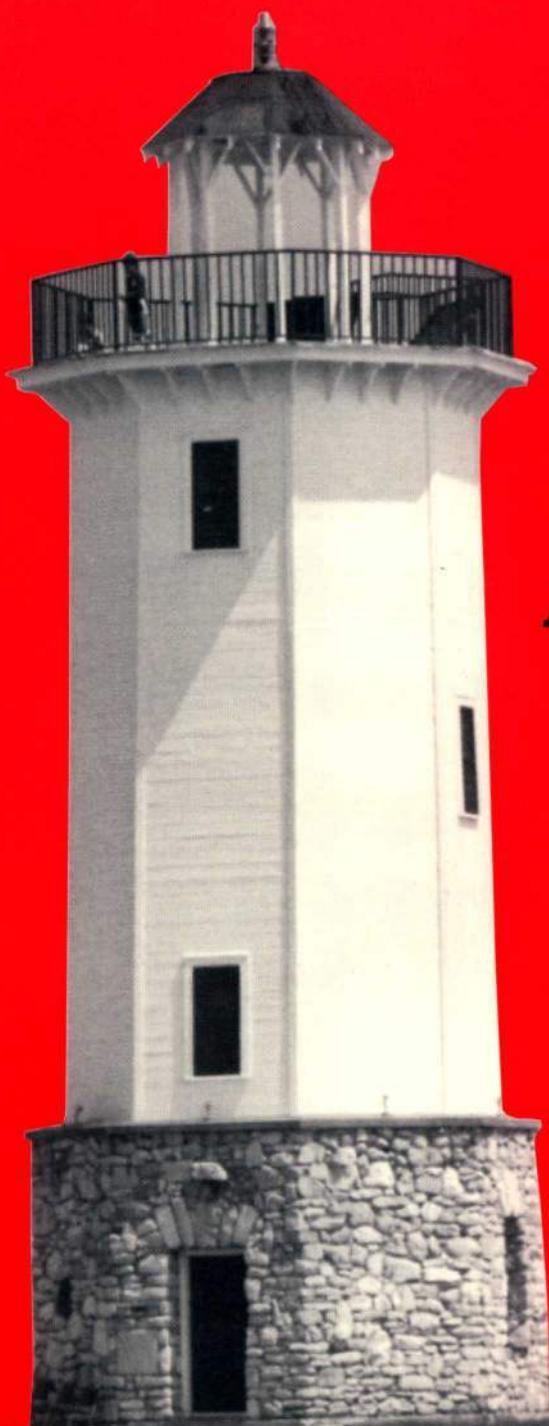# *Foot of the Lake*

An Early History of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin

by
Cindy Barden

Foot of the Lake:

An Early History of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin

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A Note from the Author:

So much has happened; so much has changed since the first white settlers arrived in Fond du Lac in 1836. It would take a much larger book to cover all the notable events, businesses, and people who contributed to the growth of our city. Since that is beyond the scope of this project, an attempt has been made to present an overview of the early history of our city and to touch on a few of the many events and people who have contributed to the uniqueness of Fond du Lac. A brief bibliography is included at the end of the book for those interested in more information.

While researching material for this book, I found many interesting and informative sources. However, not all sources agree on dates, spellings of names, and other facts. Discrepancies are not unusual in old records. Every attempt has been made to provide accurate information on the early history of Fond du Lac.

Special thanks to the Fond du Lac Public Library Board of Trustees and Leslyn Shires, Kay Conrad, Mike Mentzer, and Lillian Nolan for making this book possible.

Cindy Barden

Introduction

The Fond du Lac Public Library Board of Trustees has published *Foot of the Lake: An Early History of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin* for the children of the city. It is the Board's hope that the children who read the book will have a greater appreciation for the people and events that shaped Fond du Lac and will develop pride in our city and interest in its future.

The Board is indebted to Cindy Barden, who gladly accepted the challenge to research and write the book. Special thanks are due Michael Mentzer, author of *Fond du Lac County: A Gift of the Glacier*, for editorial and content advice; Steven A Rosenberg, third grade teacher at Evans School, for checking the manuscript for reading level; and Mary Walker Dillmann for layout and design. Many photographs in the book were borrowed from the Fond du Lac County Historical Society, Adams House Resource Center. The Board appreciates the Society's support and the assistance Adams House Director, John Ebert, provided in locating the photographs.

The Board would also like to express appreciation to Kay Conrad, head of the Library's Reference Department, for providing editorial assistance and for locating the photographs; to Lillian Nolan, head of the Children's Department, for helpful suggestions and editorial support; and to Leslyn Shires, Director of the Library, for coordinating the project.

This Sesquicentennial project has been made possible because of the generous support that the Library receives from the trust created by Bernice and Robert Seefeld.

FOND DU LAC...LONG, LONG AGO

Long before anyone lived in the area we know as Fond du Lac, the landscape was very different. Glaciers covered much of Wisconsin during the last Ice Age. The glaciers were sheets of ice and snow up to two miles thick.

As the glaciers moved, they flattened mountains. They formed hills, valleys, and flat plains. When the glaciers retreated, they left lakes, rivers, streams, and fertile farmland in Fond du Lac County.

Wisconsin Glaciation

— Ice Age Trail

Glaciated Area

Wisconsin Terminal Moraine
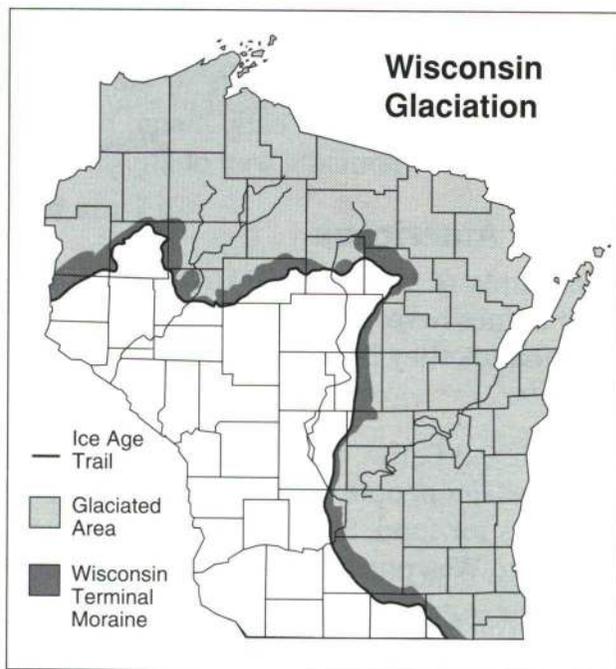
The shaded area shows how much of Wisconsin was covered by glaciers during the last Ice Age.

SUPPLE'S MARSH

A REGISTERED CITY OF FOND DU LAC HISTORIC LANDMARK

SUPPLE'S MARSH CAME INTO BEING ALONG WITH LAKE WINNEBAGO AFTER RETREAT OF A GLACIAL ICE SHEET THAT COVERED THIS REGION 10,000 YEARS AGO.

THE RETREATING GLACIER DEPOSITED GRAVEL AND ROCKS THAT BLOCKED ANCIENT NORTHWARD FLOWING DRAINAGE SYSTEMS, THEREBY CREATING A LARGE LAKE KNOWN AS GLACIAL LAKE OSHKOSH. CENTURIES LATER A PORTION OF THIS LAKE BECAME LAKE WINNEBAGO AND ITS ADJACENT MARSHLANDS.

FROM THAT TIME FORWARD, SUPPLE'S MARSH HAS BEEN A HAVEN FOR FISH AND GAME. HERE WAS WHERE THE WINNEBAGO INDIAN FISHED AND HUNTED LONG BEFORE THE WHITE MAN APPEARED. AS THE YEARS PROGRESSED, WHITE HUNTERS AND ANGLERS TOOK OVER, CONCENTRATING ON THE MARSH FOR PROFIT, SPORT AND FOOD.

ON MARCH 25, 1929, MATHIAS SUPPLE PURCHASED THE MARSH FROM THE WISCONSIN CENTRAL LAND CO. THE HOLDING FIRM FOR THE SOO LINE RAILWAY. THE SUPPLE FAMILY STARTED A FUR FARM HERE IN 1932, HARVESTING AS MANY AS 6,000 MUSKRATS IN ONE YEAR.

THE CITY OF FOND DU LAC ACQUIRED THE 240 ACRE MARSH FROM THE SUPPLE FAMILY IN 1987. HUNTING AND TRAPPING ARE BANNED NOW AND SUPPLE'S MARSH HAS BECOME A NATURE CONSERVANCY FOR ALL TO ENJOY.

Supple's Marsh is a wetlands formed by the retreat of the glaciers northwest of Fond du Lac along Lake Winnebago.

THE FIRST RESIDENTS OF FOND DU LAC

The first people who lived in Fond du Lac arrived about 10,000 years ago when the last Ice Age ended. Nomadic hunters moved south from Alaska and Canada, following large herds of animals. They hunted antelope, caribou, musk-oxen, saber-tooth cats, bison, horses, camels, and mammoths. Some continued their nomadic way of life. Others settled in the area.

Native Americans

Thousands of years ago, Native Americans, called Mound Builders, made their homes here. Little is known about their culture. Their name came from the mounds they built shaped like panthers, turtles, birds, bears, and other animals.

About 500 B.C. the Woodland Tribes moved to the area. They lived in small villages. The people hunted and fished. They gathered wild plants, berries, and nuts for food. Some grew corn, squash, and beans. Later, other tribes moved to Wisconsin, forced west by the growing number of white settlers.

During the late 1600s the Winnebago, Menominee, Potawatomi, Kickapoo, and Mascoutin tribes lived in Fond du Lac County. Some lived in Fond du Lac. Others lived in villages at Taycheedah, Pipe, Brothertown, Stockbridge, Van Dyne, and Green Lake. The Winnebago were the dominant tribe. They called themselves the *Wau-chon-gra*.
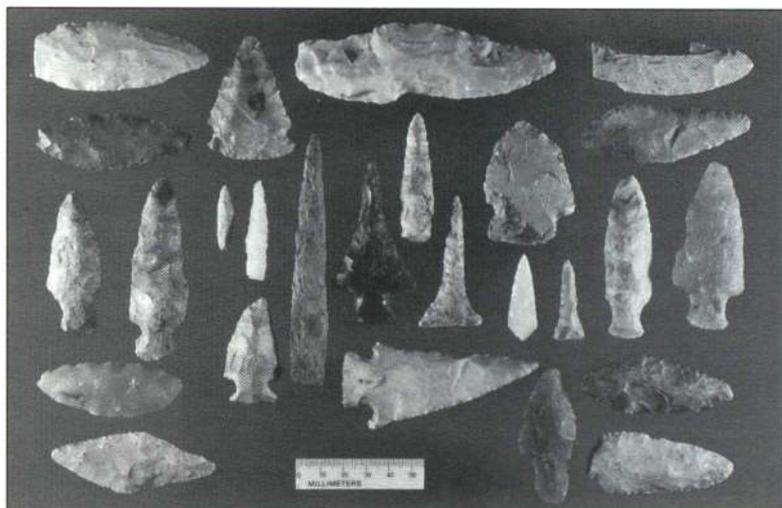
Stone knives and drills found in Fond du Lac County. Items are 1,500 to 8,000 years old.

The Winnebago

The Winnebago people used wood, stone, and copper tools for cooking, hunting, fishing, and farming. They built villages along trails and waterways. Rivers, lakes, and streams provided food, water, and transportation. Their well-used trails followed the easiest routes of travel. Many Indian trails later became routes for highways and railroads.

Winnebago Villages in Fond du Lac
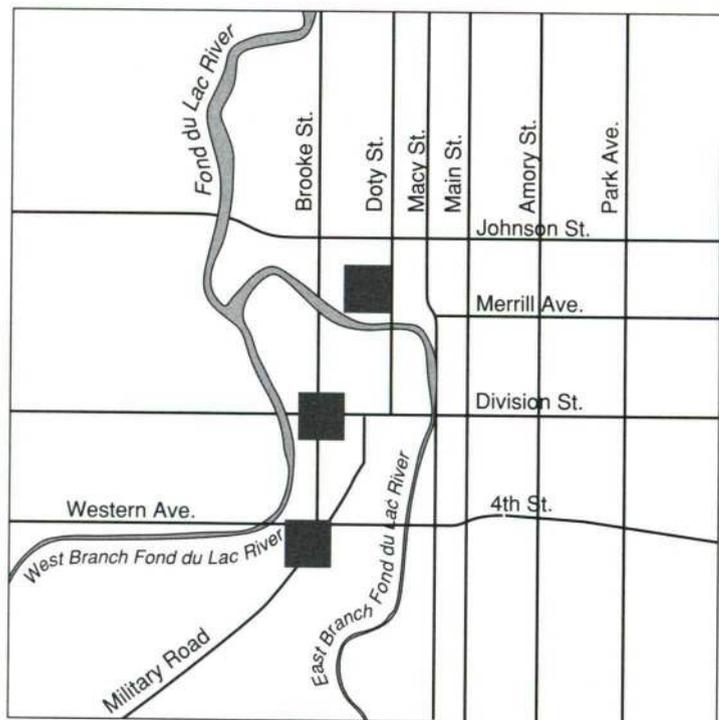
When white explorers arrived, they found three Winnebago villages along the Fond du Lac River. (The shaded areas on the map show where the villages were.)

On September 15, 1832, the U.S. Government and the Winnebagos signed the Rock Island Treaty. The Winnebago Nation sold all lands south of the Fox and Wisconsin Rivers. By 1834 most Native Americans from Fond du Lac County lived on reservations.

EXPLORATIONS OF JEAN NICOLET
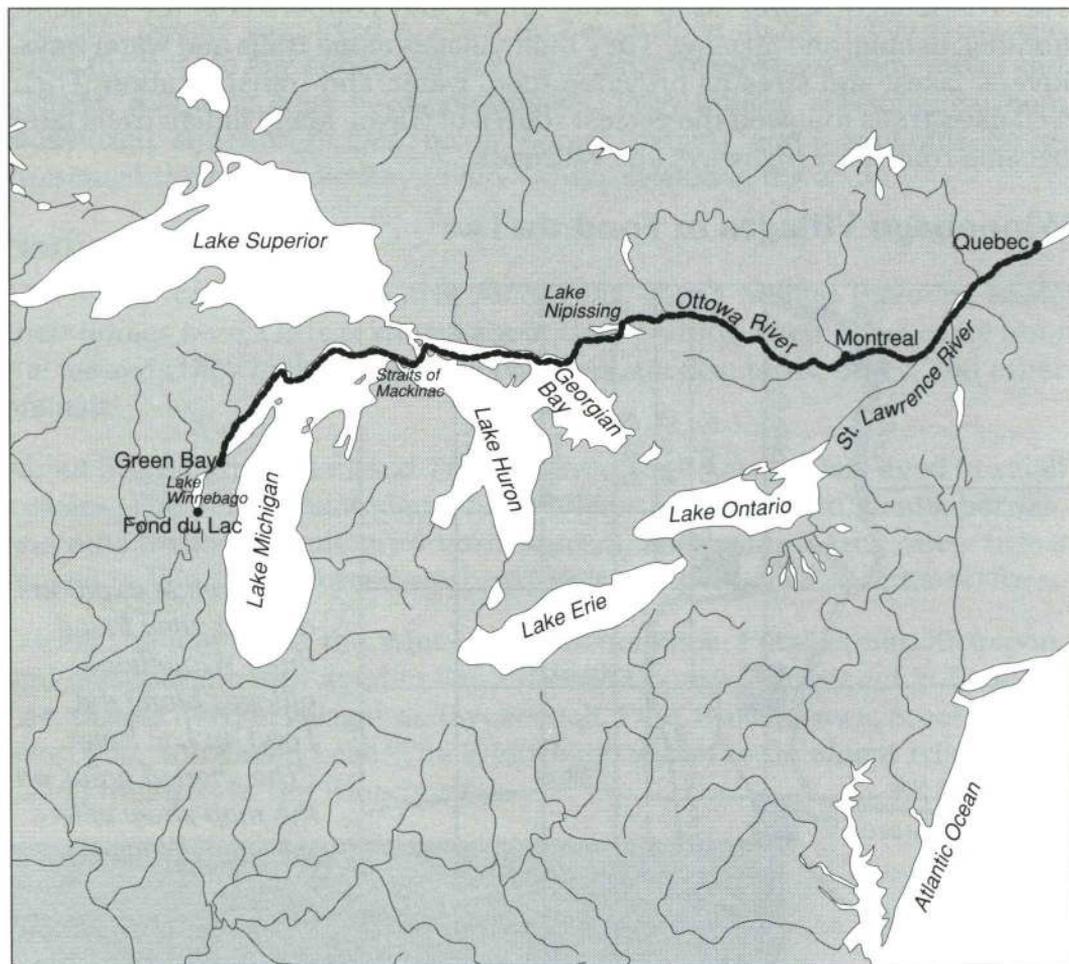
In 1634 Jean Nicolet traveled by land and water from Quebec, Canada to the present site of Green Bay, Wisconsin. Like many explorers of the time, he searched for the fabled water passage across North America to China.

French trappers explored the south end of Lake Winnebago. They called the area Fond du Lac. The name means the foot or end of the lake in French. It was the farthest point on the lake from their fur trading centers at Green Bay.

FROM FRENCH, TO BRITISH, TO U.S.

The French were the first Europeans to explore and claim the land that became Wisconsin. In 1761 the British gained control. After the Revolutionary War, the newly-formed United States claimed the territory for its own. Wisconsin was part of the Michigan Territory at first. It became a separate territory in 1836, then a state in 1848.

An Early Description

Before people built towns, farms, railroads, or roads, Fond du Lac was mostly flat prairies, marshes, and forests. British author and historian, Frederick Marryat, wrote this about Fond du Lac in 1838:

> "We encamped upon a very high ridge...studded with oak trees. I never saw a more beautiful view...From the high ground...we looked down...upon a prairie flat and level...as far as the eye could scan..."

> Beyond the prairie, Marryat saw thick forests and "...Winnebago Lake, smooth and reflecting like a mirror the brilliant tints of the setting sun..."

Today, the view from the Ledge east of Fond du Lac is very different. The city has grown. The forests are gone. Farm lands surround the city. The sight of Lake Winnebago with the sun reflecting off the water remains a beautiful sight.

TRADING POSTS

The French built the first known trading post in the city in 1787. Jacob Franks was the first trader. An historical marker on the south side of West Johnson Street between Brooke Street and the Fond du Lac River shows where it once stood.

C.W. Butterfield tells this story about an early trader in his 1880 *History of Fond du Lac County*: "A Spaniard by the name of Ace...and his clerk were enticed a short distance from his house, by some Indians of the Rock River band, and murdered. The Indians then endeavored to enter the house, but the wife of Ace, with a gun, kept them at bay until assistance arrived from the friendly Indians of the Taycheedah Village..."
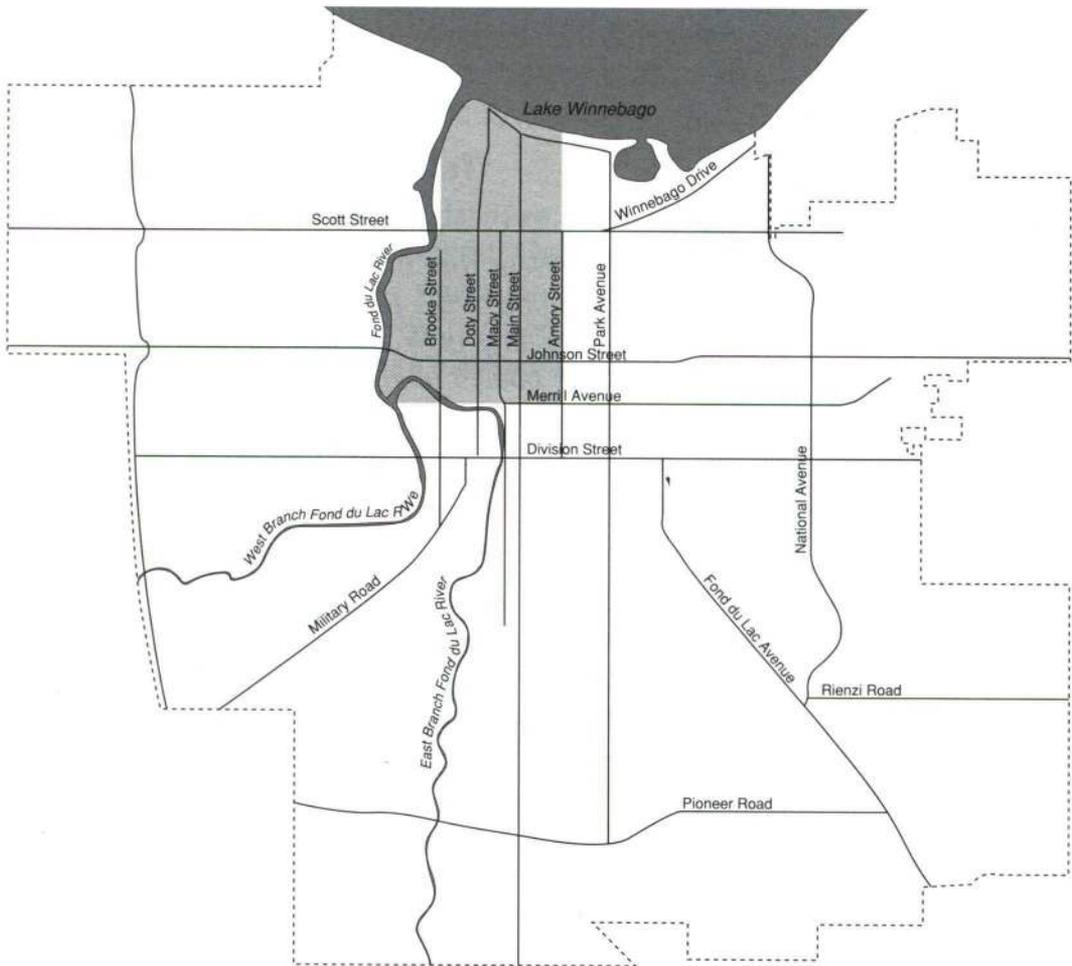
Goods in Exchange for Furs

The Winnebagos trapped many mammals for their fur. They traded the skins of fox, mink, bear, marten, rabbit, squirrel, and beaver. They received blankets, guns, knives, traps, clothing, tobacco, and other goods in exchange.

Furs were in great demand in the eastern states. Traders sometimes traveled by boat to collect more furs. They paddled canoes along the Fond du Lac River as far as they could go. Some traders took the furs across Lake Winnebago to Green Bay. Others went across land and water to cities along the Mississippi River.

The site of the earliest trading post was at the junction of the east and west branches of the Fond du Lac River.

THEN...AND NOW: CITY BOUNDARIES

Lake Winnebago

Winnebago Drive

Scott Street

Fond du Lac River

Brooke Street

Doty Street

Macy Street

Main Street

Amory Street

Park Avenue

Johnson Street

Merrill Avenue

Division Street

National Avenue

West Branch Fond du Lac River

Military Road

East Branch Fond du Lac River

Fond du Lac Avenue

Rienzi Road

Pioneer Road

The shaded area shows the land set aside for the city by James Doty in 1835 compared to its present size. Since no permanent settlers lived here at that time, Fond du Lac was a city only on paper.

JAMES DOTY, LAND SPECULATOR
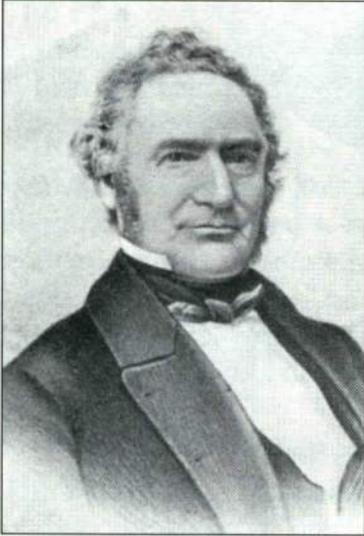
Born in New York in 1799, James Duane Doty became one of the leading land speculators in the early days of Wisconsin. He and his partners bought land at low prices hoping the value would rise so they would make a profit.

Doty's Early Career

In 1818 young James Doty traveled to Detroit where he became a lawyer. Five years later President James Monroe appointed Doty federal judge for the western part of the Michigan Territory. His duties required traveling through parts of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Iowa. As he traveled, Doty looked for land that might be valuable in the future.

Investments in Fond du Lac

Doty believed the land at the southern end of Lake Winnebago might someday become a great city. The nearby Fox, Rock, Wisconsin, Sheboygan, and Milwaukee Rivers offered transportation routes for people and goods.

Late in 1835 Doty and his partners bought land in the marshy area where the Fond du Lac River flows into Lake Winnebago. Much of that area is now part of Lakeside Park. They formed the Fond du Lac Company to buy and sell more land.

Doty helped many communities grow. When he found a place he thought would be good for a future city, he bought land. Then he drew up a village on paper and sold lots to settlers. He worked to connect these areas to the outside world with roads, railroads, and canals. This increased the value of land he and his partners owned.

Fond du Lac, State Capital?

The Wisconsin Territorial Legislature met in 1836. John Arndt proposed Fond du Lac for the new capital. His motion failed 7 to 6. James Doty convinced the legislature to select Madison instead. Madison was not even a village then, but Doty and his partners owned much land there. They knew their land would become more valuable if Madison became the capital.

Doty helped develop many cities in Wisconsin, but some historians question his motives. They believe personal profit may have been his main goal.

Doty never lived in Fond du Lac. He built his home east of the city on the Ledge. He lived there from 1838 until 1840.

FOND DU LAC'S FIRST PIONEERS

In February 1836 Colwert and Edward Pier met James Doty. The Vermont farmers each bought 160 acres of land in Fond du Lac. Colwert and his wife, Fanna, agreed to serve as managers of the Fond du Lac House owned by the Fond du Lac Company.

In May Colwert traveled from Green Bay by horse. Fanna came by boat with products for the store and household goods. The voyage took nine days. She arrived at the Fond du Lac House on June 6, 1836.

Fanna Pier Meets the Indian Women

About a half hour after she arrived, Indian women came to trade. They offered feathers in exchange for pork and flour. In a short time, Fanna ran out of supplies, but she had enough feathers to make two large feather beds.

This sign stands near the corner of Johnson and Brooke Street. The Fond du Lac House was east of Brooke Street and slightly north of where Rees Street crosses Brooke.

The Fond du Lac House

This painting by Fond du Lac artist Mark Harrison shows the Fond du Lac House, first home of Colwert and Fanna Pier.

The Fond du Lac House served as the Piers' home. It was also a tavern, a resting place for travelers, and the land office for people who wanted to buy land from the Fond du Lac Company. The building was made of three log cabins joined together. An open hallway separated the dining room and sitting room. The kitchen was in the back. Stairs led to bedrooms in a loft.

Colwert Pier moved out of the house after Fanna's death in 1838. Dr. Mason Darling lived there for a few months with his family while building his home. In 1844 Clock and Weikert's General Store took over part of the building. Later it became a boarding house for men building the city's first steam mill.

The Second Family in Fond du Lac

For almost a year, Colwert and Fanna were the only white residents in Fond du Lac. Edward (Colwert's brother) and Harriet (Fanna's sister) moved to the city with their two young daughters in 1837. They also brought the first cow to the city.

Edward and Harriet Pier built their home at 681 South Main Street. At first their small log cabin had no doors or windows. The house grew as they improved and expanded it. Harriet taught the first school in their cabin.

Born in Vermont in 1807, Edward Pier only attended school until he was 12. He worked as a farmer and cobbler, making and mending shoes before moving to Fond du Lac.

Edward served on the first County Board of Supervisors and became its president for 10 years. He was elected County Treasurer, State Senator, and Superintendent of the Poor. He became president of the Fond du Lac Savings Bank and the First National Bank.

The Next Generation

Colwert K. Pier (son of Edward and Harriet) was the first man from Fond du Lac to enlist in the Army during the Civil War. He married Kate Hamilton. They had four daughters. One died very young. Daughters, Harriet, Kate, Caroline and their mother all earned law degrees from the University of Wisconsin. Together, they practiced law at the Pier Law Office.

EARLY HOMES

When the pioneers arrived, their first task was to build a home. Until that was done, some camped on the ground or lived in their wagons. Often, neighbors gathered to build a new house at a "house-raising."

Most families built log homes. They used tree bark or sod for the roof and filled the cracks between the logs with mud. They

The log house at the Galloway House and Village looks much like homes built by early settlers in the city.

covered windows with greased paper and wooden shutters. For the door, they hung split logs from wooden hinges.

Fireplaces provided heat and light. Pioneer women cooked in large kettles and long-handled pans over the open flames. They ate what they hunted, gathered, or grew. Cows provided milk and butter.

People did not have indoor plumbing or running water. They carried water from wells and streams for cooking and bathing. Candles, lanterns, or wick lamps provided light. A wick lamp was a dish filled with animal fat or oil with a rag for a wick.

Most families slept, cooked, ate, worked, and played in one large room. As families grew or relatives moved in, they added more rooms or a sleeping loft.

DR. MASON DARLING ARRIVES

Although few people lived in the new village of Fond du Lac, they needed a doctor. The Fond du Lac Company offered Dr. Mason Darling several lots and an 80-acre farm in exchange for his office property in Sheboygan. Dr. Darling agreed. He arrived with his wife, Naomi, three children, and several friends in 1838.

His log cabin farm house stood at the northwest corner of Macy and First Streets. This area later became the center of the city's downtown. Dr. Darling bought more land nearby. He divided his farm into small lots. Some he sold to merchants, lawyers, and doctors. He also gave away lots for schools, churches, and the first courthouse.

Dr. Mason Darling, sometimes called the "Father of Fond du Lac," was the city's first doctor.
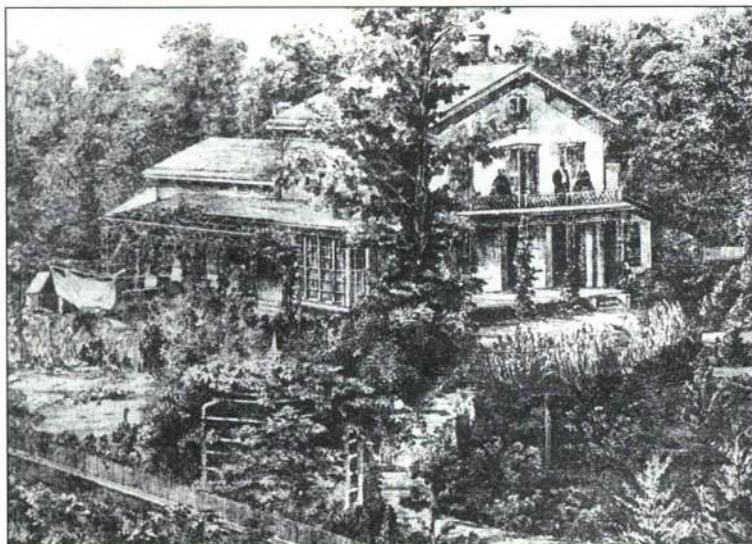
Dr. Darling's home in Fond du Lac.

Dr. Darling's Achievements

Dr. Darling served in the Wisconsin Territorial Legislature from 1840 to 1847. He became Speaker of the House in 1846 and the first representative in Congress when Wisconsin became a state in 1848.

Dr. Darling was also the founder and first president of the Fond du Lac and Wisconsin medical societies and president of the Lawrence University Board of Directors. He became a leader in founding the State Historical Society.

Dr. Darling became the first mayor when Fond du Lac became a city in 1852. He also started the city's first bank.
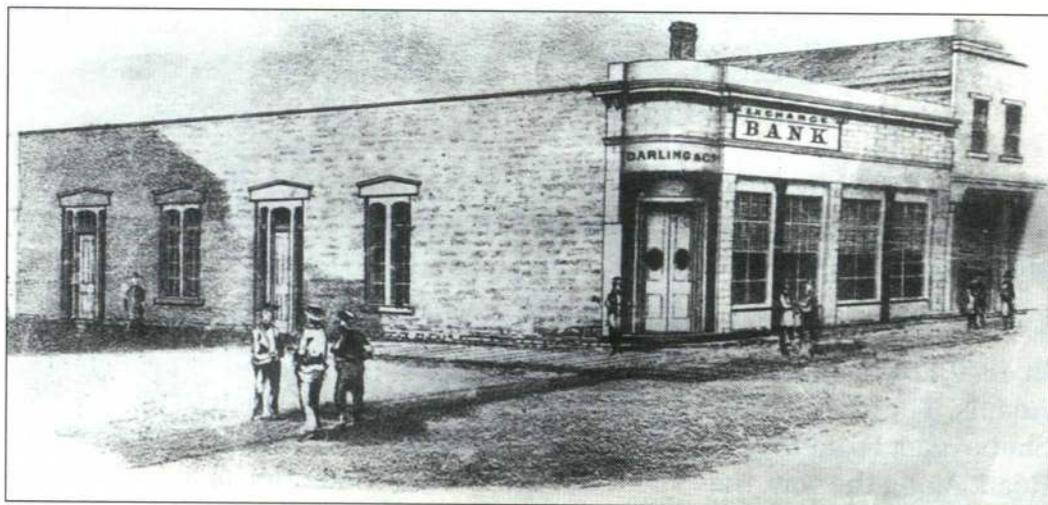
Dr. Darling opened Fond du Lac's first bank in 1850, the Exchange Bank of Darling and Company.

THE GALLOWAYS
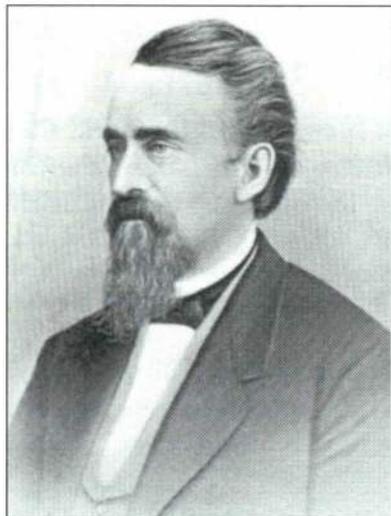
Edwin H. Galloway

Maria Adams Galloway

Edwin H. Galloway arrived in Fond du Lac in 1848. He became important in banking, lumber, and the dairy industry. Galloway served two terms in the State Legislature and became city mayor.

In 1849 Edwin H. Galloway returned to Fond du Lac with his bride, Maria Adams. They traveled by boat and stagecoach from Lowville, New York to Sheboygan. From there they continued by stagecoach across the Old Plank Road. Along the way, they spent the night at the Wade House in Greenbush.

Their granddaughter said their first house was "little more than a shack." As the family grew and prospered, they built a log cabin. When business ventures succeeded, they bought a small farmhouse built by Selim Newton in 1846, but it didn't stay small for long.

Theresa Galloway Ebernau remembered her grandmother, Maria Galloway, saying, "...as Spring started bursting forth, Grandfather started to remodel." Edwin remodeled and added rooms. He hired experts to carve the elaborate wooden trim, doors, and railings. When completed in 1880, the Victorian mansion contained 30 rooms, plus attic and cellar.

Galloway House and Village

Edwin P. Galloway, grandson of Edwin H. and Maria, donated the family home, carriage house, and land to the Fond du Lac County Historical Society in 1955. A tour of the beautiful Galloway House shows how the family lived around 1900. Their home was not typical of most city houses. Then, most people had simple wooden homes with outhouses. The Galloways had two indoor bathrooms. Rainwater stored in a tank on the roof provided running water.

Visitors today enjoy a walk through the past at Galloway House and Village.

A Tour of the Village

The Fond du Lac County Historical Society has moved other buildings to the site to form a small village near Galloway House. These buildings display equipment, furniture, clothing, and other items used and made in the early days of the city, like the pianos made at Fond du Lac's Strascino Piano Co. in the late 1800s.

At the newspaper and print shop, equipment used in the late 1800s is on display. An old train depot and antique caboose remind visitors of the city's early railroad days.

THE BOYLE BROTHERS

John and Henry Boyle arrived in Fond du Lac from New York in 1873. They opened a retail grocery business on Main and Johnson. They invented "yeast foam" which was made at The Northwestern Yeast Company. An advertisement for their product claimed they had the largest yeast factory in the world. They sold a family-size package of yeast for five cents. Housewives needed yeast to make homemade bread. Yeast foam was so popular, they soon became millionaires.

Henry Boyle

Gifts Benefit People of Fond du Lac

Thanks to their offer of a loan, Mother Mary Agnes Hazotte was able to build the proposed $55,000 St. Agnes Hospital in 1896. The Boyles also donated much-needed equipment to the new hospital.

John Boyle donated the first building at Lakeside Park, in 1898, a pavilion where families could enjoy picnics and parties. He also built Boyle Hall, a sanitarium (medical center for long-term patients). The building was a gift to the Sisters of St. Agnes in honor of his mother. This four-story stone building with castle-like towers and red tile roof cost $25,000 to build. It later became part of St. Mary's Springs Academy.

In 1901 Henry Boyle built the three-story red brick Boyle Home for the Aged on North Park Avenue. He also provided money for operating expenses. The many generous gifts of John and Henry Boyle to the people of Fond du Lac helped the city grow and prosper.

THE MAIL ARRIVES

The Fond du Lac post office was in the building on the corner of First and Macy Streets from 1937 to 1968.

Mail sent from the East Coast traveled by horse, stagecoach, and boat to Green Bay. From there, men walked, rode horses, or paddled canoes to bring mail to Fond du Lac. Travel from Green Bay to Fond du Lac took three days by horseback.

A French-Indian man rode his horse from Green Bay to deliver the first mail to the city in February 1838. After that he walked back and forth between Fond du Lac and Green Bay every two weeks, carrying mail.

Colwert Pier served as the first postmaster. His home, the Fond du Lac House, became the first Post Office. When Dr. Darling became the postmaster in 1839, he used a room in his home. Other postmasters did the same.

People did not use stamps to mail letters at that time. The person who received mail paid to have it delivered.

FOND DU LAC MEN MARCH OFF TO WAR

Colwert Pier was the first Fond du Lac man to enlist in the Civil War.

Soon after the Civil War began in 1861, Fond du Lac men enlisted in the Union Army. Colwert K. Pier (son of Colwert and Fanna) became the city's first volunteer. The 88 "Badger Boys" of Company I formed the first local company of soldiers. They attended a grand party at the Lewis House (hotel) before leaving on May 2, 1861. Volunteers from Fond du Lac County formed six more companies of soldiers within the next few days.

Soldiers trained at Camp Hamilton on the west side of town near Bell Street. This later was renamed Camp Wood. Conditions at the swampy campground were often cold, wet, and miserable.

About 2,200 men from Fond du Lac County fought in the Civil War. The local newspaper said more volunteers from Fond du Lac County joined the Union Army than from any other county in Wisconsin. Not all men from the city were willing to go to war. Some ran away to avoid being drafted. Others paid about $300 for replacements to serve in their place.

General Bragg

Edward S. Bragg moved to Fond du Lac in 1850 from New York. He became the city's best known Civil War hero. He served as a general in the Union Army and was wounded. Another time he was knocked from his horse by the shock of a cannonball. After the war, he became an ambassador to Mexico, Cuba, and China. He served several terms in Congress before retiring in Fond du Lac.

MILITARY ROAD

James Doty convinced the government to build a road to connect Fond du Lac with Fort Howard (Green Bay), Fort Winnebago (Portage), and Fort Crawford (Prairie du Chien). He was appointed civilian commissioner in charge of the project. After surveyors laid out the route, soldiers built the road.
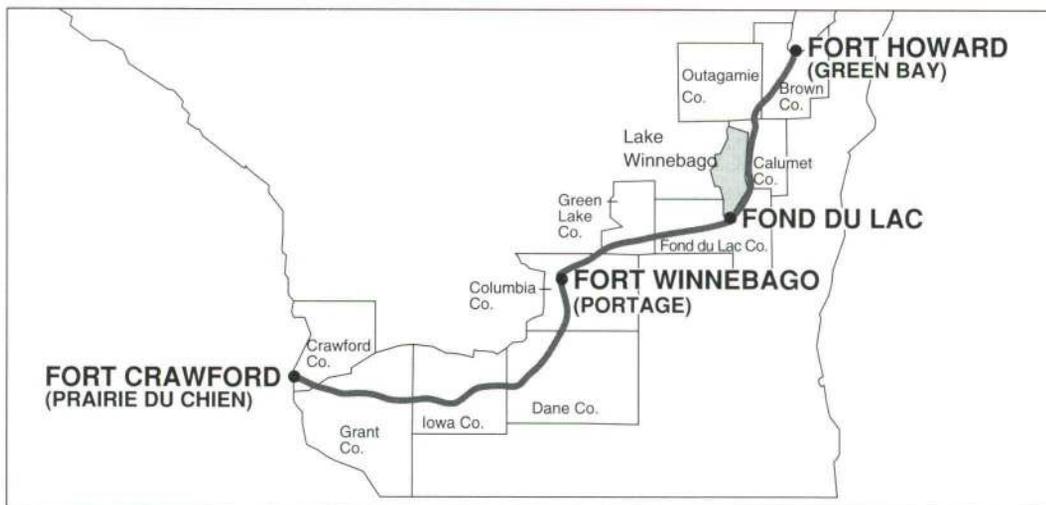
By today's standards, the Military Road wasn't much of a road. On the prairies, only wooden stakes marked the road. The only bridges were logs across the water. In swampy areas, soldiers cut logs and placed bundles of branches side by side to build the road.

One of the three Army men in charge of completing the Military Road was Colonel Zachary Taylor who became the twelfth president of the United States.
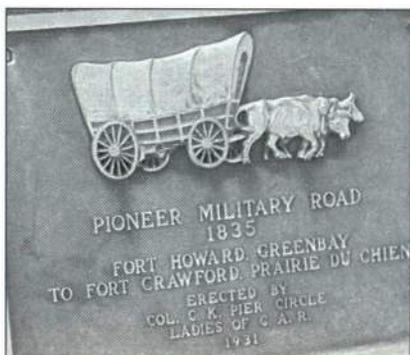
This marker shows oxen pulling a wagon. Stronger than horses, farmers needed oxen to pull plows and haul heavy loads.

TOLL ROADS AND STEAMBOATS

In 1880 historian C.W. Butterfield wrote: "With regard to roads, there was nothing of the kind worthy of the name. Indian trails were common, but they were unfit to travel on with vehicles. They were mere paths about two feet wide." He called the Military Road "a crude affair."

Toll Roads

The Military Road was an improvement, but not by much. Tax money could not be used for roads then. Private landowners built many of the early roads. In the late 1800s, plank roads linked the small villages around Fond du Lac. They were made of different sized boards and logs placed side by side.

People who traveled over the bumpy plank roads called them "corduroy roads." The old name for Winnebago Drive was Sheboygan Plank Road.

State Historical Society of Wisconsin. Image Whi(X3) 12675

Tolls Charged

To use the roads, travelers paid a fee called a toll. At the Luco Toll, riders on horseback paid one cent. People in sleds, sleighs or carriages pulled by two animals paid two cents. They paid another penny for each additional animal pulling the vehicle. Farmers paid four cents for twenty cattle and one cent for every twenty sheep or pigs taken on the road.

Poor Roads Made Travel Difficult

Although people paid tolls to use the roads, the owners did not always keep the roads in good shape. When it rained, even the best roads could become muddy ditches. In summer the roads were dry, dusty, and bumpy. Rain, mud, ice, and snow made traveling difficult most of the time.

Steamboats

Until 1843 people had little choice about how to travel. Either they went by land on bad roads or across the streams, lakes, and rivers of Wisconsin in canoes, rafts, or barges. They wanted an easier way to visit friends, conduct business, and move goods to market.

Steamboats sailed from Fond du Lac to Taycheedah, Neenah, Menasha, Brothertown, and Oshkosh. The trip down the Fond du Lac River and across Lake Winnebago was easier for people and goods on steamboats. Travel was not very fast. It took about five and a half hours to go to Menasha. In winter ice blocked the waterways. Storms any time of the year could make sailing on Lake Winnebago dangerous.
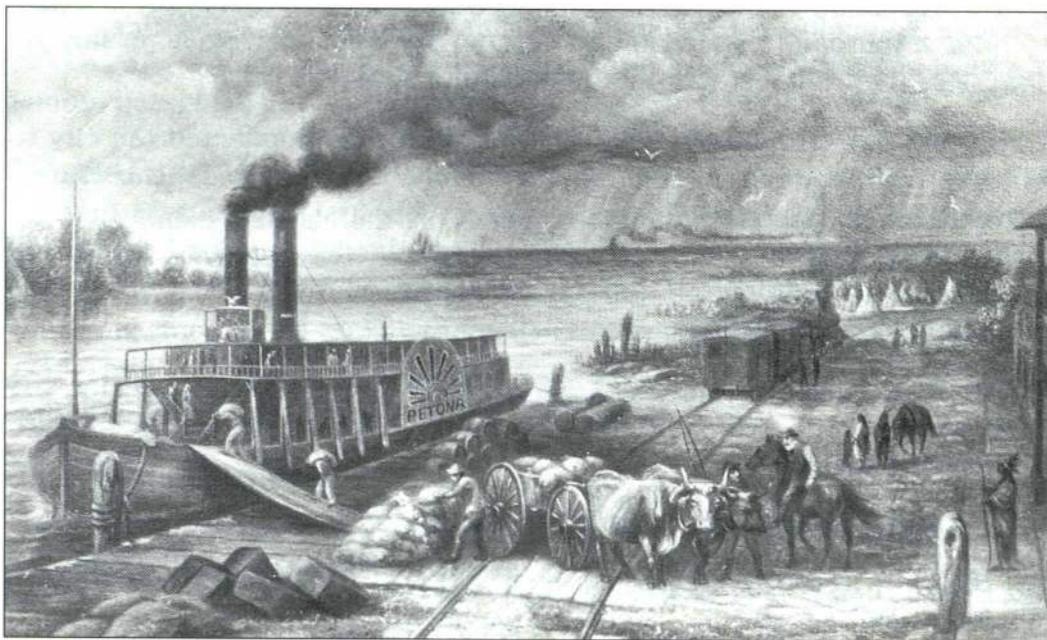
The Petona, built in 1849, was the second steamboat on Lake Winnebago.
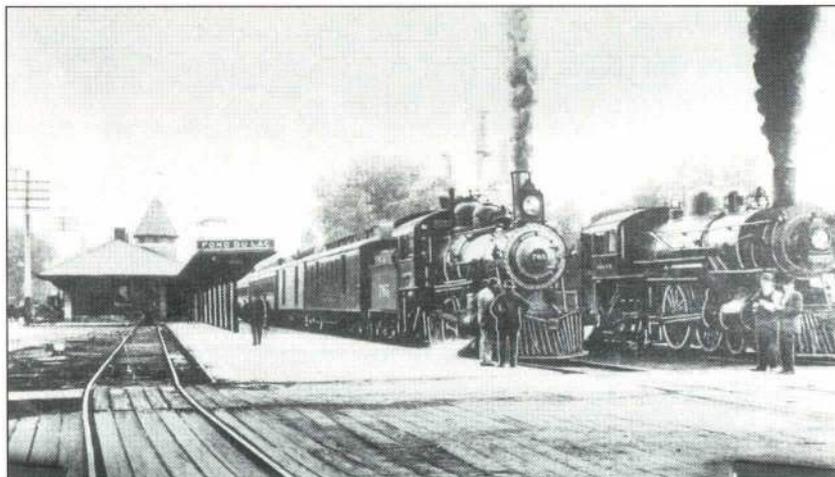
Trains at the Chicago & North Western passenger station at the corner of Brooke Street and Forest Avenue.

John Macy Promotes the Railroad

In 1850 John B. Macy wanted a faster, more reliable form of transportation for the people of Wisconsin. He convinced friends to invest money in a plan to bring a railroad to Fond du Lac. Ground breaking took place on July 10, 1851, less than 100 feet west of the Fond du Lac House.

Two years later the first 20-mile section of railroad connected the city to Chester, near Waupun. In *Fond du Lac County, Wisconsin: Past and Present* written in 1912, Maurice McKenna states: "The first engine...was brought from Buffalo by boat to Sheboygan and was hauled...to Fond du Lac by teams of oxen and horses. It took several weeks to bring it here." The engine was named *The Winnebago*.

The first railroad was the Rock River Valley Union. It later became the Chicago, St. Paul and Fond du Lac Railway, then the North Western Transportation Co.

The Railroad Connects Fond du Lac

By 1862 the railroad connected Fond du Lac to Watertown, Oshkosh, Appleton, and Green Bay. Trains ran to Sheboygan by 1869. A few years later, tracks connected Fond du Lac with Milwaukee and cities in Illinois, Minnesota, and northern Michigan.

A steam engine donated by the Soo Line in 1955 stands at the west entrance of Lakeside Park.

Passenger Service

The Chicago & North Western Depot, built in 1892 near the corner of Brooke Street and Forest Avenue, became the loading and unloading area for passengers, goods, and mail. To keep warm while waiting for trains in winter, passengers huddled around the large wood-burning stove.

North Fond du Lac

The Wisconsin Central Railroad (forerunner of the Soo Line) established car shops and division headquarters in North Fond du Lac in 1898. The Chicago & North Western Railroad did the same a few years later. There were few homes in North Fond du Lac then. Many railroad workers lived in Fond du Lac. They commuted to and from work, but not in cars. In those days, workers took the streetcar instead.

The End of an Era

At one time, 46 passenger trains and 54 freight trains passed through the city every day. The last northbound Soo Line passenger train left the Fond du Lac depot on January 15, 1965. The era of passenger train travel to and from Fond du Lac had ended.

STREETCARS PROVIDE TRANSPORTATION
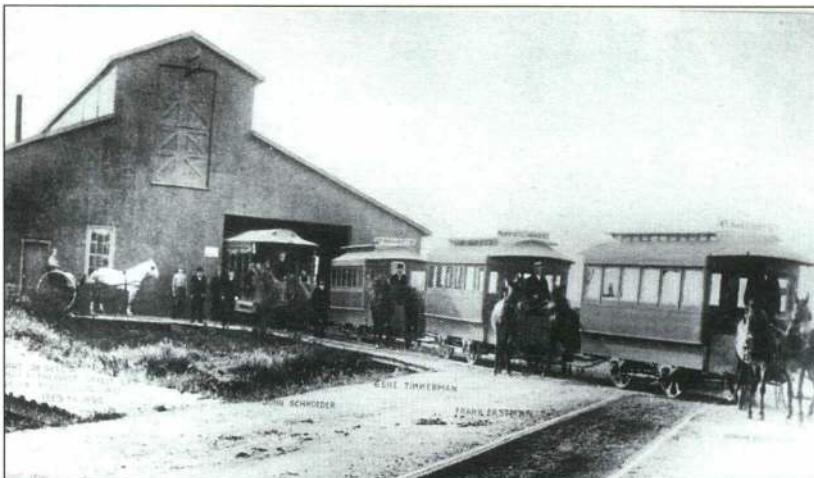
The first streetcars in Fond du Lac were pulled by mules.

J. P. Burkholder began the city's first streetcar service in 1888. Mules pulled the cars along special tracks. Both cars and mules were stored in a barn on Fond du Lac Avenue near Fourth Street. A year later electric streetcars replaced the mules. The business changed hands several times when the owners went broke. For a time, the city had no public transportation.

In 1899 the Fond du Lac Street Railway & Light Company began a new service. Streetcars ran on Main Street to Lakeside Park and then to North Fond du Lac. In 1903 the tracks went all the way to Oshkosh along the lake. Streetcar service ended in 1930. By then, many people owned cars.

City bus service began in 1944. Until 1967 private companies provided the service. The Fondy Area Bus Cooperative formed in 1968.

AFTER THE HORSE AND BUGGY

Before people had automobiles, they rode in wagons, carriages, or sleighs pulled by horses or oxen. Some hotels in the city had stables for people to keep their horses overnight. The 1907 City Directory lists only two automobile dealers. That same year the city had several blacksmiths, horseshoers, and harness and carriage makers.

Thomas W. Meiklejohn Sr. founded **Service Motors** in 1911. He opened his first car dealership at 19 Fourth Street. By then more and more people wanted to own automobiles. In time it became less expensive to buy a used car than it did to buy a horse.
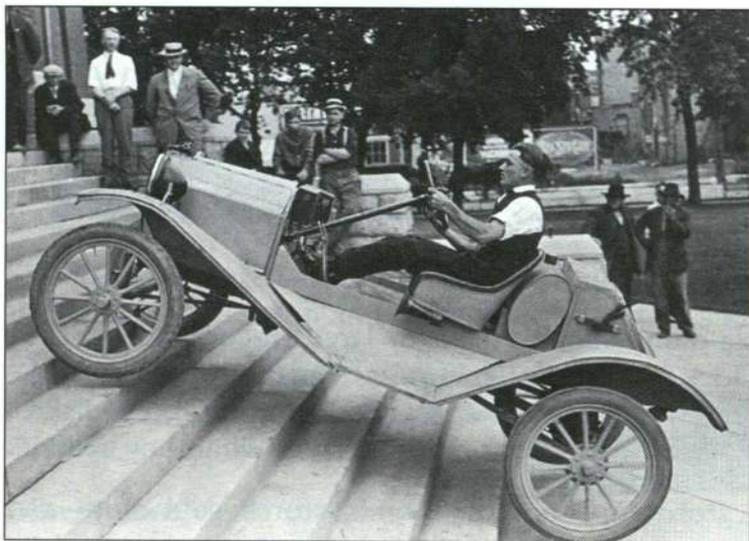
In 1914 Thomas W. Meiklejohn, Sr. drove a Model T up the steps of the Fond du Lac County Courthouse to promote his business.

Up, Up, and Away

The Fond du Lac County Airport opened in the early 1920s on Highway 23, east of the city. Steve Wittman, who later became a famous pilot, was one of the first students to take flying lessons there in 1924. He served as a test pilot, then became manager of the airport for several years.

A new Fond du Lac Skyport opened in 1957 on land west of the city. Pilots from around the world participate in the annual International Aerobatics Club Championships and Convention.

SHOPPING IN FOND DU LAC

H. T. Whinfield Grocery Store

In the early days, people didn't shop in malls or large grocery stores. They shopped at places like Clock & Weikert's General Store on the corner of Brooke and Johnson Streets. Here the pioneers bought food, clothes, tools, dishes, and medicines. Sometimes they traded farm products for what they needed.

After 1850 many new stores opened. Dry goods stores sold cloth and clothing. Boot and shoe stores opened. People shopped at bakeries, drug stores, and candle shops. They visited the shops of harness makers, watch repairers, and blacksmiths.

Food was not packaged in plastic, styrofoam, or cardboard. Early grocery stores sold food in cloth sacks, wooden barrels, and crates. The grocer wrapped small items in paper and tied them with string.

Visitors to the Galloway House and Village on Old Pioneer Road can tour a general store furnished much as it would have been in the early days of the city.

A PAGE OUT OF TIME

Advertisements, like the ones below, found in the 1911-1912 Wright's Directory of Fond du Lac, tell much about the city at that time.

W.J. Butler advertised as a **Veterinary Surgeon and Dentist**.

The **Royal Theater** featured "Moving Pictures and Illustrated Songs."

An ad for **The Palmer** (hotel) claimed: "Every Room has Steam Heat, Hot and Cold Water, Tungsten Electric Lights and Telephone." It cost $2 to $3 a day to rent a room.

At the **J. Gerhard Bakery**, bread sold for 10 cents a loaf.

Dallman & Cooper Supply Co. made and sold "Elastic Roof Paint."

Gruenheck's Big White Store sold "Dry goods, Carpets, Rugs, Curtains, Lamps, Crockery, Cloaks, Furs, [and] Suits."

Carl J. Hinn sold coal and wood for heating.

The **Joseph Stenz Modern Grocery** ad claimed "Our Teas and Coffees are of the Finest Selection and we guarantee perfect satisfaction."

Students were invited to attend **The Fountain City Business College**.

E. J. Hounsell
DEALER IN
BICYCLES
Bicycle Repairing
GUNS, AMMUNITION
SPORTING GOODS
16 W. Division St.,   Fond du Lac, Wis.

Albert Rau dealt in flour, feed, hay, and poultry foods. **John P. Hess** sold diamonds, watches, clocks, and jewelry.

Helmer Milling Co. advertised as "The Largest Seed House in the City." Helmer also sold lime, cement, brick, stucco, and other building materials.

Other 1911-1912 listings included:

4 banks	4 blacksmiths	3 book binders
3 carpet weavers	33 doctors	7 horseshoers
1 barrel maker	74 dressmakers	57 grocers

SAWMILLS LINE THE FOND DU LAC RIVER

At the height of the lumbering era in the 1870s, the city produced more than 67 million board feet of lumber and 88 million wood shingles a year.

After the Civil War, Fond du Lac grew and prospered. By 1870 it was the second largest city in Wisconsin. Only Milwaukee was larger. As more people moved to Wisconsin, the demand for lumber to build homes and businesses grew.

Lower Town

At one time, sawmills lined the banks of the Fond du Lac River and the shore of Lake Winnebago. People called this area "Lower Town." In 1873 there were 18 lumber and shingle mills. The most successful sawmill was the Moore & Galloway Lumber Co. which started in 1866. Lumbermen cut trees in northern Wisconsin. They floated logs down the Wolf River and Lake Winnebago to the city's sawmills. Workers then cut logs into boards to make lumber.

The lumber industry also helped people begin new businesses. They started companies to make shingles, doors, carriages, and other wood products. With lumber available, people built wooden frame houses instead of log cabins.

The lumber industry in Fond du Lac did not last very long. By the early 1900s, fires had destroyed all the mills in the city.

THE "COOLEST" BUSINESS IN FOND DU LAC

From 1888 until 1945, horse-drawn wagons and trucks owned by Supple & Sons Co. delivered ice to city homes. At its peak, the company covered 12 city routes, serving about 3,000 homes.

Before people had electricity, they kept food cold in thick wooden boxes called ice boxes. They placed large chunks of ice covered with newspaper in the ice box. Ice cutting, storage, and delivery became an important industry.

In winter men cut large blocks of ice from the Fond du Lac River and Lake Winnebago. Teams of horses hauled the blocks to storage in ice houses. As the weather warmed, thick layers of sawdust kept the ice from melting.

Ice Men Were Cool

The ice men drove through the city in horse-drawn wagons. They watched for signs in the front windows of homes. The handmade signs told when someone needed ice and how much to deliver. On hot summer days, children followed the ice man's wagon, hoping to get a few chips of ice to keep cool.

OXEN PULLED THE PLOWS
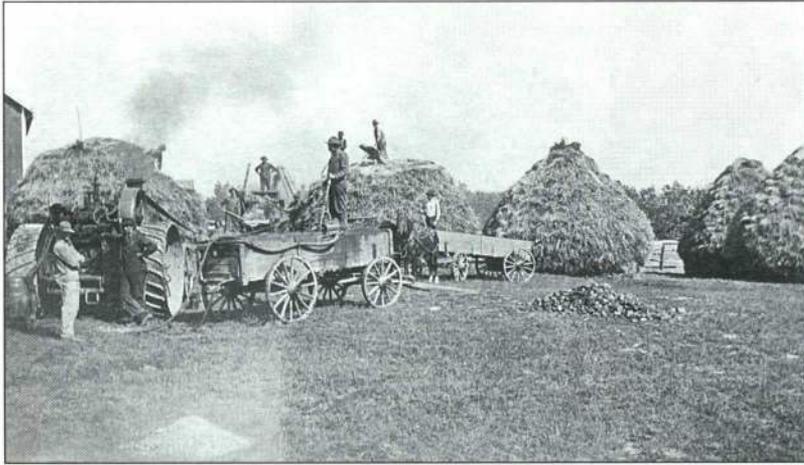
Horses and wagons were used on area farms.

Some of the first city residents were traders, merchants, and doctors. Some were lawyers, teachers, and lumbermen. Many more were farmers. Farming has always been an important industry in the Fond du Lac area. The table below shows the number of bushels of wheat, rye, corn, and oats raised by farmers in Fond du Lac County.

Year	Wheat	Rye	Corn	Oats
1850	4,286,131	81,253	1,988,979	3,414,672
1860	15,657,458	888,544	7,517,300	11,059,260
1870	25,606,344	1,325,294	15,033,988	20,180,016

In the 1870s wheat was "king." Barley and hops became important in the mid-1800s when local breweries began making beer. Hemp, cucumbers, buckwheat, flax, onions, cabbage, carrots, and sugar beets were also important crops.

Farm Animals

Until about 1870 farmers used oxen to pull plows and wagons. Oxen are stronger than horses and could live without barns in winter. Horses later became more popular with farmers. Eventually, tractors replaced horses on most farms.

Farmers raised cattle and pigs for meat. Chickens provided meat and eggs. Sheep supplied wool. Cows gave milk for butter and cheese. By 1910 Fond du Lac County reported a total of 73,470 cattle, 59,202 pigs, 34,241 sheep and 253,535 poultry. That same year, the total human population of the county was only 51,610.

A cow owned by the Galloways made the news in 1923. "Pretty Jane," a Brown Swiss, set a world record by producing 18,042.5 pounds of milk in one year.

Cheese and Dairy

In a way, Fond du Lac's dairy industry began in 1837 when Edward Pier arrived with his family and one cow. The first cheese factory in the county opened in 1844 in Springvale.

In 1850 dairy cows in Fond du Lac County produced enough milk to make 3.6 million pounds of butter and more than 400,000 pounds of cheese. By 1870 milk from the county's dairy cows increased production to 22.4 million pounds of butter and 1.5 million pounds of cheese.

In 1878, 4,500 cows produced milk for 30 cheese factories in the county. An article in the *Daily Reporter* (October 4, 1916) stated that dairy products from Fond du Lac County for 1915 exceeded $2.5 million.

In 1915 the *Daily Commonwealth* reported that Galloway-West Co. shipped an average of 150,000 pounds of milk daily to Chicago by train.
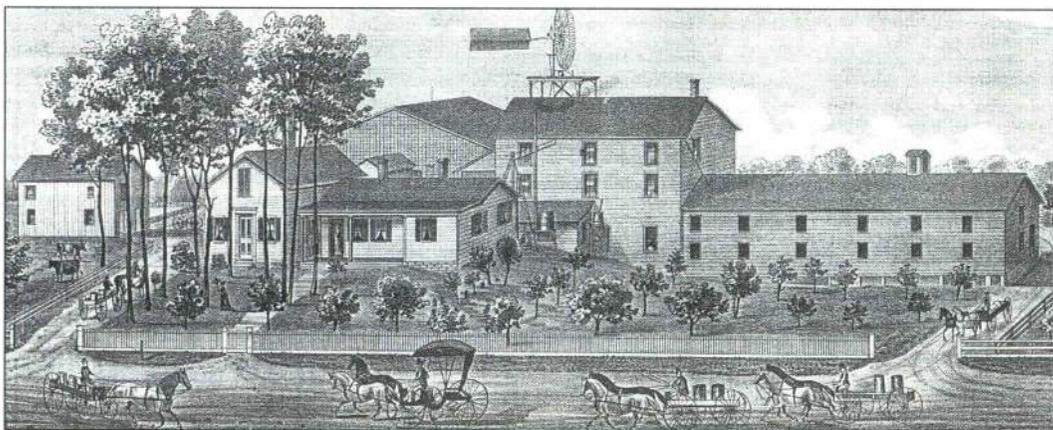
This large cheese factory in Springvale was owned by Chester Hazen.

INDUSTRIES GROW WITH FOND DU LAC

Many industries have grown with the city. Some prospered for a time before going out of business. Some moved to different cities. A few have remained for more than one hundred years.

1848: J. & C. Frey Brewery began making beer.

1854: William Rueping built the first tannery along the east branch of the Fond du Lac River. At a tannery, leather was made from animal hides for use as harnesses, shoes, and other goods. After 131 years, the company went out of business.
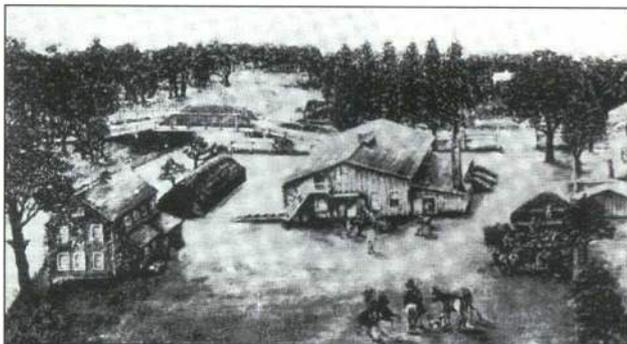
The early years of the Fred Reuping Leather Company are portrayed in this painting by W. H. Reuping.

1858: Once a family farm and garden, **Haentze Floral & Greenhouse** started "growing" in 1858.
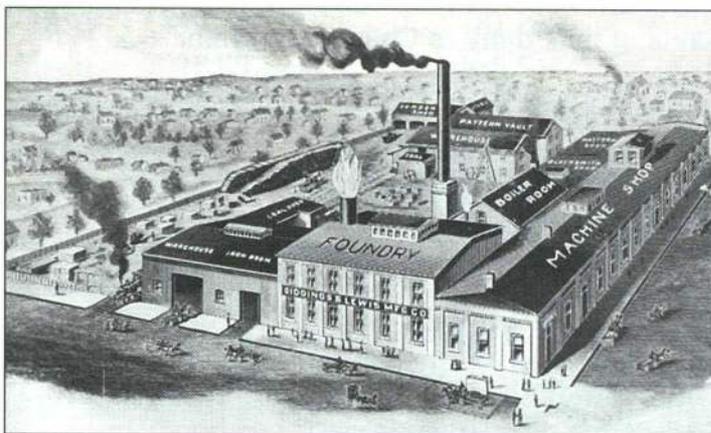
An artist's view of Giddings & Lewis in 1897.

1859: John Bonnel opened a machine shop in 1859. This became the **Novelty Iron Works** in 1866, and later, **Giddings & Lewis**.

1868: J. C. Huber's Drug Mill made medicines from herbs, roots, and spices grown in the area.

1875: The Fond du Lac Spring Wagon Company made carriages and sleighs. They used a 35 horsepower steam engine built by the **Novelty Iron Works**.

1878: Joseph Hutter formed **Hutter Construction**. He built many city homes, schools, and public buildings.

1888: D. Ahern & Sons provided "sanitary plumbing & steam & hot water heating."

1900: Jacob Brenner opened his **Brenner Tin Shop** on Third Street. The business grew to become **Brenner Tank Inc.**, makers of stainless steel tank trailers.

1903: Wells Manufacturing opened with only six workers. According to an early city directory, the company manufactured "electric apparatuses."

Brenner Tin Shop on Third Street in Fond du Lac around 1940.

1908: Clarence and Edgar Wright founded the **Wright Brothers Paper Box Co.** on Main Street, north of Johnson.

1908: The **Damrow Brothers Company** began production of cheese-making equipment.

1909: Alfred Jaeger founded the **Jaeger Sign Company**. Workers hand-painted signs. They did lettering and designs on cars, windows, and walls.

1932: J.R. Tolibia, Sr. began **Tolibia Cheese**.

1946: Kiekhaefer Mercury (Mercury Marine) began producing outboard motors in Fond du Lac.

FIRES: A MAJOR PROBLEM

Fires were a major problem in the early days of the city. Most homes and businesses were built of wood. A spark from a fireplace could quickly start a major fire.

The village council appointed the first fire marshals in 1848. Their duties were to "take charge of all fires." They also commanded the "bucket brigades." Members of a bucket brigade filled leather buckets with water and passed them to others in a line. Those closest to a burning building threw the buckets of water on the fire. In cold weather, water could freeze in the buckets before it reached the fire.

First Fire Laws

In 1849 the village council passed several fire laws:

- All new homes must have brick or stone chimneys.

- Anyone who refused to obey a fire warden would be fined $5.

- All homes must have scuttle holes to the roof or ladders tall enough to reach the roof.

- In an emergency, buckets could be borrowed from stores. If any buckets became damaged or lost, the owner would be paid.

First Fire Truck

In 1854 the city purchased its first fire engine. Fire marshals organized a 50-man volunteer fire department. The volunteers pulled the engine to a fire. They hand-pumped water from the nearest pond or well. Volunteers received $2 a year for their work.

Eventually the city built fire houses and organized more volunteer fire companies. Paid firefighters replaced volunteers in 1878. The city built water reservoirs connected by underground pipes. It bought more "modern" equipment, like horse-drawn and steam fire engines.
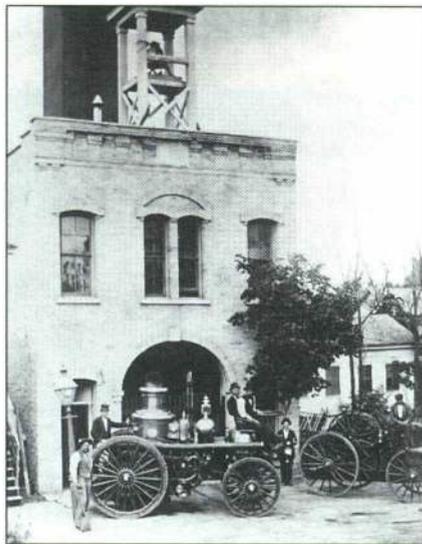
The "Self Propeller" was an early fire engine used in Fond du Lac.

The Night the Churches Burned

September 25, 1908, was a night long remembered by residents of the city. A large fire started in the Crescent Garage at Marr and Second Streets causing cans of gasoline to explode. The fire spread to St. Joseph's Church and Grant School. The wind carried sparks to St. Peter's Lutheran Church, then to the Congregational Church two blocks to the north. Water pressure dropped. Water pipes broke. The fire raged out of control.

Fred Rueping's offer of water from the tannery's artesian wells helped control the blaze. The mayor called the Oshkosh Fire Department for help. In response, a hose cart, steam engine, and 50 volunteers arrived by train. Many churches, businesses, and homes were damaged or destroyed before the fire was finally out.

Firefighting Has Changed

Firefighters in Fond du Lac no longer rely on volunteers and leather water buckets. They don't pull their fire engine down the street or pump water by hand. The duties of today's firefighters still include protecting people and property, putting out fires as quickly as possible, and keeping fires from spreading. In addition, many firefighters also serve as paramedics.

THE GREAT FLOOD OF 1924

Eight inches of rain fell during a 24 hour period on August 4 and 5, 1924, causing massive flooding. Businesses and homes were damaged. Streets became rivers. The photos on this page show the extent of the flood at various locations in Fond du Lac.

Third Street, east of Main Street.

Canoeing on North Main Street near Arndt Street.

Northeast corner of Forest Avenue and Sophia Street.

READ ALL ABOUT IT: IN ENGLISH OR GERMAN

Fond du Lac has had a long history of newspapers since the *Fountain City* began publishing in 1844. At least 30 daily and weekly papers have come and gone. Nine of them were in German. Newspapers sold for 2 to 5¢ a copy.
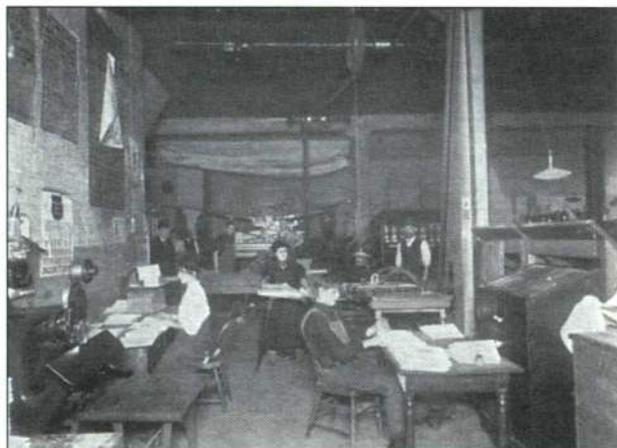
Printing an early newspaper involved hard work. After writing a news story, the printer set the type. This meant finding each metal letter for each word, one at a time and arranging the letters in a special box. After checking for errors, the paper went to press.

Operating the large printing presses was a heavy, dirty job. The operator fed the paper into the press, one sheet at a time. Then he inked the type and closed the press. The freshly printed pages were hung up to dry. When enough copies of one page were ready, the process started again for the next page.

Many of the early local papers only lasted a year or so. Some merged, then split and formed new ones. Some changed ownership, editors, and even their names several times. Two newspapers, the *Western Freeman* and the *Fountain City Herald*, joined in 1856 to become the weekly *Fond du Lac Commonwealth*. This became the *Daily Commonwealth* in 1870.

The *Daily Reporter*, started in 1883, was the first in the city to use telegraph service to gather news. In 1926 the *Daily Reporter* and the *Fond du Lac Commonwealth* became *The Fond du Lac Commonwealth Reporter*. In the early 1970s, it became *The Reporter*.

The 1911-1912 city directory listed two daily and two weekly newspapers. It cost 10¢ a week or $5 a year for delivery of a daily paper.

FOND DU LAC CONNECTS WITH THE WORLD
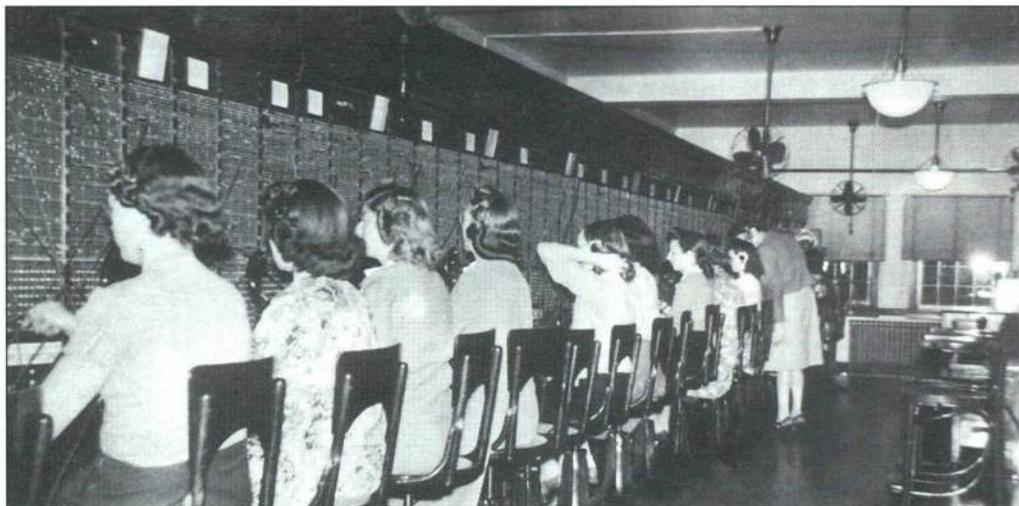
Switchboard operators for the Wisconsin Telephone Co. at 45 Sheboygan Street in 1941.

On May 24, 1844, Samuel Morse sent the first long-distance message on his new telegraph machine. By 1850 telegraph lines connected Fond du Lac through Sheboygan. Soon messages went back and forth to friends and relatives in far-off places. News items arrived as quickly as the distant operators could tap out the messages. "Live broadcasts" of sporting events became possible. Operators sent play-by-play accounts of games by telegraph.

When a personal telegram arrived in the local office, messengers delivered it for a small fee. As telephone service became available, the need for telegrams declined. The city telegraph office closed in 1960.

Telephones Ring

Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone in 1876. Three years later, the owners of Deland's Drug Store installed the first one in Fond du Lac. By the end of the year, 25 people in the city had telephones.

Long Distance

Long-distance service to Oshkosh, then to Milwaukee, began in 1881. By 1911 the city had 2,000 telephones. Until 1957 people in Fond du Lac dialed the operator to place a call. They told the operator the number and she dialed it. Direct dial service began in 1957. By then the city had more than 16,000 telephones.

KFIZ

Oscar A. Huelsman organized KFIZ, the city's first radio station in 1922. It began on an experimental basis, broadcasting a few hours a day from the third floor of a building on Forest Avenue. News, talk shows, weather, and commercials were the first items broadcast.

KFIZ added live broadcasts of local talent, sports events, and network programs, including plays and concerts. Hours on the air increased.

A new "high-fidelity" system improved the quality of the broadcast in 1934. In 1951, 24-hour teletype equipment brought in national news.

Over the years, KFIZ changed ownership many times and joined several different national radio networks. KFIZ is no longer the only radio station in the city, but it is the oldest radio station in the entire state of Wisconsin.

Exotic Foods Come to Fond du Lac

People in the early days were not too adventurous when it came to trying new foods. "The first celery ever brought to Fond du Lac to be sold was grown by James Smith, an English gardener...and driven about the streets and to the different groceries. For some time no one was found who knew what it was, and, after smelling of the neatly tied bunches, the people would turn up their noses, wag their heads and pass by on the other side [of the street]. Finally, Dr. T.S. Wright, seeing Mr. Smith's wagon, seized a bunch of celery and began to devour it, much to the astonishment of those [watching]. Finally, James Ewen, who kept the Lewis House, purchased the entire lot, and thereafter Mr. Smith found a market for his 'decayed pie-plant,' as some of the citizens called the celery." (Butterfield, 1880)

LAKESIDE PARK

Until 1889 people from Fond du Lac could not get to Lake Winnebago very easily. "Frog-infested" marshes blocked the way, according to a local newspaper. No roads or sidewalks led to the lake. The people wanted a park for all to enjoy. They formed the Lakeside Park Subscription Committee and raised $2,000 to begin the project.

The first steps were to fill in the marsh, build a sidewalk and a road. Soon people could walk, drive, or take the streetcar to Lakeside Park. They enjoyed picnics, band concerts, and swimming at the public beach.

People took swimming lessons at a private swimming school on Lake Winnebago, west of Main Street. Diving boards and 60-foot high water slides, called chutes, made this early water park fun for people of all ages.

Lakeside Park in the early 1900s.

Over the years, Lakeside Park grew. In 1898 John Boyle built the first pavilion as a gift to the people of the city. William McDermott donated a bandstand which was featured in a national magazine, *The Saturday Evening Post*, in the 1950s. Others donated park benches and swings. Each year the park changed as the city added footpaths, boathouses, and tennis courts. Trees and flowers made the park more beautiful. Pleasure boats sailed the lake. Eventually electric street lights brightened the park at night. In 1920 a campsite for tourists opened.

The city council approved plans for building a zoo in 1930. In 1955 the Soo Line Railroad donated the steam locomotive that stands at the Main Street entrance.

Lakeside Park has changed since it began in 1889. Trolley cars no longer take visitors to the park. Concrete sidewalks replaced the wooden ones. The streets are paved. The tennis courts and campgrounds are long gone. In one way, Lakeside Park has not changed. Thousands of people continue to enjoy the city's largest park every year.

Built in 1933 as a gift from W. J. Nuss, a city lumberman, the lighthouse at Lakeside Park has become the symbol of Fond du Lac and Fond du Lac County.

PUBLIC HALLS AND THEATERS

People in the early days worked hard. They also set aside time for fun. **Darling's Hall**, built in 1847 on the corner of First and Main, was the first public hall. Ten years later, the new **Amory Hall** featured a huge ballroom. It had room for 1,500 people. People attended dances, lectures, plays, and concerts there and at several smaller halls. The **Crescent Opera House** opened in 1887 on the southeast corner of Marr and Second.

Various groups sponsored programs and lectures by well-known people. Some famous people who visited Fond du Lac were Alexander Graham Bell, Horace Greely, Booker T. Washington, William Jennings Bryan, John L. Sullivan, Amelia

Amory Hall was built in 1856, and burned to the ground in 1937.

Earhart, and Carry Nation. Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show came to town in 1899. In 1912, 18-year-old Jack Benny performed at the **Idea Theater**.

The **Henry Boyle Theater** opened in 1906 to a sold-out crowd of 1,000. People paid $10 each to attend the opening night performance by Otis Skinner, a famous actor.

The city's first movie theater opened in 1906. Early theaters, called nickelodeons, charged a nickel to watch a movie. The first movies had no sound or music. A pianist or organist played music to accompany the moving pictures. All early movies were black and white.

According to the *Daily Reporter* on May 31, 1906, the films showing at the **Coliseum** were the "Great San Francisco Disaster and a Spanish Bullfight."

LUXURY HOTELS

The city's first hotel was the **Fond du Lac House**, run by Colwert and Fanna Pier. In 1838 Dr. Darling opened another hotel also called the **Fond du Lac House**. It was a temperance hotel, which meant no liquor was sold there.

The **Exchange Hotel** (1838) on the corner of Main and Division offered rooms for rent and sold liquor. The business was so successful that the owner built a new, three-story hotel in 1847. It was the tallest building in the city.

The Eagle (1848) opened at Fourth and Ellis. The owners moved the building to Main and Sheboygan and sold it to J. C. Lewis. It burned in 1866. When it was rebuilt two years later, it became known as the **Patty House**. The new four-story **Patty House** was the largest hotel north of Milwaukee. The outside was brick and creamy white limestone. It cost about $65,000 to build and contained 105 rooms. To celebrate the grand opening, 1,600 people bought tickets at $5 each to attend the ball.

The **American House** (1861) on Main and Court contained 45 rooms, dining room, office, and kitchen. C.J. Lewis built another **Lewis House** (1871) on the east side of Main near Division.

Farmers especially liked to stay at the **First National Hotel** (1872) on Main and Forest. This hotel offered lower prices and "wholesome food." It provided large sheds for horses and livestock. The **Washington House** on Main and Fifth was also popular with farmers. German travelers enjoyed staying at the **Serwe House** at Merrill and Main and the **Fountain City Hotel** near the corner of Main and Division Streets.

The first Lewis House was located on the corner of Main and Sheboygan Streets.

MANY DENOMINATIONS BUILT CHURCHES

Religious services were an important part of frontier life for Fond du Lac's pioneers. Dr. Darling's home was the site of the first religious service in 1839. People held services in private homes, schools, and even the court house. By 1854 the city had six church buildings.

The **First Baptist Church** began in 1845 with eight members. The church was completed in 1853.
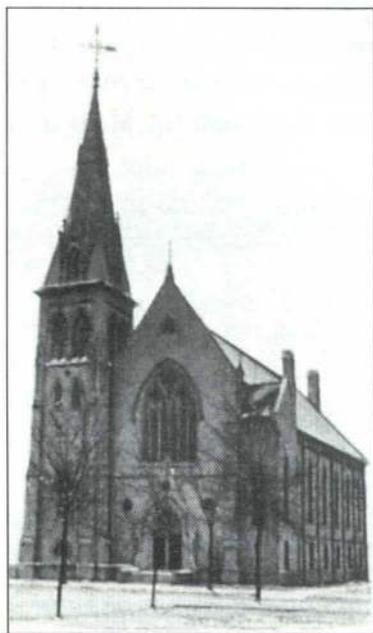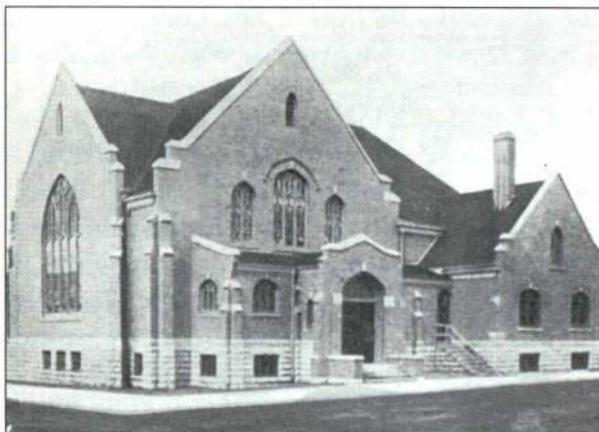
St. Louis Chapel, at the corner of Marr and Second, became the city's first Catholic Church in 1847.When a new St. Louis parish started (1870), the original church became **St. Joseph's**.

The first **Methodist Church** (1852) stood at the corner of Third and Marr.

Dr. Darling donated land at Marr and Second for the **Congregational Church** built in 1847.

Services were first held at **St. Paul's Episcopal Church** in 1852. The building was replaced in 1867. When it burned in 1884, the congregation built a larger cathedral with beautiful wood carvings and stained glass. Today it is known as the Cathedral Church of St. Paul.

Members met in private homes until the city's first **Presbyterian Church** (1855) could be built.

St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church (1860), started by German settlers, opened on Marr and Second.

German Catholics built the first **St. Mary's Church** (1866) at the corner of Merrill and Marquette.

St. Patrick's Catholic Church was organized in 1854 and the church building was completed in 1862.

A group of former slaves came to the city during the Civil War. They built **Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church** (1867) on West Eleventh Street.

German settlers also built **Peace Evangelical Church** (1870) on Military and Ruggles.

Jewish residents began the religious society Kahilath Jacob in 1914. The first synagogue was built in 1923 on the corner of Seymour and Ruggles. **Temple Beth Israel** on Division Street was dedicated in 1960.

As the city grew, people needed more churches. Sometimes groups split and formed new churches. Most of the first churches eventually burned or were torn down and replaced with newer buildings. The 1997 city telephone book listed more than 50 churches and one synagogue in the city.

EDUCATING THE STUDENTS OF FOND DU LAC

The city's first schoolhouse was built in 1843 on land donated by Dr. Darling on Main Street between Second and Third. The building also served as a public meeting place and courthouse. Parents paid the teacher's salary. Five years later the school was moved to the north side of Fifth Street. The school burned that December. For a year, the city had no school.

Enrollment Grows

In 1852 the city had 9 teachers and 498 students. The teachers were paid an average of $120.82 per year. By 1879 records show 2,484 students enrolled. The 47 teachers had received a raise. They earned an average of $385.87 a year.

Some children of German settlers did not speak English. They attended classes in German. In 1854 the state legislature declared classes must be in English.

The First High School

The first city high school was built in 1859 and burned in 1867. A four-story "modern" brick building on the northeast corner of Merrill and Amory in 1873 became the new high school. Only four students graduated the first year.

The high school later became Roosevelt Junior High. The building contained the Roosevelt Auditorium, a public theater used for plays, speeches, and other community programs.
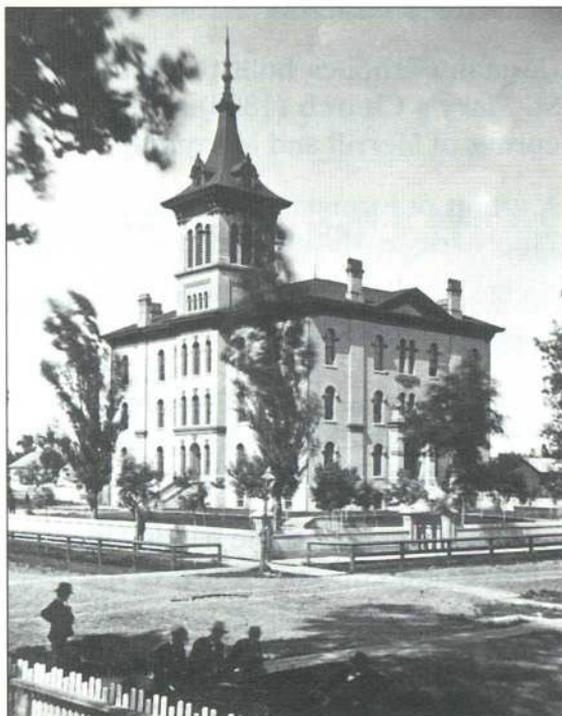
More Schools Needed

Between 1860 and 1909, the city built 33 new schools. Many of them were small wooden buildings — one-room schoolhouses.

Early schools were more than education centers for students. They also served as gathering places for adults to attend sports, cultural, social, and church events.
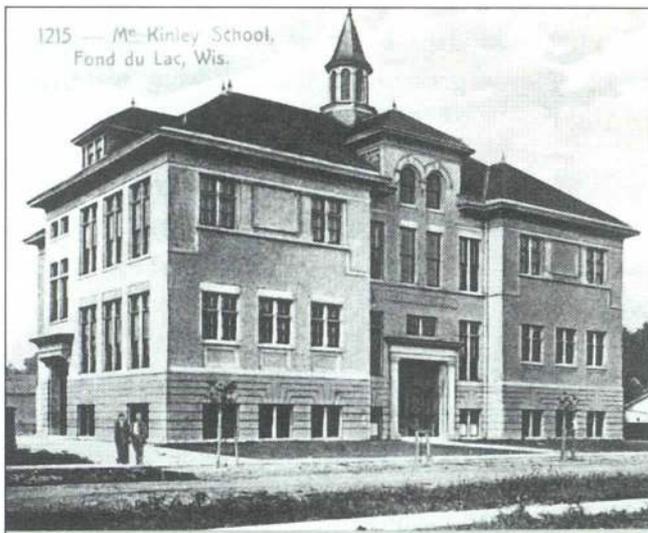
Specialty Schools

Over the years, many private and specialty schools opened. Students paid $1.50 to $2 per month to attend the **German and English Academy** (1854). Fancy sewing classes cost 25¢ extra.

McKinley School opened in 1904 on Amory Street and was razed in the 1960s.

The **Merrille Institute**, a private school for girls, opened in 1866. **Grafton Hall** and **St. Mary's Springs Academy** (1909) were both private boarding schools for high school girls. Members of St. Peter's Lutheran Church founded **Winnebago Lutheran Academy** (1925).

Marian College (1936) began with less than 20 students as a college for the Sisters of St. Agnes. Lay women were admitted the following year. Men began attending in 1969.

The first **Vocational School** (1912) opened on the third floor of the Model Laundry building. An outgrowth of the early vocational schools is the present **Moraine Park Technical College**.

The **University of Wisconsin Center - Fond du Lac** (1968) offers two-year Associate college degrees. In 1997 the name changed to UW-Fond du Lac.

FOND DU LAC'S LIBRARIES

The first libraries in Fond du Lac opened in the 1850s. People who liked to read formed groups to share books. Members paid dues to borrow books. In the reading rooms, they enjoyed current magazines and newspapers.

In 1864 the Young Men's Association of Fond du Lac opened a small library with less than 200 books. The group also paid speakers to give public lectures. The most famous writer and lecturer was Ralph Waldo Emerson who came to Fond du Lac in 1867.

The Neocosmian Society began as a literary club in 1872. Members valued books and learning. They held debates and readings. The group sponsored lectures and presented plays. In 1874 they opened a library. For a fee of one dollar a year, people could borrow their books.

Free Library Comes to Fond du Lac

The city's first Free Public Library opened in 1877, paid for by taxes and private donations. The librarian received $250 a year for her work. Purchases and gifts helped the library's collection grow. By 1894 the library contained 13,000 volumes. The city hired people to catalog books and maintain the library.

As the library grew, space became a problem. Members of the Fond du Lac Woman's Club obtained a $30,000 donation from Andrew Carnegie to build a larger public library. In 1904 a beautiful stone building, which some called the "Carnegie Library," opened on the corner of Portland and Sheboygan Streets. This building served the people of Fond du Lac until it was replaced in 1968 by a larger, more modern facility.
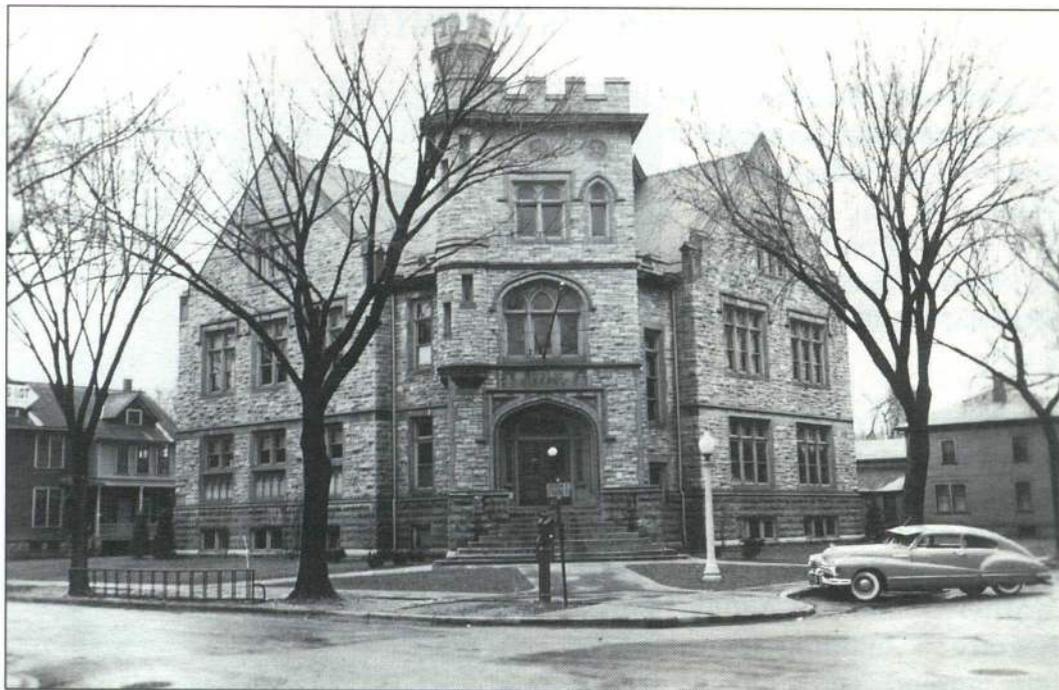
Thanks to efforts by the Fond du Lac Woman's Club, the city received a $30,000 donation from Andrew Carnegie to build a public library.

Updating and expanding the library continues to be an ongoing project. Today's Fond du Lac Public Library, with computerized catalogs, CDs, videos, and hundreds of thousands of books, magazines, newspapers, and documents is far different from the one that opened in 1904.

The current library opened in 1968.

ST. AGNES HOSPITAL

The first city hospital, St. Paul's, opened in 1887. Run by the Sisters of St. Monica, it had room for only 10 to 12 patients. Due to financial problems, the hospital closed a year later.

The Fond du Lac Businessmen's Association began a fund-raising campaign to build a new hospital. John and Henry Boyle offered Mother Mary Agnes Hazotte a building loan. She agreed to build a hospital staffed by the Sisters of St. Agnes.

The hospital opened in 1896 with beds for 60 patients. Although it had telephone service, the hospital did not have

St. Agnes Sanitarium opened on July 1, 1896. The name was changed to St. Agnes Hospital in 1900.

electricity. The nurses used lanterns as they walked through the halls. Small oil lamps provided light in patients' rooms. Kerosene stoves were used for cooking and heating. The hospital admitted 82 patients the first year.

A laundry and bakery were added in 1897. The east wing (1913) made room for 70 more patients plus an X-ray lab (1913) and pharmacy (1914). By 1925, the hospital had room for 250 patients, an obstetrics (birthing) and childrens' department.

Expansions, remodeling, and the addition of new technology have allowed St. Agnes Hospital to continue its long tradition of quality medical care.

STREET NAMES

The first city street was named for General George Brooke, the man in charge of building the Military Road. Lieutenant Alexander Center **(Center Street)** surveyed the route for the Military Road. **Military Road** in Fond du Lac was once part of the original Military Road.

Doty Street was named for James Doty. Other streets bear the names of several of his partners in the Fond du Lac Company: **McWilliams**, **Arndt**, **Bruce**, **Merrill**, **Satterlee**, **Rees**, **Scott**, and **Ellis**.

Darling Place was named for Dr. Darling, the city's first doctor and mayor.

Hamilton Place honors Charles Hamilton, a city resident, who became a general in the Civil War. **Sophia Street** was named for his wife.

Hazotte Court was named for Mary Agnes Hazotte, founder of the Sisters of St. Agnes.

Jared Taylor named **Mary's Avenue** and **Emma Street** for his daughters. His family donated land for **Taylor Park**.

Boyle Place honors John and Henry Boyle, the brothers who gave many generous gifts to the city.

Macy Street was named for John Macy who brought the railroad to the city. He named **John Street** for his son, **Russel Street** for his wife's family, and **Thomas Street** for his son-in-law.

Many other Fond du Lac streets honor past and present city residents. The names of presidents, trees, and states are also commonly found on the Fond du Lac city street map.

Instead of Fond du Lac, the city could have been called Fountain City. That nickname was popular in the mid-1800s because of the large number of artesian wells, called fountains. Two early newspapers included Fountain City as part of their names. There was a Fountain City Hotel and a Fountain City Business College in Fond du Lac at one time.

In 1880 historian C.W. Butterfield wrote: "Hunter's Magnetic fountain, which discharges a strong stream several feet above the surface of the ground through a two-inch pipe, became particularly famous for the cures wrought by its use in cases of

Hunter's Magnetic Springs were advertised as a fountain with healthful water.

kidney disease and rheumatism. The fountain was sunk to get water for a paper-mill, which proved to be unfit for the desired purpose. The analysis ordered by Mr. Hunter, to discover what the water contained to render it unfit for use in the manufacture of paper, resulted in developing the fact that

it possessed valuable curative properties. A large bath-house and hotel were then erected on the spot and the fountain advertised. This resulted in bringing invalids from all parts of the Union, many of whom came on crutches and returned home cured."

TOO MANY VAGRANTS!

"In early days a small wooden building, hardly large enough for a smoke house, located on Portland Street, served as a city lock-up. It had no cells...and was made secure by weak wooden shutters. It was used only for the incarceration of unfortunates who had become so drunk they could not break out of a paper house. In 1866, a more substantial structure of brick, with cells and apparatus for warmth, was erected near the corner of Macy, on First Street.

In 1878, this having become too small to accommodate the constantly increasing numbers of tramps, or wandering vagrants, and too dilapidated to secure criminals, the present brick and stone structure was built at a cost of $2,300 on the same site. It is two stories high, with six single and four double cells, and a commodious office for the Chief of Police and police headquarters.

The building is well provided with heating and ventilating apparati, and is strong enough to confine any criminal. It is used merely as a place of confinement for persons charged with crime, until their trial — not as a place of punishment to those who have been sentenced to imprisonment." (Butterfield, 1880)

This Fond du Lac County jail was built on Linden Street near Western Avenue.

DID YOU KNOW?

The first Fond du Lac Fairgrounds was east of Main Street near 13th Street. The present site of the Fond du Lac County Fairgrounds was purchased in 1892. At first it was called Kite Park because the race track was shaped like a kite.

Joshua Barnard started a cabinet making and undertaking business in Fond du Lac in 1847. He used a farm wagon for a hearse.

"In May, 1848, the first circus and menagerie — Raymond & Co.'s — visited Fond du Lac Village. Everybody went, and it was the talk of the villagers during several weeks afterward." (C.W. Butterfield, 1880)

In 1856 C.J. Pettibone & Co. opened a store on the third floor of the Amory building on the corner of Main and Sheboygan Streets. At the time, it was the highest store in Wisconsin.

At one time, carrier pigeons brought in the news from outlying areas. The birds lived in the newspaper office attic. Today, telephones connect people all over the world. They use car phones, cordless phones and answering machines. Telephones link people through computers to the Internet.

My How We've Grown!

1850: **1,940**

1860: **5,450**

1870: **12,764**

1880: **13,094**

1890: **12,024**

1900: **15,100**

1910: **18,797**

1920: **23,429**

1930: **26,449**

Population of Fond du Lac

1940: **27,209**

1950: **29,936**

1960: **32,719**

1970: **35,315**

1980: **35,863**

1990: **37,755**

1997: **40,804 (est.)**

BOOKS OF INTEREST

Fond du Lac County: A Gift of the Glacier by Michael Mentzer (Fond du Lac County Historical Society, 1991)

Prehistoric Indians of Wisconsin by Robert E. Ritzenthaler (Milwaukee Public Museum, 1953)

Looking into our Heritage, Ruth Spoerri, Editor (Joint School District #1, 1969)

A Photographer's History of Fond du Lac County Volumes I and II by Ray Thornton (1977 and 1981)

Pictures of the Past: A look back at Fond du Lac and the region (Heritage House Publishing, 1995)

The History of Fond du Lac County as told by its place-names by Ruth Shaw Worthing (Globe Printing Company, 1976)

Other sources of local history include the August 22, 1970 centennial edition of the *Fond du Lac Commonwealth Reporter* and the many publications available at the Fond du Lac Public Library.

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