superior region. The government factories, of which there was one at Prairie du Chien and one at Green Bay, carried in stock for this purpose cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, ginger, allspice, and mace (Peake, 1954:60).

The beaver dams were sometimes opened and a trap set in the channel. Regarding the efficiency of this method in Dunn County, Cartwright (1875:240) wrote: "There Mr. Putnam tried the old but fatal plan of cutting down the dam to catch the beavers. He did let them out; but he caught only two from the four or five dams which he cut into."

The steel trap became indispensable and competition in the nineteenth century between traders caused them to loan rather than sell traps to the Indian. If the trap was not returned he was charged five dollars for it on the books. Newhouse (1874) sum-
med up the importance of the trap by stating that trapping for furs took place in advance of civilization. The trap preceded the axe and the plow and caused the bear and beaver to give way to settlement. In his opinion it would not be inappropriate, accordingly, for Wisconsin to have a steel trap in her coat of arms.

**GRADeS OF PELTS**

The Indians captured beavers at all seasons. Those taken in summer for food might or might not be skinned. The poorest pelts were taken at this season. The quality improved through fall, winter, and spring. The pelts were not fully prime until spring, the best being obtained between the first of February and the first of April, depending on latitude and altitude. In order to keep the goodwill of the Indians, it was necessary for the trader to buy all the skins presented, and this forced the establishment of several grades (La Potherie, 1753, I:269).

There is some inconsistency as to the grades among the early writers. Lahontan (1708, II:70) defines hazily five grades: (1). Winter beaver, called Muscovite, valued at 4 livres and 10 sous per pound. (2). Fat beaver, the long hairs of which have fallen out while being worn by the natives and valued at 5 livres. (3). Soft beaver, that is beaver taken in autumn, worth 3 livres and 10 sous. (4). Dry or ordinary beaver, 2 livres. (5). Summer beaver valued at 3 livres.

Six grades are given by La Potherie (1753, I:267–69). The first is fat winter beaver (*gras d’hiver*) with a fine thick undercoat and long guard hairs. Six or seven skins were sewed together to make a robe. The sweat from the Indian’s body and the bear’s grease from his soiled hands turned the undercoat yellow. Handfuls of the grease were taken to eat, some of which fell on the guard hairs and gradually reached the undercoat. The chief source of grease was probably the bear oil which the Indians applied liberally to their bodies especially in winter.

The second grade was the half-fat winter beaver (*demi-gras*). Due to pressing needs the natives sold these robes to the French when they were only half-fatted. It was necessary, however, that they be as supple as the fat robes. The third grade was the summer fat. The robes had large guard hairs but a thin undercoat. The fourth grade was the soft beaver (*veule*). The robes were of fine quality but since they had been worn very little, the undercoat was only slightly greased. The pelts were well prepared and the price was the same as for the fat winter beaver. The fifth grade was the dry winter beaver (*sec*). The skins were not used for robes on account of the holes made by shot or spear. The skin was very
thick and badly prepared. The sixth grade was the Muscovite for which grade the beavers were caught in traps. This was a fine fur with long guard hairs. There was a large commerce with Russia in this grade. The Russians combed out the undercoat, leaving only the long guard hairs. The wool was sold to hatters.

Two kinds of pelts are mentioned by Charlevoix (1928:146), the green (vert) and the dry (sec). The green pelt was one which had been worn by the Indians, hence was equivalent to the fat pelt. The leather side was scraped, then rubbed with bone marrow to make the pelt supple before the robe was made. He states that the robe was worn with the hair side next to the body and was never removed day or night; also that the long guard hairs soon fell out. This is doubtful. If the guard hairs fell out, the ampulla, or base of the hair, must have been cut by too severe scraping in removing the flesh and fat adhering to the skin. In this case the hairs of the undercoat would fall out also.

The values in trade of gras, demi-gras, sec (autrement bardeau),* veule, and Muscovite pelts were argued by Cadillac (1883.1). He thought that the commerce in fat beaver should cease. Properly, veule was only a dry beaver which had been scraped, cleaned, and sewed into a robe. The leather was white, light in weight, and thinned to the point where the hair could still be held fast. In the half-fat the leather is greased inside and out, is more worn, dusty, and matted than the veule and smells of the Indian. It is dirty but not as much so as the gras.

Eight grades are given by Dobbs (1744:25) whose information came from French sources. They follow:

"The first is the fat Winter Beaver, kill'd in Winter, which is worth 5s. 6d. per Pound.
"The second is the fat Summer Beaver killed in Summer, and is worth 3s. 6d.
"The third the dry Winter Beaver and fourth the Bordeau, is much the same, and are worth 3s. 6d.
"The fifth the dry Summer Beaver is worth very little, about 1s. 6d. per pound.
"The sixth is the Coat Beaver, which is worn till it is half greased and is worth 4s. 6d. per Pound.
"The 7th the Muscovite dry beaver, of a fine skin, covered over with a silky Hair;... This is worth 4s. 6d. per Pound.
"The eighth is the Mittain Beaver, cut out for that Purpose to make Mittains, to preserve them from the cold and are greased by being used, and are worth 1s. 9d. per Pound."

His grades are poorly defined and he confused bardeaux with Bordeaux. The English used only coat (fat) and parchment (dry) beaver in their data on exports in the early part of the eighteenth century (Dobbs, 1744:199).

*I have been unable to find the meaning of bardeau as applied to the beaver pelt.
Most of the beaver pelts produced were dry. For example in 1723, Canada exported 649 packs of dry beaver, 330 of fat, 2 of soft, and 20 of Muscovite (Innis, 1727:150). These grades fell into disuse in the latter part of the eighteenth century in Wisconsin. The pelts were then graded as No. 1 and No. 2. I have not discovered the difference. Porlier (1911) shipped: “No. 1. 100 Beaver weighing 108 lb.; No. 2. 57 Beaver weighing 78 lb.” Both parcels are stated to have been of the best quality. The No. 2 beavers were the heavier, hence the largest; so that the difference in grades does not appear to have been based on size.

**Weight of Packs and Pelts**

Beaver pelts were compressed into packs for economy of space and ease of handling. Poor grades of bear skins were commonly used as covers. Four methods of compression were used (Russell, 1948). At small and remote posts a pole was employed. One end was fastened to the ground and pressure was applied by the weight of a man on the other end of the pole. The wedge press consisted of a frame of four posts driven into the ground, and provided with cross pieces beneath which were placed the furs covered with slabs of wood. Pressure was obtained by driving wedges between the slabs. Large trading posts having easy shipping facilities, such as Mackinac, used a heavy metal screw press. This press was superseded by the simple and efficient jack.

The weight of a pack of furs is usually given as 90 to 100 pounds. Chittenden (1904) states that a pack weighed 100 pounds and contained 80 beaver pelts, which would be 1.25 pounds per pelt. Larpenteur (1933) gives 100 pounds for a pack containing 60 average pelts, or 1.66 pounds a pelt. A weight of 100 pounds is also mentioned by Henry (1921:197). The packs of beaver taken along the Minnesota River in 1822 weighed 100 pounds and contained 80 skins; again 1.25 pounds a pelt (Neill, 1852). Harmon (1922) in 1801 had his furs in packs weighing 90 pounds each. According to Morgan (1868:228) an average pelt from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan weighed 1.5 to 1.75 pounds.

Extensive data on the packs of beaver collected by the Northwest Company at the Fond du Lac post in 1804–05 are given by Pike (1895). Four packs of mixed large and small pelts averaged 91.5 pounds in weight and contained on the average 69.5 skins weighing 1.82 pounds each. He lists the weights of 115 packs. If the highly abnormal weights of 72 and 127 pounds for two packs are rejected, the average weight of a pack is 91.5 pounds.

The following data were compiled from 133 invoices of the American Fur Company and its agents of beaver taken in the
upper Great Lakes region, principally in Wisconsin. A total of 25,630 pelts weighed 29,545 pounds, or 1.15 pounds each. All lots weighing less than a pound per pelt were rejected as young or “cubs.” Their average weight was 0.88 pound. The heaviest lot consisted of 416 pelts having an average weight of 1.4 pounds, shipped by Jacques Porlier in August, 1821. Two apparently especially selected skins weighed two pounds each. It may be accepted that the average pack of Wisconsin beaver pelts weighed 91.5 pounds and contained 80 pelts of 1.15 pounds each.

Large beaver, weighing 80 to 110 pounds, have been caught in the state (Schorger, 1953; Jackson, 1961:193).

**PRICES**

Originally the unit of value at the trading posts was a beaver pelt or plus, pronounced plew. Not only were trade goods priced in beaver pelts but furs other than beaver as well. In the Fond du Lac region in 1820, a large prime beaver pelt was worth two otter skins, and three of marten or mink (Doty, 1876:205). The cost of goods at the posts varied considerably but was regulated largely by the distance that the supplies must be transported. Examples of the rate of exchange are given in Table 1.

English blankets for the Indian trade varied in size and weight and were classified as 2, 2 1/2, 3, 3 1/2, and 4 point (Elliott, 1900). The points were woven into the blanket. A black strip four inches long represented one point, and a strip two inches long one-half of a point. A 2 1/2 point blanket was six feet and three inches long, five feet and two inches wide, and weighed seven and one-half pounds (Peake, 1954:56). A 3 point Northwest or Mackinac blan-

<table>
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<td>White Stroud</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Henry (1921:303)</td>
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<td>Lac du Flambeau, Wisconsin</td>
<td>2 1/2 Point</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10*</td>
<td>Henry (1921:303)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>Fond du Lac, Wisconsin</td>
<td>2 1/2 Point</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Doty (1876:205)</td>
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*Inventory value.
ket was six and one-half feet long, five and one-half feet wide, and weighed eight and one-half pounds. A 3 point American blanket, e.g., was inferior in size, weight, and quality.

In 1820, according to Doty (l.c.) a plus (or pound) was estimated at $2.00 and a large prime beaver skin was worth two plus. His data have been adjusted to full skins in the above table. Turner (1889, 1891) was informed by Andrew J. Vieau that a plus was a pound of pelt worth $1.00 in his day. Vieau's trading experience was in the period 1834–50 and was confined to Milwaukee and a few places north of this city, an area where the beaver was close to extinction. The values given by Malhiot (l.c.) for his post at Lac du Flambeau in 1804–05 are somewhat perplexing. He carried a gun at ten plus and a 2 point blanket at two plus in his inventory. The blanket was traded at three plus. His plus must have been a large skin weighing two pounds for in his return for December 23 he lists 30 beaver skins, evidently small, at 16.5 plus. Traders at Green Bay in 1810 charged $10.00 for a 2½ point blanket (Peake, 1954:20).

It is difficult to follow the early prices in currency of beaver since it is frequently impossible to determine if the price was based on the whole skin or the pound. The hat manufacturers were interested only in the weight of skins, so that selling beaver by the pound became an early custom. A good example of confusion is to be found in the tables in Innis (1927:153, 154). In 1754 a skin was priced at four francs, and the following year the price is four francs per pound. In the Canadian trade the average beaver skin was considered to weigh one and one-half pounds. Where weight is not stated I have assumed (Table 2) that the price is per pound. In Table 3 all prices are per pound.

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<tr>
<td>1681</td>
<td>Montreal</td>
<td>8 livres</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>Du Chesneau (1855)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1681</td>
<td>Albany</td>
<td>3 livres 7 sols 6 den.</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>Du Chesneau (1855)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1699</td>
<td>Montreal</td>
<td>55 sols</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>Cadillac (1883:148)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1738</td>
<td>Montreal</td>
<td>4 livres</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>Salome (1906)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1744</td>
<td>Montreal</td>
<td>4 livres</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>Salome (1906)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1749</td>
<td>Quebec</td>
<td>12 shillings</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>Innis (1927:154)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1799</td>
<td>Montreal</td>
<td>12 shillings</td>
<td></td>
<td>Morison (1910)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1A skin sold for $2.25 making $1.50 per pound.
2Canadian livre, or shilling after the conquest of Canada, was worth 16.6 cts. There were 20 sols to the livre and 12 deniers to the sol. One English shilling = 1s. 4d. Canadian.
3Increase in price attributed to war with the English.
4Sterling.
The prices in Table 3 have been taken from the voluminous papers of Wisconsin fur traders in the Wisconsin Historical Society library and from those of the American Fur Company.

There was a financial crisis in England and the United States in 1837 and the American Fur Company did not know what to do with its beaver. About this time the Northern Outfit of the Company at La Pointe issued “beaver money” (Fig. 1) with which the trappers were paid (Nute, 1928). The certificate was payable in merchandise only. Under normal conditions two profits were obtainable, one from the merchandise, the other from the furs.

**Table 3. Price Per Pound Paid to Wisconsin Traders**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>DOLLARS</th>
<th>TRADERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1811</td>
<td>3.00*</td>
<td>Pierre Grignon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1813</td>
<td>2.50*</td>
<td>Pierre Grignon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1814</td>
<td>3.34*</td>
<td>Jacob Franks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1815</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>P. and A. Grignon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1816</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>Franks and Co.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>Lawe and Grignon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>Porlier and Rouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1821</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>Lawe and Grignon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1824</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>Suggested buying price Stuart to Abbott Aug. 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1825</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>Upper Miss. beaver Crooks to Astor July 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1827</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>La Bulle (Wausau) Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>Dec. 19. Suggested buying price Crooks to Juneau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1844</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>Dec. 25. H. L. Dousman to A. Bailly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>July 23. Dousman’s offer for Ermatinger’s beaver</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Prices in livres changed to dollars.

---

**Figure 1. Beaver Money used at La Pointe, Madeline Island.**
The Wisconsin traders in the first half of the nineteenth century rarely made a profit, many continuing to sink deeper into debt. The main reason why the Company continued to advance credits was that most of the traders had acquired land which had grown in value and could be put up for security. In 1844 Solomon Juneau (Nute, 1955: no. 14,187) at Milwaukee was bankrupt with $20,000 of debts. John Lawe (Nute, 1944: no. 7,883), with forty-two years of experience in the Indian trade, could lament that no one ever heard of a rise in price of furs. Accustomed to dealing only in furs and with no other means of support, the traders accepted with resignation a fate impoverishing and inescapable. The Company was not free from the line of least resistance. Time and again it was determined to close an unprofitable post, yet the trader was continued in employment for years afterward.

DECREASE OF THE BEAVER

Few species of mammals can withstand continuous and indiscriminate trapping. There is precious little evidence that the Indian practised conservation in spite of Lahontan’s (1703, II:161) statement that after breaking down a dam the Indians spared a dozen females and half a dozen males for reproduction. It would be an unusual pond that even had an initial population of eighteen beavers. Indians were directly responsible for exhaustion of the beaver as nearly all the pelts were taken by them.

Only a few Indian tribes were of importance in taking beaver in Wisconsin. The Chippewa hunted the south shore of Lake Superior and bartered their furs at Fond du Lac and La Pointe. In 1757 the Menominee, Sauk, Fox, Winnebago, Mascoutin, Kickapoo, Prairie Sioux and Lake Sioux came to Green Bay to trade (Bougainville, 1908:183). It is sometimes stated that the Sioux occupied lands west of the Mississippi and were not residents of Wisconsin. In the early days, the Sioux held the country immediately east of the Mississippi and never relinquished in spirit their rights to this borderland, especially the privilege of hunting. In the census of 1821, the number of Sioux men, women, and children residing east of the Mississippi is given as 1,182 (Cass, 1911). As late as 1850 Grignon (1914) traded with the Sioux for the furs which they had obtained up the Trempealeau River.

Beaver were so scarce in the Mackinac region by 1700 that the Indians went 200 leagues to hunt them. Between October and May a good hunter could capture 50 to 60 beavers, more or less (Cadillac, 1888). This means that he would average only one beaver in four days. Morgan (1868:243) wrote that an Indian family of four effective persons would take 75 to 150 beavers in a season
on the south shore of Lake Superior in well-stocked beaver territory, and that 50 to 100 were not uncommon. This statement might have applied to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, but doubtfully to Wisconsin. The winter of 1870–71, Cartwright (1875:272) and a companion caught 73 beavers in Marquette County, Michigan.

By 1793, according to Dickson (1923; Doyle, 1923), very few beavers were taken east of the Mississippi or on the streams which flowed into it. The land of the Menominee on Green Bay was almost exhausted of game. These Indians accordingly spent the winter in part on the upper Wisconsin, but chiefly on the upper Mississippi where they captured large numbers of beaver. They excelled all the other Indians in art. The Winnebago, Sauk, and Fox hunted chiefly deer, raccoon, and bear. Furs at Fond du Lac (Superior), which was once a highly productive region, had dwindled to a trifle by 1807 (Monk, 1923). This year, at Prairie du Chien, Dubuque (1910) outfitted a party of eight men to trap beaver on the Missouri. The Fond du Lac Indians hunted south to Pine Lake, Polk County, and in 1820 had but few beavers in their territory (Doty, 1876:201). Brunson (1843) traveled overland from Prairie du Chien to La Pointe. The only sign of beaver found was between the headwaters of the Black and Chippewa rivers.

The statement of Lanman (1847) that the beaver was extinct south of Lake Superior is not true. In the 1880’s it was supposed to be close to extinction in the state (Strong, 1883; Paquette, 1892). It was sufficiently uncommon at that period that the trapping of one, or the presence of its dams, was certain to receive publicity. In 1912 it was still to be found in most of the northern counties (Cory, 1912). The estimate of Seton (1929) that in 1925 only 100 beavers remained in Wisconsin is much too low since 2,208 beavers were trapped in the season 1933–34. The recovery of the beaver under protection has been remarkable as 14,282 were trapped in 1958, and 9,806 in 1962. These figures were not approached at any time during the nineteenth century.

I have tabulated the copious data on the shipment of beaver from Wisconsin in the nineteenth century to be found in the fur papers in the Wisconsin Historical Society without being able to find consecutive quantitative data for any one post extending over a period as short as ten years. Henry (1921:196) obtained 150 packs at Chequamegon Bay in the spring of 1766. The return in 1832 at adjacent La Pointe, under Lyman F. Warren, was down to 250 pelts. These came from the seven posts on the St. Croix, Lac Court Oreilles, Lac Chetec, Chippewa River, and Lac Vassale* (Allen, 1834). The shipment of beaver from Green Bay declined from 535 pounds in 1813 to 198 pounds in 1836, but in neither case is possi-

*Corruption of Vaseux or Mud Lake, Town of Oakland, Burnett County.
ble to know the extent of the area from which the furs were collected. The last shipment of beaver from Milwaukee which I found was 21.5 pounds in 1822.

If the returns from a post were poor, the trader had an excuse whether valid or not. There was too much snow or none, high water, severe competition from rival traders, and the Indians were starving or ill. In March, 1835, Solomon Juneau wrote from Milwaukee that the Indians were so discouraged by the arrival of so many settlers north of Chicago that they refused to hunt. Then on Nov. 23, 1836, Ramsay Crooks wrote that the progress of civilization will break up all of the American Fur Company’s trade south of the Fox and Wisconsin Rivers, worth $25,000 annually.

**DISTRIBUTION OF THE BEAVER**

The statement (McLeod, 1946; Lapham, 1946) that formerly the beaver occurred on all the waters of the state is undoubtedly correct. As demonstrated below it has been possible to show the early presence of the beaver in nearly all of Wisconsin’s counties. I am indebted to Walter J. Zelinske and George J. Knudsen of the Wisconsin Conservation Department for information on the present and recent status of the beaver in certain counties. The recent presence of the beaver is good presumptive evidence that it occurred in primitive times. Numerous streams and lakes bear the name Beaver from the former presence of this animal (Fig. 2).

**ADAMS.**—Beavers were numerous in the early days of settlement (Cole and Smythe, 1919). In the fall of 1843 Kingston (1879) and a companion descended the Wisconsin River from Grand (Wisconsin) Rapids. Fresh sign of beaver was noted on the east bank below the mouth of Yellow River, hence in the town of Quincy.

Beaver Pond is in the eastern part of the town of Jackson.

**ASHLAND.**—Lapham (1858) listed the beaver among the mammals inhabiting the vicinity of Ashland. In 1878 Joe Harper of Butternut caught an old beaver which had lost a front paw (Ashland, 1878). According to McManus (1920) the headwaters of the Potato River formed “a vast region of beaver dams.” Some beaver were to be found in 1920.

Beaver Lake, town of Morse, two and one-half miles SE of Mellen; a second Beaver Lake, one mile SW of the city of Clam Lake; a third Beaver Lake, western part of the town of Marengo; Beaverdam Lake, seven miles S of Marengo; Beaver Creek rises two miles W of Butternut and flows S into Butternut Creek.

**BARRON.**—Surprisingly to some inhabitants, several beavers were caught in the county in 1881 by J. M. Parkhurst of Prairie
Farm (Barron, 1881). The following year a few beavers were still being captured near Rice Lake and their old dams were common (Butler, 1882). An old and crippled beaver was caught in Hay River by Mr. Harris of Barron in 1892 (Barron, 1892).

Beaverdam Lake, edge of Cumberland; Beaver Creek, town of Dovre, flows NW into Tenmile Lake.

BAYFIELD.—In 1885 a colony of beavers was building a dam on a stream a few miles from Bayfield (Bayfield, 1885). Nineteen beavers were taken in March, 1921, by W. T. Gray, mostly in this
county (Jackson, 1961:193), a good indication that the beaver was fairly common.

Beaver Lake, seven and one-half miles N of Drummond.

BROWN.—When Nicolet (1898) visited the Winnebagos at Green Bay in 1634 at least six score beavers were served at one feast. This is probably an exaggeration like his four to five thousand curious male visitors, but it indicates that the beaver was common in the region. Perrot (1864:279) was in the Great Lakes region from 1665–70. At the Potawatomi village on the eastern shore of Green Bay near Point Sable, the Indians gave him five beaver robes to dispel the ill-will which they had created in him. They did not wish to hunt beavers as they were few, preferring to seek other game to satisfy the needs of the body. Lahontan (1703, 1:139) was at Green Bay in 1689 when he was served a roasted beaver tail. He saw in the Indian village ten or twelve tame beavers which came and went at will.

BUFFALO.—W. W. Cooke (1940:295) came with his parents in 1856 to a homestead five miles from Gilmanton. Beavers were in all the streams and two dams flooded part of the farm. His father took them by spearing. They were pleased if $1.50 was received for a pelt. In the fall of 1860 two trappers returned to Viroqua with 69 beaver pelts obtained on Beef River (Slough) in a period of six weeks (Viroqua, 1860).

BURNETT.—The winter of 1803–04 Curot (1911) collected three packs of beaver at his trading post where the Yellow River leaves Yellow Lake.

CALUMET.—Old beaver sign has been found in the towns of Charlestown and Brillton. At present there is a colony in the town of New Holstein (In litt., Warden K. L. Reichenbach).

CHIPPEWA.—The fall of 1858 Cartwright (1875:241) and two companions caught beavers on Mud, Elk, and O’Neil creeks. Trappers in the fall of 1886 were taking four to five beavers nightly at various places on Duncan Creek eight miles above Chippewa Falls. The animals were also quite numerous on this creek near Bloomer (Chippewa Falls, 1886). Several beavers were taken on the same stream a year later by J. L. Stevens. A substantial dam had been built within a mile of Bloomer (Chetek, 1887). A fine beaver caught on Paint Creek, which flows into Lake Wissota, was exhibited in Chippewa Falls (Chippewa Falls, 1888). At this time a number of beavers was taken by a Minnesota hunter in the woods north of Chippewa Falls (Shullsburg, 1888). On October 25, 1891,
Frank Hunter on Duncan Creek trapped a beaver weighing 68 pounds (Chippewa Falls, 1891). Beaver Lake, ten miles NE of Bloomer; Beaver Creek, town of Wheaton, flows E into the Chippewa River near Chippewa Falls; another Beaver Creek, a small stream flows N and enters Fisher River eight miles NE of Cornell.

Clark.—Manly (1927) trapped on the upper Black River the winter of 1843–44. He stated that the beavers living in the banks could not be secured until the ice went out in the spring. At this period the beaver was abundant (French, 1875.1). In 1874 a beaver minus one leg was killed on the Black River above Neillsville (Neillsville, 1874). A beaver dam was discovered in 1886 on O'Neill Creek a short distance east of Neillsville (Milwaukee, 1886). Two beavers were killed “near the mound” west of the Black River in the fall of 1889 (Neillsville, 1889).

There is a town of Beaver.

Columbia.—E. F. Lewis settled in 1849 on Section 16, Town 18N, Range 7E on Beaver Creek, so-called because beavers had built a dam across it (Lewis, 1920). The stream is now called Big Slough. A beaver dam at Dorward’s Glen, town of Caledonia, was still visible in 1896. Dorward (1901) saw it first about 1864.

Beaver Creek rises nine miles N by E of Columbus and flows into Beaver Dam Lake.

Crawford.—During the 1959 season, 195 beavers were trapped in the county (Bersing, 1959).

Dane.—In 1836, according to Tenney (1877), the beaver had not yet been exterminated in the town of Madison. At present it is fairly common in the western part of the county.

Dodge.—Beaver Dam Lake and the city of Beaver Dam owe their names to the beaver. Prior to construction of the dam, the lake was a large marsh (Snyder, 1902). W. H. Murkley stopped at Beaver Dam in the spring of 1849 and reported that he saw beavers working on a dam (Beaver Dam, 1924). In 1843 Lapham (1925) visited Solomon Juneau’s trading post on the Rock River, which according to the surveyor’s description was near Mayville. Beavers were present until about 15 years previously.

Beaver Dam Lake is in the NW part of the county. The portion of Beaver Creek draining this lake flows S into the Crawfish River, town of Shields. On the map of Cram (1839) Beaver Creek bears the Algonquian name of the beaver, Ahamc.
DOOR.—As late as September 14, 1905, a beaver was shot at Washington Harbor, Washington Island (Sturgeon Bay, 1905).

DOUGLAS.—At intervals the Brule was a famous stream for beavers. In 1680 their dams were numerous (Duluth, 1886). Henry (1921:188) spent the winter of 1765–66 at Chequamegon Bay where he advanced goods worth 3000 plus to the Indians who went to Fond du Lac to hunt. When they paid their credits in the spring he obtained 150 packs of beaver weighing 100 pounds each. Even if it is assumed that on the average a pelt weighed as much as one and one-half pounds, he obtained 10,000 skins!

The water was so low at the headwaters of the Brule in 1767 that Carver (1781:81) had to close several old beaver dams, broken down by hunters, to raise the water sufficiently to float his canoe. In 1840, at the proper season, the Chippewa went to the Brule for “the beaver and otter that exist along its whole course. There are indications of its once having been abundantly stocked with these animals; but the trappers have made such havoc among them of late years, that the stock has become very much reduced” (Cram, 1841). Writing of the Brule in recent years, McManus (1920:136) stated that it had many ponds formed by beaver dams.

Beaver Creek, flowing S, enters the St. Croix about nine miles W of Gordon.

DUNN.—Perrault (1909–10:547, 555) built a post on the lower Red Cedar River and during the winter of 1788–89 traded for 14 packs of beaver of 90 pounds each. From his rough map his post could not have been much farther up the river than Menomonie. On one occasion he camped down the river at the petit rocher, near the post, where a deer pursued by wolves jumped from a cliff and broke its legs on the ice of the river. His rock corresponds with the Pinnacle midway between Downsville and Menomonie. Furthermore this is the only elevation sufficiently close to the river for the tragedy to have occurred.

The winter of 1857–58 Cartwright (1875:240) and a companion trapped beaver on Pine Creek, town of Sand Creek. The fall of 1858 he and two companions caught beavers on Gilbert and Wilson creeks. Writing of the “Big Woods” a “Pioneer” (1884) stated: “A notable feature to the eye of the observer, along the small streams, is the great number of old beaver dams, showing that at one time these animals must have been very numerous here.” A few still lingered. The Big Woods comprised the present towns of Eau Galle, Weston, Lucas, Stanton, Sherman, Sheridan, and parts of others.

Big Beaver Creek flows SE into Hay River four miles NW of Wheeler; Little Beaver Creek flows into Big Beaver; Beaver Creek,
rising in the town of Auburn, Chippewa County, flows W into the Red Cedar three miles S of Sand Creek. The Beaver River on Perrault’s map (i.e.) appears to be the present Hay River.

**Eau Claire.**—The fall of 1866 Charles Martin trapped several beavers in the town of Bridge Creek (Bartlett, 1929). The Slayton brothers of Augusta took four beavers during their hunt the winter of 1867–68 (Dodgeville, 1868). On January 22, 1877, a beaver was killed on the upper Eau Claire River (Eau Claire, 1877). Three large beavers were trapped in 1883 by Herman Heckern on Seven Mile Creek about seven miles east of Eau Claire. They were then quite rare; however fifteen years previously they were plentiful (Eau Claire, 1883). In the fall of 1886 a party of hunters captured 40 beavers on Muskrat Creek, town of Wilson (Delevan, 1886).

Beaver Creek enters the Eau Claire River from the E seven miles E of Altoona; another Beaver Creek flows N into Otter Creek at Brackett.

**Florence.**—A black beaver was caught by Paul Miller on Pine River, town of Commonwealth (Florence, 1886).

Beaver Pond, town of Long Lake.

**Fond du Lac.**—Beavers had not been seen for many years in the town of Osceola until the fall of 1872 when four were killed by W. Tomkins (Fond du Lac, 1872).

**Forest.**—The county produced 296 beaver pelts in 1959. Insofar as known, the beaver was never exterminated.

**Grant.**—At Muscoda, the fall and winter of 1845–46, Robert and William McCloud bought beaver and other furs, fur-bearing animals being numerous (Butterfield and Ogle, 1884). There is now a considerable population of beaver in the county. The take of beaver in 1959 was 202.

**Green.**—According to Jackson (1961) there were remains of beaver dams and ponds as late as 1900.

**Green Lake.**—When Perrot (La Potherie, II:109) came to the Indian village at the site of modern Berlin there was a mixed population of Mascoutin, Miami, and Kickapoo. He gave the women knives for skinning beaver and cutting meat. The Miami told him that they had no beaver pelts because up to that time they were accustomed to roasting the entire animal. As late as 1847 the Indians were busily engaged in trapping beavers and muskrats (Acme, 1890).
IOWA.—Fifteen beaver were trapped in 1959. Most of the beaver occur along the Wisconsin River and the streams flowing into it.

IRON.—Beaver Pond, town of Gurney, two miles SW of Saxon; Beaver Lake, six miles N of Mercer; a second Beaver Lake, six miles NE of Mercer; Beaver Creek, town of Sherman, flows N into west arm of the Flambeau Flowage.

JACKSON.—The creeks flowing into Black River had beaver dams at short intervals in 1841 (French, 1875). In January, 1887, Royal McGregor caught a beaver on Robinson Creek, town of Manchester (Black River Falls, 1887). The take in 1959 was 390.

Beaver Creek, town of Northfield, flows S into Pigeon Creek at York; a second Beaver Creek rises in the town of Bear Bluff and flows E; South Beaver Creek, rises in the town of North Bend, flows W.

JEFFERSON.—Hawkins (1940) thought that the beaver was exterminated prior to settlement. He mentions that several well preserved dams could still be seen near Milford. On one of the dams was growing an elm tree estimated to be 100 years old. The father of E. D. Coe (1908) settled on the west bank of Rock River, town of Watertown, seven miles from the city of Watertown, in 1839. The following winter about thirty Winnebago families camped near his home. Beaver was among the furs taken by them. During the archeological excavations at Carcajou Point, Lake Koshkonong, there were found split incisors of beaver which had been used for chisels (Hall, 1962). Thirty remains of the beaver at the Aztalan site on the Crawfish River were identified by Parmalee (1960).

JUNEAU.—Beaver Creek rises in the town of Kingston and flows S into the Lemonwier. The county furnished 298 pelts in 1959.

KENOSHA.—There were no beaver in the county in 1956.

KEWAUNEE.—There are no resident beaver at present. Warden Philip Hein has seen an occasional beaver in years past. He furnished a photograph of a beaver traveling along the Lake Michigan beach in May, 1950.

LA CROSSE.—The Sioux called the Black River Chabadebah or Beaver River (La Salle, 1902). The former presence of the beaver in Lewis Valley, town of Farmington, is mentioned by Sisson (1955). In 1881 a man living a few miles from La Crosse brought to town the pelts of seven beavers which he had trapped (La Crosse, 1881).

LAFAYETTE.—In April, 1894, W. H. Calvert shot a beaver on a small stream on his farm near Benton. Its length from tip to tip
was three feet and nine inches. None other had been seen for many years (Dodgeville, 1894).

LANGLADE.—Beaver was formerly one of the principal furs taken in the county (Dessureau, 1922). It furnished 205 skins in 1959.

LINCOLN.—It was stated by Hoy (1882) that a few beavers persisted in this and adjacent counties. The take in 1959 was 268. Beaver Lake, town of Skanawan, three miles SE of Tomahawk.

MANITOWOC.—Beavers, though rare, were present in the county in 1956.

MARATHON.—Having seen sign of beaver on the Eau Pleine River east of Colby, William Wilde set his traps, but secured only part of the foot of a beaver (Colby, 1886). The following year a beaver weighing about 70 pounds was trapped by J. W. Denney (Colby, 1887). In the fall of 1889 beavers had a new dam two miles up Little Rib River, town of Stettin. Several had been trapped. The editor (Wausau, 1889) stated that a few years previously the streams in the region were well-stocked with this animal which was now becoming scarce. He entered a plea for protection. Two years later two beavers were trapped on Little Rib (Wausau, 1891). In the early days, Michael De Jarden, a Chippewa, assisted his father in trapping beaver and other fur-bearers near Mosinee (Ladu, 1907).

Beaver Creek, town of Bern, flows S to join Black Creek two miles NW of Athens.

MARINETTE.—Stanislaus Chapeau (1831, 1835) wrote in 1831 from his post on the Menominee River that a rival trader had secured most of the beaver. In June, 1835, he informed John Lawe that he had 150 pounds of beaver.

Beaver Branch, town of Dunbar, flows S into KC Creek two miles NW of Dunbar; Beaver Creek, Town of Beaver, flowing E, enters the Peshtigo seven miles S of Crivitz.

MARQUETTE.—In 1680 Hennepin (1903:306) descended the Fox River from Portage and before reaching the lakes on this river broke down several beaver dams in order to get the canoes through. From Portage to Buffalo Lake the Fox is broadly margined by marsh, a condition rendering the construction of dams improbable. The dams were probably found between Buffalo Lake and Puckaway Lake. Beaver are still present.

MILWAUKEE.—Lapham (1855) mentions an old beaver dam at Milwaukee. It is shown on his Plate III on a streamlet which en-
ters the Milwaukee River three and one-half miles north of its mouth.

MONROE.—One hundred beavers were captured in 1959.

West and East Beaver Creeks rise in the NW corner to form Beaver Creek which flows S into the La Crosse River at Sparta.

OCONTO.—A beaver weighing 48.5 pounds was caught in the fall of 1884 on the Pensaukee River, near Abrams, by George Lince (Oconto, 1884). A year later a black beaver, "a rare variety," was captured near C. B. Alford's logging camp (Oconto, 1885).

Beaver Lake, three miles N of Oconto Falls.

ONEIDA.—The county produced 280 beavers in 1959.

Beaver Lake, town of Cassian, about eight miles NE of Harshaw.

OUTAGAMIE.—There were few beaver colonies in 1956.

OZAUKEE.—According to Warden Albert W. Wilke, there has not been a beaver in the county during the past 75 years.

PEPIN.—Two beaver were trapped by W. B. Dyer on the Eau Galle, west of Durand, in October, 1885. A colony was reported to exist on this stream in the town of Waubeek (Durand, 1885). One was also trapped on the Eau Galle by Dyer in 1887 when they were considered quite scarce (Durand, 1887). Three years later a trapper came into Durand with the pelts of three beaver trapped on the Eau Galle. A fourth beaver was shot but lost (Durand, 1890).

Pierce.—In 1659 Radisson returned to Montreal with a "great store" of beaver pelts obtained while living with the Indians on Prairie (Pelee, Bald) Island, at the northern end of Lake Pepin (Adams, 1961). The number of beaver pelts taken in 1959 was 108.

POLK.—Branches gnawed by beaver, along with the bones of extinct bison, were found in Mountain Meadow, Interstate Park, town of Osceola (Pond, 1937).

The North and South branches of Beaver Brook rise near the village of Turtle Lake and form Beaver Brook which enters the Apple River at Amery.

PORTAGE.—Beaver are present, 40 having been taken in 1959.

PRICE.—In 1897 Capt. Wiken had two colonies of beavers at his lake; and a large colony was at work on the Jump River one and one-half miles north of Prentice (Prentice, 1897).

Beaver Creek, a small stream in the town of Catawba, flows SW into the North Fork of Jump River three miles SE of Catawaba; a second Beaver Creek, rising in Ashland County, flows S and en-
ters Butternut Creek three miles SW of Butternut; a third stream of this name, town of Flambeau, flows into Price Lake seven miles W of Lugerville; Beaver Lake, three and one-half miles SE of Fifield; and Beaverdam Lake, five and one-half miles E of Fifield.

RACINE.—West (1903) stated that the remains of beaver dams were still quite common.

RICHLAND.—During the 1959 season, 50 beavers were trapped.

ROCK.—At one time there were beaver dams in the town of Harmony (Janesville, 1869). Remains of beaver dams and ponds were still visible in 1900 (Jackson, 1961).

RUSK.—This is one of the best beaver counties. The harvest in 1959 was 348 beavers.

ST. CROIX.—The dams built of alders and the canals dug by the beavers on Sand Creek, town of Emerald, were described by John E. Glover (Hudson, 1874). The present population is low.

Beaver Creek, town of Springfield, flows NE into Tiffany Creek at Downing.

SAUK.—Canfield (1890) came to Sauk County with a government surveying party in 1842. He wrote: "I have seen from five to ten dams, within a space of half a mile, upon some small spring branch, and have often noticed where they have dammed large streams. It would seem as though the whole country had once been alive with them." When the first settlers arrived in the town of Westfield there was a beaver dam, about 200 feet in length, one and one-half miles east of Loganville (Baraboo, 1921). Cole (1922) stated incorrectly that the beaver was exterminated about 1820; however, an occasional old dam existed. A beaver weighing 50 pounds was taken along the south branch of Honey Creek, Town of Franklin, by Edward Tabor in 1859 (Baraboo, 1859). W. A. Canfield had a section from a tree 27 inches in circumference supposedly cut by the same beaver. Parmalee (1960) identified 19 remains of beaver from the Durst rockshelter, section 12, town of Honey Creek.

Beaver Creek, a small stream, enters Dell Creek 5 miles SW of Delton.

SAWYER.—This county produced 706 beavers in 1959.

Beaver Creek, town of Weigor, flows into Little Weigor Creek 2 miles N of Weigor; a second Beaver Creek, town of Winter, flows SW, entering Thornapple River 8 miles SW of Draper; Beaver Lake, town of Round Lake, 6 miles S of Teal Lake.
SHAWANO.—Beaver Creek, town of Belle Plaine, flows SW into the Embarrass River five miles N of Embarrass.

SHEBOYGAN.—The original government survey recorded beaver dams in the towns of Plymouth and Sheboygan Falls. Charles D. Cole bought beaver and other furs from the Indians at Sheboygan (Buchcn, 1944). At one time there was a large beaver dam on the farm of W. Kuhlmey, town of Plymouth (Plymouth, 1901). There were no beaver among the fur animals caught by the Indians about 1870 (Gerend, 1920).

TAYLOR.—A Mr. Hinman exhibited chips from a birch tree felled by beavers near the headwaters of Black River (Kilbourn, 1869). In the fall of 1876 a trapper caught eight beavers in the county (Plover, 1877). The take in 1959 was 451 beavers.

Beaver Creek, town of Ford, flows into Johns Creek four miles SW of Perkinstown.

TREMPEALEAU.—Beaver Creek was so named by James Reed and Willard Bunnell on account of the numerous beavers on the stream. A Menominee Indian is reported to have taken 50 beavers during a hunt on Trempealeau River. In September, 1843, W. Smothers caught a few beaver on Pigeon Creek, and T. A. Holmes some on Elk Creek (Bunnell, 1897:238). James Reed was famous as a beaver trapper. He came to Trempealeau in 1840 and died on the Little Tamarack in 1873. Much of his trapping was done on the Trempealeau River and its tributaries. Pierce (1915) relates that in 1863 Reed stopped at his home with his pony on which was a large pack of beaver pelts and traps. In January, 1859, Reed came into Osseo with 25 beaver pelts (Madison, 1859).

The spring of 1850 Antoine Grignon (1914) traded with the Sioux Indians who had trapped on the Trempealeau River and had collected a fine lot of beaver and other furs. Beavers were still quite plentiful on Beaver Creek in 1862. Cut trees, chiefly ash, were to be found throughout the length of the stream (Galesville, 1862).

A beaver was killed by Andrew Benson in the mill pond at Whitehall in November, 1878 (Whitehall, 1878). In the spring of the following year Albert Spaulding caught a large beaver in the Trempealeau River at Independence (Arcadia, 1879). Two beavers, weighing 52 and 62.5 pounds respectively, were caught by A. Lawrence in the spring of 1887. He trapped nine during the season (Merrillan, 1887). Though formerly so numerous in Beaver Valley, it was considered to be extinct in 1917 (Curtiss–Wedge, 1917).
Beaver Creek flows SE to join the Black River three miles south of Galesville. Both Beaver Creek and its South Fork rise in Jackson County.

VERNON.—Beaver Creek, town of Greenwood, flows N into the South Branch of the Baraboo two miles S of Hillsboro.

VILAS.—At his trading post at Lac du Flambeau, Malhiot (1910) obtained about 100 beaver pelts the winter of 1804–05. The Lac Vieux Desert region was “tolerably well provided” with beaver in 1840 (Cram, 1841).

Amik (Beaver) Lake, seven miles W by S of the village of Lac du Flambeau; Beaver Lake, town of St. Germain, four miles NE of Big St. Germain Lake; a second Beaver Lake, town of Boulder Junction, seven miles N by E of the village of Boulder Junction; and Beaver Creek, town of Phelps.

WALWORTH.—The beaver occurred formerly in the town of Sugar Creek and their dams were to be seen at the lakes in the town of Troy (Western Hist. Co., 1882). Their works were still discernible in 1900 (Jackson, 1961). Lapham (1852) was informed by Solomon Juneau that the last beaver killed in southern Wisconsin was on Sugar Creek in 1819.

WASHBURN.—In the vicinity of Long Lake old beaver dams existed on dry land showing where streams had disappeared (McManus, 1919).

Beaver Lake, town of Bass Lake, four miles SE of Stansberry; Beaver Brook, town of Beaver Brook, flows NW into the Yellow River at Spooner.

WASHINGTON.—Warden R. J. Lake has written that about 1929 beavers were planted in Moon Lake, town of Fond du Lac County: “The animals multiplied, moved to Manitowoc County, the Sheboygan Marsh, built dams on all branches of the Milwaukee River. They moved into Washington County and built dams at the outlet of Smith Lake and Little Dricken in the town of Barton, blocked off the drainage ditch in the Rockfield Swamp in the town of Germantown as well as Cedar Creek in the Jackson Marsh.” The beavers were eventually trapped out because of damage to property. None remained in 1956.

WAUKESHA.—Unonius (1950) came to Pine Lake in 1841. The beaver was still present, but “was beginning to migrate from his small but carefully constructed house.” The beaver had disappeared at Waukesha, but his works were still to be seen when Silas Chapman (1890) arrived in 1841.
Beaver Lake, two miles N of Hartland.

WAUPACA.—Beaver Creek, town of Bear Creek, a small stream, flows W into Little Wolf River eleven miles SW of Clintonville.

WAUSHARA.—William H. Boone of Wild Rose, has written to me that remains of old dams can still be seen in the vicinity of this town, and that he had personally trapped eight beaver in the county. George J. Knudsen (in litt.) found the beaver rare in 1956.

WINNEBAGO.—In 1670 stags, bears and beaver were abundant in the country embracing the junction of the Wolf and Fox rivers (Allouez, 1899.1). At the Menominee Indian payment at Lake Poygan in 1847, the Indians had for trade many furs, including beaver (Watertown, 1847). According to Overton (1932) beavers were once abundant and their dams were still visible. Many beaver teeth had been found.

WOOD.—While digging a trench, J. Lavigne found a hand-made beaver trap twenty inches in length under six feet of sand (Grand Rapids, 1885). A total of 363 beavers was taken in 1959.

Beaver Creek flows S and enters Yellow River five miles S of Marshfield.

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