

1879
Marinette County
1979
Centennial

In The Beginning; Founding 1879

HISTORICAL SPOTLIGHTS

... 1836. Wisconsin became a territory.

... 1851. Oconto County set off from Brown County.

... 1879. Marinette County created. Two townships: Marinette and Peshtigo. Three man county board: one representative from Marinette, one from Peshtigo, and the County Clerk. Plans to build a county courthouse initiated.

... 1882. Florence County separated from Marinette.

... 1887. City of Marinette formed. Towns of Porterfield and Wausaukee set off from Marinette and Peshtigo. Peshtigo became a village. County board increased to eight members; standing committees established.

... 1888. Town boundaries must be established by petition of residents.

... 1890. Town of Amberg admitted.

... 1892. Town of Grover admitted. Board increased to ten members (one each from Towns of Peshtigo, Grover, Wausaukee, Amberg and Porterfield, and five from City of Marinette).

... 1893. Town of Coleman established.

... 1896. Poor Commission established as a committee of the county board.

... 1897. Town of Crivitz admitted.

... 1899. Town of Dunbar formed. County board signed contract with Dr. M.D. Bird to provide medical services to indigent and prisoners in county jail.

... 1900. First rules of order adopted for operation of board.

... 1902. Petitions received to create Towns of Lake, Athelstane, Beaver, and Bay. All were admitted, except Bay (which involved land located along Green Bay in what is now the Town of Peshtigo and a portion of the City of Marinette).

... 1903. City of Peshtigo formed. Town of Coleman changed name to Town of Pound.

... 1905. Town of Stephenson established. Total board members, 20 (Peshtigo, 3; Marinette continued with 5).

... 1906. Workhouse established to minimize cost of boarding prisoners, transients, and drunkards.

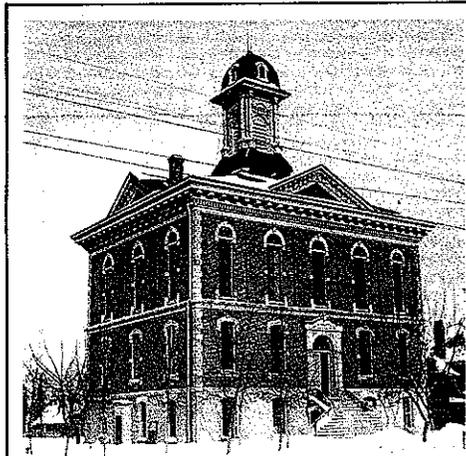
... 1908. County borrowed \$11,258.77 to pay indebtedness.

... 1909. Debt grew to \$13,853,428; tax levy, \$153,313.10.

... 1910. Debt reduced to \$5,000. Formation of Town of Middle Inlet from part of Town of Wausaukee; Town of Niagara from part of Town of Amberg. Board membership, 22.

... 1911. Coleman became a village. First Highway Commissioner elected. First Probation Officer appointed. 20th Judicial

(continued column 3)



Original Courthouse; completed in 1881

The First Courthouse

In February 1851, Oconto County separated from Brown County, and held the distinction of being the largest county in Wisconsin until it was divided to half its original size by act of the Wisconsin Legislature, March 3, 1879, when Marinette County was formed.

The first Marinette County Board of Supervisors met on March 11, 1879 in the office of J.A. VanCleve, a lumberman and surveyor, who was to be Marinette County's first County Clerk. This meeting was attended by Andrew C. Merryman, representing the Township of Marinette as Chairman, and Mr. William J. Shepherd, representing the Township of Peshtigo.

Because of the diverse locations of the various county offices (see First Board of Supervisors Meeting), the Board voted, on July 15, 1879, that "the proposition of the Honorable I. Stephenson to donate to the County of Marinette the tract of land west of the N. Ludington Company Store for a Court House site be accepted, and that the thanks of this Board be tendered to him for his liberality, and record of the same be entered in the Journal of Proceedings."

The County Clerk was authorized to engage George Clark, an engineer from London, England, who had come to America in 1871 as a civil engineer with the Union Pacific Railroad. In 1874, he settled in what was to become Marinette County. Clark's illustrious career included building programs in Calcutta, Hong Kong, and Brazil. He was instructed "to make plans and specifications of a Jail and Court House not to exceed in value \$15,000 when complete."

On Monday, July 28, 1879, Mr. Clark submitted his first plans for the jail and courthouse; on Thursday, August 7, 1879, he submitted revised plans, and these were accepted by the Board of Supervisors. The bid of Charles Patude for building the basement of these two structures was approved on Saturday, August 16, 1879, and on Wednesday, September 24, the proposal of Calix Merchant to furnish materials and erect the super structure at a cost of \$9,400 was accepted.

Circuit established, comprised of Marinette, Florence, Forest and Oconto Counties.

... 1913. Villages of Crivitz and Niagara incorporated. Town of Girard established.

... 1914. Village of Pound incorporated. Town of Pembine admitted.

... 1915. Town of Wagner formed from part of Town of Porterfield.

... 1920. Town of Silver Cliff (Rat River) established.

... 1923. Town of Beecher admitted. First "speed cop" hired by county board.

... 1924. Village of Wausaukee incorporated. Town of Girard dissolved.

... 1925. Conservation Committee added to the board, marking beginning of vigorous program to establish county parks and recreational facilities. Forest Protection District 5 formed, with headquarters in Wausaukee.

... 1926. Juvenile Probation Officer appointed. Marinette County Fair Association formed.

... 1927. Village of Crivitz dissolved to become part of Town of Stephenson.

... 1928. Marinette County entered under the Forest Crop Law.

... 1929. Rules outlining duties of board committees adopted.

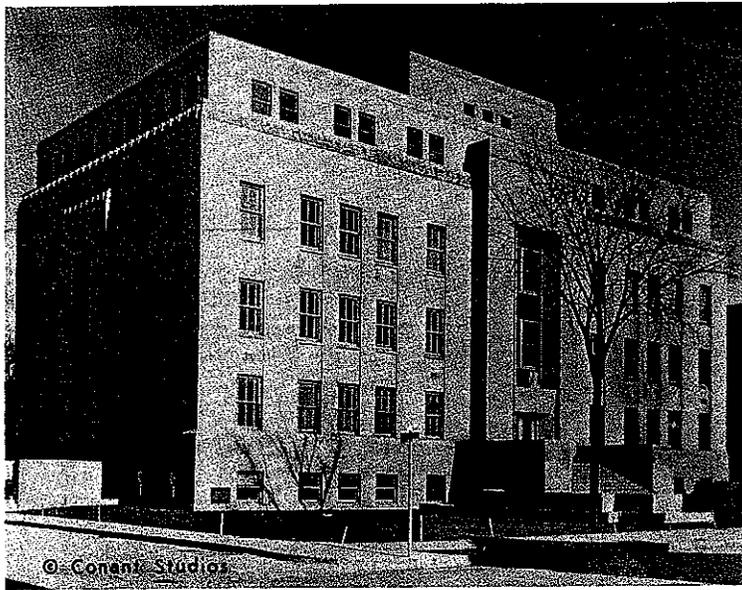
... 1930. Committee formed to study ways and means of cutting expenses. Tax levy, \$361,371.11. This year, as in the previous year, Marinette County participated in a joint county fair with Dickinson County, Michigan, held at the fairgrounds in Norway, Michigan.

... 1931. Board voted Marinette County Fair to be held at Wausaukee; appropriated \$1,000 to finance it. Board authorized poor in Marinette County to cut firewood on county owned land. Supervisors reduced their per diem from \$5.00 to \$4.50, and cut \$12,500 from the budget by means of fewer meetings, suspension of bounties on gophers, crows, foxes and wolves, and salary cuts.

... 1932. Board adopted motion that only married men be hired on highway crews, and only one member of a family be employed by the highway department. Protests filed with federal government in regard to importing pulpwood from Canada and other countries. Traffic force reduced from two officers to one. No salary increases.

... 1934. County established unemployment benefit plan. Voted to limit terms of supervisors to two years.

... 1935. Salary increases voted; wages of highway department restored to 1932 level. County relief plan adopted. First county service officer hired to assist veterans. Salaries of county officials increased. Second traffic officer hired. Sinking fund for new courthouse begun.



Present Courthouse

Historical Spotlights (cont.)

- ... 1941. Construction of new courthouse begun.
- ... 1942. New courthouse opened. Total cost, \$291,134.67, of which the county paid \$150,000, and the federal government the balance.
- ... 1965, 1966. Reapportionment of county board on a one-man, one-vote basis. City of Marinette, 11 members; Towns of Beecher, Pembine and Niagara joined to provide sufficient population to be represented by one supervisor. Goodman and Dunbar, Athelstane and Amberg, Lake and Wagner joined. Village and Town of Wausaukee combined. Portion of Town of Stephenson added to Town of Middle Inlet. Villages of Pound and Coleman, and a portion of Town of Pound joined. Towns of Beaver, Grover and Porterfield combined. Remaining portions of Towns of Stephenson and Pound combined to form one district. Town of Peshtigo split into two sections, gaining one supervisor. Village of Niagara split into two districts, and City of Peshtigo reduced from three to two supervisory districts.
- ... 1968. Traffic police and sheriff's department combined, with nine deputies.
- ... 1974. Crivitz again incorporated as a village.

Marinette County: The Townships and Communities

In 1879, when Marinette County was formed from the eastern and northwestern portions of Oconto County, only two townships were designated. The Town of Marinette extended 75 miles upstream on the Menominee River, and included what is now Florence County. All of the western part and the northern half of Marinette County comprised the Town of Peshtigo. The initial county board had three members: A.C. Merryman, representing Marinette; W.J. Shepherd from Peshtigo; and the County Clerk, who was empowered to vote in order to break a tie. Shepherd served only two months, and was succeeded by W.A. Ellis. Three years later, in 1882, Florence County separated from Marinette County.

According to an early Oconto County census, in 1853 Marinette had a population of 478, more than half of whom were Indian. There were only three permanent dwellings: the homes of Queen Marinette, John B. Jacobs, and Dr. Hall. The economy of the area, however, had already turned to lumbering, and sawmills were in operation at the mouth of the Menominee River. By 1885, the first city directory for Marinette showed eleven incorporated companies, and a wide variety of businesses to serve the growing community. In 1887, Marinette obtained a city charter.

That same year, the Town of Porterfield and Wausaukee were set off from the original townships of Marinette and Peshtigo. Wausaukee's first representative to the county board was R.G. Brown. The mainstay of the town was lumbering. John S. Monroe had come there in 1880, taken up a homestead and built a log cabin in the middle of virgin forest. He was the first to take out cedar, and he established a post mill, and later a blacksmith shop. Monroe owned 160 acres and three teams of horses; he was also a shipbuilder.

By the early 1900's, the cutover lands of the new townships proved good for general farming and stock raising. Clover, timothy grass, corn, oats, rye, potatoes, peas,

beans, and all sorts of berries and small fruits became an important source of income. The first sugar beets were planted in 1903. Wausaukee's telephone exchange extended to connect with long distance companies, and the *Wausaukee Independent* was considered to be "one of the brightest newspapers in the state." Incorporated as a village in 1924, Wausaukee has been the site of the Marinette County Fair since 1931. Wausaukee means "river among the hills."

Porterfield's first representative to the county board was Jacob H. Bernardy. The first town meeting was held in the Rawn School, April 1887. The town of Porterfield today has a population of more than 1,600, and includes many fine year-round residences along the rivers. In addition to farming, it is becoming a "residence community" for many who work in Marinette and Peshtigo.

Another important event of 1887 was the incorporation of Peshtigo as a village. In 1838, J.H. Levenworth built a sawmill on the west bank of the Peshtigo River, and in 1850 he built another on the east bank. The mills contributed greatly to the growth of the little community, and by 1850, Peshtigo had a population of 566. In 1867, a wagon road joined Peshtigo and Peshtigo Harbor.

The first settlement at Peshtigo (Squaw) Harbor was a boarding house to accommodate the men who brought Levenworth's lumber down the river on rafts to be loaded on ships bound for Chicago. About 1868, W.B. Ogden, of Chicago, developed the little settlement at the harbor as a "company town." Ogden had purchased the Levenworth mills, and vast timber tracts throughout the county. He built a third sawmill at the mouth of the Peshtigo River; here he also constructed a shipyard, boarding house, store, school house, blacksmith shop, and residences for his superintendent and harbormaster. Laborers at the village built their own homes with materials furnished by Ogden's Peshtigo Lumber Company, and in return

lived rent free for ten years. The company never allowed a saloon at Peshtigo Harbor, so the workers had no difficulty "resisting temptation," and were able to save their earnings and buy farming land from the company. Ogden also laid railroad track from Peshtigo to Peshtigo Harbor. Thus he was able to move his lumber to the markets of the south and east, and to his lumberyard in Chicago.

After the disastrous Peshtigo Fire of 1871, tenacious survivors rebuilt, and the area began to recover from this terrible disaster.

At the close of its first ten years, Marinette County consisted of these four townships: Marinette, Peshtigo, Wausaukee and Porterfield. In 1890, Amberg achieved township status. Because of the plentiful fish and game, profusion of herbs and berries, abundant grasslands and verdant forests, this area had long been a favorite Indian campsite. The Indians called it "Ca-she-men-na-doo-ten-skee-wen," which translated means "God's country." The early white settlers named it Pike, for the river teeming with this fine game fish. From the 1860's to the end of the century, many logs from this ample timber supply were sent down the river to the mills in Marinette and Menominee. The railroads reached here in the 1880's, and the area became a supply center for lumber camps. The first permanent settler, Warren Buckman, arrived in 1883 with a wagonload of blankets, clothing, guns, and ammunition to set up a trading post. He pitched his tents just west of the Pike, across from the present Catholic Church, and traded his wares for furs, ginseng, and venison saddles. In late fall, he returned to Green Bay to replenish his stock. The following spring, he built his log trading post, the remains of which can still be seen on the east bank of the Pike near the foot of Dow Rapids. The second permanent settler was Charles Dahl, a surveyor for the railroad which reached there in 1884. Just three years later, a Chicago businessman, William

(continued on page 3)

Marinette County: The Townships and Communities

Amberg, became interested in developing a quarry which had been started in this area. He recognized the potential of the granite quarries to supply paving and building blocks needed by the growing cities. In 1887, Amberg and Cameron bought forty acres on the sites of the Martindale and Argyle quarries, and the Aberdeen quarry. The following year, he platted the village of Amberg, and gave it his name. On the night of August 15, 1903, a disastrous fire occurred, but the town was soon rebuilt. In the early 1900's, the town of Amberg had a population of about 500; it has now grown to 812. The irregular, picturesque hills, fine lakes, and swift flowing streams with many falls and rapids make this township ideal for outdoor sports and recreation. Dave's Falls Park is located here.

In 1892, Grover separated from Peshtigo and was admitted as a township. Ernest Lepinsky was the first representative to the county board. Lepinsky, A.H. Colburn and F. Weinhart were the first officials of the new town. This area was originally settled by Harvey England, who came from New York state in 1864. England owned 160 acres, and was primarily engaged in farming and lumbering. He had been instrumental in setting up the Town of Peshtigo. Today, Grover has a population of 1,540, and includes the unincorporated communities of Harmony and County Line.

The first white man to make a permanent settlement in what was to become the Town of Coleman (then known as Sugar Bush) was Joseph Brault, in 1870. He had just built a cabin when the Peshtigo Fire left him surrounded by a vast, desolate region. He resolved to stay on his land, and soon a colony of French people became his neighbors. Owing to bad roads, the beginnings of Coleman were slow, until the opening of the Milwaukee and Northern Railroad, in the early 1880's. One of the first industries in Coleman was the Little River Mill, built by Richardson, but unsuccessful in its operation until purchased by E.E. Bolles and Company, around the turn of the century. The Brault Mill also contributed to the success of the community in the early days, as it sawed lumber for farmers of the surrounding countryside. Coleman was organized as a township in 1893.

In 1897, Crivitz became a township. In the early 1860's, Levi P. Hale and John Seymour set up a trading post about six miles

northwest of the present village of Crivitz. In later years, this became known as Ellis Junction, named for William Ellis, superintendent of the Peshtigo Lumber Company which gave the Milwaukee and Northern Railroad the right of way through this area. Ellis Junction was a main stop of this railroad. It was platted in the mid 1880's by Ellis and Fred Bartles, and named for the latter's birthplace, Crivitz, Germany. Crivitz incorporated as a village in 1913, although it dissolved as such fourteen years later to become a part of the Town of Stephenson. Finally, in 1974, it was again incorporated, and by last census has a population of 960.

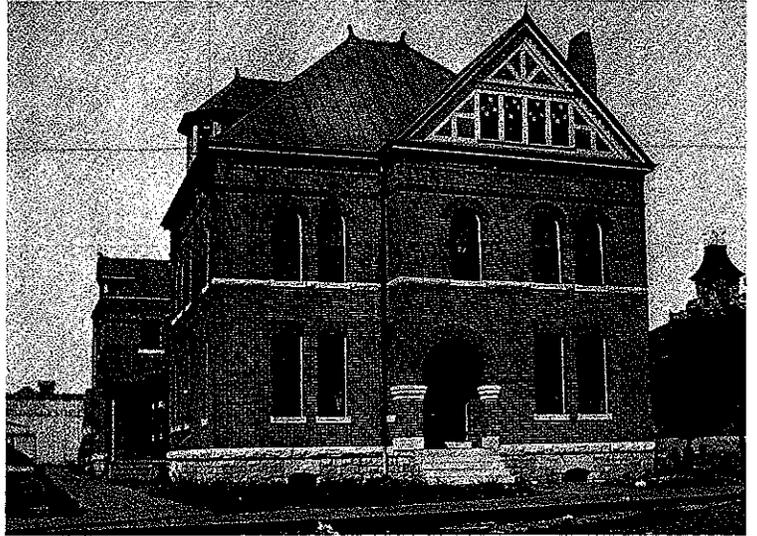
Twenty years after the formation of Marinette County, Dunbar became a township. A.C. Wells was its first representative to the county board. Dunbar is said to take its name from a lumbercamp cook who took charge of supplies for lumber camps as they were dropped at the railroad station, in the 1880's. As the trains

neared the station, trainmen could be heard to call, "Anything for Dunbar today?" At the beginning of the century, Dunbar was still primarily a lumber town, with a population of 400. Its chief industry was the Girard Lumber Company, though it was also the headquarters of the Dunbar and Wausaukee Railroad. Today the township has a population of 320. Twelve Foot Falls Park, a fine recreational area, is located here.

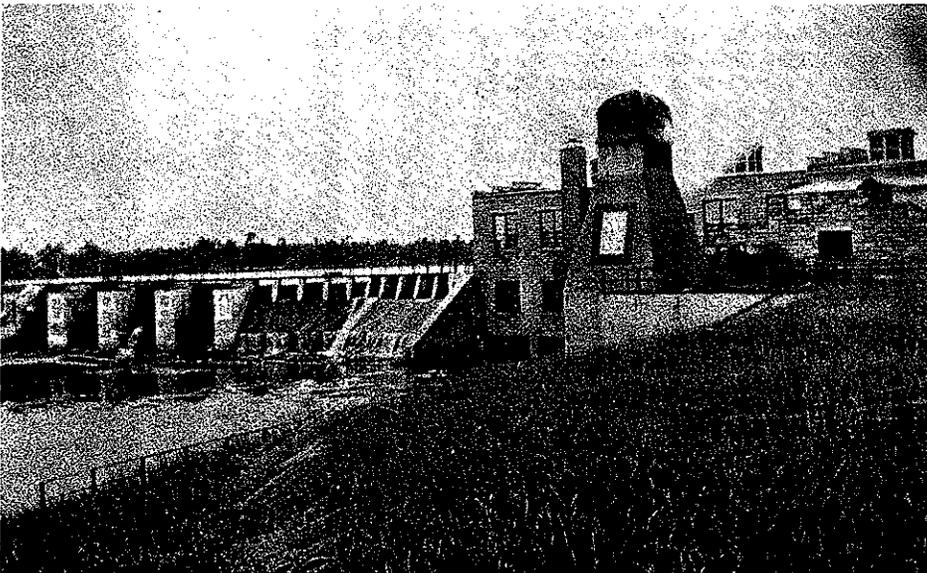
1902 marked a year of growth for the Marinette County board, as four petitions were received for the formation of new townships: Lake, Athelstane, Beaver, and Bay. All were admitted, except Bay, which included land along Green Bay in what is now the Town of Peshtigo and a portion of the City of Marinette. The Town of Lake was set off from Peshtigo Township. Its present population is 777. It includes the unincorporated community of Loomis, and Lake Noquebay Park.

Athelstane was one of the quarry locations of William Amberg. It was named by his Scotch foreman, Alex A. Marten, for the beautiful blue-grey color ("athel") of the stone ("stane"). Many cities have public buildings constructed in the early 1900's of "athelstane." At the last census, the Town of Athelstane had a population of 380.

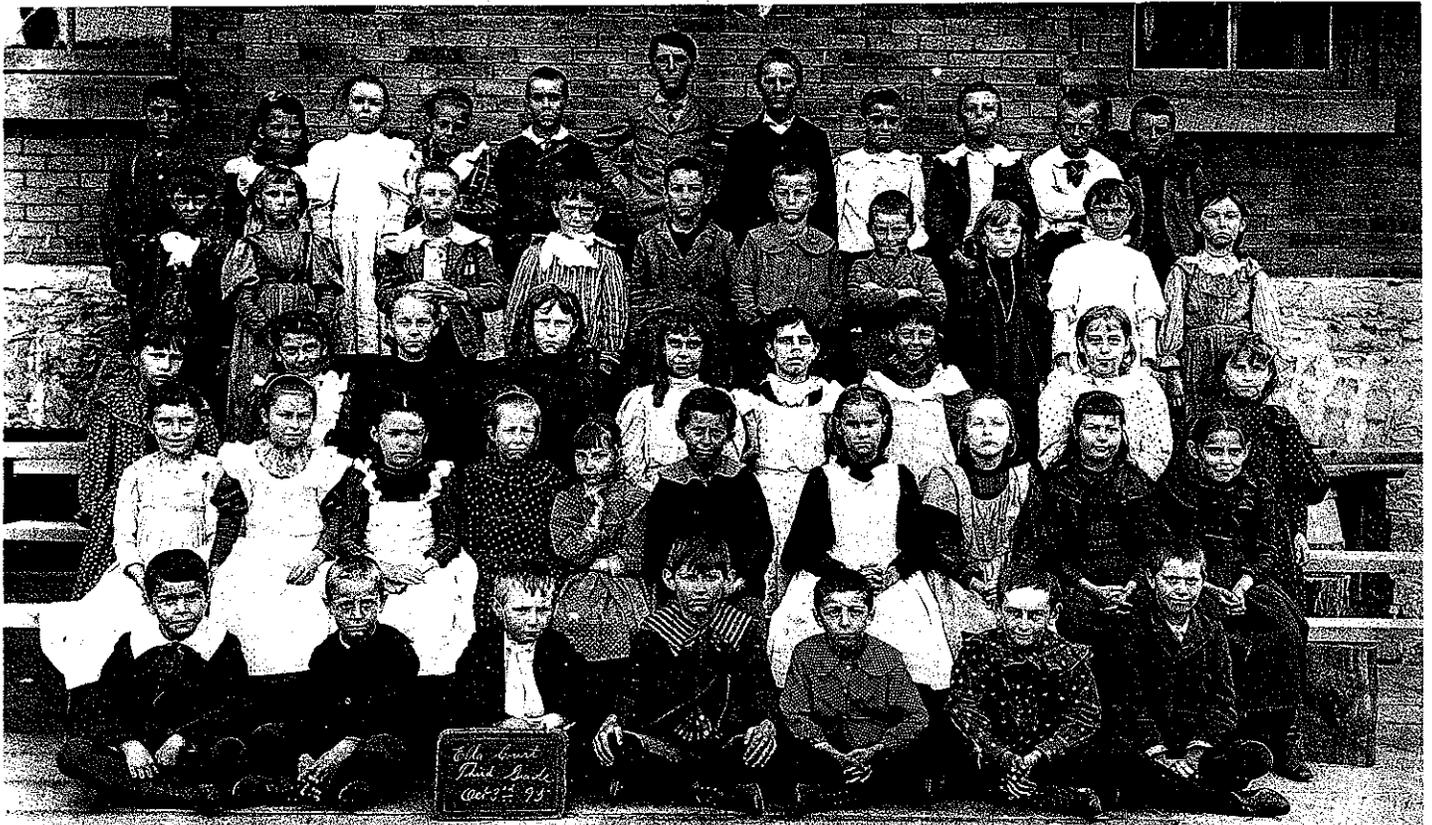
Beaver was originally known as Armstrong Dam. This land had been homesteaded by "Pinochle" Armstrong, who built a sixty-room house in which he offered room and board to lumbermen coming off the spring drives, in return for their services during the summer to clear his land. In 1902, residents petitioned the Marinette County board to set off the Town of Beaver from the Towns of Coleman and Crivitz "for the reason that there is not now received by said residents and freeholders of said territory sufficient amounts of accommodations due them as to Roads, Bridges, and Schools." The Town of Beaver takes its name from Beaver Brook, a tributary of the Peshtigo River. The midpoint between the equator and the North Pole is just north of the unincorporated village of Beaver, and a monument marks the spot. The present population of the township is 971.



Old Jail and Sheriff's Home



Crivitz Paper and Pulp Mill



Ella Court School Marinette, 1895



Early Lumber Camp



D.J. McKay's Camp, near "Bear Point"



THE LAST OF THE MENOMINEES
MEMPHIS, TENN.

"Last of the Menominees" living in the Twin City area, 1905



Drivers breaking log jam.

Marinette County: Townships and Communities (cont.)

The same year in which Peshtigo obtained a city charter, 1903, Coleman became a village. The community petitioned that the town name be changed from Coleman to Pound, honoring Thaddeus C. Pound, who was then a Representative from the 8th Congressional District and had been Lieutenant Governor from 1870-1872. Petitioners explained that "there now exist two separate municipalities within the County of Marinette bearing the same name, viz: the town of Coleman and the village of Coleman, and . . . this is misleading." Pound lies in the heart of farming country, as reflected in its early industries: a flour mill and a cheese factory. Its first settler, L.D. McMillan, arrived in 1873. The following year, a small group of Norwegians came from Michigan; and in 1875 and 1876, a group of New Yorkers settled there. In 1880, a village was founded by John A. Wagg, builder and operator of the community's first sawmill. Today, the Town of Pound includes the villages of Pound and Coleman, and the population is 1,360.

In 1905, the Town of Stephenson was created, and W.H. Falvey named the first representative to the county board. The new town included Crivitz. The Town of Stephenson has three fine county parks: Veteran's Memorial Park, Twin Bridges Park, and Old Veteran's Lake Campground.

Goodman was admitted to township status in 1908. The previous year, the James B. Goodman family bought a large piece of timberland, and built a sawmill, and houses which they rented to their employees. The new town was formed from a part of the Town of Dunbar. In 1955, the Goodman mill was sold to Calumet and Hecla, Inc., and the houses to private individuals. Today the township has a population of 792. The unincorporated community of Goodman and the Goodman Township Park are located here.

1910 was a year of activity for the county board with the formation of the Town of Middle Inlet from part of the Town of Wausaukee, and the Town of Niagara from part of the Town of Amberg. Board membership increased to 22. Middle Inlet is named for the stream which flows through the town, and is the middle of three which flow into Lake Noquebay. Niagara is a name of Indian origin, probably derived from "Oh-nia-ga," meaning "bisected bottom land." This is one of the most picturesque parts of the county. The village of Niagara, incorporated in 1913, lies in a valley on the river, below rocky bluffs and near beautiful falls. One of the first men to settle there was John Stoveken, Sr., who was the first to attempt to harness the Lower Quinnesec Falls. In 1889, he put in a small pulp mill; the following year it was purchased by the Badger Paper Company of Kaukauna, and in 1899 Kimberly-Clark obtained the plant, and rebuilt and enlarged the mills. By the early 1900's, Niagara had a population of nearly one thousand; today it has more than doubled in size.

(continued column 3)

First Meeting of Marinette County Board of Supervisors

Proceedings of the first meeting of the Board of Supervisors, for the County of Marinette, held at the office of J.A. Van Cleve, in the Village of Marinette, in said county, on Tuesday, the 11th of March, A.D. 1879.

Present: Supervisors A.C. Merryman of Marinette, and W.J. Shepherd of Peshtigo.

On motion A.C. Merryman was appointed Chairman of said Board, and W.J. Shepherd, Clerk Pro-tempore.

The following order was passed:

The Board of Supervisors of the County of Marinette do ordain as follows: That the bond of the Clerk of said Board be fixed at two thousand dollars (\$2,000.00): That the bond of the Register of Deeds of Marinette County be fixed at three thousand dollars (\$3,000.00).

On motion of A.C. Merryman the Board approved of the bonds of J.A. Van Cleve as County Clerk, and Jason K. Wright as Register of Deeds.

On motion the Board adjourned to 4 o'clock PM.

(signed) **W.J. Shepherd**
Clerk Pro-tempore

Meeting at 4 P.M.

Board met pursuant to adjournment, same members present as in forenoon.

The following order was passed:

The Board of Supervisors of the County of Marinette do ordain as follows: that the bond of the District Attorney be fixed at one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00). That the bond of the County Treasurer be fixed at fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000.00) and the bond of the Clerk of Circuit Court be fixed at five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00).

On motion the Board approved of the bonds of H.O. Fairchild as District Attorney, of O.R. Johnston as County Treasurer, and of John Holgate as Clerk of Circuit Court.

The following order was passed:

The Board of Supervisors of the County of Marinette do ordain as follows: That the County seat for said County shall be, and hereby is, located on Section six (6) in Township thirty (30) south of Range twenty-four (24) east, in the State of Wisconsin, being at the Village of Marinette in said County and State.

(signed) **A.C. Merryman**

(signed) **W.J. Shepherd**

On motion Board adjourned to Friday, March 14, A.D. 1879 at 10 A.M.

J.A. Van Cleve
County Clerk

As Written

The language of these early records is reproduced here, exactly as written. For instance, 1½ o'clock p.m., instead of half past one. All of these records were, of course handwritten.



A.C. Merryman, first supervisor, town of Marinette.

1914 saw the incorporation of the village of Pound, and the admission of the Town of Pembine, with G.C. Phelps as Pembine's first representative to the county board. In 1847, government surveyors gave the name Pemene-Bon-Won to the stream and falls flowing through this area to the Menominee River. When the railroads came, the name was shortened to "Pemene," which means "waterberries" (cranberries). This stream provides excellent fishing, and Pembine Township Park is located on it. In 1975, the population of the township was 753.

Menominee River Park and the unincorporated community of McAllister lie within the boundaries of the Town of Wagner. In 1915, residents of the area east of Middle Inlet petitioned for separation from Porterfield to form a new township, named for their first supervisor to the Marinette County board, Joseph Wagner.

It was five years before another township was designated. In 1920, Silver Cliff (also known as Rat River) was established as a town, constituting the western boundary of Marinette County, south of Goodman and north of Stephenson. McClintock and Goodman Parks are located here. R.L. King was the first supervisor. The present population is 186.

The last township formed in Marinette County is Beecher, which separated from the Town of Amberg in 1923. Ira Stout was the first supervisor. The following year, the Village of Wausaukee incorporated, and in 1927 both the village of Crivitz and the Town of Girard dissolved. No further structural changes in the county occurred until 1974, when Crivitz re-incorporated as a village.

Reapportionment of the county board took place in 1966. Marinette was granted 11 members; Towns of Beecher, Pembine and Niagara joined to provide sufficient population to be represented by one supervisor. Similarly, Goodman and Dunbar, Athelstane and Amberg, Lake and Wagner joined. The Village and Town of Wausaukee combined, and a portion of the Town of Stephenson was added to the Town of Middle Inlet. The villages of Pound and Coleman, and a portion of the Town of Pound joined. The Towns of Beaver, Grover and Porterfield combined to form a district, and the remaining portions of Stephenson and Pound combined to form another. The Town of Peshtigo split into two districts, and the City of Peshtigo reduced from three to two supervisory districts.

**Minutes of
Afternoon Meeting
Friday, March 14, 1879
1½ o'clock PM (1:30 PM)**

Board met pursuant to adjournment.
Same members present as in the forenoon.

An order defining the boundaries of the Towns of Marinette and Peshtigo in the County of Marinette.

The Board of Supervisors of the County of Marinette do ordain as follows: That the following described lands situated in the County of Marinette, State of Wisconsin, shall be, and constitute the Town of Marinette, to wit:

Townships 38,39,40 and 41

North of Range 17, east

36,37,38

North of Range 18,19,20 east

39 and 40

North of Range 18 and 19, east

34 and 35

North of Range 20 and 21 east

36,37,38

North of Range 21 and 22 east

35

North of Range 22 east

Sections 1-18 inclusive of Township 33,

North Range 21 east

Township 32,33,34

North of Range 22, east

33 and 34

North of Range 23, east

Sections 2,3,4,5,8,9,10,11,13,14,15,23,24,
25, and 36 in

Township 31

North of Range 22, east

31

North of Range 23, east

Sections 1,2,3,4,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,23,
24,25,26,35 and 36 in

Township 30

North of Range 23, east

30

North of 24, east

And the remaining territory in said County of Marinette shall be, and constitute the Town of Peshtigo.

Passed, March 14, A.D. 1879

(signed) A.C. Merryman

(signed) W.J. Shepherd

Population Figures

- 1815 — 3-4,000 Indian population
- 1850 — 17 property owners
- 1880 — 8,929 in the new Marinette County
- 1890 — 20,304
- 1900 — 30,822
- 1910 — 33,812
- 1920 — 34,361
- 1930 — 33,530
- 1940 — 36,225
- 1950 — 35,748
- 1960 — 34,660
- 1970 — 35,810



Seidl Fish Dock, about 1926

Fishing

Because of the quality, and abundance of fish in Green Bay, as well as the ready markets to the south and east, commercial fishing early became a lucrative industry. Shortly after the turn of the century, however, it was realized there had to be some regulation and restrictions enforced, or this important part of the economy would not be able to reproduce; thus closed seasons, on some species, were enforced. A local newspaper notes in the December 8, 1906 issue: "The open season for fishing white fish and trout will start on December 15, and most of the commercial fisherman are getting their gear arranged for the coming winter fishing season. During the closed season white fish and trout have become very scarce in local markets."

In early days, men of courage went out from landings in Marinette's Menekaunee area, from Philbrooks (now the end of Ogden Street), from Peshtigo Harbor and from many places in between, in handmade flat bottom sailboats, and on sail sleds in the winter, to place and lift nets. Later, more than thirty motor-powered "fishing tugs" were concentrated in "Fisherman's Harbor" in Menekaunee, bringing in tons of Whitefish, Perch, "Blue Fin," and Herring. These boats, many of them large, ranged Green Bay, into Lake Michigan, and as far away as Lake Superior, where the sturdy fishermen of Marinette's old First and Second Wards, sometimes battled the Finnish fishermen of Northern Keweenaw Peninsula over fishing grounds. This fine old fleet has dwindled now to comparatively few boats. A local paper of October 25, 1899, reviewed the past fishing season as follows: "The directors of the Green Bay Fisherman's Association met yesterday at Menekaunee and quickly disposed of the matter of selling off the season's catch. F.G. Dormer of Buffalo, wealthy wholesale fish dealer, made an offer for the largest portion

of the catch and it was accepted. He purchased 25,000 packages (barrels) at \$2.20 each for a total sale of \$55,000."

"Catches" so tremendous that they are hard to believe today, were made by early fishermen. The following story was told by "Dad" Wright. "Dad" will be remembered by many residents of Dunbar, where he spent his last years. At the time he was a fisherman. They were fishing in a low flat, covered by rushes, 10 to 12 feet high.

"We found that the ice had not moved out yet, but all day long the wind had been blowing a gale, and at dusk the ice started. John Olson, C.E. Wright, George Edwards and his Dad had a big pile of driftwood and a tar barrel capstan at each end of the seine, and another, in the center, where we expected to land the fish on a sandy bay shore beach. We followed the ice out 80 rods with our south line and then threw over our seine going north, then back to shore. We had sixteen foot sweeps on the capstans, and we needed them. When we had our hauling line half in we changed to blocks up toward the center and grounded the ends of our seine.

"It was a dark night. An off shore wind was blowing the water flat, and before the top line was near shore we were hauling in perch, perch, perch, nothing but perch; 12 and 14 inch big flat "jumbos." We commenced scooping them up and putting them in salt barrels. These were of two sizes 220 and 320 pounds capacity. When daylight came we had twenty barrels of fish. The old man hightailed it to the telegraph office. He wired Charles Witt and Sons for a price on perch. They wired back: perch, perch, hell no, we wouldn't pay the charges on them!"

Perch, Sturgeon and Walleye were considered "rough fish" in those days! Tons of perch were dumped on the land for fertilizer!

Marinette County Agriculture Has A Long History

Agriculture was practiced in what was to become Marinette County long before the first white man, Jean Nicolet, came up the river in 1618. Tradition has it that the Menominee Indians brought wild rice plants with them when they settled here, and the name "Menominee" means "wild rice eaters."

Indian gardens gave an abundant yield of vegetables; beans, squash, pumpkin, melons, and of course maize were grown. Three varieties of corn - popcorn, squaw corn (several different color kernels on each ear), and a long-ear white kernel, were prepared in many different ways, and dried for consumption during the long winters. In the marshes grew arrowhead plant, an excellent substitute for potatoes. The Indians cultivated butternut, hazelnut, and beechnut trees, and used these nuts and acorns for food. They harvested cranberries, blueberries, blackberries, raspberries, huckleberries, shad (June) berries, grapes, plums, and crab apples. In the spring, they tapped the maple trees, and usually obtained enough sugar to last through the year.

Agriculture, as we think of it today, began in the county with John Kittson, the fourth white man to locate on the Menominee River. He arrived on August 23, 1830, as the representative of the American Fur Company. Kittson was the son of a British Army officer who had immigrated to Canada and settled near Montreal. He was able to assist the Menominee with their communications to the United States government, and was affectionately known by them as "The Writer." He is described as extremely intelligent, with the temperament and strength to adapt well to pioneer life.

Kittson soon began operating a farm on the Menominee River, just above the trading post of Stanislaus Chappu, the first known white settler in this area. Here Kittson taught the Menominee improved ways of farming, and ran a very hospitable house and table. He established an Indian cemetery on part of his farm, and his friend, Chappu, is buried there.

Kittson's second, and larger, farm was located at the Ox-Bow of the Menominee River, at the Wausaukee flats area, opposite the mouth of the Wausaukee River. He also operated a trading post here to serve the Indian settlement. He built a large, two-story log house, and a huge two-story log barn which contained accommodations for horses at one end and cows at the other, with a threshing floor in the center; a haymow on the second floor covered the entire area. About a quarter of a mile downriver from his farm house, Kittson built a pelt storage house, octagonal in shape, also two-story log-hewed, over a large basement, the walls of which were lined with logs. The roof was covered with blue clay from the river. The hot summer sun dried the clay, and it became impregnable to water and the heat of the sun. The pelts were stored in the basement and first floor; the second floor was filled with ice in the late winter and early spring, to preserve the pelts in good condition until they could be taken down to the American Fur Company office at Green Bay, after the ice melted on the Menominee River.



Log Cabin Farm House, at Twin Creeks, near Wisconsin Highway 180; taken in 1938

As agent for the American Fur Company, Kittson established several satellite trading posts, the largest of which were at White Rapids and on the Pike River.

In the 1860's, with the decline of the fur trade, Kittson returned to live at the smaller farm at Chappu Rapids, where he died early in 1872. His death is attributed to exhaustion and exposure while fighting the Peshtigo Fire of October 8, 1871. In 1881, his wife, Margaret, and son, Robert, sold the Ox-Bow farm to Albert Beach. This farm is now owned by Peter Webber.

A *Brief History of Marinette County*, published in 1881, states that "agriculture in the county has not yet assumed importance, although when improved, the land is good. The lumber business is far too productive, and gives employment to all who desire work, and any earnest tilling of the land is some years off; some place it at ten, some even at twenty."

Nevertheless, there were many good-sized farms in the county at that time. As early as 1850, there were 47 farmers between the Menominee and Peshtigo Rivers. Here, 579 acres of cultivated land were producing oats, potatoes, hay, and maple syrup. In rural Peshtigo, Richard Chapman, Samuel Curtin, George Laisure, Edwin Plumb, James Powers, and W.T. Seymour each farmed 80 acres. James Shauer's farm was 57 acres, and Phillip Glass, who was also Constable and Overseer of Highways, farmed 55 acres. John Place (Chappu's son-in-law) worked as a sawyer, but also farmed 46 acres. Abraham Place owned 800 acres, of which he homesteaded 420. Levi Hale was a well-known farmer and stockman, and Edward Perkins farmed and raised horses. A. Newton purchased 147 acres in 1856; he was later Justice of the Peace. Nelson Olson, his neighbor, farmed 40 acres in the Peshtigo area, and 120 on Mud Creek.

Richard Raleigh's farm was 100 acres, and Harry Troutwine's 160 acres. Of the 355 acres which Thomas Payne purchased in 1881, 50 were in farmland. Phillip Fetterly, a Canadian who had settled in the Peshtigo area in 1861, farmed 240 acres, and was the first to send apples to the markets of the east and south bearing the label "Peshtigo Township, Marinette County, Wisconsin."

In Porterfield, John Ramsey farmed 80 acres, and in Pound, David Henry's farm was the same size. Robert Hurd had a sizable acreage under cultivation in Silver Cliff. In what was to become the Town of Grover, Edgar Annis established a 200 acre farm in 1860. Here also, O.F. Peck owned 320 and 160 acre farms. Levi Leslie's farm was 240 acres, Harvey England's 160 acres, and William McFarland and Swen Olson each farmed 120 acres.

The Skidmore-Riley Land Company brought hundreds of prospective farmers into the county with the sale of cutover lands. This land varied in its ability to produce crops, and the lighter soils played out after two or three years of potato growing. As early as 1888, the Marinette County Board of Supervisors resolved that "the sum of one thousand dollars be appropriated to the Marinette County Agricultural Society." Thus the county began studies of optimum use of the land, and crop rotation and reforestation gradually restored much of the productive capacity.

By the end of 1977, Marinette County had become one of the prominent agricultural counties of Wisconsin. Dairies, small fruits, vegetables, potatoes, and other agricultural products were worth more than any manufactured products from the county, even at the height of the lumbering industry.

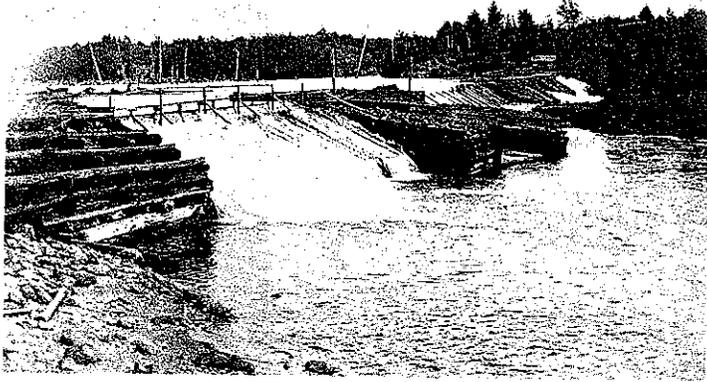
Latest figures available show Marinette County with 1,020 farms, with an average size farm of 194.1 acres.



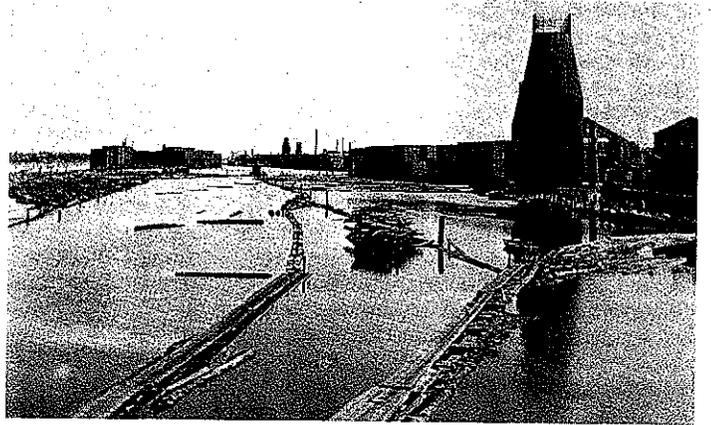
Upper Quinnesec Falls on Menominee River



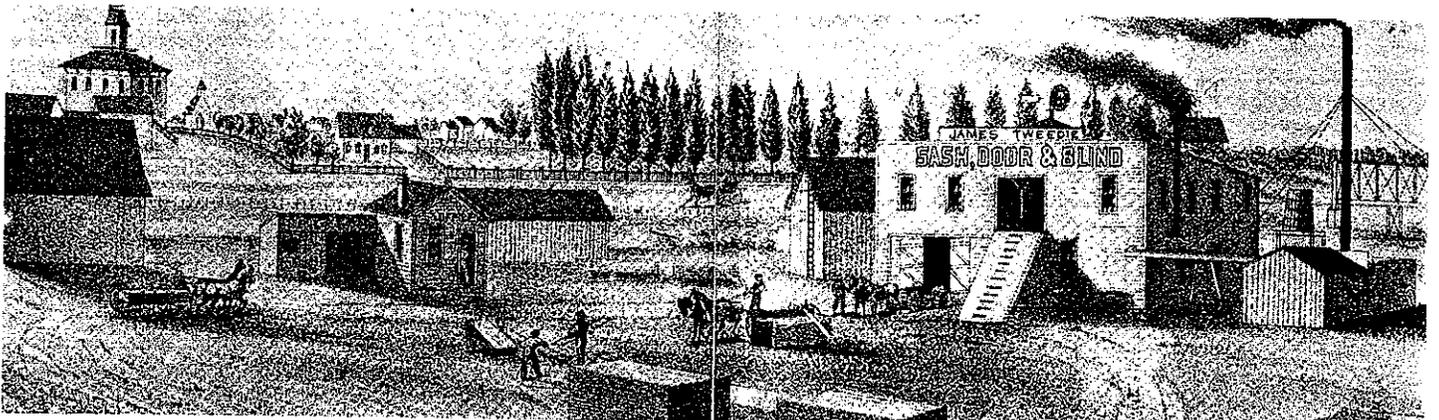
Paper Mill at Niagara; 1898



Pemene Dam on Menominee River



Menominee River 1898



Tweedie Planing Mill, 1867, on Joe Bart Island, now Stephenson Island

Medical and Hospital Care

One of Marinette's first citizens was Jonathan Cory Hall, the first doctor on the Menominee River. Dr. Hall arrived in 1842; however, his practice of medicine was subordinate to his interests in teaching, lumbering, and politics.

In 1853, J.J. Sherman, a native of New York, came to Marinette and began to study with Dr. Hall. Over the years, he studied medicine, intermittently, at Rush Medical College in Chicago, and graduated from there in 1881. Dr. Sherman was also active in politics and education, as Town Assessor, Treasurer and Clerk, Justice of the Peace, school teacher, Postmaster at Menekaunee, and the first Sheriff of Marinette County.

Ben R. Hall was the first native son of Marinette to become a doctor; he graduated from Rush in 1871, and began his medical career treating survivors of the Peshtigo Fire. Like his father, medicine was not his primary interest, and he later abandoned his profession, and returned to the woods which he loved, as a surveyor and timber cruiser.

The first full-time physician in Marinette was Dr. S.P. Jones, who came in 1867. Other early physicians were Dr. Frank Gregory and Dr. G.F. Coulter.

The beginnings of hospital care in Marinette County followed soon after the new county was formed. In 1884, the Menominee River Hospital was opened in Marinette by Dr. Horace Mann, who had completed medical training in New York in 1874. Because of the nature of lumbering, and the constant influx of inexperienced workers, accident cases were numerous and varied. The hospital was adjacent to the railroad tracks, and injured men were brought in by handcar. On one occasion, a lumberjack with a broken thigh was brought in strapped from head to foot to a tree, which kept him immovable, and served as an effective splint until the bone could be set.

Initially, only male patients were admitted; women were confined at home, where they were attended by mid-wives. Since only the most seriously ill were hospitalized, it was sometimes difficult to persuade a patient to go to the hospital for treatment, since many were afraid this implied that they might not recover.

John E. Boren entered the hospital as a typhoid patient in 1885, and remained to become its superintendent for more than half a century. The Boren name became almost synonymous with medicine in the area, since his sons, and later his grandsons, entered the profession and practiced here. His daughter, Esther, became a nurse and his assistant superintendent.

The first medical insurance plan in the county was put into effect soon after the hospital opened. A premium of ten dollars a year provided the purchaser with medical and surgical services, and out-patient medical supplies. The Peshtigo Lumber Company, under agreement with a group of doctors from Marinette, provided workers at Peshtigo Harbor with medical care for \$1.25 per month per family, or \$.75 per month for a single person. This was



Old "Menominee River Hospital," first in Marinette



Interior of Old Hospital; office

deducted from the worker's wages, and he was allowed to choose which of the doctors in the group he wished to treat him.

The hospital was incorporated as the M & M Hospital in 1899. By 1908, the staff included Drs. M.D. Bird, H.F. Schroeder, Sherman C. Wright, A.T. Nadeau, and S. Berglund.

The life of the doctor, in those days, was rigorous: morning and afternoon work in the hospital; office hours in the afternoon and evening; and house calls at any hour of the day and night. Many doctors had their offices in their homes, and some dispensed medicines, themselves. The horse and buggy permitted the doctor a short nap on his way home from a late (or early) call to the country, an advantage not available when the automobile came into use. However, old habits persist, and exhaustion will have its

way; "falling asleep at the wheel" brought at least one of these dedicated practitioners to the hospital as a patient more than once.

After more than a half century of service, plans for replacing the old M & M Hospital were considered by the county board. In 1938, with a Public Works Administration grant, a public subscription fund, and a county bond issue, work got underway on the new hospital, to be located off Shore Drive, near Green Bay.

Marinette General Hospital opened in 1940, with a medical staff of 35 physicians, including Drs. Bird, Schroeder, and Nadeau, who had been with the old M & M Hospital more than 30 years.

In 1966, the hospital added an extended care unit, and by 1972, Marinette General Hospital had grown to become a 175 bed hospital.

Beginning of Marinette County Industry

A history of industry in Marinette County is, essentially, a history of lumbering. Almost every part of the county furnished the raw materials for this truly tremendous industry. While most of the processing of the timber occurred in Marinette, several important sawmills were located in other parts of the county. Most of the communities of the county developed around the lumbering industry, and the railroads which came primarily to serve it.

The first sawmill on the Menominee River was built in 1831 by William Farnsworth and Charles Brush. Noting the decline of the fur trade, Farnsworth foresaw the enormous potential for lumber from the vast pine forests of the area. He and Brush were granted permission by the Menominee Indians, which was approved by the War Department, to construct a sawmill and grist mill on the unsurveyed Indian lands; in return, they were to saw lumber and grind grain for the Menominee tribe and the U.S. government "at reasonable expense." The dam and mill were built at what is now the junction of Raymond Street and Riverside Avenue. The water-powered sawmill cut six to eight thousand feet of timber daily. The first lumber cut was used to build the first frame house in Marinette, the home of Queen Marinette. Samuel Farnsworth later obtained the mill at sheriff's sale for 18 barrels of whitefish. In 1844, Dr. J.C. Hall and H.R. Jerome purchased the mill, but abandoned it the following year when they built a larger one on the Michigan side of the river.

In 1856, the first steam sawmill on the river was built in Menekaunee by the New York Lumber Company. Five years later, Chicago businessmen Jesse Spaulding, A.C. Brown, and Philetus Sawyer took over the mill, which burned in 1869 and again in 1871; but like the phoenix, the mill arose from its ashes and re-opened in 1872 as the Menominee River Lumber Company. In 1895, the company lost its third mill by fire, but again rebuilt and operated for a few more years.

Fire was an extreme hazard to these early mills; almost all burned at one time or another, though most were rebuilt. In 1895, the heyday of the lumber industry on the Menominee, there were 22 sawmills on the river, 9 on the Marinette side.

Another group of investors from Chicago and Milwaukee, Nelson and Harrison Ludington, and Daniel Wells, Jr., opened the N. Ludington Company in 1856, near Mission Point, upriver from Menekaunee. Isaac Stephenson gained control of this mill in 1868. After his death, in 1919, the mill and lumberyard were sold to the H.C. Below Company; in 1921 the mill burned and was not rebuilt. When the N. Ludington Company dissolved, in 1944, it had been in existence for 76 years.

In 1866, the William McCarney mill was established. It burned in 1871, and was rebuilt the following year. This was to become known as Marinette Sawmill Company's No. 1 Mill, and was eventually sold to Edward Scofield. About 1897, the mill was torn down and the machinery sold.



Last yoke of oxen used in county lumbering

In 1888, the Marinette Sawmill Company's No. 2 Mill was built a short distance below the present site of the M & M Box Company. This second mill later became Sawyer Goodman Company's No. 2 Mill. About 1905, Charles Goodman built a planing mill, and began to ship lumber direct to the trade by rail. The Sawyer Goodman Company became the largest shipper of lumber on the river. Their first mill, built in Menekaunee in 1880, was the last mill operating on the Menominee River in Marinette, when it closed at noon on July 31, 1931, ending a century of sawmill operations on the Menominee.

Several mills were built on islands of the Menominee River. In 1866, the Hamilton and Merryman Company built a mill on Merryman's Island, at the foot of Newberry Avenue. A shingle and planing mill were added, later. These mills burned in the late 1890's, and were never rebuilt. Thereafter, their logs were sawed at the R.C. Merryman mill, which had been opened in 1878, and continued in operation until 1906, when it was dismantled and the machinery shipped to the west coast.

Daniel Wells, Jr., Andrew Stephenson, and Louis Gram built a sawmill in 1867 on an island at the foot of Stanton Street. Three years later, Stephenson and Gram sold their interests to Carney and Witbeck, and the H. Witbeck Company was formed. This mill operated until 1904, when it was sold to Carney's sons, who dismantled it and moved the machinery to Canada. The mill site was purchased two years later by the City of Marinette.

The "Red Mill," built by Isaac Stephenson about 1889 on Stephenson Island, downriver from the present Interstate Bridge, was used only to saw Stephenson's logs, and had no rail connections.

Like the Menominee, the Peshtigo River traversed rich timberlands, and the Peshtigo Lumber Company's large saw and planing mill was a mainstay of the city for many years. Under the ownership of William Ogden, the company "created" Peshtigo Harbor as a company town, extending its lumbering operations to the

very mouth of the river, and beyond by barge to the cities to the south, particularly to Ogden's lumberyards in Chicago. Badger Paper Mills occupies the old Peshtigo Lumber Co. site today.

In Coleman, the Little River Mill (later sold to E.E. Bolles & Company) and the Brault Mill contributed greatly to the early development of the settlement. Wausaukee was a lumbering town from its beginnings until the end of the 19th century, when the pine was exhausted and farming and stock raising began to take over. Dunbar's chief industry in its early days was the Girard Lumber Company. One of Niagara's earliest settlers, John Stoveken, Sr., put in a small pulp mill in 1889. This was purchased and enlarged by the Badger Paper Company of Kaukauna in 1890, and in 1899 rebuilt and again enlarged by Kimberly-Clark to become one of the largest and highest speed mills in the U.S. at that time. The Niagara Paper Company today maintains a large labor force, and is a major strength in the economy of the community.

With the development of the sawmills, associated industry appeared on the Menominee River. In 1866, the Menominee River Boom Company (initially called the Menominee River Manufacturing Company, though no products were manufactured) was formed to sort and divide logs for the various sawmills. A dam was built at the head of the rapids between Marinette and Menominee, and another several miles downriver. Eventually, 44 dams were built by the Boom Company on the Menominee and its tributaries, to aid in bringing the logs down the river; piers and driving booms were erected to aid the sorting of the logs. The directors and officers of this company were, not surprisingly, giants of the lumber industry: Nels and Harrington Ludington; Isaac, S.M., and Andrew Stephenson; Charles Ellis; Fred Carney; A.C. Merryman; Jesse Spaulding; A.A. Carpenter; and W.O. Goodman. By the time of the last log drive of the Menominee River Boom Company, in the summer of 1917, 33 of its dams were still in use.

Pioneer Industry Built Our Economic Basis

In 1867, Goddard, White, and W.A. Ellis opened a factory on Joe Bart (now Stephenson) Island for the manufacture of sash, doors, and blinds; and for planing and moulding. This plant burned in 1870, was rebuilt, and burned again in 1875. In 1879, James Tweedie built a new factory on the same site, which operated until the late 1880's. Tweedie was Marinette County's first Coroner.

D. Clint Prescott, Trumbell, and Curver built a machine shop for repair and manufacture of sawmill and mining machinery on Joe Bart Island in 1867. During the fire that destroyed the Goddard, White and Ellis planing mill, in 1870, Prescott's plant was also destroyed. The company moved to new quarters on Main Street, and the name was changed to Marinette Iron Works. The Prescotts developed the steam-feed and set works, which revolutionized the sawing of lumber. They also manufactured car wheels and pumping machinery for the copper and iron mines in northern Michigan. In the early 1890's, they moved their plant to Duluth, but a few years later, they returned and built another large plant in Menominee.

The first flour mill north of Oconto was built by McGinty, Whale and McGloin in 1879. This water-powered mill had a capacity of 100 barrels of flour per day. During World War I, the large flour mill corporations invaded the territory of the small mill operators, and by 1923 the Marinette Flour Mill, which had been one of Marinette's most prosperous industries, was forced to close. The brand name, "Wis-ko-ta" is still remembered by older residents.

In 1880, the Marinette Paper Company began the gradual turning of the local economy to paper manufacture. Many changes have taken place in the industry over the years, and the company changed hands several times. The Victory Bag and Paper Company, known as the Marinette Paper Company's converter plant, was started in 1918 and operated until 1930, when it was changed to tissue and towel conversion by the Continental Paper and Bag Company. It is now owned by Scott Paper Company, one of the two largest employers in Marinette County.

The Menekaunee Planing Mill was started by Jacob Lindem in 1882. He was soon joined by Sofus Miller, who bought out Lindem in 1907, and the name was changed to Miller Sash and Door, as it remains today.

The M & M Box Company was built by John B. Nadeau (father of Dr. A.T. Nadeau) for Cook and Rathborne of Chicago. Incorporated by Hastings, McNeil and Nichols in 1890, the factory was sold to the Peninsular Box and Lumber Company of Menominee in 1916. In 1927, it was purchased by the Coffey brothers, and is today under the management of the Coffey family.

In the county, another industry became prominent during the latter part of the 19th century: the granite quarries developed by William Amberg. Many fine public buildings erected around the turn of the century in the large cities of the U.S. were built from



Employees. Pestigo Lumber Co. Sawmill at Peshtigo Harbor

granite taken from the quarries near Athelstane and Amberg. Most of these quarries were closed when Amberg withdrew from the quarrying business in 1902, beset by labor problems and aware that cement was beginning to replace stone in the building and street-paving industries.

A non-lumber industry which was not successful in Marinette was the A.W. Stevens Company of Auburn, New York, manufacturers of farm machinery. In 1896, Marinette businessmen learned that this company was seeking a new location closer to its growing markets in the central states. After months of negotiation, it was decided that the company would locate here if Marinette citizens would subscribe \$300,000 of stock. This was accomplished, and the plant was built on Pierce Avenue, and began operations in 1898. However, output exceeded demand, for the country was not yet recovered from a depression. The plant and grounds were sold to the Kreiter Piano Company, but after several years, this company also discontinued business here, and the property was eventually taken over by the county for non-payment of taxes.

A non-lumber industry which became highly successful, in spite of an inauspicious beginning, is a chemical industry. The Lignum Chemical Company, a Canadian firm experimenting in the manufacture of a stock food from sawdust, built a plant here, but was not successful in its attempts at this conversion. When the plant was offered at sheriff's sale, it was purchased by Francis Hood, who had been its manager, and

Gould Watson, its salesman. Hood had become interested in the manufacture of liquid sulfur dioxide. In 1919, H.C. Higley joined the company as chief chemist, to work on the production of very pure and dry sulphur dioxide, for use in electric refrigeration. The Ansul Company derives its name from this product, *anhydrous sulphur dioxide*, and is today one of the largest employers in Marinette County.

Scott Paper Company, with nationally distributed convenience paper products, has increased employment and production steadily. Marinette Marine Corporation, builders of small to medium size naval ships, has earned one of the finest reputations for quality of any shipbuilder, and Ansul Chemical Company, with diversified fire fighting equipment, have been the backbone of the economy in the city of Marinette, adding to the major contributions of Rodman Industry, Safeguard, and Kargaard. Combined, these operations have given not only the city, but the entire area a well balanced economy.

In recent years, diversification of industry has occurred both in Marinette and throughout the county. Major employers are engaged in shipbuilding; farm machinery, electrical equipment and non-electrical machinery manufacture; as well as the making of wood products, and the manufacture of chemicals. A more recent "industry," recreation, is coming into its own as the county becomes known for its fine recreational areas, and the rivers that once teemed with logs, now carry sports enthusiasts.