

## INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Wisconsin, this year of 1948, celebrates its 100 years of statehood. Centennial activities are being carried on to give due recognition to its 100th birth date. We, in Wisconsin, have been making and living educational history during this first century of our statehood. Much of this history is unrecorded, or if it was recorded at one time those records have been discarded as useless "junk". This is all too true in the field of public education! The record books of school district clerks and of school treasurers' recorded community history which can be obtained from no other one source. The teachers' Daily Register in which the school records of children were recorded are revealing and of tremendous historical value. Too many of these district records and the teachers' Registers have been thoughtlessly destroyed, leaving little except the reminiscences of the few old-timers still with us.

The second century of Wisconsin's statehood will, no doubt, bring about a tremendous change in public school organization. The small district system, so effective and satisfactory during the first one-hundred years of Wisconsin's settlement, may be replaced by units which will be able to meet the second century's problems in rural and urban education. It is with this thought in mind, that the Manitowoc county teachers, school board members, and town and county officials deemed it of historical importance to preserve as much of the Manitowoc county school histories as possible through the publication of this book. Many of the histories are incomplete but they are as accurate and authentic as available records can make them. The histories of about twenty-five schools are abbreviated records taken from the record books kept since the district was organized. This, very likely, is the first historical record ever compiled of the schools of one county in Wisconsin. Its importance and value will increase as the centuries pass.

The publication of the Histories of Manitowoc County Schools has been made possible through the active and whole-hearted cooperation of the teachers, school board members, school administrators, interested county citizens, town and county officials, and the Manitowoc County Board. Without their enthusiastic personal and financial support, this publication would not have been possible. To all of the above named persons and groups, Manitowoc county is indebted for this historical record of Manitowoc county schools.

## ORGANIZATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND SYSTEMS MANITOWOC COUNTY

The Manitowoc county school system began soon after the first settlers arrived. The first settlements were concentrated at or near the mouths of the two principal rivers, with the result that the first schools were established at those places. Before the development of the public school system, the educational needs of the three communities were cared for by private schools. Dr. Louis Falge in his **History of Manitowoc County** names some of the early settlers who conducted private schools at Rapids, Manitowoc, and in the Two Rivers area.

After Manitowoc county became a part of the Wisconsin territory in 1836, territorial schools were set up. These territorial schools were administered by county school commissioners. The first law relating to the organization of common or elementary schools was passed by the Wisconsin territorial legislative assembly in 1839. The act to create county, town, or school districts was passed in 1841. The three commissioners of common schools were elected by the electors of the county. One of the duties of these commissioners was to divide the county or towns into convenient school districts.

The school law of 1841 creating districts delegated much power in regard to the organization, maintenance, and the administration of these schools. The district became the unit for the administration and control of schools. The town and county governments were authorized to make a tax levy, but they rarely did so. These district schools, as they developed under the laws of 1841 and 1843, were not free schools. The money needed to maintain these so-called public schools was obtained partly from district taxes, partly from per capita tax, and partly from gifts and contributions. Only the children of the more prosperous could afford to attend in some cases. The children of the poor struggling settlers often could not attend because of the per capita tax.

On January 3, 1842, a petition by several inhabitants of Manitowoc Rapids, was presented to the county school commissioners praying that they allow the use of the first county court house at Manitowoc Rapids for a schoolhouse. This the commissioners granted "provided no avoidable injury shall be done to said building, and that by guaranteeing of said liberty, the inhabitants of the school districts of Manitowoc